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presents

the Annotated Popular Edition of

Macbeth

by William Shakespeare

Written c. 1606

Earliest Extant Edition: 1623

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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Macbeth is a seminal work of English literature,
one of the most important stage dramas ever written.
It is also one of the hardest plays to understand.

THIS EDITION of *Macbeth* does something
no edition has ever done before:
it allows readers who wish to TRULY UNDERSTAND
Shakespeare's language –
the metaphors, the tangled syntax, the obscure phrases –
to do so.

Here, explanatory annotations are integrated
directly next to the lines they illuminate;
our notes are immersive and educational,
written to be easily understood,
while offering a wealth of information and insight
into the play itself
and the language of Shakespeare.

Be prepared to become one of the few people on earth
who actually understand every line
of one of Shakespeare's most famous and
most difficult plays!

MACBETH

by William Shakespeare

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DRAMATIS PERSONS

Duncan, King of Scotland.
Malcolm, son of Duncan.
Donalbain, son of Duncan.
Macbeth, General of the King's Army.
Lady Macbeth, wife to Macbeth.
Banquo, General of the King's Army.
Fleance, son of Banquo.

Noblemen of Scotland:

Macduff.
Lady Macduff, wife to Macduff.
Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.
Boy, son of Macduff.
Lennox.
Ross.
Menteith.
Angus.
Caithness.

Old Siward, Earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces.
Young Siward, his son.

Seyton, an officer attending on Macbeth.

An English Doctor.
A Scotch Doctor.
A Soldier.
A Porter.
An Old Man.

Hecat.
Three Witches.
Apparitions.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, and Messengers.

Scene: Scotland, England.

INTRODUCTION to the PLAY.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is one of the great tragedies of the English stage. Macbeth, the character, is psychologically complex: he desperately wants to be King of Scotland, but suffers from episodes of cowardice and hesitation that would lead other men to stop short of committing the ultimate crime to achieve their ends.

Luckily (or unluckily) for our protagonist, the ruthless Lady Macbeth is there to put steel into the spine of her husband. She alternately mocks, soothes, and inspires Macbeth, because her ambition to be monarch is even greater than his.

Macbeth is a thrilling and fast-moving play, marked by short scenes in which characters enter and leave the stage with dizzying rapidity. The tone is ominous from the start, the opening scene taking place during the meeting of *Macbeth's* famous three Witches, the Weird Sisters. Filled with special effects and memorable lines, *Macbeth* remains, even after 400 years, one of English literature's most important works.

NOTES ON THE TEXT.

Our text of *Macbeth* was initially adopted from both Eugene Waith's 1918 edition of the play, published as part of *The Yale Shakespeare* series.

The play was then carefully compared directly to the 1623 Folio version. Consequently, much of the original wording, punctuation and spelling from this earliest printing of *Macbeth* has been reinstated.

NOTES ON THE ANNOTATIONS.

Mention in the annotations of various editors refers to the notes supplied by these scholars for their editions of this play.

The most commonly cited sources are listed in the footnotes immediately below. The complete list of footnotes appears at the end of this play.

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) online.
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New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918.

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7. Jowett, John, ed. *Macbeth. The New Oxford Shakespeare, Complete Works*, edited by Gary Taylor et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

8. Furness, Horace H. *Macbeth. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1915.

10. Sugden, Edward. *A Topographical Dictionary to the Works of Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists*. Manchester: The University Press, 1925.

11. Thiselton-Dyer, Rev. T.F. *Folk-Lore of Shakespeare*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1884.

NOTES

A. The Story of *Macbeth* is Not Original to Shakespeare

William Shakespeare did not invent Macbeth or Banquo, nor did he contrive the Witches known as the Weird Sisters or their prophecies that drive the action. Rather, *Macbeth* is the result of a marriage between Shakespeare's writing genius and a lengthy and often fanciful history of the British Isles bearing the title *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, casually attributed to Rafael Holinshed. In our notes and annotations, we shall refer to the volume by its common name, the *Chronicles*, and to its author as "Holinshed"). The *Chronicles* was published in two editions (1577 and 1587).

The *Chronicles* were the source and inspiration for many Elizabethan history plays, not just those of Shakespeare: Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*, for example, was also based on the *Chronicles*.

What is most interesting to contemplate is not so much what stories and details the playwrights lifted out of the *Chronicles*, but rather how authors *deviated* from them. For example, in the *Chronicles*, Macbeth is acknowledged to have been an effective and popular King of Scotland for many years before he became a tyrant; Banquo was an accomplice to the murder of King Duncan; and the rebel Macdonwald committed suicide rather than let himself get captured by the Scottish army led by Macbeth and Banquo.

All of these elements were omitted or changed by Shakespeare as he wrote *Macbeth*. It was indeed the norm for a playwright to adapt and modify the historical record for dramatic purposes, in order to enhance the plot and intensify the dramatic arc of a play.

B. Shakespeare Borrowed from Holinshed in a Variety of Ways.

As Shakespeare considered the lengthy story of the king called "*Makbeth*" in the *Chronicles* for his new play, he had to decide, often on a line-by-line basis, what details to include, which to modify, and which to omit; his goal being to write a quality play that would be enjoyed by his audience, not necessarily to present an accurate history.

It is fascinating to trace the multiple levels by which Shakespeare borrowed from Holinshed's *Chronicles*:

(1) The Plot Level. At the most basic level, the primary elements of the story of *Macbeth* the play were pretty much lifted from the *Chronicles* – the meeting of Macbeth and Banquo with the Weird Sisters, the murder of the King Duncan, Macbeth's usurpation of the throne, and the ambitious egging on of Lady Macbeth, just to give a few examples.

But to serve his purposes, Shakespeare also borrowed incidents from other stories in the *Chronicles* and blended them *into* his story of Macbeth.

According to Holinshed, for example, Macbeth actually was responsible for the death of two Scottish kings, Duffe and Duncan. With respect to the murder of Duncan, Holinshed wrote only that Macbeth "*slew the king at Inverness*", usurping the throne, but provides no specific details at all.

Yet Shakespeare's unfolding of the regicide of Duncan is a lengthy one, and includes such details as: Duncan staying overnight at Macbeth's castle; Lady Macbeth's urging Macbeth to kill Duncan; Macbeth slaying the king at night in his sleep, and his concomitant hesitation and regret; and Macbeth's killing of the chamberlains who were supposed to protect the king as he slept, in order to direct suspicion of guilt onto them.

Did Shakespeare make all of this up? Not at all! Instead, these details were part of Holinshed's recounting the story of Macbeth's arranging the death of King Duffe, which occurred *prior* to that of Duncan.

Shakespeare took all of these incidents relating to the first regicide – that of Duffe – and blended them into his story of the second – that of Duncan. King Duffe is mentioned not at all in *Macbeth*. This approach seems to reflect Shakespeare's recognition, as an experienced playwright, that the dramatic effect of *Macbeth* would be sharpened by combining the two stories into a single one, a decision tactically achieved by incorporating the details of King Duffe's murder into that of Duncan.

(2) The Character Level: Macbeth's wavering ambition, mixed with cowardice and guilt; Lady Macbeth's all-consuming desire to be Queen of Scotland; and the fantastic and ambiguous natures of the Witches; all of these were described by Holinshed and adopted by Shakespeare in *Macbeth*.

Shakespeare also included many of the minor characters from the *Chronicles*: Sueno the Norwegian king, Duncan's sons Malcolm and Donalbain, Macduff, King Edward the Confessor of England, and "old Siward", the Earl of Northumberland, all of whom played similar roles in the play as in the histories.

(3) The Individual Line Level. Countless individual lines from the play find clear counterparts in Holinshed; to take two examples:

a. At the conclusion of the meeting between the Witches and Macbeth and Banquo, Holinshed writes, "*Herewith the foresaid women vanished immediate out of their sight.*"

At the same point in the play, a stage direction states simply, "*Witches vanish.*" Banquo immediately asks, "*Wither are they vanished?*" Macbeth responds, "*Into the air.*"

b. After Macbeth killed King Duffe in the *Chronicles*, many disturbing natural phenomena were observed; amongst them was this very specific incident: "*There was a sparrowhawk also strangled by an owl.*"

Shakespeare adapted this sentence into his own description of the inversions of nature that occurred after the slaying of Duncan, but with his own typically lyrical touch:

*A falcon towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.*

(4) The Individual Word Level. In numerous places, Shakespeare, perhaps finding certain distinct words and phrases appealing, simply borrowed and reused them in the play. A pair of examples will suffice:

a. In Holinshed, Malcolm claims, "*such immoderate lust and voluptuous sensuality...followeth me, that if I were made king of Scots, I should seek to deflower your maids and matrons...*"

In the play, Malcolm says,

*But there's no bottom, none
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust...*

b. In the *Chronicles*, we are told that "*Makbeth had in every nobles man's house one sly fellow or other in fee with him...*"

In the play, Macbeth admits,

*There's not a one of them but in his **house**
I keep a servant **fee'd**.*

C. The Connections Between King James I and Macbeth.

Queen Elizabeth I of England famously never married, and never appointed a successor, leading to decades of frustration and uncertainty throughout her reign. But when she finally died on March 24, 1603, at the advanced age of 69, her advisors had already decided who the next monarch would be: messages were sent by fast post to Elizabeth's kinsman **King James VI of Scotland**, who was proclaimed **James I of England**, before any other possible claimant to the throne could be put forward.

William Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* in 1606, and it is thought the play may have been performed for James I soon thereafter. There are a number of interesting connections between the play and England's newest monarch, links which may have helped persuade Shakespeare to turn the story of Scotland's King Macbeth into a play that would flatter the new king:

1. James was fascinated by **witchcraft**. In fact, in 1597, James, a prolific writer, wrote a book on the black arts, entitled *Daemonologie*, in which he promoted witch-hunting. Shakespeare may very well have calculated that the inclusion of Holinshed's "Weird Sisters", whom he (Shakespeare) decided to call "Witches", would delight James.

2. In 1605, a group of disaffected Catholics came very close to carrying out their conspiracy to blow up Parliament and kill James I – the notorious **Gunpowder Plot**. *Macbeth* thus is viewed by many as a lesson to be taught, one which warns England's citizens of the dangerous path taken by those who choose to try to usurp the crown.

3. The Stuart line of Scottish monarchs (of whom James was the latest) was said to be descended from Banquo, an 11th century Scottish noble. In *Macbeth's* Act III, Scene vi, the Witches raise a series of eight spirits, representing James' lineal royal ancestors, traced back to Banquo. This is the clearest example of Shakespeare intending to flatter his master in this play.

D. What did the Elizabethans Believe About Witches?

When James I became King of England in 1603, his interest in witchcraft did not *create* a fear of witches amongst the typical Englishman and woman, but only added fuel to intensify the horror and loathing that already existed. The habit of blaming others – typically poor women – for one's own problems by accusing them of being witches already had a long pedigree in merry old England before James I arrived from Scotland.

A lengthy work published in 1604, Reginald Scot's *The Discovery of Witches*, helpfully summarizes the many skills and abilities witches possessed and used to harm their enemies. The following excerpts are from section 1.4 of this oft-quoted book; according to Scot, witches:

1. *"usually devour and eat young children and infants of their own kind;*
2. *"can raise and suppress lightning and thunder, rain and hail, clouds and winds, tempests and earthquakes;*
3. *"[can] procure barrenness in man, woman, and beast;*
4. *"throw children into waters, as they walk with their mothers, and not be seen;*

5. "can make horses kick, till they cast the riders;
6. "can pass from place to place in the air invisible;
7. "can pull down the moon and the stars;
8. "fly in the air, and dance with devils;
9. "can keep devils and spirits in the likeness of toads and cats;
10. "can raise spirits...dry up springs, turn the course of running waters, inhibit the sun, and stay (ie. stop) both day and night, changing the one into the other; and
11. "can...sail in an egg shell, a cockle or muscle shell. "

E. Lineation of Macbeth in the Folio

The lineation of *Macbeth* in the 1623 Folio – the division of the speeches into lines – is generally unreliable, and even problematic: a great many of the lines simply cannot be read iambically – that is, the meter is often clearly broken, and there is no obvious way to repair it. Additionally, there are what appear to be too many short lines and too many long ones. To what degree these "errors" represent Shakespeare's original work, or are errors that can be traced to the inaccuracy of the play's typesetter, or compositor, is impossible to determine.

On the other hand, there are a handful of cases in which large portions of speeches can easily be relineated, producing continuous lines of smooth iambic pentameter.

For this edition of *Macbeth*, then, we have decided to reproduce the lineation as it appears in the Folio, except in those cases where relineation materially improves the scansion (specifically, the iambic pentameter of successive lines). Furthermore, retained faulty lines will pass without comment: this is unlike our usual procedure, in which possible errors in line length or meter are identified in the annotations. To do the same with *Macbeth* would serve only to overly-clutter the annotations.

F. Scene Breaks, Settings, and Stage Directions.

Our edition of *Macbeth* is a faithful reproduction of the play as it appeared in the 1623 Folio, but with the spelling generally modernized. In other words, as is usual for all the plays found on our website, we lean towards adhering to the wording of the original text as much as possible.

In the rare cases in which words or syllables have been added to the original text to clarify the sense or repair the meter, the supplemental material is surrounded by hard brackets []. These generally represent widely accepted alterations to the text. A director who wishes to remain truer to the original text may of course omit any of the supplementary wording.

The Folio divides *Macbeth* into numbered Acts and Scenes; this edition follows these divisions faithfully, as generally all versions you will find of the play do. The only exception is the division of the play's very last scene, Scene vii, into two scenes (Scenes vii and viii), as is frequently done.

Stage directions in Elizabethan-era published plays are often minimal in quantity and confusing in quality. Hence, it is generally thought acceptable to healthily supplement a play's stage directions to give clarity to the action. As such, we adopt many of the stage directions of the *Yale Shakespeare* edition of *Macbeth*.

G. Rhyming Couplets in *Macbeth*

Rhyming couplets were frequently used in Elizabethan Drama to signal the end of a scene; a character might also end a speech with a rhyming couplet to signal the end of his or part in a scene, followed by the character's exiting the stage.

In some cases, a scene or speech might end with two or more rhyming couplets.

Finally, a rhyming couplet appearing at the conclusion of a scene was often used to express a sententious bit of wisdom, an aphoristic sounding comment.

Macbeth contains a large number of scenes – 28 to be exact – and many of them end with rhyming couplets. While the notes point out many of the rhyming couplets, you may wish to note them as you read through the play.

MACBETH

by William Shakespeare

Written c. 1606

Earliest Extant Edition: 1623

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*An Open Place.
Thunder and Lightning.*

Enter three Witches.

The Setting: the opening scene in *Macbeth* sets the play's ominous and creepy tone, taking place in an unspecified outdoor location amidst some atmospheric violence.

Entering Characters: the three *Witches* are supernatural beings with extraordinary powers: they prophesize, summon apparitions, control the weather, and brew charms and potions.

Commentators have suggested the Witches should enter the stage in a manner that emphasizes their eerie other-worldliness, e.g., by gliding in, or appearing out of a mist or storm cloud.^{4,8}

Note that the Witches speak in short rhyming lines of mostly seven-syllable lines, which sometimes begin with a stressed, and sometimes unstressed, syllable.

1: Interestingly, Shakespeare begins the play at the end of the Witches meeting.³

4-5: the 2nd Witch alludes to a battle presently being fought in northern Scotland, the setting of Scene ii. The Witches will meet again at the conclusion of the fighting.

hurly-burly's = *hurly-burly* is strife or commotion.¹

= before.

= tract of wasteland.¹

13: the purpose of the next Witches' next gathering will be to meet with Macbeth.

15-19 (below): the Witches are summoned by their attendant spirits, called "familiars".

= the 1st Witch's familiar has traditionally been assumed to take the form of a gray cat. Cats were commonly associated with witches: a 1566 pamphlet described an actual witch trial in which a defendant was accused of having a spirit-cat named *Sathan* (Satan).

Gray Malkin = appears in the Folio as shown, but is

1 *1st Witch.* When shall we three meet again?
2 In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

4 *2nd Witch.* When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

6 *3rd Witch.* That will be ere the set of sun.

8 *1st Witch.* Where the place?

10 *2nd Witch.* Upon the heath.

12 *3rd Witch.* There to meet with Macbeth.

14 *1st Witch.* I come, Gray Malkin!

16

2nd Witch.

Paddock calls.

18

3rd Witch.

Anon.

20

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

22

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

24

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT I, SCENE II.

A Camp near Forres.

Alarum within.

*Enter King Duncan, Malcolm,
Donalbain, Lennox, with Attendants,
meeting a bleeding Captain.*

usually printed as a single word *Graymalkin*; **malkin**, perhaps a diminutive of the name "Maud", was an old and contemptuous term for a lower class or servant woman, or a mop.¹ **Gray Malkin** may be derived from *Grimalkin*, the name of a cat appearing in a c. 1570 novel entitled *Beware the Cat*, by William Baldwin. Beginning in about 1602, *Grimalkin* appeared frequently in English literature for the name of a cat.

= old term for a toad;¹ Reginald Scot's 1584 work, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, observed that witches "*can keep devils and spirits in the likeness of toads and cats.*"

= "at once", ie. "coming!"¹ The 3rd Witch responds to the summons of her own familiar, without identifying it by name.

21: the line emphasizes the blurring, and even inversion, of clear moral categories in the Witches' worldview: what appears good and beautiful – including good weather and good deeds – may be evil and ugly, and vice versa.³

The expression "*fair and foul*" was a common one, e.g., "*of weather faire and fowle*" (1570).

= thick, murky.^{1,6}

24: Waith posits the Witches may disappear through the stage's trapdoor, from which a stage-mist may arise, engulfing the Witches.⁴

Lines 17-24 (above): the Folio prints all of these lines as a single speech, spoken by "All" the Witches. Until the late 19th century, it had become traditional to give the 2nd Witch the line "*Paddock calls...anon.*" Since then, "*Anon*" has typically been carved out for the 3rd Witch to speak, as shown.

The Setting: *Forres* is a Scottish town, located 160 miles north of Edinburgh.¹⁰

A great battle has been taking place: the Scottish army, led by the nobles Macbeth and Banquo, had to first put down a rebellion, then immediately afterward repel an invading Norwegian army.

= a trumpet call from offstage.

Entering Characters: *King Duncan* seems to be a genial monarch, though Stevenson suggests he is weak, as evidenced by his failure to lead his own army into battle.⁵ The king is accompanied by his sons *Malcolm* and *Donalbain*, and by *Lennox*, a Scottish noble.

The royal party meets a wounded officer (a *Captain*), who reports on the battles, and highlights Macbeth's heroic actions which led the army to victory.

Duncan has been king since 1034, when he succeeded his grandfather Malcolm II, who was murdered at Glamis.

1 **Duncan.** What bloody man is that? he can report,
2 As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.

4 **Malc.** This is the sergeant,
6 Who like a good and hardy soldier, fought
'Gainst my captivity: – Hail, brave friend!

8 Say to the king the knowledge of the broil,
As thou didst leave it.

12 **Capt.** Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together,
And choke their art: the merciless Macdonwald

14 (Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villainies of nature

16 Do swarm upon him) from the Western Isles
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;

Though portrayed as an older man in *Macbeth*, Duncan was in reality only about 33 years old when he was crowned.

Captain = a term usually used to describe a military commander; however, Malcolm's use of **sergeant** to describe the man (line 5) suggests he is a non-commissioned officer.⁶

1-3: **he can...newest state** = "judging by his wounded condition (**his plight**), this man should be able to tell us the latest development (**newest state**) of the revolt."

plight = unfortunate condition.¹

state = circumstances.²

= pronounced as a tri-syllable.

6: **hardy** = bold, valiant.^{2,3}

6-7: **fought...captivity** = Malcolm was saved from capture by the enemy, thanks to the efforts of the Captain.

8: ie. "tell the king what you know about the battle (**broil**)".²

knowledge = information, that which is known.^{1,6}

9: "at the moment you left it."

11-13 (below): Doubtful...art = the play's first simile describes the two armies fighting to an exhausted stalemate, neither side able to gain an advantage over the other, the outcome uncertain.

= like. = exhausted.⁵

13: **choke their art** = obstruct each other's ability to swim – ironically leading to the drowning death of each.⁸

choke = suffocate, smother.¹

art = skill (ie. of swimming).

Macdonwald = the rebel leader. Holinshed spelled the rebel's name *Macdowald*.

14-16: **Worthy...upon him** = Macdonwald is well-suited (**Worthy**) to be a rebel, seeing that nature has for that very purpose (**for to that**) instilled in him many evil and infamous qualities (**villainies**).^{1,2,5}

swarm upon (line 16) = beset, fill.¹

16-17: **from the...supplied** = Macdonwald's rebellion is reinforced (**supplied**)¹ by soldiers from Ireland and the Outer and Inner Hebrides (a set of islands lying off of Scotland's west coast), ie. the **Western Isles**.

Note how Shakespeare conflates the two distinct categories of soldiers who Holinshed identified as assisting Macdonwald in his rebellion: Holinshed mentions (1) "a great multitude of people" who came from "out of the Western Isles" (ie. the Hebrides), and (2) "no small number of kerns and galloglasses" who came "out of Ireland".

Two types of rebel soldiers are mentioned:

(1) **kerns** = lightly-armed foot-soldiers, usually Irish, but sometimes from the Scottish Highlands, each typically supplied with a sword, a wooden shield, and / or bow and arrows.^{1,3}

(2) **galloglasses** = usually emended to the correct term

gallowglasses, which were heavily armed infantry from Ireland, often wearing mail and wielding battle-axes.^{1,3} The form *gallowgrosses* seems only to appear in Shakespeare; since Holinshed wrote "*galloglasses*", the form appearing in the Folio may simply be an error.

18-19: personified *Fortune* is described as briefly seeming to favour the rebel cause (hence *smiling* on Macdonwald's cause, ie. *his damned quarrel*), before turning against him.

his damned quarrel = ie. Macdonwald's accursed cause or point of contention against the legitimate Scottish king.

smiling = in a common metaphor of the time, *Fortune* was frequently depicted as either smiling or frowning on her human victims.

Shewed like a rebel's whore = by temporarily favouring the rebel cause, Fortune acted like a prostitute – fickle, untrustworthy, and morally corrupt.

Shewed = ie. showed, the more-common variant.

but all's too weak = Fortune's brief show of favour was ultimately not enough to secure the rebels' victory.

There is a good argument to be made that this should be emended to "*but all too weak*": *all too weak* was a common expression used in the 16th century to describe someone or something lacking the strength to do something: e.g., a 1563 work describes a soldier who wanted "*to fight it out, but all too weak (alas) he was.*"

On the other hand, to say "all was too weak" or "all is too weak", as the clause suggests, really doesn't make much sense, and also had no precedent in contemporary literature.

Rather than *his damned quarrel*, the Folio actually prints "*his damned quarry*" (which is usually emended to the former): the emendation of *quarry* to *quarrel* is justified by the assumption that Shakespeare was adapting Holinshed's description of the revolt as "*that rebellious quarrel*", which occurs right in the middle of the same sentence in which Holinshed mentioned the *Western Isles* and the *kerns and galloglasses*.

[If *his damned quarry* is in fact correct, we might gloss it to mean "Fortune's accursed prey": line 18 might then be paraphrased, "And Fortune, toying with Macdonwald, his accursed prey..."

However, the use of *his* for *Fortune* would be highly unusual, since it was conventional to personify Fortune as female.]

= because. = daring, valiant, bold.² = reputation.⁷

21: *Disdaining Fortune* = showing contempt for Fortune, ie. Macbeth fought boldly, without concern or dependency on luck. Jowett, however, paraphrases, "unperturbed by the rebels' initial success" (p. 2507).⁷

with his brandished steel = wielding or flourishing his sword.¹

22: which steamed (*smoked*) with the hot blood of Macbeth's victims, the result of his inflicted slaughter or damage (*execution*).^{1,5}

18 And Fortune, on his damnèd quarrel smiling,
Shewed like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:

20 For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name),
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel,

22 Which smoked with bloody executiön

	(<u>Like Valour's minion</u>), <u>carvèd out his passage</u> ,	23: <i>like Valour's minion</i> = like the favourite son of personified Valour. <i>carved out his passage</i> = fought his way through a horde of rebels, creating a metaphoric path.
24	Till he faced the <u>slave</u> :	24: till he was finally face-to-face with the rebel leader Macdonwald himself. <i>slave</i> = a common term of contempt. ⁵
26	<u>Which</u> ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him, Till he <u>unseamed</u> him from the <u>nave</u> <u>toth'</u> <u>chops</u> ,	25-26: humorously, Macbeth did not bother to exchange pleasantries with Macdonwald until after he killed him, by tearing him open with a vicious vertical slash. <i>Which</i> = ie. who, meaning Macbeth. ^{5,8} <i>unseamed</i> = ripped open. ¹ <i>nave</i> = navel, ¹ ie. belly. <i>toth'</i> = ie. to the; see the note at Act II.iii.109 below. <i>chops</i> = jaws. ¹ Line 26: it has been pointed out that Shakespeare likely borrowed this image from Christopher Marlowe's play <i>Dido</i> (written c. 1585), in which Aeneas says, " <i>then from the navel to the throat at once, he ripped old Priam.</i> " ^{3,8}
	And fixed his head upon our <u>battlements</u> .	27: warriors frequently cut off the heads of their slain enemies and displayed them in a high place to show (1) they have won the battle, and (2) the leaders of the enemy have been eliminated, so as to demoralize the remaining foes and encourage them to give up. <i>battlements</i> = parapets, defensive walls on a fortification. ¹
28	Duncan. O valiant <u>cousin</u> ! <u>worthy</u> gentleman!	29: <i>cousin</i> = according to Holinshed, Macbeth and King Duncan were first cousins. <i>worthy</i> = noble. ³
30		31-39 (below): a lengthy and complex double-metaphor, illustrating how both the weather and the fortunes of battle can turn in an instant: Just as the sun – the source of comfort and light – rises from the east, so can the east be the direction from which dangerous thunderstorms arise (lines 31-32); similarly, beneficial and malevolent phenomena can come from the same metaphoric source, or <i>spring</i> (33-34, <i>So from...swells</i>): just when the Scottish army had completed the defeat of the rebels (35-36) – a joyful result – a separate Norwegian army, its commander sensing that the Scots were vulnerable, attacked (37-39). ^{3,4,5,6}
	Capt. As <u>whence</u> the sun ' <u>gins</u> <u>his</u> <u>reflectiön</u> ,	31: "Just as from where (<i>whence</i>) the sun begins (<i>'gins</i>) its (<i>his</i>) radiant glare (<i>reflection</i>)". According to the OED, Crystal, and others, <i>reflection</i> here properly means "turning back" or "return"; but numerous citations from the turn of the 17th century make it abundantly clear that in this period, <i>reflection</i> was used in this context to mean, very simply, "intense shining": One example, from 1596, will suffice: " <i>the next morning, as soon as the sun was risen, and that the reflection of the sun beams did beat upon the tents and eyes of the barbarians.</i> "

32	<u>Shipwracking storms</u>, and <u>direful thunders</u> [<u>break</u>], So from that <u>spring</u> whence <u>comfort</u> seemed to come,	32: <i>Shipwracking storms</i> = storms that cause shipwrecks. <i>direful thunders</i> = dreadful claps of thunder. <i>break</i> = in the Folio, the line ends with <i>thunders</i>; <i>break</i>, a verb frequently used to describe the commencement of violent weather, is frequently added here.
34	Discomfort swells: <u>mark</u>, King of Scotland, mark:	33-34: <i>So from...swells</i> = so it is that from the same source (metaphorically, a <i>spring</i> from which water flows), both delight (<i>comfort</i>) and grief (<i>discomfort</i>) can emerge. The line ties together the imagery of the sudden and unexpected reversal of fortune in both weather and war. <i>swells</i> (line 34) = there is some wordplay here: while the primary meaning of <i>swells</i> is "arises" or "grows", <i>swells</i> also was used to specifically describe a body of water overflowing or rising above its usual level; by applying <i>swells</i> to the <i>spring</i> of line 33, we are provided with a neat conclusion to this sentence's multiple liquidity metaphors.¹
36	No sooner <u>Justice</u> had, with <u>valour</u> armed, <u>Compelled</u> these <u>skipping kerns</u> to <u>trust their heels</u>,	= observe. 35-36: figuratively, "just as the Scots sent the rebels running". <i>Justice</i>, personified as a warrior wearing the armour of boldness and military prowess (<i>valour</i>), represents the moral righteousness of the legitimate Scottish king and his administration. Line 36: forced (<i>Compelled</i>) the rebel soldiers to retreat in haste; Here, <i>kerns</i> (see line 17 above) stands for the entire rebel force. <i>skipping</i> = moving quickly and lightly, or absconding;^{1,7} used as a term of disdain.³ <i>trust their heels</i> = run away; the <i>heels</i>, explains the OED, were imagined as the last part of a fleeing person visible to an observer, hence they were frequently used in expressions of flight; the expression to <i>trust [to] one's heels</i> was common.
38	But the <u>Norweyan lord</u>, <u>surveying vantage</u>, With <u>furberished arms</u>, and <u>new supplies of men</u>, Began a fresh assault.	37-39: but the Norwegian King Sweno (<i>Norweyan lord</i>), seeing an opportunity, at this moment attacked the Scottish army. <i>surveying vantage</i> = perceiving an advantage:¹ the Norwegians attacked the Scots, knowing the latter must have been exhausted and disorganized after a difficult contest with the rebels. <i>furberished arms</i> = polished weapons, ie. swords of steel; hence suggesting the Norwegians were well-prepared for battle. <i>new supplies of men</i> = fresh reinforcements; <i>new supply of men</i> was a common expression.
40	Duncan. Dismayed not this our <u>captains</u>, Macbeth and Banquo?	= commanders.
42	Capt. Yes, as <u>sparrows</u> <u>eagles</u>;	43-44: "yes, just as <i>sparrows</i> dismay <i>eagles</i>, and a <i>hare</i> dismays a <i>lion</i>:" that is, not at all: ironic and humorous.
44	Or the <u>hare</u>, the <u>lion</u>.	= speak truthfully. = ie. Macbeth and Banquo.
46	If I <u>say sooth</u>, I must report <u>they</u> were <u>As</u> cannons <u>overcharged</u> with double <u>cracks</u>,	46-47: the Captain compares the ferocious and effective

	So they <u>doubly redoubled</u> strokes upon the foe:	fighting of Macbeth and Banquo to cannons double-charged with extra ammunition (overcharged), delivering a much more devastating fire. As = like. cracks = charges, projectiles, or reports. ^{1,4,5} Line 47: literally, so Macbeth and Banquo struck against the enemy with four times the number of blows; an exaggeration emphasizing their extraordinary martial energy. doubly redoubled = unique expression, used only by Shakespeare, both here and in <i>Richard II</i> .
48	<u>Except</u> they meant to bathe in <u>reeking</u> wounds,	48-50 Except...tell = the Captain is at a loss as to explain why Macbeth and Banquo fought as fiercely as they did, unless (Except) they intended to bathe in the blood of the steaming (reeking) wounds of their victims, or else were determined create a battlefield as famous as Golgotha (Or memorize another Golgotha). ^{1,4}
50	<u>Or memorize another Golgotha</u> ,	memorize another Golgotha = create a scene of death as memorable as that of Golgotha.
	<u>I cannot tell</u> : – but I am faint,	memorize = literally, "memorialize". ¹ another Golgotha = a second field of the dead; Golgotha , also known as Calvary, was the field outside of Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified; Golgotha was often defined or interpreted to mean "the place of dead men's skulls" in contemporary literature. In <i>Richard II</i> , Shakespeare wrote, "this land be call'd / The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls."
		Golgotha = stressed on its initial syllable: GOL-go-tha. I cannot tell = the Captain cannot be sure what their purpose was. ³
	My gashes cry for help.	51: the Captain, though about to pass out, thinks to personify his wounds!
52	Duncan. So well thy words <u>become</u> thee, as thy wounds:	53: the Captain speaks as a soldier was expected to speak, with a combination of "bombast and homeliness" (Kittredge, p. 95). ³ become = befit, are appropriate for.
54	They <u>smack of</u> honour both: – Go get him surgeons.	= are strongly suggestive of, have the flavour of. ^{1,2}
56	[Exit Captain, attended.]	
58	Enter Ross and Angus.	Entering Characters: Ross and Angus are Scottish nobles. Note that Angus is completely ignored in this scene.
60	Who comes here?	= the Scottish thane was a rank approximately congruent to that of the English earl. ⁵
62	Malc. The worthy <u>Thane of Ross</u> .	64: Lennox notices the urgent look (the haste) ¹ reflected in Ross's eyes.
64	Lennox. What a <u>haste</u> looks through his eyes!	65: this is how someone who (that) is about to report (seems to speak) something unusual or disturbing ought to look.
	So should he look, <u>that seems to speak</u> things strange.	= from where.
66		
	Ross. God save the King!	
68		
	Duncan. <u>Whence</u> cam'st thou, worthy thane?	
70		

	Ross.	From <u>Fife</u> , great King,	= location of the battle against the Norwegians; Fife is a county on the east coast of Scotland, located adjacent to and north of the Firth of Forth. Fife is the home county of Macduff, another of the Scottish noblemen in our play (see Act II.iv.66).
72	Where the Norwegian banners <u>flout</u> the sky,		72: where the Norwegian flags or standards did wave. flout = mock; ¹ the image of the flags flapping insultingly in the breeze suggests the arrogance of the invaders.
	And fan our people cold.		73: this line has been interpreted in two completely contrasting ways: (1) the flags, waving before the battle, were, through their fanning action, causing the citizens to become chilled with fear or apprehension, ^{1,7,8} or, (2) the Norwegians having been defeated and their flags captured, the still-waving flags are imagined now to be cooling the Scottish soldiers, who have been "heated by the victorious battle" (Kittredge, p. 94). ^{3,8}
74	<u>Norway</u> himself, <u>with terrible numbers</u> ,		74-76: Ross, picking up the narrative of the fight where the Captain left off, narrates how King Sweno of Norway, arriving with a large army (with terrible numbers), launched an attack against the Scots, with the help of a treacherous nobleman, the Thane of Cawdor , whose personal name is not mentioned.
76	Assisted by that most disloyal traitor, The <u>Thane of Cawdor</u> , <u>began a dismal conflict</u> ,		Norway = ie. the king of Norway; it was common to refer to a monarch by the name of the land he or she ruled. terrible = formidable, fear-inducing. ^{1,6} began a dismal conflict = initiated an ill-boding battle; ^{1,6} the attack was dismal because it threatened disaster to the Scottish army. ³
	Till that <u>Bellona's bridegroom</u> , <u>lapped in proof</u> ,		77-81 (below) : briefly, till Macbeth almost single-handedly defeated the Norwegians. 77: Bellona's bridegroom = the husband of Bellona, the Roman goddess of war; Ross's conceit is that Macbeth's skill and tenacity as a warrior were so extraordinary, that Bellona herself willingly took him as her husband. ³ lapped in proof = clad in tested armour; ⁴ armour of proof , meaning proven or impenetrable armour, was a common expression.
78	Confronted him <u>with self-comparisons</u> ,		78: Macbeth met Sweno face-to-face as an equal, warrior against warrior. with self-comparisons = this unique expression has elicited numerous interpretations: (1) Macbeth proved to Sweno he was his equal; ⁴ (2) Macbeth countered every move Sweno made with a matching response; ³ and (3) Macbeth caused Sweno to compare himself to Macbeth. ⁵
	<u>Point against point</u> , <u>rebellious arm 'gainst arm</u> ,		79: point against point = matching the tip of his sword to that of the Norwegian king, ³ hence "sword against sword". rebellious arm 'gainst arm = traitorous force versus (loyal) force; while Sweno was not technically a rebel, he was assisting in rebellion, or at least opposing the

		legitimate monarch. ^{3,4}
80	<u>Curbing his lavish spirit</u> : and, to conclude, The victory fell on us.	= restraining or checking Sweno's impetuous or wild (<i>lavish</i>) courage and fire. ^{1,4,6}
82		
84	Duncan. Great <u>happiness</u> !	= fortune or success. ^{1,2}
	Ross. <u>That</u> now Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition:	85: That = ie. so that. craves composition = asks or begs for a truce or terms of peace. ^{1,3,4}
86	Nor would we <u>deign</u> him burial of his men	86-88: the Scots refused to permit the Norwegians to bury their dead until their king paid the Scots a large sum of money. deign = condescend to grant. Saint Colme's Inch = the island of <i>Inchcolm</i> in the Firth of Forth, also previously called <i>Colme's Inch</i> , or the Island of St. Columba, who was said to have visited the island. ¹⁰ The magnificent ruins of the abbey may be visited today. Inch = Celtic for "island". ⁵ dollars = dollar was a name used for any of various international units of money, including Scandinavian currencies, as well as the German thaler. ¹ to our general use = for the Scottish government or army to use as either sees fit. ³
88	Till he disbursed, at <u>Saint Colme's Inch</u> , Ten thousand <u>dollars</u> , <u>to our general use</u> .	
90	Duncan. No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive Our bosom interest: <u>go pronounce his present death</u> ,	90-91: No more...interest = "never again shall the Thane of Cawdor betray (1) the matters closest to my heart (<i>bosom</i>)," ie. "my trust in my most important concerns;" or, (2) my intimate affection" ^{3,4,8} Our (line 91) = Duncan, as king, employs the royal "we". = Duncan orders the immediate (present) execution of Cawdor. pronounce = announce, declare. ^{1,2}
92	And with his former title greet Macbeth.	92: Duncan gives Macbeth the title of Thane of Cawdor. There is great irony that Duncan is transferring the title from a man he learned he could not trust to one who he <i>should</i> not trust.
94	Ross. I'll see it done.	
96	Duncan. <u>What he hath lost</u> , noble Macbeth hath won.	= ie. what the Thane of Cawdor has lost – his title.
98	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	<u>ACT I, SCENE III.</u>	
	<i>A heath.</i> <i>Thunder.</i>	The Setting: a large tract of wasteland (<i>heath</i>) ¹ near Forres; at Act I.i.11 above, the 2nd Witch had advised that the Witches would next meet on the heath, where they would encounter Macbeth.
	<i>Enter the three Witches.</i>	
1	1st Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?	
2	2nd Witch. Killing swine.	3: there appears to have been a belief that witches would

4		frequently express their displeasure with a person by killing his or her farm animals, such as their cattle and pigs; a 1579 work describes a woman, accused of witchcraft, of killing 20 hogs of a farmer who she felt had mistreated her. ¹¹
	3rd Witch. Sister, where thou?	
6		
8	1st Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap, And <u>mounched</u> , and mounched, and mounched. "Give me," <u>quothe</u> I.	8: mounched = munched, a common alternate form. ¹ quothe = spoke, said.
	" <u>Aroynt thee, witch!</u> " the <u>rump-fed ronyon</u> cries.	9: Aroynt thee, witch = "begone, witch!" The etymology of aroynt (modern spelling, <i>aroint</i>) is unknown. ¹ Shakespeare used this same expression in <i>King Lear</i> in an identical line, " <i>And aroynt thee, witch, aroynt thee!</i> " rump-fed = literally, a consumer of the upper hind-quarters of an animal (the rump), hence meaning "fat" or "fat-rumped". ^{1,3,4} ronyon = term of abuse for a woman (modern spelling, <i>runnion</i>); another word of unknown origin. ¹ In <i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> , Ford beats Falstaff, exclaiming in part, " <i>Out of my door, you witch, ... you runyon! out, out!</i> " Shakespeare seems to be the originator of both " <i>aroint</i> " and " <i>runnion</i> ".
10	Her husband's to <u>Aleppo</u> gone, <u>master</u> o' th' <u>Tiger</u> :	10: the woman's husband was the captain (master) of a ship, named the <i>Tiger</i> , that was bound for Aleppo. Aleppo = a major trading city of Syria, but located 70 miles inland from the Mediterranean; the Witch likely means the ship was a trading vessel, bound for the port of Iskenderun on the shore, through which merchants from Aleppo did great trade with the west in Shakespeare's time. ¹⁰ Tiger = also used by Shakespeare as the name of a ship in <i>Twelfth Night</i> .
	But in a <u>sieve</u> I'll <u>thither</u> sail,	Line 11ff (below): the Witches return to speaking in mostly pairs of rhyming lines of 7-syllables each, the lines alternating between stressed and unstressed syllables, the first syllable usually the stressed one.
12	And like a <u>rat without a tail</u> , <u>I'll do</u> , I'll do, and I'll do.	11: there are many references to the belief that witches could sail in a sieve in contemporary literature. ^{1,11} thither = ie. to Aleppo. 12-13: ie. the Witch will assume the form of a rat , and get her revenge on the woman by harming her husband; specifically, as described in the following lines, she will torment him at sea with destructive winds and deprive him of sleep for a lengthy period of time. without a tail = Thiselton-Dyer tells us that when a witch took the shape of an animal, one way to identify it as a witch was by the absence of a tail. ¹¹ I'll do = ie. "I will harm the sailor". ⁷ An early commentator had an entirely different take on these lines: viz., the Witch uses a metaphor of a tailless rat to indicate that she intends to destroy the rudder of the sailor's ship, so that it will drift aimlessly for almost two years (as described in the succeeding lines). A rat's tail acts as a rudder when it swims. ⁸

14	2nd Witch. I'll give thee a wind.	15ff: witches were thought to be able to create storms and raise winds. ¹¹
16	1st Witch. <u>Th'art</u> kind.	= thou art, ie. "you are".
18	3rd Witch. And I another.	
20		
	1st Witch. I myself <u>have all the other</u> ,	21-24 (below): the 1st Witch controls all the other winds (line 21), including those that blow ships into any port (22), and all the directions those winds can blow (23-24). = ie. control all the other winds. ⁵
22	And the very ports they blow,	22: a cryptic line which seems to suggest the 1st Witch controls the ports, but she is clearly speaking of her control over the winds.
24	All the <u>quarters</u> that they know I' th' shipman's <u>card</u> .	23-24: every compass direction (each quarter) from which the wind can blow and that can be found on a sailor's compass-card (card). ^{1,2} card = an early compass: specifically, a stiff sheet of paper marked with the 32 main compass directions, with an attached magnetized needle that could spin freely so as to always point north. ¹
	I'll drain him <u>dry as hay</u> :	25: literally, the Witch plans to withdraw or suck out all of the moisture from the sailor – but what does this mean? Multiple interpretations have been proposed: (1) the most plausible interpretation may simply be, "I will cause him to waste away", through the deprivation and affliction described in the succeeding lines. A parallel comes from Shakespeare's Sonnet 63, in which the speaker imagines the future aging of his beloved: " <i>When hours have drain'd his blood and fill'd his brow / With lines and wrinkles</i> ": there, blood represents vitality and youthfulness, and as one ages, life-force is gradually drained. Likewise, dry as hay suggests the loss of strength and vital energy. Other interpretations include: (2) Kittredge suggests the Witch will keep the sailor's ship at sea long enough until it runs out of fresh water and he is driven mad with thirst. (3) Stevenson paraphrases, I'll "drain the blood from the sailor's body," without explaining what he means. Taken literally, however, draining the blood from the body would immediately kill him, which is not the Witch's intent. We may note that Shakespeare used expressions like " <i>did drain / The purple sap</i> " (<i>Richard III</i>) and " <i>drain the life-blood</i> " (<i>Henry VI, Part III</i>) to describe outright murder.
26	<u>Sleep</u> shall neither night nor day Hang upon <u>his pent-house lid</u> :	26-27: figuratively, he shall get no sleep (a noun here). Sleep is personified as never attaching itself to the sailor's eyelids (his pent-house lid). pent-house lid = literally, the sloping roof of a smaller building projecting from a larger one; ¹ the eyelid is imagined here to slope over the eye like such a roof. ⁵

28	He shall live <u>a man forbid</u> :	28: the line has been interpreted to mean that the sailor shall be like a man living under a curse (<i>a man forbid</i>). ^{1,4}
	<u>Weary sev'-nights</u> , nine times nine,	29: literally, "for 567 dispiriting days and nights"; that is, the Witch plans to torment the sailor for nearly two years, ie. a very long time (7 x 9 x 9 = 567 nights). <i>Weary</i> = tiresome, drawn-out, ie. wearisome. ^{1,2} <i>sev'-nights</i> = ie. seven-nights, ie. a week: <i>seven-night</i> was often written as <i>sennight</i> , rather than as a full compound word. ¹
30	Shall he <u>dwindle</u> , <u>peak</u> , and <u>pine</u> :	30: <i>dwindle</i> and <i>peak</i> both mean "decline" or "waste away"; <i>pine</i> suggests "suffer". ¹
	Though his <u>bark</u> cannot be <u>lost</u> ,	31: for some supernatural reason, the Witch is not permitted to allow the sailor's ship to be actually sunk (her powers are thus not absolute). <i>bark</i> = usually a small ship; the OED speculates that it might also refer to a two- or three-masted ship used in the Mediterranean (across which the woman's husband would sail to reach Aleppo). <i>lost</i> = ie. lost at sea.
32	Yet it shall be tempest-tossed. –	
	Look what I have.	
34		
36	2nd Witch. <u>Shew</u> me, shew me.	= ie. show.
38	1st Witch. Here I have a <u>pilot's thumb</u> , <u>Wracked</u> , as homeward he did come.	37-38: the Witch has in her possession the <i>thumb</i> of a ship's navigator (<i>pilot</i>), who had undergone suffering while guiding his ship to its home-port. <i>thumb</i> = Kittredge explains, "fragments of dead bodies were used in evil magic, and were thought to be especially powerful if the person had died a violent death" (p. 98). ³ <i>Wracked</i> = could mean "shipwrecked" or "ruined", ¹ ie. it is unclear whether the pilot perished when his ship was lost, or if his thumb had been damaged by a shipwreck or some other violent means.
40		[<i>Drum within.</i>] = ie. heard from offstage.
42	3rd Witch. A drum, a drum!	
44	Macbeth doth come.	
		Line 45 (below) and elsewhere: in the Folio, the three Witches are described as either " <i>the weyard sisters</i> " or " <i>the weyward sisters</i> "; editors almost always emend these to " <i>The Weird Sisters</i> ", the name or description by which the Witches are generally known today. This raises two questions: (1) How can editors make this seemingly presumptuous change? The answer lies in Shakespeare's source for the story of <i>Macbeth</i> , Raphael Holinshed's <i>The firste volume of the chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande</i> of 1577, usually referred to simply as the <i>Chronicles</i> . In the <i>Chronicles</i> , Holinshed actually described the sisters not as witches, but as " <i>three women in strange and wild apparel</i> "; Holinshed explains, " <i>that these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the</i>

		goddesses of destiny, or else some nymphs or fairies."
		Since Holinshed called the women " weird ", it would be natural to assume that this was the word used by Shakespeare in <i>Macbeth</i> ; this makes sense, since in Shakespeare's day, the word <i>weird</i> meant "having the power to control the fate of human beings". ¹
		Holinshed confirms this by explaining that if the sisters are in fact <i>weird</i> , he means that they are the three Fates of mythology – the three sister goddesses who determined the path and lifespan of all human beings.
		Etymologically, this also makes perfect sense, as the word <i>weird</i> (in its earliest Old English form <i>wyrd</i>) originally meant "fate" or "destiny". ¹
		(2) How did Shakespeare's "Weird" come to appear in the Folio as <i>weyard</i> (a non-existent word) and <i>weyward</i> – a variant spelling of <i>wayward</i> (the wrong word)?
		The answer probably lies in the method by which books were typeset in the 17th century: the compositor (the man who set the type) did not work directly by looking at, and then copying, an original text; rather, the text was read, or dictated, to him. Thus, it is easy to see how – if the compositor is not familiar with the word <i>weird</i> – he might understand the dictator to have said <i>wayword</i> (a real word, meaning "refractory" or "perverse") or <i>weyard</i> instead, especially if the reader pronounced the word in two syllables.
	All. <u>The weyward sisters</u> , hand in hand,	= ie. the Weird Sisters, or the three Witches. Shakespeare never makes the exact nature of the mysterious sisters explicitly clear. ^{3,4}
46	<u>Posters</u> of the sea and land,	= a <i>poster</i> was one who traveled swiftly, like one who delivers dispatches. ¹
	Thus do go, about, about,	47: the Witches dance in a circle.
48	Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,	48: circling three times in one direction, then the other; or, the Witches "make obeisances", or bows, "to their familiars" (Waith, p. 1152). ⁴
	And thrice again, to <u>make up nine</u> . –	= ie. totaling nine times around.
50	<u>Peace</u> , the charm's <u>wound up</u> .	= silence! = completed.
52	<i>Enter Macbeth and Banquo.</i>	Entering Characters: <i>Macbeth</i> and <i>Banquo</i> are returning from the day's battle to join the king at Forres, when they stumble upon the Witches in the heath.
54	<i>Macbeth.</i> So foul and fair a day I have not seen.	54: perhaps meaning, the weather is foul, though the day itself is splendid due to the Scots' great victory in battle. ^{3,5} Macbeth's observation recalls the Witches' chant from Act I.i.21, " <i>Fair is foul, and foul is fair</i> ".
56	<i>Banquo.</i> <u>How far is't called to Forres?</u> – <u>What</u> are these,	56: <i>How far is't called to Forres</i> = ie. "how far is it to Forres?" The exact meaning of this odd and unique phrasing is obscure. Jowett suggests the meaning of <i>called</i> to be "said to be". ⁷ Note the wordplay of " <i>far is</i> " and " <i>Forres</i> ". <i>Forres</i> = the Folio prints <i>Soris</i> , which is certainly a compositor's error, since Holinshed places the king at " <i>Fores</i> ", ie. Forres.

	So withered, and so <u>wild in their attire</u> ,	<i>What</i> = ie. who. = strange or fantastic in the way they are dressed; the idea was taken straight from Holinshed: " <i>three women in strange and wild apparel</i> ."
58	That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' earth,	
60	And yet are on't? – Live you, or are you <u>aught</u> That man may question? – You seem to understand me,	59-60: <i>Live you...question</i> = "are you truly living creatures? and is it possible to ask you questions?" ³ The Witches respond with the common gesture for "silence". <i>aught</i> = anything, ie. anyone or someone. ¹
	By each at once her <u>choppy</u> finger laying	= filled with clefts, ie. chapped, cracked and rough; ^{4,5} sometimes emended to <i>chappy</i> .
62	Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,	
64	And yet your <u>beards</u> forbid me to interpret That you are so.	62-64: <i>you should...are so</i> = judging by their general appearance, the Witches seem to Banquo to be women, but the fact that they have <i>beards</i> prevents him from confidently concluding that they are. The spectral and ambiguous appearance of the witches confuses Banquo. The presence of a beard on a woman was thought to be one way to distinguish a witch. ¹¹ In <i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> , Sir Evan Hughes says of the cross-dressing Falstaff, " <i>I think the 'oman is a witch indeed: I like not when a 'oman has a great peard</i> (ie. beard); <i>I spy a great peard under his muffler</i> ."
66	Macbeth. Speak, if you can: <u>what</u> are you?	= who. The Witches will initially address only Macbeth.
68	1st Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!	68: Macbeth's current title is Thane of Glamis . Holinshed tells us that Macbeth inherited the title upon the death of his father Sinel.
70	2nd Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!	69: Thane of Cawdor was the title of the unnamed rebel who assisted the Norwegian attack on the Scots; Macbeth has not yet learned that King Duncan has granted him the rebel's title. Holinshed informs us that the king gave the rebel's " <i>lands, livings</i> (ie. income), <i>and offices</i> " to Macbeth.
72	3rd Witch. All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter!	
74	Banquo. Good sir, why do you <u>start</u> , and seem to fear Things that do sound so fair? – I' th' name of truth,	74-75: <i>why do...fair</i> = Banquo wonders why Macbeth, startled by the Witch's prophecy, seems unsettled rather than pleased by what she has foretold. <i>start</i> = involuntarily jump or otherwise physically react.
76	Are ye <u>fantastical</u> , or that indeed	76: <i>ye</i> = plural form for "you". <i>fantastical</i> = imaginary. ⁴ 76-77: <i>or that...shew</i> = "or are you indeed what you seem by your appearance to be?"
78	Which outwardly ye shew? My noble partner You greet with <u>present grace</u> , and great prediction Of <u>noble having</u> , and of <u>royal hope</u> ,	77-79: <i>My noble...hope</i> = "you have successively greeted Macbeth (1) by his current title (<i>present grace</i>), (2) with a prediction that he will acquire another noble title (<i>noble having</i>), and (3) with the prospect of gaining the crown (<i>royal hope</i>)". ² <i>having</i> = fortune or estate. ²

80	That he seems <u>rapt withal</u> : to me you speak not.	= ie. so that he has become transported with emotion, ie. in a trance. <i>withal</i> = by it, ie. by the thoughts the Witches have put in his mind. ⁵
82	If you can look into <u>the seeds of time</u> , And say, which <u>grain</u> will <u>grow</u> , and which will not,	81-82: metaphorically, "if you can foresee the future (<i>seeds of time</i>)". Banquo employs an agricultural metaphor for the potential events of the future: those <i>grains</i> that <i>grow</i> represent outcomes that will in fact come to pass; <i>seeds</i> that fail to sprout, on the other hand, represent those that will not.
84	Speak then to me, who neither <u>beg</u> nor <u>fear</u> Your <u>favours</u> , nor your <u>hate</u> .	83-84: <i>who neither...hate</i> = Banquo neither seeks the Witches' regard or favour, nor does he fear their displeasure. Note the tight parallel structure of the clause: he does not <i>beg</i> their <i>favours</i> , nor <i>fear</i> their <i>hate</i> .
86	<i>1st Witch.</i> Hail!	86-90: the Witches now speak to Banquo.
88	<i>2nd Witch.</i> Hail!	
90	<i>3rd Witch.</i> Hail!	
92	<i>1st Witch.</i> Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.	92-94: the Witches' predictions are deliberately ambiguous and mysterious.
94	<i>2nd Witch.</i> Not so <u>happy</u> , yet much <u>happier</u> .	= fortunate. = more fortunate.
96	<i>3rd Witch.</i> Thou shalt <u>get</u> kings, though thou be none:	= ie. beget; Banquo is the mythical ancestor of the Stuart kings. ³
98	So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!	
100	<i>1st Witch.</i> Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!	
	<i>Macbeth.</i> <u>Stay</u> , you <u>imperfect speakers</u> , tell me more:	101: Macbeth asks for clarification of the prophecies. <i>Stay</i> = stop, hold on. <i>imperfect speakers</i> = <i>imperfect</i> because their speeches are unclear or equivocal. ¹
102	<u>By</u> <u>Sinel's</u> death, I know I am Thane of Glamis;	102: <i>By</i> = as a result of. <i>Sinel's</i> = Sinel was Macbeth's father; see the note at line 68 above.
	But how of Cawdor? <u>the Thane of Cawdor lives</u> ,	= Macbeth has no idea that Cawdor had been assisting the Norwegians; that the king has ordered his execution; or that the rebel's title has been given to him.
104	A <u>prosperous</u> gentleman: and to be king,	= flourishing. ¹
106	Stands not within the prospect of belief, No more than to be Cawdor. Say <u>from whence</u> <u>You owe</u> this strange <u>intelligence</u> , or why	105: ie. is not possible to believe. = from where.
108	Upon this <u>blasted</u> heath you stop our way With such prophetic greeting? –	107: <i>You owe</i> = "you possess", ie. "you have received". ^{3,5} <i>intelligence</i> = knowledge, information. ¹ = blighted, parched. ¹
110	Speak, I <u>charge</u> you.	= command.
112	[<i>Witches vanish.</i>]	
114	<i>Banquo.</i> The earth hath <u>bubbles</u> , as the water has,	114-5: Banquo compares the brief appearance and sudden

	And these are of them: <u>whither</u> are they vanished?	disappearance of the Witches to bubbles , whose ephemeral existence ends with a sudden popping. The earth hath bubbles = the earth was thought to release vapours, or exhalations, into the air; Banquo may be connecting the common image of bubbles rising from water to these "exhalations". whither = to where. Note that, in contrast to Macbeth's intensely serious demeanour, Banquo reacts lightly to the meeting with the Witches. ³
116	Macbeth. Into the air: and what seemed <u>corporal</u> ,	= ie. corporeal, material. ⁴
118	<u>Melted</u> , as breath into the wind.	= vanished. ¹
120	<u>Would</u> they had stayed!	= if only, ie. "I truly wish".
122	Banquo. Were such things here, as we do speak about?	
124	Or have we eaten <u>on</u> the <u>insane root</u> , That <u>takes the reason prisoner</u> ?	122-3: Banquo wonders if he and Macbeth have consumed the roots of some plant that induces hallucinations. Editors have identified the plant as likely hemlock, though nightshade has also been suggested. ⁸ on = of. insane root = root that causes insanity. takes the reason prisoner = nice metaphor of insanity arresting or locking up personified Reason, preventing it from guiding thought.
	Macbeth. Your children shall be kings.	
126	Banquo. You shall be king.	
128	Macbeth. And Thane of Cawdor too: <u>went it not so</u> ?	= ie. "is that not how the prediction went?"
130	Banquo. <u>Toth' selfsame tune and words.</u> – Who's here?	= ie. "yes, in that exact same manner (tune = sound, voice) and with those identical (selfsame) words." ^{1,2,6} Toth' = ie. to the.
132		
134	<i>Enter Ross and Angus.</i>	Entering Characters: the noblemen Ross and Angus had appeared before King Duncan in Scene ii above; Ross had reported the Scots' victories to Duncan, who then gave Ross the responsibility to see that the traitorous Thane of Cawdor was executed.
136	Ross. The king hath happily received, Macbeth, The news of thy success: and when he <u>reads</u> Thy personal <u>venture</u> in the rebels' fight,	136-7: when he...fight = when Duncan learns of (perhaps from a report or written account) the risks or hazard (venture) Macbeth took: (1) in the fighting generally; or (2) by engaging in individual combat with Macdonwald. ^{6,7,8}
138	<u>His wonders</u> and <u>his praises</u> do contend, Which should be thine, or his: silenced with <u>that</u> ,	138-9: the king is unsure whether to simply remain stricken with admiration for Macbeth (His , ie. Duncan's, wonders), ¹ or to indulge his inclination to verbally commend him (his praises): ¹ the conflict of these emotions leaves Duncan in silence with awe. that = ie. the contention between Duncan's <i>wonder</i> and his <i>praises</i> .

140	In viewing o'er the rest o' th' selfsame day, He finds thee <u>in</u> the <u>stout</u> Norweyan <u>ranks</u> ,	140: in considering or reviewing the course of the battle this same day. 141: the king has learned that Macbeth was personally in the thick of the fighting against the Norwegians. <i>in</i> = ie. fighting within. <i>stout</i> = fierce. ^{1,2} <i>ranks</i> = rows or lines of troops aligned for battle. ¹
142	<u>Nothing</u> <u>afeard</u> <u>of</u> <u>what</u> <u>thyself</u> <u>didst</u> <u>make</u> , Strange images of death. <u>As</u> <u>thick</u> <u>as</u> <u>hail</u>	142-3: <i>Nothing...death</i> = Macbeth felt no fear in the situation caused by his own actions (<i>of what thyself didst make</i>), no panic or fright from the <i>strange images of death</i> before him. <i>Nothing afeard</i> = ie. not at all afraid. ⁷ <i>Strange images of death</i> = "death in [its] strange and fearful forms" (Kittredge, p. 103); ³ or "those killed by Macbeth" (Waith, p. 1128). ⁴ 143-4: <i>As thick...with post</i> = reports of the course of the battle arrived rapidly, one after another. <i>As thick as hail</i> = the Folio reads, " <i>As thick as tale</i> ", usually emended as shown, since <i>as thick as hail</i> was a common simile. <i>post with post</i> = one messenger arriving on top of another. ³
144	Came post with post, and <u>everyone</u> did bear	= each one, ie. each post.
146	Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence, And poured <u>them</u> down before him.	146: and delivered Macbeth's praises (<i>them</i>) in rapid succession to Duncan.
148	<i>Angus.</i> <u>We</u> are sent To give thee from <u>our</u> <u>royal</u> <u>master</u> thanks,	= ie. Ross and Angus. = ie. the king.
150	<u>Only</u> to <u>harald</u> thee into his sight, Not pay thee.	150-1: Ross and Angus have been sent solely (<i>Only</i>) to bring Macbeth back to appear before the king, but are not presenting him with any concrete or tangible rewards at this moment. <i>harald</i> = ie. herald, a verb, meaning "to usher" or "to escort"; ^{1,3} <i>herald</i> was occasionally spelled with an <i>a</i> , as here, rather than an <i>e</i> .
152	<i>Ross.</i> And for an <u>earnest</u> of a <u>greater</u> <u>honour</u> ,	153: <i>earnest</i> = pledge or foretaste of what is to come; down-payment. ^{1,3} <i>a greater honour</i> = ie. greater honours to come.
154	He <u>bad</u> me, from him, call thee "Thane of Cawdor":	= asked (instructed, in reality).
156	<u>In</u> <u>which</u> <u>addition</u> , <u>hail</u> ! most worthy thane, For it is thine.	= "for this new title (<i>addition</i>), I salute you!" ²
158	<i>Banquo.</i> What, can <u>the</u> <u>devil</u> speak true?	158: "is it possible the Witches have spoken the truth, ie. their prediction was accurate?" By calling them <i>the devil</i> , Banquo appears to recognize the evil nature of the Weird Sisters. <i>devil</i> = pronounced as a single-syllable word, the <i>v</i> elided: <i>de'il</i> .
160	<i>Macbeth.</i> The Thane of Cawdor lives:	160: Macbeth has still not yet been informed that the Thane of Cawdor is to be executed.

	Why do you <u>dress</u> me in [his] <u>borrowed robes</u> ?	161: metaphorically, Macbeth asks why Ross is addressing him with the title of Thane of Cawdor . There is fun wordplay in this line: dress meant "to address", yet Macbeth also suggests that he is being dressed with the Thane of Cawdor's robe , the latter representing his title, which seems to cover or enwrap him. By calling the robe borrowed , Macbeth emphasizes that the robe (that is, the title) does not really belong to him, but for some reason has been lent to him – at least for a moment – by Ross.
162	Angus. <u>Who</u> was the thane, lives yet,	163: the Thane of Cawdor is still alive. Who = ie. he who.
164	But under <u>heavy judgement</u> bears that life,	164: but his life now carries a weighty sentence (heavy judgment): Angus euphemizes the fact that the Thane of Cawdor is effectively under a death sentence.
166	Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was <u>combined</u> with those of Norway, Or did <u>line the rebel</u> with hidden help	= allied with the Norwegians. ³ 167: or the Thane of Cawdor secretly aided Macdonwald (the rebel). line = reinforce. ¹
168	And <u>vantage</u> ; or that with both he laboured In his country's <u>wrack</u> , I know not:	168: vantage = opportunity; he may have helped Macdonwald gain a tactical advantage or favourable position in the battle. 168-9: or that...wrack = or, the Thane of Cawdor may have worked to help both Macdonwald and the Norwegians bring about Scotland's ruin (wrack) – though Ross can't be sure (Ross's uncertainty stems from the fact that the Thane of Cawdor himself was not at either of the battles, so that his exact role in the uprising remains unclear). ³
170	But <u>treasons capital</u> , confessed and proved,	170-1: but the Thane of Cawdor has confessed his capital treason , which has thus been verified, and which now
172	Have <u>overthrown</u> him.	brings about his ruin or downfall. Have overthrown him = have cast him down from his high position. ¹
174	Macbeth. [<i>Aside.</i>] Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor: The greatest <u>is behind</u> .	174: ie. the best or most important title is yet to come. ³ is behind = remains, comes after. ¹
	[<i>To Ross and Angus.</i>] Thanks for your <u>pains</u> .	175: Macbeth thanks the nobles for taking the trouble (their pains) to bring him the news and to fetch him on behalf of the king.
176	[<i>To Banquo.</i>] Do you not <u>hope</u> your children shall be kings,	176-9 (below): since the veracity of the Witches has been proven by the fact that he (Macbeth) has in fact become the Thane of Cawdor, doesn't Banquo's hope for his descendants' future as kings increase?
178	When <u>those</u> that gave <u>the Thane of Cawdor</u> to me, Promised no less to them?	= ie. have an expectation. = ie. the Witches. = ie. the title of Thane of Cawdor.
180	Banquo. That, <u>trusted home</u> ,	181-2: ie. "that prophecy – if you believe all of it – might
182	Might yet <u>enkindle</u> you unto the crown,	ignite your ambition to attain the crown". Note that Banquo does not answer Macbeth's question, but instead turns it back

Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:

184 And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
186 Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence. –

188 Cousins, a word, I pray you.

190 *Macbeth.* [*Aside.*] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act

192 Of the imperial theme. – I thank you, gentlemen: –

194 [*Aside.*] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good.

If ill? why hath it given me earnest of success,

onto Macbeth. Banquo may be hinting at his unease with the thought of Macbeth becoming king, when Duncan is very much still alive.

trusted home = believed in full or completely.^{3,4}

enkindle = inflame desire or passion.¹

= in addition to.

184-7 (below): when they mean to harm us, agents of evil often first gain our trust by being truthful about minor things, which then gives them the opportunity to betray us in matters of greater importance.

= gain our confidence to our own great detriment.

= agents of wickedness.

= by being truthful regarding matters of little importance.

187: ie. in matters of weightiest or gravest importance.¹

188: *Cousins* = Banquo addresses Ross and Angus; *cousins* was often used, as here, as a term of affection between social equals.²

I pray you = ie. please; a common expression.

190-205 (below): here is a neat bit of stagecraft: as Banquo and the other two nobles step aside to confer, Macbeth is given an opportunity to soliloquize, a chance to describe to the audience his developing thoughts on how he might gain the crown.

190: the Witches' first two predictions have come true.

191-2: Macbeth compares the Witches' initial truthful prophecies to a pair of stage Prologues which introduce (and perhaps foreshadow the events of) the main *acts* of a play – whose central plot revolves around the kingship.

happy = fortunate.

swelling = magnificent or stately.^{2,3,4}

imperial theme (line 192) = the supreme leadership of the nation as the main storyline of the metaphoric play.

= an early commentator explains the appearance of this strange clause in the middle of Macbeth's soliloquy: Macbeth, momentarily aroused from his abstract musing, and thinking Banquo, Ross, and Angus are still standing where they were moments ago, turns and apologizes for his own inattention; but they have stepped away, and do not hear him. Realizing this, Macbeth resumes his train of thought.⁸

193f (below): Macbeth mulls over the moral ambiguity of the prophecy.

193-4: this supernatural temptation (*soliciting*) cannot be entirely evil (*ill*) or entirely benign (*good*).^{1,7}

soliciting = "a drawing on by some specious representation" (OED).¹

195-6: if the prophecies are evil (*If ill*), then why have they

196	<u>Commencing in a truth?</u> I am Thane of Cawdor.	bestowed on him a downpayment (<i>earnest</i>) on his future good fortune (<i>success</i>), ⁶ ie. the title of Thane of Cawdor? Note that Macbeth's reasoning ignores Banquo's earlier point (lines 184-7 above) that forces of evil deliberately offer small truthful initial benefits in order to gain the trust of the beneficiary before leading him to harm. <i>given</i> = pronounced as a monosyllable: <i>gi'en</i> . <i>success</i> = might also mean, "what is to follow." ³ <i>Commencing in a truth</i> = the Witches' prophecies are off to a good start – the first one has already come true.
198	If <u>good?</u> why do I <u>yield</u> to that <u>suggestion</u> , Whose <u>horrid image</u> doth <u>unfix</u> my hair, And make my <u>seated heart</u> knock at my ribs,	197-200: <i>If good...nature</i> = on the other hand, if the prophecies are benign (<i>If good</i>), then why does such an evil and unsettling thought enter Macbeth's mind? The idea Macbeth suddenly has – that he might have to murder King Duncan to gain the crown. – is too shocking to state explicitly. <i>yield to that suggestion</i> = allow this idea to take hold in his mind. ³ Lines 198-9: Macbeth emphasizes the physical manifestations of this terrible thought: it undoes (<i>unfix</i> = undo, loosen) his hair (line 198; perhaps hinting that it is standing on end), and causes his normally calm heart to pound violently (line 199). <i>horrid image</i> = Macbeth actually visualizes the revolting act of regicide against Duncan. ³ <i>seated heart</i> = the heart imagined as firmly fixed in place, (but now pounding wildly). ^{3,8} <i>Against the use of nature</i> (line 200) = ie. Macbeth's allowing the dreadful thought of killing Duncan to enter his mind goes against his customary moral instincts, ie. what he would normally ever consider doing; <i>use</i> = usual habit. ²
200	Against the use of nature? <u>Present fears</u> Are less than horrible imaginings:	200-1: <i>Present fears...imaginings</i> = "the dangers I am currently facing (<i>Present fears</i>) are far less frightening than the terrible thoughts running through my mind." <i>Present fears</i> = Stevenson suggests Macbeth is alluding to his lack of fear in physical confrontation, ie. in battle; but he is struggling with moral courage when considering his regicidal thoughts.
202	<u>My thought</u> , whose <u>murther</u> yet is but <u>fantastical</u> , Shakes so <u>my single state of man</u> ,	202-5 (below): "my idea, of a murder that is still yet only imaginary (line 202), so unsettles my being (203), that my ability to function as a normal human is overwhelmed with this conjecture (204), and reality and fancy have been inverted (205)." 202: <i>My thought</i> = the vision of regicide in Macbeth's mind. <i>murther</i> = murder, a common variant. <i>fantastical</i> = purely imagined, existing in fancy only. = Macbeth's condition as an individual man; or, "my weak human condition" (Kittredge, p. 105); ³ in this latter reading, <i>single</i> is used in its sense of "feeble". ^{2,8} Waith suggests another interpretation: "the nature of man is compared to a nation" (hence <i>state</i>) "which internal disturbances may reduce to impotence" (p. 1152). ⁴

204	That <u>function</u> is <u>smothered</u> in <u>surmise</u> ,	204: that Macbeth finds himself in a trance-like state: his ability to act (his <i>function</i>) is suspended, suppressed (<i>smothered</i>) by the speculative, hypothetical idea formed in his mind (<i>surmise</i>). ¹
	And nothing is, but what is not.	205: "and nothing is real except that which is not real"; that is, the only reality for Macbeth at this moment is the fanciful – the visions of his nefarious crime-to-be.
206	Banquo. Look how our partner's <u>rapt</u> .	207: Banquo urges Ross and Angus to observe how completely absorbed (<i>rapt</i>) ² Macbeth is in his thoughts.
208	Macbeth. [<i>Aside.</i>] If <u>chance</u> will have me king,	209-211: if fate (<i>chance</i>) ² is destined to raise Macbeth to the throne, then it is possible he will be crowned without having to proactively do anything to make it happen.
210	Why, chance may crown me, Without my <u>stir</u> .	Thus, for a moment, Macbeth considers that his ambition is likely to be satisfied if he remains on the path of honourable behaviour he has always tread; in hindsight, this would have been the preferable course for Macbeth to take. Kittredge notes that Duncan is old, and, since the king's sons are too young to rule, and the king in Scotland is elected, there would be nothing unusual for the crown to pass to Macbeth, a first cousin to the king, in the natural course of events. <i>chance</i> = fortune or lot. ¹ <i>stir</i> = action, movement. ¹
212		213-5 (below): having noted Macbeth's odd behaviour, Banquo invents an explanation, though of course he knows full well the reason behind it and the thoughts going through Macbeth's mind. ⁸
214	Banquo. New honours come upon him Like our <u>strange</u> garments, <u>cleave</u> not to their <u>mould</u> , But with the aid of <u>use</u> .	213-5: Banquo compares the new title (Thane of Cawdor) Macbeth has just received to new and unfamiliar (<i>strange</i>) ⁴ clothes one wears, which initially do not cling or adhere (<i>cleave</i>) ¹ properly to the body (ie. they fit awkwardly), but with use will fit better. <i>mould</i> = "the human body considered as imparting form to the clothes it wears" (OED, <i>mould</i> , n.3, sense II.11.d). ¹ <i>use</i> = usual practice, habit. ^{2,3} Note Shakespeare's metaphor within a metaphor: the body as a mould that gives shape to clothing, within the larger simile comparing <i>honours</i> to <i>garments</i> .
216	Macbeth. [<i>Aside.</i>] <u>Come what come may</u> ,	= an early version of the familiar expression "come what may"; the variants <i>come what come will</i> and <i>come what come would</i> were common in the 16th and 17th century. The familiar form, <i>come what may</i> , first appeared in 1598.
218	<u>Time, and the hour</u> , runs through the <u>roughest day</u> .	218: time passes through even the most difficult of days, ie. even the <i>roughest day</i> eventually comes to an end. ^{3,4} Macbeth's point ties in with his previous aside (lines 209-211 above): he is viewing the difficult period of waiting for events to unfold in his favour philosophically: he will need patience, but time ultimately will bring him the crown. <i>Time, and the hour</i> = variation on the extremely common 16th and 17th century expression " time and hour ", which was used to mean simply "time": e.g., " <i>concerning the</i>

		time and hour to eat" (1576), and "till the very time and hour of death" (1603).
220	Banquo. Worthy Macbeth, <u>we stay upon your leisure</u> .	= "we await your convenience"; ³ a conventional formula showing deference to another, regarding what to do next.
222	Macbeth. Give me your favour:	222: literally, "please show me goodwill or mercy", ie. "pardon me;" ^{1,3} Shakespeare uses this same expression in <i>The Tempest</i> : "Good my lord, give me thy favour still."
	My <u>dull</u> brain was <u>wrought</u> with things forgotten.	223: Macbeth's muddled (dull) ² mind was agitated or troubled (wrought) ^{1,4} by matters which needed his attention, but had slipped his memory. Macbeth is excusing his momentary distraction.
224	Kind gentlemen, your <u>pains</u> are <u>registered</u>	224-6: using a handsome metaphor, Macbeth courteously acknowledges the efforts (pains) his companions have made on his behalf, describing them as having been recorded (registered) in the book of his memory, whose pages describing their services to him he rereads daily.
226	Where every day I <u>turn the leaf</u> , To read them.	turn the leaf = turn the page.
	Let us <u>toward</u> the king:	227: toward = ie. move or travel to.
228	[<i>Aside to Banquo.</i>] think <u>upon</u> What hath <u>chanced</u> : and <u>at more time</u> ,	= ie. about. = happened. = when we have more time. ³
230	<u>The interim having weighed it</u> , let us speak	= ie. "using the time between now and when we next speak (The interim) to mull over the significance of what has occurred", ie. the Witches' prophecies. The interim = Stevenson glosses, "in the meantime". ⁵ Note that interim is personified as doing the weighing. ³
	<u>Our free hearts each to other</u> .	230: ie. "freely (Our free hearts) to each other." each to other = one might think that this inversion of "to each other" was devised by Shakespeare for some poetic purpose, but each to other was actually the more common wording used until the mid-17th century.
232		
	Banquo. Very gladly.	
234	Macbeth. Till then, enough: – Come, friends.	
236		
	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	<u>ACT I, SCENE IV.</u>	
	<i>The next day: Forres. A Room in the Palace.</i>	The Setting: the castle at Forres was an occasional residence of Scotland's early kings. ¹⁰
	<i>Flourish.</i> <i>Enter King Duncan, Lennox, Malcolm, Donalbain, and Attendants.</i>	= a trumpet call, announcing the entrance of important personages.
1	Duncan. Is execution done on Cawdor?	1: "has the Thane of Cawdor been executed yet?"
2	<u>Are</u> not <u>those in commission</u> yet returned?	2: Are = the Folio prints "Or", usually emended to "Are". Here is a good example of a likely error a compositor might make in typesetting the play: in this era, a compositor did not copy text directly; instead, he created his type by listening to

4 **Malc.** My liege, they are not yet come back.
 But I have spoke with one that saw him die:
 6 Who did report, that very frankly he
 Confessed his treasons, implored your Highness' pardon,
 8 And set forth a deep repentance:

Nothing in his life became him,

10 Like the leaving it. He died
 As one that had been studied in his death,
 12 To throw away the dearest thing he owed,
 As 'twere a careless trifle.

14 **Duncan.** There's no art
 16 To find the mind's construction in the face:

18 He was a gentleman on whom I built
 An absolute trust.

20 *Enter Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, and Angus.*

22 [To Macbeth.] O worthiest cousin!

The sin of my ingratitude even now

24 Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before,
 That swiftest wing of recompense is slow

another employee read the text aloud. It is easy to see how in this case, he might hear *are* as *or*.

those in commission = ie. those men assigned the duty (to see that Cawdor's death sentence has been carried out).⁸

= ie. the Thane of Cawdor.

= openly, honestly. = ie. Cawdor.

8: and offered genuine remorse (for his treachery).

9-13 (below): briefly, Cawdor took his punishment like a man. Elizabethan characters admired a bad actor who owned up to his misdeeds, and accepted the imposed penalty without whimpering or begging for mercy.

9-10: **Nothing...leaving it** = Cawdor did nothing during his lifetime that suited (**became**) him as much as his demeanor at his moment of death; the sense is, never before had Cawdor acted in a way that showed him possessing more dignity and grace.

10-13: **He died...trifle** = Cawdor died like a man who had been trained or instructed (**studied**)⁴ in how to die, and thus to treat his life – objectively the most valuable (**dearest**) thing he owned (**owed**) – as something of little importance, so that he could discard it (**throw it away**) casually when he died, as if it were an uncared for (**careless**)¹ triviality.

15-16: there exists no technique or skill (**art**) that enables one to perceive or detect (**find**) how a person's mind is to be interpreted (**the mind's construction**) by looking at his face or countenance,^{1,2,3} ie. there is no way to know what a person is thinking based on his or her appearance. Duncan rues the fact that he had trusted Cawdor, never recognizing that behind his loyal-seeming appearance lay a traitorous mind!

17-18: **built** suggests that Duncan's faith in Cawdor was based on a solid foundation carefully secured over time, making the thane's betrayal that much more painful.

20: some editors point out that just as Duncan finishes ruing the hidden disloyalty of one thane, another thane – Macbeth's – whose mind's workings Duncan also has no ability to perceive, enters his presence.

= Macbeth was a first cousin to the king.

23-24: **The sin...on me** = to Duncan, it was a **heavy** weight that he has not yet rewarded Macbeth for his accomplishments. Duncan even goes so far as to compare his apparent **ingratitude** to a **sin**.

24-26: **Thou art...thee** = figuratively, Macbeth's accomplishments come one upon the other so rapidly, that it is impossible to reward him quickly enough to keep up. Note Duncan's neat metaphor, in which **reward** (**recompense**) is imagined to have wings, flying swiftly, but futilely, to catch up with Macbeth, who is far ahead (**before**)^{1,4} of it.

Thou / thee = Duncan uses the intimate and affectionate

26 To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment,

28 Might have been mine: only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

30

32 **Macbeth.** The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself.

34 Your Highness' part is to receive our duties:
And our duties are to your throne and state,

36 Children and servants; which do but what they should,
By doing everything safe toward your love
And honour.

38 **Duncan.** Welcome hither:

40 I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing. – Noble Banquo,

42 That hast no less deserved, nor must be known

"thou" to address Macbeth, signaling the warmth and personal regard he has for his relative.

26-28: **Would thou...mine** = ie. "I wish (**Would**) you had deserved less, so that it would be within my power or ability (**Might have been mine**) to give you a reward (Duncan's **payment**) proportionate to my gratitude (**thanks**)."⁴

Another interpretation is, "I wish you had deserved less, so that the ratio of the reward I give you to what you deserve would fall in my favour," ie. that Duncan could give Macbeth more than he deserves, not less.^{3,5}

= pronounced as "I've".⁴

29: ie. Macbeth deserves more than Duncan could ever repay him.

31-37 (below): Macbeth responds to Duncan's compliments in the formal and formulaic way expected of heroes, basically claiming, he was only performing his duty, which deserves no special recognition; commentators disagree as to whether Macbeth's speech should be viewed as hypocritical.^{3,8}

31-32: "fulfilling or performing the duty (**service**) and faithfulness I owe you is its own reward (**pays itself**)."^{2,5}

33-35: **Your Highness'...servants** = with exaggerated deference, Macbeth suggests that Scotland's nobles are, with respect to their duty owed, in the same position to the king as are children to their parents, and servants to their masters; or that Duncan is like a parent and master to his subjects.⁸

part = role, as in a play.

35-37: **which do...honour** = if the king's vassals act as they should towards the throne, then they will not fail in the love and honour that is the king's due (Stevenson, p. 92).⁵

safe toward = another bit of obscure language that has attracted numerous interpretations: for example, (1) **safe toward** might mean "to guarantee"; (2) it is an error for "safe to ward" (**ward** = protect, guard); (3) it should be the compound word "safe-toward"; (4) the line means, "so as not to fail in the honour that is due you" (Stevenson, p. 92); and (5) **safe** is an adverb, so the meaning becomes "safely toward".^{1,4,5,8}

= here.

40: **I have begun to plant thee** = just as *planting* is the first step in growing a successful flower or tree, so has Duncan taken the first step in rewarding Macbeth, by making him Thane of Cawdor.³

40-41: **and will labour...growing** = continuing the horticultural metaphor, Duncan asserts that he will work to promote Macbeth further; **growing** also bears a sense of "increasing wealth".⁸

42-43: **nor must...done so** = ie. not only does Banquo deserve as much reward as does Macbeth, but his merits

		must also be publicly acknowledged.
44	No less to have done so: let me <u>infol</u> thee, And hold thee to my heart.	= embrace. ¹
46	Banquo. <u>There if I grow,</u> The <u>harvest</u> is your own.	46-47: Banquo extends the horticultural metaphor begun by Duncan in his previous speech: literally, if Banquo grows there – in Duncan's heart (line 44) and favour – then any resulting fruit or crop will belong to the king; meaning, if Banquo too enjoys continued advancement (if I grow), the benefits (harvest) gained thereby will accrue to the king. ³ Kittredge suggests that Banquo's comment here is meant to be mildly humorous, in contrast to Macbeth's intense seriousness.
48		
50	Duncan. My <u>plenteous joys</u> , <u>Wanton in fulness</u> , seek to hide themselves In <u>drops of sorrow</u> . – Sons, kinsmen, thanes,	49-51: My plenteous...sorrow = despite the abundant pleasure Duncan is experiencing, he also feels like crying. The king's feelings of happiness (his joys) are personified as trying to hide within what appear to be tears of sadness (drops of sorrow). plenteous = plentiful, numerous; ¹ but plenteous also carries the sense of "bearing crops", ¹ tying in nicely to the horticultural metaphor developed in the previous two speeches. Wanton in fulness = unrestrained, profuse, or luxuriant in abundance, suggesting Duncan is satiated with joy.
52	And you <u>whose places are the nearest</u> , <u>know</u> ,	52: whose places are the nearest = ie. "who are closest to me", "who are my closest relations", or "who are closest to the throne in the line of succession". ^{3,8} know = ie. "let it be known".
	We will <u>establish our estate</u> upon	= ie. settle the succession, or "name as our successor"; ^{4,5}
54	Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we <u>name hereafter</u>	Duncan employs the royal "we". = now grant the title of.
56	The <u>Prince of Cumberland</u> : which honour must <u>Not unaccompanied invest</u> him only,	55: Prince of Cumberland = title of the heir apparent to the Scottish throne, equivalent to England's Prince of Wales. ⁵ Kittredge points out once again that the throne of 'Scotland was elective, so that by formally naming his son Prince of Cumberland, he is effectively calling on the nobles to promise to select his young son as the realm's next king. Given Macbeth's accomplishments, and the youth of Duncan's son Malcolm, it would have been reasonable for Macbeth to have had every expectation to be selected Scotland's next king. Duncan's appointment of Malcolm as his heir, however, effectively shuts Macbeth out of the succession, and as a result, says Kittredge, Duncan has "[signed] his own death warrant" (p. 109). ³ 55-56: which honour...only = Malcolm should not be the only one to receive rewards. Note the interesting double-negative: Malcolm's honour should not be unaccompanied : see the next note.
58	But <u>signs of nobleness</u> , like stars, shall shine On all deservers. –	57-58: But signs...deservers = figuratively, all who deserve recognition will be rewarded when Malcolm is formally invested with his new title. signs of nobleness = distinguishing tokens or marks of merit and rank, ⁶ ie. tangible evidence of promotion

			and honour.
		[To Macbeth.] <u>From hence</u> to <u>Enverness</u> ,	59: ie. "let us leave here (From here) and go to Inverness (Enverness)", the location of Macbeth's castle. ⁵ Duncan unwittingly plans to spend the night in the lion's den! Enverness = this city in central Scotland was spelled both <i>Invernesse</i> and <i>Envernesse</i> in Shakespeare's day. An old commentator thought that Shakespeare's use of E- to begin the city's name was deliberate, and thus should be preserved, since <i>hence to Enverness</i> is clearly more melodious than <i>hence to Inverness</i> . ⁸
60	And bind us further to you.		60: by placing Macbeth in the position of host, the king becomes even more personally obliged to Macbeth.
			62-65 (below): Macbeth asserts that, by limiting his activity to simply riding alongside Duncan to Inverness, he would feel as if he were not accomplishing anything for him: he would rather ride ahead and inform his wife of the king's imminent arrival, perhaps implying that he would like to get a head start in his household's preparations for the reception and entertainment of the king and his retinue.
62	Macbeth. The <u>rest</u> is labour, which is not used for you:		62: a difficult line to interpret, but the consensus is, "any relaxation (rest) of effort to serve you requires, in fact, a greater effort" (Waith, p. 1152), ⁴ ie. performing a service for Duncan is ironically easier than doing nothing. Macbeth would rather ride ahead and prepare for the king's arrival – thus actively performing work on Duncan's behalf – than passively ride alongside him. But rest might also mean "remainder", so that Macbeth's point becomes, "any labour of duty (referring back to his most recent speech at lines 31-37 above) not used on your behalf (ie. the remainder, or rest , of it), is just unrewarding hard work." ⁸
64	I'll be myself the <u>harbinger</u> , and make joyful The <u>hearing</u> of my wife with your approach;		63: harbinger = formal term for one sent ahead to secure lodging for the royal train. ¹ 63-64: make...approach = literally, Macbeth will delight his wife's hearing with news of the king's approach to their castle; meaning, of course, he will gratify his wife with the news.
66	So, <u>humbly</u> take my leave.		= ie. "I humbly".
68	Duncan. My worthy Cawdor!		67: Duncan affectionately addresses Macbeth by his new title.
			69ff (below): as Macbeth speaks his aside, Banquo and Duncan converse silently; once Macbeth exits the stage (line 77), we are permitted to hear the conclusion of that dialogue (lines 79-83).
70	Macbeth. [<i>Aside.</i>] The Prince of Cumberland! – that is a step On which I must <u>fall down</u> , or else <u>o'erleap</u> ,		70-72: The Prince...lies = Macbeth recognizes the sudden obstacle that has arisen to block his path to the kingship (in my way it lies): the bestowing of the title of heir apparent on Malcolm. Macbeth compares this obstacle to his gaining the throne

72 For in my way it lies. – Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light see my black and deep desires.

74 The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

76 [Exit Macbeth.]

78 **Duncan.** True, worthy Banquo: he is full so valiant,

80 And in his commendations, I am fed:

It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,

82 Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:

84 It is a peerless kinsman.

86 [Flourish.]

[Exeunt.]

ACT I, SCENE V.

Inverness.

A Room in Macbeth's Castle.

Enter Lady Macbeth alone with a letter.

to a step or set of stairs: either he will (1) **fall down** the steps, symbolizing their preventing him from gaining the crown, or (2) jump over (**o'erleap**) them, representing his successfully bypassing Malcolm to succeed Duncan.

72-73: **Stars...desires** = Macbeth apostrophizes the stars, beseeching them to go dark, so that the wicked (**black**) thoughts and **desires** running through his mind cannot be seen.

There is a question as to why Macbeth is addressing the stars when it is clearly still daytime; the answer may be that he is anticipating that the murder of Duncan will take place at night in full view, as it were, of the stars.⁸

deep desires = suggests that Macbeth's ambitions are currently hidden well below the surface – he is not yet ready to face them openly.

74-75: let the eyes be closed (**wink**) to the evil deed carried out by the hand; but let the hand commit the deed (**yet let that be**), which the eye will fear to look at once it has been performed (**when it is done**).

Shakespeare seems to have been forced into awkward phrasing in line 75 in order to rhyme **see** with **be** in line 74.

70-75 (above): Macbeth has concluded his part in the scene with a speech comprised of rhyming couplets. Characters frequently employed one or more rhyming couplets to signal their imminent departure from the stage.

79: Banquo has been praising Macbeth to the king.
full so valiant = completely or entirely brave.

80-81: **And in...to me** = listening to praise for Macbeth gives Duncan the same satisfaction as enjoying a lavish banquet.
fed = nourished.¹

= ie. ride after.

= literally, Macbeth's concern for the king's welfare has ridden ahead; that is, his care for the king prompts him to ride ahead.

83: ie. "he is a relative without equal."

85: trumpets sound.

The Setting: it is the same day as that of Scene iv.

Entering Character: Lady Macbeth – Macbeth's wife – enters the stage reading a letter she received from her husband.

Although Scene iv ended with Macbeth hurrying off to

1 **L. Macbeth.** “They met me in the day of success:

2 and I have learned by the perfect’st report, they have

4 more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burnt

4 in desire to question them further, they made

6 themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I

8 stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the

king, who all-hailed me, “Thane of Cawdor”; by

which title before, these weyward sisters saluted me,

and referred me to the coming on of time with “Hail,

10 king that shalt be!” This have I thought good to

deliver thee (my dearest partner of greatness) that

12 thou might’st not lose the dues of rejoicing by being

14 ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to

thy heart, and farewell.”

his home, he had apparently written this letter to his wife between his meetings with the Witches and with Duncan, and had it delivered to Lady Macbeth.³

Lady Macbeth reads aloud only the last part of the letter, in the middle of Macbeth's description of the encounter with the Witches.

We note that Macbeth's wife is referred to in the Folio as either "*Lady*" or "*Macbeth's wife*"; her universally familiar appellation of **Lady Macbeth** appears nowhere in the play. The name **Lady Macbeth** first appeared in Sir William D'Avenant's 1674 rewrite of the play, which he turned into a musical!¹⁸

1: the Weird Sisters (**They**) met Macbeth the same day Macbeth and the Scottish armies had defeated Macdonwald and the Norwegians (**the day of success**).

2-3: **I have...knowledge** = Macbeth has learned through the **perfect'st report** that the Witches have knowledge that goes beyond what ordinary humans possess (**mortal knowledge**) – that is, they have supernatural insight.³

perfect'st report = has been glossed to mean (1) inquiries made by Macbeth, (2) his own experience, (3) Ross's report that he has been made Thane of Cawdor; any of these could have acted in Macbeth's mind to confirm the special powers of the Witches.^{3,4}

3-4: **burnt in desire** = became inflamed with the desire.

4-5: **made themselves...vanished** = ie. turned into air and disappeared; Shakespeare has for a second time expanded Holinshed's description of the Weird Sisters, who "**vanished immediately out of their sight**" (see Act I.iii.112-7).

= "there arrived messengers (**missives**)".¹

= hailed, greeted.¹

= greeted.⁷

= "and then the Witches drew my attention (**referred me**)¹ to what will happen in the future".

10-13: **This have...promised thee** = Macbeth was eager to communicate (**deliver**) his account of the meeting with Weird Sisters (**This**, line 10) to his wife so that she would not miss out on the joy of knowing the advancement in store for her – the queenship – by remaining unaware of it.

= an affectionate form of address which acknowledges that Lady Macbeth shares in her husband's importance, status, and power (**greatness**).¹

= "the opportunity to rejoice, which is due to you" (Stevenson, p. 95).⁵

13-14: **Lay it to thy heart** = ie. reflect deeply or ruminate on this prophecy.

To **lay it to one's heart** was a common phrase, suggesting one should take a given lesson seriously; the expression originated in Ecclesiastes 7:2 in the Geneva Bible of 1561: "*It is better to go to the house of mourning, then to go to the*

16 Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature,

18 It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness,

To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
20 Art not without ambition, but without

The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,

22 That wouldst thou holily: wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win.

24 Thould'st have, great Glamis, that which cries,
"Thus thou must do," if thou have it,

26 And that which rather thou dost fear to do,

Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
28 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,

And chastise with the valour of my tongue
30 All that impedes thee from the golden round,

house of feasting, because this is the end of all men: and the living shall **lay it to his heart**." Earlier English versions of the Bible concluded the verse with, "*take it to heart*."

16-17: **and shalt...promised** = "and you will become that which has been promised to you" – ie. king.
= worry about.

18-19: **It is...way** = Macbeth's nature (**It**) is too full of kindness and compassion to take the quickest route to achieve his ambitions (**catch the nearest way**), if it means violating his humanity.

milk of human kindness = this well-known expression has its roots in the common use of **milk** as a metaphor for anything considered healthy, pleasant or nourishing: examples from the 16th century include, "*the milk of soundness* (ie. healthiness)",¹ "*the milk of pleasure and delights*" (1584), and "*the pure milk of God's word*" (1587).

= her husband wants to be great, Lady Macbeth knows.

20-21: **but without...attend it** = but he lacks the wicked character (**illness**) which necessarily must accompany (**attend**) ambition in order to achieve greatness.^{1,5}

21-22: **What thou...holily** = what Macbeth ambitiously (**highly**)² desires – the throne – he would seek to gain only in an honourable and virtuous manner (**holily**).^{1,6}

Lady Macbeth is all too aware of her husband's weak character, and worries (before she has even spoken to him about this directly) that he will be too scrupulous to do what needs to be done to become king.

= Macbeth would never deceive or cheat another person (**play false**); **play false** was a common expression.

23: and yet he wants something which, to obtain it, would require him to act immorally.

24-25: "You want to obtain that (the throne) which demands of you, '*this is what you must do (to get it)*', if you really want it.

Thould'st have = "you would'st have", ie. "you desire to possess".

great Glamis = a vocative; Lady Macbeth apostrophizes her husband with his newest title.

26-27: **And that...undone** = the phrasing is extremely dense and awkward, but the sense is, "and this very act which you are afraid to commit (ie. the murdering of the king), you would still rather it be done than left **undone**", ie. "you would regret it if it remained uncompleted."⁷

= ie. "hurry yourself to here", ie. home.

28: figuratively, "so that I may fill you with my courage, mettle, and resolution (her **spirits**)."^{1,3}

29-30: and reprimand (**chastise**), with the bravery and force of her words (**the valour of my tongue**), everything (ie. his fear and scruples) which blocks (**impedes**) Macbeth from gaining the crown.^{1,6}

		<i>the golden round</i> = the golden circle, ie. the crown, hence "the throne".
32	Which fate and <u>metaphysical aid</u> doth seem To have thee crowned <u>withal</u> .	31-32: "which destiny and supernatural assistance (<i>metaphysical aid</i>) ¹ appear to have already crowned you with (<i>withal</i>)." ^{2,3,5,8}
34	<i>Enter Messenger.</i>	34: the messenger is a member of Macbeth's household.
36	What is your <u>tidings</u> ?	= news, report.
38	<i>Mess.</i> The king comes here tonight.	
40	<i>L. Macbeth.</i> Thou'rt mad to say it.	40: <i>mad</i> = crazy; Lady Macbeth does not believe the messenger. Some commentators, however, have argued that Lady Macbeth is addressing herself in this line, referring to her own wild thoughts regarding Macbeth and Duncan; then, in lines 41-42, feeling she might have revealed more than she intended to the Messenger, quickly recovers, and explains her surprise with a conventional excuse. ⁸
42	Is not <u>thy master</u> with <u>him</u> ? who, were't so, Would have informed for preparation.	41-42: "isn't Macbeth (<i>your master</i>) with the king (<i>him</i>)? If he were, he would have sent notice so we could prepare."
44	<i>Mess.</i> <u>So please you</u> , it is true: our thane is coming:	= ie. "may it be agreeable to you", a common expression of deference, though more often written as "if it so please you".
46	One of <u>my fellows</u> <u>had the speed of</u> him; Who <u>almost dead for breath</u> , <u>had scarcely more</u> Than would make up his message.	45-47: the logistics of what happened is not made clear, but it seems that one of Macbeth's servants who had been attending him had been sent ahead to ride as quickly as possible to his castle at Inverness to deliver the news that Macbeth was on his way home, but that he was so out of breath (<i>almost dead for breath</i>) when he arrived, that he barely had enough breath (<i>scarcely more</i>) to relate the message to his fellow servant (the present <i>Messenger</i>), who went upstairs to deliver it to Lady Macbeth. Line 45: one of the Messenger's fellow servants (<i>my fellows</i>) went ahead of Macbeth. <i>had the speed of</i> = outdistanced or outspeeded; ^{1,4} Shakespeare seems to have been the originator of this expression, which he also used in <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , and which was adopted by other later writers. <i>almost dead for breath</i> = almost dead because he was so out of breath, ie. left without breath.
48	<i>L. Macbeth.</i> Give <u>him</u> tending,	= ie. the other servant.
50	He brings great news.	
52	<i>[Exit Messenger.]</i>	
54	The <u>raven</u> himself is <u>hoarse</u> That <u>croaks</u> the <u>fatal entrance</u> of Duncan	54-56: <i>the raven...battlements</i> = the call or <i>croak</i> of a <i>raven</i> was thought to be an omen of death or misfortune; ^{4,11} here, the fact that Lady Macbeth describes the raven as <i>hoarse</i> from repeated croaking suggests that the omen, announcing the arrival of King Duncan to the castle, which he will not leave alive (hence his <i>fatal entrance</i>), was a potent one. Some older commentators have opined that Lady

		Macbeth intended to associate the raven with the Messenger who just left the stage. It has also been argued as to why the raven was hoarse: however, it is likely that Shakespeare simply borrowed the connection between the two from either John Lyly's 1594 play <i>Mother Bombie</i> ("you shall hear sweet music between a hoarse raven and a screech owl") or Robert Albott's 1600 work, <i>England's Parnassus</i> ("the ill-faced owl, death's dreadful messenger, the hoarse night-raven..."). raven = pronounced as a one-syllable word: <i>ra-en</i>. entrance = likely pronounced as a tri-syllable: <i>EN-ter-ance</i>. battlements (line 56) = parapets of the castle.
56	Under my battlements. – Come, you spirits	56f: Come...thoughts = Lady Macbeth calls on the malignant spirits that accompany murderous (mortal) thought.
	That tend on mortal thoughts, <u>unsex me here</u> ,	= Lady Macbeth asks the spirits to divest her of the traits conventionally associated with femininity, such as mercy and tenderness. ¹
58	And fill me <u>from the crown to the toe</u> , <u>top-full</u>	58: from the crown to the toe = early version of "from head to toe";
	Of <u>direst</u> cruelty! <u>make thick my blood</u> ,	top-full = filled to the top, to the point of overflowing. ¹
		59: direst = most dreadful. ¹
		make thick my blood = the thickening of one's blood was believed to accompany melancholia, which itself could lead to gloomy or dire thoughts: in <i>King John</i> , Shakespeare wrote, "Or if that surly spirit, melancholy / Had baked thy blood and made it heavy-thick". Lady Macbeth is seeking to harden herself so that she can face the king's murder without mercy.
60	<u>Stop up</u> th' <u>accès</u> and passage to <u>remorse</u> ,	60: by thickening her blood, the spirits may block (Stop up) any feminine or compassionate emotions, such as regret or feelings of guilt (remorse), from gaining entrance to (access) and coursing through her veins.
		access = stressed on its second syllable.
62	That no <u>compunctious visitings</u> of nature <u>Shake</u> my <u>fell purpose</u> , nor <u>keep peace</u> between	61-63 That no...and it = so that no naturally-occurring remorseful impulses (compunctuous visitings) arise which would:
		(1) undermine or unsettle (Shake) her cruel and ruthless (fell) resolve (purpose), and
		(2) keep peace between the result (Th ' effect , ie. Duncan's death) and her intent to carry it out (it).
		62-63: nor keep peace...and it = the meaning of this second clause – which depends on the interpretation of keep peace , a still-common phrase meaning "prevent or restrain from strife" – has been greatly debated. Lady Macbeth's clearly intends to state that she does not want remorse to interfere or come between her purpose and the act.
		However, it has been argued that the natural meaning of lines 62-63 is the complete opposite of this, that to keep peace between her purpose and the act means they should be in accord. If this interpretation is correct, then Lady Macbeth should be hoping that no feelings of compunction should

		arise that will <i>break</i>, rather than <i>keep</i>, the peace between purpose and act.^{4,5} 63-66 (below): <i>Come to...mischief</i> = briefly, "no matter where, in your invisible nature (line 65), you spirits attend to the evil in human nature (66), come take the milk from my breasts and replace it with bitterness (63-64)." Lady Macbeth seems to be wishing to exchange her natural tenderness of femininity for the unyielding severity of masculinity.
64	Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts, And <u>take my milk for gall</u>, <u>your murth'ring ministers</u>,	64: <i>take my milk for gall</i> = exchange (<i>take</i>)¹ the milk in Lady Macbeth's breasts for gall.^{3,4} <i>milk</i> = as mentioned earlier in the scene (line 18 above), <i>milk</i> could also symbolize nurturing and health-giving qualities, positive attributes. <i>gall</i> = literally bile, a secretion of the liver; one of the four traditional humours of the body, <i>gall</i> was used to represent a spirit of ruthless bitterness.^{1,2} <i>your murth'ring ministers</i> = literally, "your agents of murder". But since Lady Macbeth is addressing the spirits, it is unclear who <i>your</i> is referring to. She may simply mean "you murdering ministers", <i>your</i> being an error for "you".
	Wherever, in your <u>sightless substances</u>,	65-66: <i>Wherever...mischief</i> = "no matter where you, in your invisible being or nature (<i>sightless substances</i>, referring to the spirits),^{4,6} attend to or act upon (<i>wait on</i>) the evil things in our nature (<i>nature's mischief</i>)."⁵ <i>wait on nature's mischief</i> (line 66) = Kittredge paraphrases, "are on the watch to help forward any of the evil deeds to which our nature is prone" (p. 115).³
66	You wait on nature's mischief! – Come, <u>thick</u> night, And <u>pall</u> thee in the <u>dunnest smoke of hell</u>,	66: <i>Come thick night</i> = Lady Macbeth now apostrophizes night. <i>thick</i> = dense, difficult to penetrate.¹ 67: loosely, "and cover or enshroud (<i>pall</i>) thyself in the darkest (<i>dunnest</i>) smoke of hell", meaning, "make yourself as dark and opaque as possible."^{1,5} <i>pall</i> = cover, as with a <i>pall</i>, or rich cloth.¹ <i>dunnest</i> = murkiest, most obscure or dark, so as to cause a lack of light.¹ <i>smoke of hell</i> = there are numerous references to the <i>smoke of hell</i> in 16th and 17th century literature. Apropos is this citation from 1566: "<i>except the smoke of hell have marred his sight.</i>"
68	That my <u>keen knife</u> see not the wound it makes, Nor <u>Heaven peep</u> through the <u>blanket</u> of the dark,	= sharp knife – the one that will be used to kill the king. 69: Lady Macbeth calls for a darkness so thick (lines 66-67 above) that Heaven will not be able to catch a glimpse (<i>peep</i>) at the murderous deed she is contemplating. The metaphor of the darkness covering the earth like a <i>blanket</i> recalls both (1) the cloth, or <i>pall</i>, mentioned at line 67 above, which covers the night, and (2) Macbeth's earlier apostrophe to the stars to go dark, so that his wicked thoughts would remain invisible (see Act I.iv.72-73 above). <i>Heaven</i> = pronounced as a monosyllable: <i>He'en</i>. <i>peep</i> = could also mean "appear".

70	To cry, " <u>Hold</u> , hold!"	= stop.
72	<i>Enter Macbeth.</i>	
74	Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor! <u>Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!</u>	74-75: Lady Macbeth is not merely welcoming her husband by his titles; she is also recalling the all-hails (the hails) addressed to Macbeth by the Witches at Act I.iii.68-72 above, and in the same order: first Glamis, then Cawdor, and finally king. Greater than both = when he becomes king, Macbeth will be greater than either of his present titles (Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor). by the all-hail hereafter = "by virtue of the following (<i>hereafter</i>), or third, " <i>hail</i> " of the Witches". However, hereafter might also refer to Macbeth's becoming king in the future, hence "by the all-hail that is yet to come!"
76	Thy <u>letters</u> have <u>transported</u> me beyond	76-78: Macbeth's written message has swept (transported)
77	<u>This ignorant present</u> , and I feel now	Lady Macbeth beyond the present moment to the future,
78	The future in <u>the instant</u> .	which she feels as if it has already arrived. letters = ie. the letter read by Lady Macbeth at the beginning of the scene; the plural form letters seems to have been often used by Shakespeare for a single letter. ⁶ transported = carried away in rapture, as by a vision. ^{1,3} This ignorant present = the present is ignorant because it does not know what the future will bring. ³ the instant = the present moment. ^{3,5}
80	Macbeth. My dearest love,	
	Duncan comes here tonight.	
82	L. Macbeth. And <u>when goes hence</u> ?	= "when will he go from here", ie. "when is he departing?"
84	Macbeth. Tomorrow, as he <u>purposes</u> .	= intends. ⁶
86	L. Macbeth. O never	
88	Shall sun that morrow see!	87-88: that is, for King Duncan, the sun will not rise the next day. Lady Macbeth is getting more comfortable with and closer to directly stating what she has in mind.
	Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men	89-90: Your face...strange matters = using a common metaphor, Lady Macbeth tells her husband she can read his face like a book: she can see what unfamiliar or extraordinary things (strange matters), ¹ ie. thoughts, are on his mind.
		90-97 (below): To beguile...masterdom = Lady Macbeth begins to counsel her husband as to how he should behave in front of his guests: naturally, he should treat the king as a loving vassal should, and leave preparation of the terrible business – still not explicitly stated – to her. Aware of Macbeth's weakness and indecisiveness, Lady Macbeth assumes the active role in the planning. Lady Macbeth's ruthlessly calculating character becomes increasingly evident with each succeeding speech.
90	May read strange matters. <u>To beguile the time</u> ,	= to deceive everyone; time = people, the world. ^{2,3,6}
	<u>Look like the time</u> : bear welcome in your eye,	= "appear exactly as the situation demands."
92	Your hand, your <u>tongue</u> : look like th' innocent flower,	92: tongue = ie. speech. 92-93: look like...under't = Shakespeare used the

	But be the serpent under't. <u>He</u> that's coming	same metaphor of the evil actor hiding behind the mask of benevolence in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : " <i>O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!</i> "
94	Must be <u>provided for</u> : and you shall put	= ie. the king.
	This night's great <u>business</u> into my <u>dispatch</u> ,	= attended to – perhaps deliberately ambiguous, meaning both in a good way (to make the king feel welcome) and a bad way (to prepare for his demise). ³
96	Which shall <u>to all our nights and days to come</u> ,	= ie. the king's murder. = management. ^{1,4}
98	Give <u>solely</u> sovereign <u>sway</u> , and <u>masterdom</u> .	96-97: the murder of the king will, for the rest of their lives (<i>to all our nights and days to come</i>), give them alone (<i>solely</i>) ² full and unchallenged power and authority in the kingdom. <i>Give solely sovereign sway</i> = "make the couple supreme" (Stevenson, p. 67); ⁵ note the clause's nice alliteration. <i>sway</i> = power, rule. ² <i>masterdom</i> = supremacy, absolute control. ¹
	Macbeth. We will speak further.	
100	L. Macbeth. Only look up <u>clear</u> ;	101: "only appear with an innocent countenance (<i>clear</i>)." ³
102	To alter <u>favour</u> ever is to <u>fear</u> .	102: the sense is, "if you change your facial expression (<i>favour</i>) so as to show your true feelings, you will always have to worry about being discovered" (Stevenson, p. 95). ⁵ Jowett glosses <i>fear</i> as "arouse suspicion". ⁷ Lady Macbeth manages to signal the end of the scene with both a rhyming couplet and an aphoristic comment (line 102).
	Leave all the rest to me.	
104	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	ACT I, SCENE VI.	
	<i>The evening of the same day: Inverness. Before the Castle.</i>	
	<i>Hoboyes and torches.</i>	The Setting: music is playing as several men enter carrying torches. <i>Hoboyes</i> = ie. hautboys, an early oboe-like instrument; <i>hoboyes</i> was a common variant. <i>torches</i> = ie. torch-bearers. Torches were used to signal to the audience that a scene takes place at night, since Elizabethan performances were staged during the day. That the king and Banquo can still see the castle suggests it is evening rather than full night. ⁴
	<i>Enter King Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Lennox, Macduff, Ross, Angus, and Attendants.</i>	Entering Characters: the royal party arrives at Macbeth's castle.
1	Duncan. This castle hath a pleasant <u>seat</u> ; the air	1: <i>seat</i> = situation, location, site. ¹
2	<u>Nimbly</u> and sweetly <u>recommends itself</u> Unto our <u>gentle</u> senses.	1-3: <i>the air...senses</i> = "the invigorating and sweet air makes itself agreeable (<i>recommends itself</i>) ⁶ to our refined (<i>gentle</i>) ¹ senses."

4		<i>Nimble</i> = bracingly;² other editors gloss <i>nimble</i> to mean "freshly".^{3,4}
6	<i>Banquo.</i> This guest of summer, The temple-haunting barlet, does approve, By his loved mansionry, that the Heaven's breath	5-12 (below): as a way to compliment the setting and the castle, Banquo evokes an image of the bird called the martlet, or common house martin (written as <i>barlet</i> in the Folio), building its nests all over the castle. Thielton-Dyer tells us that this bird's nests were "treated with superstitious respect – it being considered unlucky to molest or in any way injure its nest" (p. 128).¹¹ Waith writes that the house martin was believed to build its nest only in "fine houses" (p. 1152).⁵ 5: allusion to the fact that the martlet is a migratory bird, spending its winters in Africa.¹² 6-8: <i>The temple-haunting...here</i> = the martlet (<i>barlet</i>), which likes to build its nest on churches, proves (<i>does approve</i>), by building its dwellings (<i>mansionry</i>), or nests, in this location (Macbeth's castle), that the air or breeze (<i>Heaven's breath</i>) here smells enticingly (<i>wootingly</i>).^{1,2,6} <i>temple-haunting</i> = an adjective describing the martlet literally as regularly visiting (<i>haunting</i>) or living in the neighbourhood of churches; but meaning only that the martlet likes to build its nest on lofty buildings or fine places like a church.^{1,5} <i>barlet</i> = perhaps an error for martin or martlet, as it seems not to appear elsewhere in contemporary literature. <i>Heaven's breath</i> = <i>Heaven's</i> should be pronounced in a single syllable, the <i>v</i> elided: <i>Hea'ns</i>. The expression <i>Heaven's breath</i> was also used by Shakespeare in <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>, but to refer to a puff of air: "That the lover, sick to death, / Wish himself the Heaven's breath." <i>smells wootingly</i> (line 8) = that the air smells enticingly suggests the air is sweet and inviting, and hence "appealing to the senses" (Kittredge, p. 118).^{1,3,5}
8	Smells wootingly here: no juty, frieze, Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird hath made his pendant bed, and procreant cradle:	8-10: <i>no juty...cradle</i> = briefly, there is no part of the castle on which the martlet has not built a nest. <i>juty</i> = a projecting part of a building.¹ <i>frieze</i> = the usually wide middle band of the horizontal structure (the entablature) that sits on top of the columns of a building, often wrapping all the way around.^{1,5,6} <i>Buttress</i> = a projecting structure built against a wall to strengthen it.¹ <i>coign of vantage</i> = a projecting corner (<i>coign</i>) on which it is advantageous to build a nest.^{1,5} <i>pendant bed</i> = hanging nest.^{1,5} <i>procreant cradle</i> = metaphorically, a nest for breeding, ie. for laying and hatching eggs.^{3,5}
12	Where they must breed and haunt, I have observed The air is delicate.	11: <i>must</i> = perhaps meaning "instinctively"; often emended to "most". <i>haunt</i> = frequent; colloquially, "hang out". = pleasant, delightful.²
14	<i>Enter Lady Macbeth.</i>	
16	<i>Duncan.</i> See, see, our honoured hostess! –	

	The love <u>that follows us</u> sometime <u>is our trouble</u> ,	17-18: <i>The love...as love</i> = Duncan acknowledges that the loyalty or affection that people show him (<i>that follow us</i> , using the royal "we") can sometimes be an inconvenience to him because of the trouble to which it puts him (<i>is our trouble</i>), yet he still accepts such attention with gratitude as sincere acts of devotion, or because it proves they love him. ^{3,4,5}
18	Which still we thank as love. <u>Herein I teach you</u>	18-20: <i>Herein...trouble</i> = in a similar vein, then, Lady Macbeth should bless him and thank him for the burdens he is placing on her by causing her to receive him as her guest (since his visit demonstrates his affection and attachment to Macbeth and his wife). ^{3,4,8} Duncan, in a pleasant mood, is speaking drolly.
20	How you shall <u>bid God-eyld us</u> for your <u>pains</u> , And thank us for your trouble.	<i>Herein</i> = in this matter. ¹ <i>I teach you</i> = Duncan frames his comments as a courteous lesson to be taught to Lady Macbeth. Line 19: "how you should ask or pray (<i>bid</i>) God to reward me (<i>us</i>) for the work and effort (<i>pain</i>) I am causing you". ¹ <i>God-eyld</i> = ie. "God yield (<i>reward</i>)", an expression of gratitude; ¹ pronounce <i>eyld</i> as " <i>eeld</i> ". ^{1,4}
22	<i>L. Macbeth.</i> All our <u>service</u> , In every <u>point</u> twice done, and then done double,	22-26 (below): in formal, almost formulaic, rhetoric, Lady Macbeth declares that all of the exertions she and Macbeth could make on behalf of Duncan, even if quadrupled, would still be insignificant compared with the great honours the king has bestowed on the couple. = ie. actions or duties performed on the king's behalf. 23: in every detail (<i>point</i>) performed twice twice-over. ²
24	<u>Were</u> poor and <u>single</u> business to contend	24: would be (<i>Were</i>) insignificant and trivial (<i>single</i>) if it tried to vie with the extensive (<i>deep and broad</i>) honours granted Macbeth and his wife (metaphorically, <i>our house</i>). ³
26	Against those honours <u>deep and broad</u> , <u>Wherewith</u> your Majesty <u>loads our house</u> :	<i>Wherewith</i> = with which. ¹ <i>loads</i> = suggestive of a great abundance of honours having been piled upon Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.
28	<u>For those of old</u> , and <u>the late dignities</u> Heaped up to them, <u>we rest your ermites</u> .	27-28: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are obliged to Duncan for the previous honours he has bestowed (<i>For those of old</i>), and the more recent ones (<i>the late dignities</i>) added on top of them. <i>we rest your ermites</i> = literally, "we remain your hermits (<i>ermites</i>)", meaning that she and her husband are bound to pray for the king; a nice rhetorical flourish to signal her gratitude. ^{1,3,5} <i>ermite</i> = a variant of "hermit", meaning "beadsman", a person who prays for another; a beadsman may also be paid to pray for another. ¹
30	<i>Duncan.</i> Where's the <u>Thane of Cawdor</u> ? We <u>coursed him at the heels</u> , and had a purpose	= ie. Macbeth himself. 31-32: <i>We coursed...purveyor</i> = Duncan, using the royal "we", asserts that he rode closely in pursuit of Macbeth (<i>coursed him at the heels</i>), actually intending to arrive ahead of Macbeth so that he could personally arrange his welcome.

32 To be his purveyor: but he rides well,
 And his great love (sharp as his spur) hath help him
 34 To his home before us: fair and noble hostess,

36 We are your guest tonight.

L. Macbeth. Your servants ever
 38 Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,

To make their audit at your Highness' pleasure,
 40 Still to return your own.

42 **Duncan.** Give me your hand:
 Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,
 44 And shall continue our graces towards him. –

By your leave, hostess.
 46

[Exeunt.]

ACT I, SCENE VII.

The Same Evening.

coursed = pursued, followed.^{2,5}
at the heels = closely;¹ a common expression, used frequently with *follow*, as in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*: "*The throng that follows Caesar at the heels, / Of senators.*"
purveyor (line 32) = one sent ahead to make arrangements for the arrival of an important personage.²

32-34: *but he...before us* = Macbeth is a skilled rider, and that, combined with his love, has pricked him to ride swiftly, allowing him to arrive at the castle before Duncan. This was a true compliment, since it was normally *for* the king that *others* prepared a reception.

his great love = Duncan leaves the object of Macbeth's love unstated: he may mean himself, or Lady Macbeth, or even his home, or perhaps for some combination of the three.

(sharp as a spur) = Macbeth's strong love is like a sharp spur which a rider digs into the sides of his horse, the love and the spur motivating Macbeth and the horse respectively to go faster.

help = variant past tense form of "help".

To his home = ie. to arrive at his home.

37-40 (below): using a dense accounting metaphor, Lady Macbeth declares, in a long-winded and highly-stylized manner, that everything she and Macbeth possess really belong to the king, so that he has a right to call for any of it for his own use at any time, ie. that she and Macbeth, as the king's subjects, hold everything they own in reserve for Duncan's use.

= ie. she and Macbeth. = at all times.

38: hold or keep their retainers, vassals, and servants (*theirs*), themselves, and everything they own (*what is theirs*) on account (*in compt*), ie. for use by the king, or accountable to him.^{3,4}

compt = variant spelling of *count*, meaning "account" or "reckoning";¹ pronounced "*count*".⁴

39: ready to render or settle their account (*make their audit*)³ whenever the king wishes.

40: always (*Still*) ready to return any of their possessions to the king, since everything really belongs to him (they are his *own*).

= ie. Macbeth. = very much, greatly.

= a likely disyllable: *OU-er*. = royal favours.³

= "with your permission", or "allow me": the king offers his arm to Lady Macbeth, or takes her by the hand.^{3,5}

The Setting: having entered Macbeth's castle, the royal

A Lobby in the Castle.

Hoboyes. Torches.

*Enter a Sewer, and divers Servants,
with dishes and service over the stage.
Then enter Macbeth.*

party enjoys a supper in the great hall. Macbeth leaves the hall to take a few minutes to be alone and reflect on the plan to murder Duncan.

= oboe-like instruments are playing. = torchbearers enter.

Entering Characters: various servants pass across the stage in a flurry of activity, delivering supper to the king and his party.

Sewer = attendant in charge of arranging and serving supper.^{1,3}

service = table preparations, ie. cups, dishes, cutlery, etc.^{1,2}

1-28 (below): the scene's opening soliloquy comprises one of the play's most difficult speeches. The monologue is organized as follows:

(1) lines 1-12: **If it...lips** = Macbeth first observes that if Duncan's murder could be carried out without resulting in any negative consequences, it ought to be done sooner rather than later; but he then acknowledges the possibility of a pair of long-term disagreeable repercussions: **(a)** he could end up spending eternity in hell, and **(b)** his act may set a precedent that another may follow, by killing him in turn to gain the throne;

(2) lines 12-20: **He's here...taking-off** = Macbeth next considers multiple reasons why he should restrain from killing the king;

(3) 21-25: **The deep...the wind** = Macbeth also realizes that Duncan's murder would be deeply mourned throughout Scotland; and

(4) 25-28: **I have...th' other** = Finally, Macbeth admits that his ambition to be king is the sole reason he is even considering taking this path, and recognizes that he might be biting off more than he can chew.

1 **Macbeth.** If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well

1-2: **If it...quickly** = if it were to be true that, once the deed itself were accomplished (**when 'tis done**), the entire business would thereby be concluded (**it were done**), then it would be best (**'twere well**) to carry it out without delay (**quickly**).^{3,5}

2 It were done quickly: if th' assassination
3 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
4 With his surcease, success: that but this blow
Might be the be-all, and the end-all. Here,

2-5: **if th'...end-all** = if Duncan's murder (**th' assassination**) could take place without troublesome consequences, and thus, with Duncan's death (**his surcease**), prevent the occurrence of those unpleasant consequences (**success**),³ then with this single stroke (**blow**), he could put an end to the whole matter (**be the be-all, and the end-all**).

th' assassination = for the first time, Macbeth explicitly names the deed under contemplation.

trammel up the consequence = a **trammel** is a net used to catch fish; as a verb, it means "entangle" or "hinder"; thus, **trammel up the consequence** means to "block or prevent (negative) consequences from occurring".^{1,3,4}

3-4: **and catch...success** = "and ensnare, with Duncan's death, any unfavourable outcome." The OED has a definition for **success** of "unhappy fortune" or "unfavourable result". With this reading, the clause here would logically follow the metaphor begun with **trammel**: Macbeth hopes the murder of the king would entangle, or prevent, negative consequences,

thus catching (as in a net) – and hence preventing – any unfavourable result associated with the deed.

Many editors take *success* to carry its usual modern meaning, but then the metaphor of *trammel* would be muddled: if Macbeth hopes to entangle (*trammel up*) troublesome consequences, it would make little sense to want to catch a good result (*success*) in the same net.

the be-all, and the end-all = the whole thing and the end of the whole thing. This still common expression is Shakespeare's invention.

The OED credits Shakespeare with the first recorded use of the terms "*be-all*" and "*end-all*"; however, "*be-all*" did appear earlier than the time he wrote *Macbeth*, in a 1595 work: "*albeit the be all of one nation, who shall dispose and carrie away all things...*" In this citation, the meaning of "*be-all*" is slightly different, referring to "the most powerful or important persons", rather than more generally "the whole matter".

6-7: *But here...to come* = a dense metaphor, but the meaning seems to be, "but in this world (*here*), and in this life (*upon...time*), we risk (*jump*) punishment in the next life (*the life to come*)."^{1,4}

Stevenson suggests that Macbeth means that, he is willing, to achieve his particular goal, to risk damnation (see p. 98).⁵

bank and shoal = both terms here refer to a sandbank, or area of shallow water.

Why *time* (referring to a man's lifetime) should be viewed as a *bank and shoal of time* is not obvious: Perhaps the best explanation comes from the old Variorum edition of *Macbeth*: "human life is compared to a narrow strip of land in an ocean (of time)" (Furnace, p. 97).⁸

shoal = the word appearing here in the Folio is *schoole*, usually emended to *shoal*. However, if *school* is correct, a completely different interpretation is suggested: first, we note that *bank* also meant "bench". Thus life could be considered a process of education; this would also tie in to *teach* in line 8. A brisk discussion of this possibility can be found in the Variorum edition.⁸

7-10: *But in...inventor* = but in situations like this, we will invariably (*still*) be judged and sentenced (*have judgment*) in this life (*here*): if we set an example by committing a bloody deed (metaphorically, *teach bloody instructions*), then, once the lesson has been learned, we can expect that lesson to come back upon us;^{1,7} that is, if Macbeth murders Duncan, he sets a precedent which he can expect another to follow – to murder him in turn.

have judgment = a common expression in contemporary literature, meaning both "to be judged" and "to be sentenced".¹

teach / Bloody instructions = literally, "teach a violent lesson"; the sense is, "by committing a crime, we are showing others how it is done".^{1,6}

plague th' inventor = literally, "torment or punish the originator or author (ie. of the criminal act)".⁶

10-12: *This even-handed...own lips* = in this way, this

6 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,

8 We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases,
We still have judgement here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught, return

10 To plague th' inventor. This even-handed justice

	<u>Commends th' ingredience of our poisoned chalice</u>	impartial (<i>even-handed</i>) justice sentences us to consume the very cup of poison which we prepared for another. Shakespeare adapted the idea for the line directly from Holinshed's description of Macbeth's degeneracy after he became king: " <i>for the prick of conscience ... caused him ever to fear, lest he should be served of the same cup, as he had ministered to his predecessor.</i> " <i>even-handed</i> = suggests "giving each person what he deserves" (Stevenson, p. 98). ⁵ <i>Commends</i> = offers. ² <i>th' ingredience of our poisoned chalice</i> = literally, "the contents of our poisoned cup (<i>chalice</i>)". <i>ingredience</i> = mixture or compound; ^{1,8} though <i>ingredience</i> could also refer to the components (ie. ingredients) of a medicine or potion (OED).
12	To our own lips. – He's here in <u>double trust</u> : First, as I am <u>his kinsman</u> , and <u>his subject</u> ,	12-14: <i>He's here...deed</i> = Macbeth turns now to weighing the arguments against his killing Duncan: in these lines, Macbeth notes that he should be hesitant to harm the king because (1) they are related as first cousins (hence, <i>his kinsman</i>), and (2) Macbeth is his vassal (<i>his subject</i>), and as such Macbeth owes him loyalty and fidelity. <i>double trust</i> = Duncan has two reasons to trust Macbeth, as indicated above. <i>Strong both against the deed</i> (line 14) = ie. both reasons are strong arguments for Macbeth to restrain from killing Duncan.
14	Strong both against the deed; then, as his host, Who should against his <u>murtherer</u> shut the door,	14-15: <i>then, as...door</i> = a third argument against committing this crime is that, as Duncan's host for the night, Macbeth owes him protection; the accepted obligation of a host to serve and safeguard his guests dates back at least to ancient Greek mythology: one of the attributes of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods, was "Zeus of Hospitality", since it was his duty to punish anyone who harmed a guest. <i>murtherer</i> = ie. murderer; <i>murtherer</i> was a common variant.
16	<u>Not bear the knife myself</u> . Besides, this Duncan	16: <i>Not bear the knife myself</i> = Macbeth may be sensing a loophole in the obligation to protect his guests: if he himself does not personally do the deed, then maybe he has not violated his sacred duty to the king. 16-20: <i>Besides...taking-off</i> = a fourth reason presents itself: Duncan has been such a modest and virtuous ruler, that he deserves to keep his life.
	Hath <u>borne</u> his <u>faculties</u> so <u>meek</u> ; hath been	= has wielded (<i>borne</i>) his powers (<i>faculties</i>) so humbly or mildly (<i>meek</i>). ^{1,4,6} <i>meek</i> = used for "meekly"; Shakespeare had no compunction about using an adjective as an adverb (by omitting "-ly") if it helped him maintain a line's meter.
18	So <u>clear</u> in his <u>great</u> office, that his virtues	18-20: (Duncan is) so blameless (<i>clear</i>) in the way he has carried out his high (<i>great</i>) office (as king), that his virtues will magnify the condemnation Macbeth can expect to receive for the killing of the king (<i>his taking-off</i>). ^{1,5}
20	<u>The deep damnation</u> of his <u>taking-off</u> :	18-19: <i>his virtues...trumpet-tongued</i> = Duncan's virtues are imagined as angelic in their moral purity, crying out persuasively against the crime and swaying public opinion.

22 And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubin, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,

24 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

26 That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
28 Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th' other –

trumpet-tongued = literally, "with a tongue like a trumpet", ie. with a loud, and therefore compelling, voice.

The deep damnation = the heinous sin; *damnation* here refers to a sin deserving of damnation.¹

of his taking-off = literally, of Duncan's removal; *taking-off* was actually an old and commonly used noun meaning "the act of taking something off or away", but used by Shakespeare here, and then by subsequent writers, to mean "murder" or "death".¹

21-25 (below): *And Pity...the wind* = employing a pair of vivid similes, personified Pity is imagined to be riding upon the wind, and being carried far and wide, spreading the news of Duncan's murder to all people, causing them to shed tears over the terrible crime.

21-23: personified *Pity* is compared to (1) a new-born infant, astride or riding (*Striding*) upon a strong gust of wind (a *blast*), and (2) a cherub (*cherubin*), mounted, as on a horse (hence *horsed*), also upon the wind.

Stevenson suggests that Pity is like a *new-born babe* "because it touches our feelings of tenderness" (p. 98).⁵

sightless couriers of the air = a vivid metaphor of the wind as a team of invisible (*sightless*) swift horses (*couriers*).^{1,4} Shakespeare may have created the image by combining language from two different sources: (1) Psalms 18:10: "And he rode upon Cherub and did fly, and he came flying upon the wings of the wind (Geneva Bible); and (2) William Warner's linguistically influential *Albion's England* (1597): "the scouring winds that sightless in the sounding air do fly..."

24-25: *Shall blow...the wind* = the metaphoric wind blows the news (which is implicitly compared to bit of dust carried by the wind) of the king's murder into *every eye*, resulting in such weeping, that the volume of tears will, like a heavy rain, seem to drown out or overwhelm the howling of the wind.⁸

25-28: *I have...th' other* = continuing the intense and dense imagery, Macbeth admits he has no reason or motivation for killing Duncan except his own ambition.

Turning to another equestrian metaphor, Macbeth implicitly compares the impetus or stimulus for acting on his ambition to a *spur* pressed into the flanks (*sides*) of a horse (metaphorically representing his *intent*, or goal or design, to be king).

The manic equestrian figure now morphs, as Macbeth describes his ambition as a rider *vaulting*, or leaping, onto a horse; but, just as the rider may leap too far (*o'erleap*) his mount and fall on the other side, Macbeth's ambition may drive him to go too far in his actions, potentially leading to his own ruin.^{4,5}

prick = used frequently to mean, "to spur a horse".¹

o'erleaps itself = overleaps, ie. leaps too far.¹

Line 28: Macbeth is on the verge of completing his metaphor when Lady Macbeth enters, interrupting him, perhaps as he was about to say "*side*".⁴ Some editors add "*side*" to the end of the line, in order to help the combined

30 *Enter Lady Macbeth.*

32 *How now?* what news?

34 *L. Macbeth.* *He* has almost supped: why have you left the chamber?

36 *Macbeth.* Hath he asked for me?

38 *L. Macbeth.* *Know you not* he has?

40 *Macbeth.* We will proceed no further in this business:

42 He hath honoured me of late, and I have bought Golden opinions from all sorts of people,

44 Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

46 *L. Macbeth.* Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?

48 And wakes it now to look so green, and pale,

lines 28 and 32 satisfy the requirements of meter. Kittredge notes that, because Macbeth's soliloquy represents thought, he cannot technically be "interrupted".

= ie. "how is it now?" a common greeting.

34: Lady Macbeth is unhappy that Macbeth has absented himself from the royal party.

He = ie. Duncan.

supped = completed his meal.

chamber = dining hall.³

Line 38ff (below): note how throughout this scene, Lady Macbeth responds to every one of Macbeth's questions, assertions, and excuses with a scornful question of her own.³

= ie. "don't you know".

= ie. the plan to do away with Duncan.

41-44 (below): note the extended implied metaphor in which Macbeth compares his new enhanced reputation to a set of new clothes which should not be discarded as soon as it is purchased.

41: *of late* = recently (with various rewards, including a new title).

41-42: *I have...people* = Macbeth has earned the admiration and respect (*Golden opinions*) of many for his military exploits and the recognition he has received.

all sorts of people = people high and low, from the king down to the Captain of Scene ii.³

43-44: like a man wearing new clothes that still retain their sheen (*gloss*), Macbeth should (*would*) enjoy and preserve his new reputation, and not discard (*cast aside*) it too quickly by killing the king.^{1,7}

46f (below): Lady Macbeth excoriates her husband for abandoning the plan that would gain them the throne of Scotland.

46-47: Lady Macbeth shows her disdain, by wondering whether Macbeth's previously-expressed expectation (*hope*) of becoming king was like a drunken reveler that has since slept off its ambition.³

Note that Lady Macbeth also continues Macbeth's clothing metaphor with *dressed*.

46-47: *Was the hope...yourself* = Lady Macbeth's imagery is tangled and confusing: her husband's *hope* of becoming king is simultaneously identified with both the drunk himself and the suit of clothes the drunk has put on; note that the latter figure further adds a new clothing metaphor to one Macbeth employed in the previous speech.

48-49: the metaphor continues: Macbeth's drunken expectation has now awakened, but it appears sallow (*green*)

	At what it did so freely? From this time,	and <i>pale</i> , indicating it is sickly, or weakened; ^{1,3} <i>pale and green</i> was a very common collocation.
50	Such I account thy love. Art thou <u>afeard</u> To be the same in thine own <u>act</u> and <u>valour</u> ,	49: <i>At what it did so freely</i> = ie. when it previously spoke so glibly and easily. <i>From this time</i> = ie. from now on.
52	As thou art in desire? <u>Would'st thou have that</u>	50: <i>Such I account thy love</i> = Lady Macbeth implies that just as Macbeth has shown himself to be fickle or hesitant in his ambition to become king, so she shall assume him to be as fickle in his love for her. ⁵
54	Which thou <u>esteem'st</u> the ornament of life, And live a coward in thine own <u>esteem</u> ?	50-52: <i>Art thou...desire</i> = "are you afraid (<i>afeard</i>) to make your deeds (<i>act</i>) and bravery (<i>valour</i>) match your <i>desire</i> to become king?"
	Letting "I dare not" <u>wait upon</u> "I would",	52-54: <i>Would'st thou...esteem</i> = "do you want to possess <i>that</i> (ie. the crown) which you judge (<i>esteem'st</i>) to be the most important thing to adorn life (<i>the ornament of life</i>), yet live as a coward in your own eyes or estimation (<i>esteem</i>) (by failing to pursue it)?" ^{3,6} Note Shakespeare's wordplay here, using <i>esteem</i> as both a verb and a noun. <i>Would'st thou have that</i> = it has been noted that the sentence would make more natural sense if this were emended to " <i>Would'st thou leave that</i> ". ⁸
56	Like the poor cat i' th' adage?	55: like a metaphorical servant, "I dare not" always follows "I will". ⁵ <i>wait upon</i> = attend.
58	<i>Macbeth.</i> Prythee, peace:	56: Lady Macbeth alludes to a well-known proverb, " <i>the cat would eat fish, but she will not wet her feet</i> ", meaning that the cat sees a potential yummy fish in a small body of water, but is unwilling to step into the water to get it, because it does not want to get its feet wet. Similarly, Macbeth wants the crown but is unwilling to take the necessary action to obtain it. The cat proverb can be found in John Heywood's 1555 book of epigrams.
	I dare do all that <u>may become</u> a man;	58: "please, quiet." <i>Prythee</i> = common spelling of "pray thee", meaning "I ask you", or "please".
60	Who dares <u>do more</u> is none.	= is fitting or appropriate for.
62	<i>L. Macbeth.</i> What <u>beast</u> was't, then, That made you <u>break</u> this <u>enterprise</u> to me?	60: ie. anyone who tries to do more than is appropriate cannot be considered a real man: Macbeth suggests honour is lost when one exceeds what is fitting. For line 60, the Folio prints, " <i>Who dares no more is none</i> ", which contradicts Macbeth's intended meaning; so, <i>no more</i> is usually emended to <i>do more</i> . Another solution to interpreting line 60 as it appears in the Folio has been to reassign it to Lady Macbeth, as a direct response to Macbeth's plea of line 59. ⁸
		62-63: Macbeth has just asserted that, anyone who does more than is appropriate is no longer a man; Lady Macbeth responds by asking, what kind of creature (<i>beast</i>) was it then (clearly not a man, by Macbeth's own logic) that did broach

64 When you durst do it, then you were a man.

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

66 Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:

68 They have made themselves, and that their fitness now

Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
70 How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
72 Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
74 As you have done to this.

76 **Macbeth.** If we should fail?

78 **L. Macbeth.** We fail?

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,

or disclose (*break*) the idea to her of killing Duncan?^{4,5}

We may note that Lady Macbeth is being disingenuous, as she was the first to raise the idea between them: see her speech at Act I.v.87-97 above, in which she implies that Duncan will not leave the castle alive.

enterprise = task, undertaking.¹

64: when Macbeth dared (*durst*) bring up the idea, he was acting like a true man.

65-66: *And...the man* = "and, to become something greater (ie. a king) than you currently are (ie. a thane) by daring to do this deed, you would prove yourself to be even more of a real man."

66-67: *Nor time...make both* = literally, "at the time you made the decision to implement this plan (*then*), neither the time nor occasion (*Nor time, nor place*) agreed or cohered (*Did adhere*), ie. fit the circumstances, to do so;¹ yet, you were prepared to (*would*) make the right time and place happen."

That is, it was neither the right time nor situation to actually commit the murder (because Duncan was not yet at the castle), but at least at that moment Macbeth was willing to create the opportunity.³

Nor...nor = commonly used for "neither...nor".

68-69: *They have...unmake you* = "well, now that the time and place (*They*) are suitable (*have made themselves*), their very suitability has undone you (*Does unmake you*)."

unmake you = the sense is, unman or unnerve Macbeth, because he is now incapable of doing the deed, or lost the resolve to do it.^{1,2,3}

Note Lady Macbeth's wordplay, opposing *made* with *unmake*.

69-74: *I have...to this* = attempting to shame her husband into regaining his courage to murder Duncan, Lady Macbeth emphasizes that she would never fail to carry out a vow, even if it had been to kill her own baby, whom she loved.

given suck = ie. nursed babies.

milks = ie. obtains milk from.

the brains = ie. the infant's brains.

Line 74: nowhere in the play has Macbeth ever sworn he would kill Duncan; however, he may have done so in a conversation that did not take place on-stage.

= ie. what if.

78: Lady Macbeth's response may be read as contemptuous and impatient: "what? us fail? impossible!"

Some early commentators have asserted that this brief line should be concluded with a period, giving Lady Macbeth's response a fatalistic sense of, "then we fail."⁸ With this miniscule emendation, her succeeding thought, presented as a contrast – "but if you keep up your courage, then we will not fail" – might also make more sense.

79: metaphorically, Lady Macbeth encourages her husband not to let his courage falter.

screw your courage to the sticking-place = Shakespeare imagines **courage** as a **screw** being turned "until it becomes tightly fixed" (OED):¹ her point is to inspire Macbeth to hold onto his courage, and not let it weaken; **sticking-place**, literally, is a place where something becomes stuck.¹

In the early 17th century, the expression "screw up" began to appear in literature to mean "raise" or "elevate", and was used frequently – scores of times in the 17th century – in a metaphorical sense: "*come, join we hands, and screw up all their spite*" (1615); "*could I screw up my brain so high with soaring raptures*" (1657).

At some point (I have not been able to find any examples in the 17th century), someone first wrote, "*screw up one's courage*", a now-common expression. Though credit is usually given to Shakespeare for creating it, the meaning of line 79 (ie. to raise one's courage, and then keep it at that elevated level) is not exactly the same as that of the common modern expression.

81-82: *Whereto...him* = literally, Duncan will be strongly (**Soundly**) "invited" by the personified long and wearying trip to the castle into a deep sleep all the more (**the rather**).⁵

Whereto = ie. to which state, referring to his being **asleep** in the previous line.

Soundly = primarily meaning "fully, thoroughly", but also is suggestive of Duncan's being in a deep, uninterrupted sleep (ie. sleeping soundly).

82-87: *his two...a death* = Lady Macbeth will get the two guards of Duncan's room completely drunk, to the point where they will be senseless.

chamberlains = attendants of Duncan's bedchamber; essentially the guards of his private room.²

83: Lady Macbeth will overpower (**convince**)⁸ the two guards with wine and alcohol to such an extent...

wassail = usually refers either to the salutation used in the drinking to one's health, or to a spiced ale; but here suggestive of a stronger liquor.¹

84-86: *That memory...only* = that memory, which is personified as the brain's watchkeeper or sentinel (**warder**), will turn into a vapour or mist (**fume**) which will rise into another chamber, or receptacle (**receit**), of the brain, the one which houses **reason**; this second chamber thus figuratively being converted into a distillation vessel (**limbeck**).^{1,2,3}

Historical Context: the imagery here alludes to the belief that the brain is comprised of three chambers, or ventricles; the hindmost of these chambers – the cerebellum – was thought to be the seat of memory.¹³ Shakespeare imagines that the other two chambers (the middle chamber being the seat of reason, the foremost the seat of imagination) can be reached only through the chamber of memory, thus suggesting that memory acts as a figurative gatekeeper, or guard, of the other two chambers.^{4,5} As the fumes of the alcohol rise from the stomach into the memory's chamber, memory is so overcome that it fails in its job to protect the rest of the brain, and the fumes pass into the chamber of reason, causing the men to lose their sense of reason (ie. by

80 And we'll not fail: when Duncan is asleep,
(Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey

82 Soundly invite him), his two chamberlains

Will I with wine, and wassail, so convince,

84 That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason

86 A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep
 Their drenched natures lies as in a death,

88 What cannot you and I perform upon
 90 Th' unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
 His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
 Of our great quell?

92 **Macbeth.** Bring forth men-children only:
 94 For thy undaunted mettle should compose

96 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,

98 That they have done't?

100 **L. Macbeth.** Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar,

102 Upon his death?

104 **Macbeth.** I am settled, and bend up

becoming inebriated).^{4,5}

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare wrote of a group of mental notions that "*are begot in the ventricle of memory*".

limbeck (line 86) = ie. an alembic; properly, an apparatus used for distilling, comprised of two vessels: the first contains the substance to be distilled, and the second (connected to the first) the receiver of the condensed vapour boiled out of the first vessel.

Here, the chamber of **reason** is identified with the second vessel, since it receives the fumes from the chamber of memory.

86-87: **when in...death** = once they are saturated or drowned (**drenched**) with alcohol, the men will fall into a sleep so deep that it will resemble death itself.

swinish sleep = sleeping like swine; the metaphor emphasizes the men's senseless, animal-like state when they are completely drunk. There is an interesting citation from 1577, which compares a group of sleeping people to swine, because they slept "*all in one heap*."

drenched natures = the men's natural states being saturated with alcohol.²

lies = note the lack of grammatical agreement with **natures**, a common feature in Elizabethan writing.

89-91: **what not...quell** = loosely paraphrased, "what can we not impose on Duncan's drunken guards, who shall be blamed for the murder (**quell**)?"¹

89-90: **what not...officers** = "what will we not be able to lay upon Duncan's guards";¹ the sense is that the guards will be so drunk, that Macbeth and his wife can easily place the blame on them.

spongy = having the capacity to absorb liquid, like a sponge; some editors gloss **spongy** to mean "drunken",^{3,4} though this sense is not recorded by the OED.

93-95: **Bring forth...males** = speaking with a sense of – perhaps uneasy – admiration, Macbeth declares that his wife should give birth (**Bring forth**) only to male children (**men-children**), because her fearless spirit (**undaunted mettle**) would produce or form (**compose**)² only sons.

= ie. will it not in fact be believed.³

= ie. smeared. = ie. the two sleeping guards.

= treated (**used**) their daggers the same way, ie. by smearing them too with blood.

= believe otherwise.

101: in view of the way in which (**As**)³ the noble couple will loudly express their grief and make their outcries; note the subtle personification of the **griefs** and **clamour** "roaring".

= on account of.²

104: **settled** = resolved, determined.^{1,3}

Each corporal agent to this terrible feat. –

104-5: **bend up...feat** = will brace or strain (**bend up**) every bodily or physical faculty (**corporal agent**) to perform this formidable act (**feat**).^{1,2}

corporal agent = suggests that certain parts of Macbeth's body – his arms, hands, etc. – act as the instruments or "doers" (the **agents**)¹ of the deed.

corporal = much more commonly used in Shakespeare's time than **corporeal**, which only overtook **corporal** in frequency in the mid-17th century.

106 Away, and mock the time with fairest show:

106: "then let us go, and deceive the world (**mock the time**)⁵ with our best appearance;" Macbeth is ready to return to the royal supper, and act as if all is normal.

108 False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

107: one must present a pleasant yet deceitful expression (**false face**), ie. demeanor, to disguise and conceal the disloyal feelings (**false heart**) beneath it.

Note that lines 106-7 comprise a rhyming couplet, a common technique used to signal the end of a scene; similarly, many scenes also end with a bit of sententious wisdom, as spoken in line 107.

Throughout the play, **show** (and its derivatives, like **showed**, etc.) is printed in the Folio as **shew**; except in two cases, in which **show** appears as the last word in a line as part of a rhyming couplet: in line 106, **show** is used to rhyme with **know** in the next line; see also Act IV.i.101-2.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*The same night: late night.
A Court within the Castle.*

Enter Banquo, and Fleance with a torch before him.

1 **Banquo.** How goes the night, boy?

2 **Fleance.** The moon is down: I have not heard the clock.

4 **Banquo.** And she goes down at twelve.

6 **Fleance.** I take't, 'tis later, sir.
8

Banquo. Hold, take my sword: – there's husbandry in
Heaven;

10 Their candles are all out: – take thee that too.

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,

12 And yet I would not sleep: –

Merciful powers, restrain in me the cursèd thoughts
14 That nature gives way to in repose!

The Setting: the scene takes place in an inner court within Macbeth's castle at Inverness.

Entering Characters: **Banquo**, the Scottish commander, we have met before. **Fleance**, Banquo's son, is acting as his attendant. A torchbearer (**torch**) precedes them. Kittredge suggests that Banquo has just escorted the king to his private chamber, and is now himself heading to bed.

1: Banquo is asking for the time of night; although I could find no examples of "**How goes the night**" (or day) appearing pre-Shakespeare, it was used frequently in 17th century literature as a way to inquire how far the night has progressed, or even the specific time.

3: **is down** = has gone down, ie. has set.
heard the clock = Fleance has not heard the clock strike, so he cannot state the time with confidence.

= the moon; the moon was typically personified as feminine, and frequently referred to as **she**.

7: logically, then, it must be after midnight.

9: **Hold** = frequently used to signal that the speaker is about to hand something over to another; analogous to the modern, "here".

9-10: **there's husbandry...out** = with a humorous metaphor, Banquo observes that the stars are not shining; comparing stars to **candles**, he suggests Heaven is frugal (**husbandry** = thrift, economy)¹ because it is choosing not to "light" them. Shakespeare had used the same metaphor in *Romeo and Juliet*, when Romeo observed approaching dawn by noting, "*Night's candles are burnt out*."³

= Banquo hands Fleance another of his accoutrements, perhaps his dagger, shield, or helmet.⁵

11: Banquo is very sleepy.

Another metaphor: like a burdensome weight, drowsiness **lies upon** Banquo, calling him to sleep (hence, a **summons**).

The still-common simile of describing something as **heavy as lead** was already frequently used in the 16th century.

= ie. could not, cannot; Banquo is vaguely uneasy.

13-14: Banquo prays to the heavens to prevent the arising of evil (**cursèd**) thoughts which naturally come to mind when one is at rest (**in repose**).¹ Banquo is presumably unable to keep his mind off of the Witches' prophecies, and the temptation with which they fill him.

		Shakespeare's deep and native psychological insight is on full display here.
16	<i>Enter Macbeth, and a Servant with a torch.</i>	
18	Give me my sword: – Who's there?	
20	Macbeth. A friend.	
22	Banquo. What sir, not yet at rest? The king's abed. He hath been in unusual pleasure and	23: Duncan has been in an unusually happy mood.
24	Sent forth great <u>largess</u> to your <u>offices</u> :	24: and he has distributed generous gifts (largess) to the servants of the castle. ⁵ offices = properly, the servants' quarters, hence, the servants themselves. ^{2,4}
26	This diämond he greets your wife <u>withal</u> , By the name of most kind hostess, And <u>shut up</u> in <u>measureless</u> content.	= ie. with. ³ 26: Duncan has complimented Lady Macbeth.
28	Macbeth. Being unprepared,	27: the king concluded (shut up) his remarks (or the day) enjoying a feeling of boundless (measureless) satisfaction. ^{4,7} shut up = brought to an end; ¹ in early Modern English, shut up was frequently used to describe the wrapping up of one's speech or writing (e.g., <i>Thus have I spoken sufficiently of the Isles of the Hebrides, ... and therewith all would shut up my discourse of the same...</i> (1577)). One wonders if this usage is the precursor to the modern, rude imperative, "Shut up!"
30	<u>Our will</u> became the <u>servant</u> to <u>defect</u> ,	29-31: literally, "having been unprepared (for the king's visit), my desire (Our will) became subservient (servant) to my deficiency (defect); otherwise, my desire would have been free to act unrestrainedly." ^{1,6}
32	Which else should <u>free</u> have wrought.	Speaking rather obscurely, Macbeth is stating that he would have liked to have done more for the king, but Duncan's visit caught him unprepared (line 29); as a result, his desire to entertain Duncan more lavishly was hampered by his shortcomings, ie. his inability to do as much as he wished (30). Otherwise, he would have acted more generously (31). ^{4,5}
34	Banquo. All's well. I dreamt last night of the three weyward sisters: To you they have shewed some truth.	free = ie. freely; meaning "without hindrance", hence suggesting "lavishly" or "generously". ^{1,2}
36	Macbeth. I think not of them:	35: at least one of the Witches' predictions has already come true.
38	Yet when <u>we</u> can entreat an hour to serve, We would spend it in some words upon <u>that business</u> ,	37: Macbeth is disingenuous!
40	If you would grant the time.	38-40: when the two of them (we) have an hour at their service, Macbeth would like to speak with Banquo further on the topic of the Witches and their predictions (that business). ⁸
42	Banquo. At your kind'st leisure.	Line 38: literally, "when we can induce the busy time to grant us a little leisure for the purpose" (Kittredge, p. 130). ³ we = not the royal "we", but simply "you and I". ³
44	Macbeth. If you shall <u>cleave</u> to my <u>consent</u> ,	42: "at your pleasure." 44-45: literally, "if you adhere (cleave) to my opinion or

	When 'tis, it shall make honour for you.	advice (<i>consent</i>), then when the time comes (<i>When 'tis</i>), it will provide you with honour." If Banquo is willing to go along with Macbeth's plan, he will reward Banquo.
		<i>When 'tis</i> = might refer specifically to the time when the prophecy of Macbeth's attaining the throne comes true. ⁸
		Macbeth's brief address to Banquo seems deliberately cryptic.
		Some editors gloss <i>consent</i> to mean "party" or "faction": hence, if Banquo will join or be of Macbeth's party when the time comes, his honour will be enhanced. ^{3,4}
46	<i>Banquo.</i> So I lose none	47-50: "provided that (<i>So</i>) I lose no honour (as a result of acting faithlessly or unethically) in looking to add to my honour (<i>augment it</i>), but am always (<i>still</i>) able to keep my heart morally upright (<i>my bosom franchised</i>), and my loyalty (<i>allegiance</i>) to Duncan unblemished (<i>clear</i>), I will listen to what you have to say." ^{1,3,5}
48	In seeking to <u>augment it</u> , but <u>still</u> keep	
50	<u>My bosom franchised</u> , and <u>allegiance clear</u> , I shall be counselled.	<i>franchised</i> = meaning "free", but suggesting "free from moral stain or evil". ^{1,2}
52	<i>Macbeth.</i> Good repose the while!	52: "I wish you a good night's rest in the meantime!"
54	<i>Banquo.</i> Thanks sir: the like to you.	
56	[<i>Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.</i>]	
58	<i>Macbeth.</i> [<i>To Servant.</i>] Go <u>bid thy mistress</u> , when <u>my drink</u> is ready,	59: <i>bid thy mistress</i> = ie. ask Lady Macbeth. <i>my drink</i> = the cup of warm, spiced wine usually drunk at bedtime. ^{3,5}
60	She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.	60: Macbeth tells his servant that the bell is to be rung to let him know his drink is ready; in reality, it will be the signal that lets Macbeth know it is time to kill Duncan (see lines 94-96 below).
62	[<i>Exit Servant.</i>]	
64	Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle toward my hand? – Come, let me <u>clutch</u> thee: – I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.	64-65: Macbeth sees a dagger floating in the air in front of him; the first crack in his mental stability makes itself known. 65-66: <i>Come...still</i> = Macbeth reaches out, but fails, to seize (<i>clutch</i>) the vision of the dagger.
68	Art thou not, <u>fatal vision</u> , sensible To feeling, as to sight? or art thou but A dagger <u>of the mind</u> , a false creation, <u>Proceeding from</u> the <u>heat-oppressèd</u> brain? –	67-72 (below): Macbeth tries to make sense of the incorporeal dagger: it looks real, but is it? Macbeth continues to apostrophize the dagger. 67: <i>fatal vision</i> = a vocative, describing the dagger as a hallucination or manifestation, the sight of which will determine either Duncan's or Macbeth's own fate. ^{3,5} 67-68: <i>sensible...sight</i> = capable of being felt, just as it can be seen. ³ <i>sensible</i> = perceptible to the senses. ¹ = ie. hallucinated. 70: <i>Proceeding from</i> = arising or emanating from. ¹ <i>heat-oppressed</i> = burdened or disordered by fever;

72	I see thee <u>yet</u>, in form as <u>palpable</u> As this which now I draw. Thou <u>marshall'st</u> me the way that I was going, 74 And such an <u>instrument</u> I was to use. Mine eyes are <u>made the fools o'</u> th' other senses, 76 Or else worth all the rest: – <u>I see thee still</u>; And on thy blade and <u>dudgeon</u>, <u>gouts</u> of blood, 78 Which was not so before. – <u>There's no such thing</u>: It is <u>the bloody business</u> which <u>informs</u> 80 Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse	hence, "feverishly excited", ie. mentally agitated.⁶ = still. = perceptible. 72: ie. as his own dagger, which he is now drawing. 73: the dagger seems to be guiding Macbeth in the direction towards which he was already heading. marshall'st = to <i>marshal</i> is to guide or lead.¹ 74: and the incorporeal dagger floating before him represents, in fact, the type of weapon he intended to employ (to murder the king). instrument = tool or device used for a particular purpose.¹ 75-76: Mine eyes...the rest = either Macbeth's other senses are making his eyes seem foolish (line 75), or his eyes are in fact more reliable than the other senses combined (or else worth all the rest): Macbeth still cannot determine whether or not he should trust what he sees. made the fools o' = the still-familiar expression, "to make a fool of", has appeared in literature since the 1570s. = there may be a pause before Macbeth speaks these words. 77-78: And on...before = a new element manifests: now blood appears on the dagger's blade and handle (dudgeon). gouts = drops, traces, used especially for blood.^{1,2} not so (line 78) = ie. not covered with blood. = Macbeth now concludes that the dagger is in fact not real. 79-80: It is...eyes = the whole thing about the murder (the bloody business) is causing (illusory) information or shapes (ie. the appearance of the unreal dagger) to appear before Macbeth's eyes.^{1,3,7} informs = the OED glosses informs in this line to mean "causes to appear in visible shape" (OED);¹ however, the more likely meaning is, "gives information".³ It was common in contemporary literature to describe what the eye sees as allowing the eyes to <i>inform</i> the mind; however, there are instances in which what the eyes see is described as <i>informing</i> the eyes, as Macbeth uses the figure: e.g., "<i>the breaking of that bread informed their eye sight that he would fulfil his promise</i>" (1573). 80-81: Now o'er...dead = over half the world, everything is still and appears lifeless (dead): a lovely, poetic way of describing the night that covers half the world. 81-82: wicked dreams...sleep = sleep is misused by, or inflicted with, evil dreams. curtained sleep (line 82) = there are several possible interpretations of this collocation: (1) when asleep, one no longer sees with one's eyes, as if they have a curtain drawn about them; (2) the closed eyes themselves are like curtains; or (3) more literally, a description of a sleeper whose bed is
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- 82 The curtained sleep: witchcraft celebrates
- Pale Hecat's off'rings; and withered murther,
- 84 Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,
- Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
86 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design

surrounded with curtains.^{3,5}

82-83: *witchcraft...off'rings* = the Witches (*witchcraft*) are sacrificing or giving gifts (making *offerings*) to the goddess Hecate.^{1,4}

celebrates = to *celebrate* is to perform a solemn ritual.¹

Hecat's (line 83) = *Hecate* was the Greek goddess of witchcraft.¹ *Hecate* is a three-syllable word (*He-ca-tē*), but Shakespeare appears to have preferred a two-syllable variant (*He-cat*), so the name is spelled *Hecat* throughout the Folio.

Pale Hecat's (line 83) = Hecate was sometimes identified with the moon, hence the attribute *pale*.

83-87 (below): *withered murther...like a ghost* = in this dense passage, Macbeth makes the broad point that he is moving stealthily but steadily towards the act of murder.

= murder is personified as an old man, wasted away with age.

withered = decayed, shriveled, deprived of vitality: frequently applied to a person.¹

murther = common variant of "murder".

84-85: *Alarumed...watch* = the old man who represents personified Murder is roused to action (*Alarumed*) by his guard (*sentinel*), the *wolf*, whose howl is a signal (*watch*), letting him know it is time to act;^{1,4} that is, the wolf howls to wake Murder at the proper time of night.⁵

Alarumed = *alarum* was a common variant of "alarm".

Whose howl's his watch = another line open to other interpretations:

(1) the wolf howls at regular intervals to mark the different periods (the *watches*) into which night was traditionally divided, hence marking the progress of the night;^{1,5}

(2) the howl of the wolf acts like a timepiece (a *watch*), "striking the hour" (Kittredge, p. 132);³ or

(3) the wolf's howl acts like a watchman's cry (Jowett, p. 2520).⁷

Whichever view the reader feels most sympathetic to, the basic point remains unchanged: the wolf howls to alert Murder to get moving.

85-87: *thus with...ghost* = having been alerted by the wolf, Murder moves stealthily (*with his stealthy pace*), like a *ghost*, towards his goal or purpose (*his design*).

pace = manner of walking.⁶

With Tarquin's ravishing strides = allusion to Lucius Tarquinius, an early Roman king, who, in a well-known story, raped (hence, *ravishing strides*) Lucrece, the beautiful daughter of one of his noblemen; the act caused such outrage that Tarquin and the monarchy were overthrown, and the Republic formed. In 1594, Shakespeare wrote and published an entire long poem (*The Rape of Lucrece*) about this story.

The conceit, then, is that Murder moves stealthily – and with just as evil an intent – as did Tarquin when he approached Lucrece. Shakespeare, in fact, seems, as he wrote this clause, to have had in mind his *Lucrece's* "Argument", or prologue, in which he described how Tarquin "*treacherously stealeth into her chamber, violently*

88 Moves like a ghost. – Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,

90 And take the present horror from the time,

92 Which now suits with it. – Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

94 [A bell rings.]

96 I go, and it is done: the bell invites me. –
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell

ravished her, and early in the morning speedeth away".

strides = printed as *sides* in the Folio, usually emended to *strides*.

87-89: ***Thou sure...whereabouts*** = Macbeth apostrophizes the earth beneath his feet, beseeching it to keep his footsteps quiet, so that they do not reveal that he is walking towards the commission of his crime.

Thou sure and firm-set earth = Macbeth describes the ground below his feet as firm, immovable, and strongly-fixed:^{1,6} this is a good example of pleonasm – the use of two synonymous, and therefore redundant, words (here, ***sure*** and ***firm-set***) for poetic effect.

sure = the Folio prints *sowre* (ie. sour), usually emended to *sure*.

which way they walk (line 88) = "which direction (***way***) my footsteps are taking me;" the Folio prints "*which they may walk*", which is usually emended as shown. Another proposed emendation is "*where they may walk*".⁸

prate = prattle.¹

90-91: *And take...with it* = editors have offered a couple of different interpretations of this line, which describes the expected consequence of the clamour of his footsteps, depending on the meaning of ***the present horror***:

(1) if ***present horror*** refers to the silence, then the line may be glossed, "and as a result (of the sound created by Macbeth's footsteps), lose the feeling and atmosphere of the moment";^{3,7} or

(2) if ***present horror*** refers to the murder of Duncan, then the suggestion is that the undesirable noise, by alerting others to Macbeth's presence, may force him to defer the murder which he intends to commit now, since the present conditions – the darkness and stillness – are perfectly suited for the deed.⁵

91-92: ***Whiles I...gives*** = Macbeth spurs himself to get going.

Whiles I threat, he lives = "as long as I am only making threats, Duncan remains alive", ie. all talk and no action doesn't get the job done.

Line 92: talk alone (***Words***), with its figurative ***cold breath***, cools (ie. diminishes) the intensity and urgency of action (***the heat of deeds***); that is, solely talking about the deed ultimately leads to loss of resolve.

Note that **(1)** lines 91-92 form a rhyming couplet; and **(2)** line 92 offers a piece of sententious wisdom. Both of these techniques serve to signal the substantive end of both Macbeth's soliloquy and the scene.

94: earlier, at lines 59-60 above, Macbeth had instructed his servant to ask Lady Macbeth to ring a bell to let him know his bedtime-drink was ready; in reality, the ringing serves as a pre-arranged signal to let Macbeth know that conditions are right (specifically, Duncan has gone to sleep and his guards have passed out in their drunkenness) for Macbeth to proceed with the murder.

97-98: a second rhyming couplet reinforces the arrival of

98	That summons thee to Heaven, or to hell.	the end of the scene. <i>knell</i> = slow ringing of a bell at a funeral. ¹
	[Exit.]	
	<u>ACT II, SCENE II.</u>	
	<i>The same.</i>	
	<i>Enter Lady Macbeth.</i>	Entering Character: Kittredge suggests that Lady Macbeth is standing near the foot of the stairs leading to the bedrooms of the king and his sons. ³
1	L. Macbeth. <u>That which</u> hath made them drunk hath made me bold:	1-2: That which...fire = Lady Macbeth observes that she has drunk the same strong night-draught (That which) that she had given Duncan's guards to incapacitate them; only in her case, it has given her courage and spirit. Line 2 presents a nice metaphorical antithesis: while the drink has given her fire (ie. has energized her), it has quenched , or extinguished, the fire of the guards (ie. has knocked them out). ⁵ quenched (line 2) = suppressed, hence "stupefied". ^{1,2,6} given (line 2) = pronounced in one-syllable: <i>gi'en</i> .
2	What hath quenched them, hath given me fire. – <u>Hark!</u> <u>Peace!</u> It was the <u>owl</u> that <u>shrieked</u> , the <u>fatal bellman</u> ,	2: Hark = listen! Peace = quiet! 3: Lady Macbeth had heard an owl , whose shriek was thought to portend evil, calamity or death. ^{3,11} fatal = ominous. ² bellman = the owl is compared to the town crier or watchman who, once upon a time, rang a bell while announcing deaths and executions, ^{1,2,6} or who visited condemned prisoners the night before their executions; Duncan, of course, is the figured condemned victim. ^{4,5,8}
4	<u>Which gives the stern'st good-night.</u> – <u>He is about it,</u> The <u>doors</u> are open; and the <u>surfeited grooms</u>	4: Which...good-night = the owl's shriek is like a harsh "good-night": Lady Macbeth may be implying that the owl has just given Duncan a most severe and pitiless (stern'st) final farewell! He is about it = Lady Macbeth refocuses on the present moment: she hears Macbeth moving, and realizes he is about to kill the king. 5: doors = ie. the doors through which Macbeth must pass, including that of Duncan's bedchamber. 5-6: the surfeited...snores = the literal sense is, the drunken guards are, with their snoring, scoffing or ridiculing (ie. making a mockery of) their duty or responsibility (their charge) to protect the king. ^{2,5} In other words, the attendants are not doing their jobs. surfeited = satiated or filled; ¹ here, with liquor specifically; the word surfeit (and its derivatives) was typically used to describe the consumption of food or drink to excess. grooms = male attendants, servingmen. ²
6	Do mock their charge with snores. <u>I have</u> drugged their <u>possets</u> ,	6: I have drugged their possets = Lady Macbeth adds a twist: she had not mentioned before that she planned to drug the guards, just get them inebriated. I have = pronounce "I've".

8 That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live, or die.

10 **Macbeth.** [*Within.*] Who's there? what, ho!

12 **L. Macbeth.** Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done: th' attempt and not the deed,

14 Confounds us: – Hark! I laid their daggers ready,

16 He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't. –

18 *Enter Macbeth.*

20 My husband!

22 **Macbeth.** I have done the deed: didst thou not hear a noise?

24 **L. Macbeth.** I heard the owl scream, and the crickets cry.

26 Did not you speak?

28 **Macbeth.** When?

30 **L. Macbeth.** Now.

Macbeth. As I descended?

possets = a *posset* was a drink made by mixing wine or ale with hot curdled milk and flavoured with sugar and spices.¹

7-8: the guards have been so heavily drugged that *death* and mortal life (*nature*)² seem to be in combat (they *do contend*) over whether the men will live or die; the purpose of this line is only to highlight the degree of the guards' drunkenness, and not to imply that they were in any literal danger of dying.³

10: *Within* = Macbeth is calling from off-stage; he has heard a noise or sensed someone nearby.
what, ho = common exclamation used to get someone's attention.¹

12-16 (below): Lady Macbeth is stricken with the fear that Macbeth has failed to carry out the deed, perhaps because the guards have awakened from their stupor after all.

= common interjection to express regret.¹ = ie. the guards.

13-14: *th' attempt...us* = "to attempt the murder (*the deed*) without (*and not*) actually consummating it would ruin (*Confound*) us."²

= after the guards were knocked out, Lady Macbeth had placed their daggers in such a way that Macbeth would easily find them; his task was to use the daggers to kill the king, making sure they were smeared with Duncan's blood and gore.

15-16: *He could* = ie. Macbeth could.

Had he not = ie. had Duncan not.

Lines 15-16: *Had he...done't* = Lady Macbeth reveals a surprising weakness in her character, offering a flimsy excuse for not killing Duncan herself, had the job been her responsibility.

Entering Character: Macbeth is carrying the guards' blood-stained daggers with him; see line 81 below.

22-37 (below): this bit of confused dialogue suggests that both Macbeth and his wife have become slightly disoriented, as they come to grips with the fact that Macbeth really did kill Duncan.

24: *scream* = ie. screech.

crickets cry = the chirp of a cricket was sometimes thought to be ominous.¹¹

31: ie. as Macbeth descended the stairs after killing Duncan.

32	L. Macbeth. Ay.	
34	Macbeth. Hark, – who lies i’ <u>th’ second chamber</u> ?	= ie. the second bedroom; there are likely multiple bedrooms on the floor occupied by Duncan.
36	L. Macbeth. Donalbain.	
38	Macbeth. [<u>Looking on his hands.</u>] This is a <u>sorry</u> sight.	37: Donalbain is Duncan's younger son (Malcolm is the older one). 40: perhaps because his hands are covered with blood. Looking on his hands = this stage direction is not in the Folio, but is inserted here in many editions. sorry = pitiful, wretched. ⁵
40	L. Macbeth. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.	42: Lady Macbeth once again takes to mocking her husband, ridiculing his horror and fear.
42	Macbeth. There’s one did laugh in’s sleep,	
44	And one cried, “Murther!” <u>that</u> they did wake each other:	43-46: Macbeth heard two people interacting, perhaps from the second bedroom: the pair seemed to have wakened each other up, maybe because of the disturbance caused by the slaying of the king, before returning to sleep. Some commentators assume Macbeth is talking about the guards, who were reacting to the murder of the king; Kittredge, however, argues that the guards were too drugged to wake up this way; he suggests instead that Macbeth is describing the conversation he overheard in the second chamber, outside of which he had to stand quietly until the people in the room went back to sleep, before he could descend the steps.
46	I stood and heard them: but they did say their prayers, And <u>addressed them again to sleep.</u>	that (line 44) = ie. so that. ⁵ addressed them again to sleep = they returned their attention or energies to going to sleep, ie. settled themselves back into sleep. ^{2,5,6,7}
48	L. Macbeth. There are two lodged together.	48: Lady Macbeth assures her husband that there were indeed two people sharing the second bedroom.
50	Macbeth. One cried, “God bless us!” and, “Amen,” the other, <u>As</u> they had seen me with these <u>hangman’s</u> hands:	50: the prayers Macbeth referred to in line 45 above are concluded. = ie. as if. = executioner's. ^{3,4}
52	<u>List’ning their fear, I could not say “Amen,”</u> When they did say, “God bless us!”	52: List’ning their fear = hearing the alarm in the voices of the two men. ³ 52-53: I could not...bless us = blessings were typically followed by an "Amen". After hearing one of the voices say "God bless us", however, Macbeth found he was unable to utter "Amen", perhaps because of the spiritual guilt he felt over the unholy act he has just committed.
54	L. Macbeth. Consider <u>it</u> not so deeply.	55: Macbeth should not dwell on his inability to speak "Amen"; however, it could possibly refer to the murder or its spiritual implications. ³
56	Macbeth. But <u>wherefore</u> could not I pronounce “Amen”?	= why.
58	I had most need of blessing, and “Amen” Stuck in my throat.	
60	L. Macbeth. These deeds must not be <u>thought</u>	61-62: "we shouldn't think about acts like murder in this

62	<u>After these ways; so</u> , it will make us mad.	manner (<i>After these ways</i>); dwelling on them like this will drive us to madness." ³ <i>thought</i> = regarded, thought about. ³ <i>so</i> = ie. "if we do so". ³
64	Macbeth. Methought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder Sleep" – the innocent Sleep,	64-75 (below): Macbeth now fixates on a voice he heard crying that he (Macbeth) has "murdered sleep": in killing Duncan, he has committed a crime so grievous that he will never enjoy a restful sleep, or the peace and innocence sleep represents, ever again.
66	Sleep that <u>knits up</u> the <u>ravelled</u> <u>sleave</u> of <u>care</u> ,	66-69 (below): through numerous metaphors, "innocent sleep" is celebrated as a function that gives a person a break from worry and an opportunity to restore and refresh one's mind and body. 66: in this well-known but often misunderstood metaphor, personified Sleep is imagined as functioning to tie up (<i>knit up</i>) threads or filaments of silk (a <i>sleave</i> , representing worry, or <i>care</i>) that have become frayed, or separated (<i>ravelled</i>), from the main or thicker thread. ¹ In other words, Sleep acts to heal the mind from the anxieties of the day. <i>ravelled</i> = ie. unravelled. ¹ <i>sleave</i> = not to be confused with <i>sleeve</i> .
	<u>The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,</u>	67: <i>The death of each day's life</i> = sleep marks the end, or <i>death</i> , of the consciousness of daily life. <i>sore labour's bath</i> = sleep is like a bath that refreshes an aching body after a day of toil. ³
68	<u>Balm</u> of hurt minds, great nature's <u>second</u> <u>course</u> ,	68: <i>Balm</i> = ointment used to heal wounds. ¹
70	Chief nourisher in life's feast.	68-69: <i>great nature's...feast</i> = sleep is like the <i>second</i> , or main, <i>course</i> of a meal, and thus the heartiest and most physically nourishing part. ³
	L. Macbeth. What do you mean?	
72	Macbeth. Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all the house:	
74	" <u>Glamis</u> hath murdered sleep, and therefore <u>Cawdor</u>	74: <i>Glamis</i> and <i>Cawdor</i> , we remember, are Macbeth's former and current titles respectively.
	Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more!"	
76	L. Macbeth. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,	
78	You do <u>unbend</u> your noble strength to think	= weaken, undermine; ^{1,2} some editors, however, gloss <i>unbend</i> as "relax". ^{3,4}
	So <u>brainsickly</u> of things. Go get some water,	= incoherently. ¹
80	And wash <u>this filthy witness</u> from your hand. –	= ie. the blood as a witness to, or evidence of, the murder. ³
82	Why did you bring <u>these daggers</u> from the place?	= ie. the guards' daggers, used to kill Duncan.
	They must lie there: go carry them, and smear	
84	The sleepy grooms with blood.	
	Macbeth. I'll go no more:	85: ie. "I won't go back to Duncan's chamber again."
86	I am afraid, to think what I have done:	= ie. upon the scene of the murder.
	Look <u>on't</u> again, I dare not.	

88	<i>L. Macbeth.</i> <u>Infirm of purpose!</u>	89: Lady Macbeth accuses her husband of being weak (<i>Infirm</i>) in his resolve or determination (<i>of purpose</i>). ¹
90	Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood,	90-92: <i>the sleeping...devil</i> = those who are asleep or dead are as passive, inactive, and harmless as images in pictures, and it is only children who are afraid of a picture of something as frightening as the devil.
92	That fears a painted devil. <u>If he do bleed,</u>	92-94: <i>If he...guilt</i> = ie. if blood has in fact poured from Duncan's wounds (<i>If he do bleed</i>), Lady Macbeth will smear it on the guards' faces so that they appear guilty of the murder.
94	I'll <u>gild</u> the faces of the grooms <u>withal</u> , For it must seem their <u>guilt</u> .	<i>gild</i> = literally, to cover with a thin layer of gold; using <i>gild</i> metaphorically to describe her smearing the guards with the king's blood, Lady Macbeth may be trying to make light of the situation. ³ The connection of <i>gold</i> with <i>red</i> (the colour of the blood) is not illogical: <i>gold</i> had a long history of being described in literature as <i>red</i> , due to its turning red when heated; later, Duncan will be described as being covered with <i>golden blood</i> (see Act II.iii.209 below). ^{1,8} There is also a bit of wordplay with <i>gild</i> / <i>guilt</i> ; Shakespeare used the same pun in <i>Henry IV, Part II</i> : " <i>England shall double gild his treble guilt.</i> " <i>withal</i> = with it (ie. the blood). ^{2,6}
96	[Exit Lady Macbeth.]	= off-stage.
98	[Knocking <u>within</u> .]	= ie. from where. = horrifies, ie. fills with terror. ^{1,2}
100	<i>Macbeth.</i> <u>Whence</u> is that knocking? How is't with me, when every noise <u>appalls</u> me?	102: the sight of his own bloodstained hands makes Macbeth feel as if his eyes are being torn out – he cannot bear to look at them. = ie. can. = <i>Neptune</i> was the Roman god of the seas.
102	What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes. <u>Will</u> all great <u>Neptune's ocean</u> wash this blood	104-5: <i>this hand...incarnadine</i> = instead of acting to clean his hands, washing them in the ocean will only serve to turn the ocean red. <i>multitudinous</i> = having numerous ripples or waves. ^{1,5} <i>incarnadine</i> = turn to red or the colour of blood. ¹
104	Clean from my hand? No: this my hand will rather The <u>multitudinous</u> seas <u>incarnadine</u> ,	106: turning the green sea red. Another interpretation of this line has been to understand <i>one</i> to be an adjective of <i>red</i> , ie. "turning the sea, which is green, into a single universal red (<i>one red</i>). ^{1,8}
106	Making the <u>green one</u> , <u>red</u> .	Entering Character: Lady Macbeth returns from her errand, having smeared the guards with Duncan's blood. She has presumably returned the daggers to the guards' hands, similarly painting them with blood.
108	<i>Enter Lady Macbeth.</i>	110: <i>your colour</i> = ie. the same colour – red – as Macbeth's hands. <i>shame</i> = ie. would be ashamed.
110	<i>L. Macbeth.</i> My hands are of <u>your colour</u> , but I <u>shame</u> To wear a heart so <u>white</u> .	111: to possess so fearful a spirit: <i>white</i> was the colour of

112		cowardice. Lady Macbeth is once again trying to shame and humiliate her husband.
	[<i>Knocking within.</i>]	
114		
116	I hear a knocking At the south entry:	115-6: Kittredge explains that a gate at the south entry separates the "best and safest part of the castle" – where the Macbeths and the king and his sons are staying – from the rest of the property, where Banquo and the others are spending the night. The insistent knocking will continue to the end of this scene and into the next.
	<u>Retire we</u> to our chamber:	= ie. "let us retire".
118	A little water clears us of this deed.	118: all Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have to do is wash the blood off themselves, and no one will ever suspect them of killing the king.
	How easy is it then? Your <u>constancy</u> Hath left you <u>unattended</u> .	119-120: <i>Your constancy...unattended</i> = like a servant who has deserted him, Macbeth's steadfastness, or firmness of mind (his <i>constancy</i>) has abandoned him, leaving him metaphorically <i>unattended</i> . ^{1,6}
122		
124	[<i>Knocking within.</i>] <u>Hark</u> , more knocking. –	= listen.
	Get on your <u>nightgown</u> , lest <u>occasion</u> call us,	125: <i>nightgown</i> = loose gown worn over one's night-clothes. ^{1,4,5} 125-6: <i>lest occasion...watchers</i> = "just in case we are called upon, and found to be awake." <i>occasion</i> = circumstances, the situation. ² <i>watchers</i> (line 126) = persons who stay awake at night, ie. they have not gone to bed. ^{1,3}
126	And shew us to be watchers: be not <u>lost</u> So <u>poorly</u> in your <u>thoughts</u> .	126-7: <i>be not...thoughts</i> = Lady Macbeth admonishes Macbeth not to be so feebly or miserably (<i>poorly</i>) absorbed in his thoughts: in other words, she is telling him to snap out of it! ^{2,4,6} That Lady Macbeth describes her husband as <i>lost</i> in his <i>thoughts</i> suggests that he is once again "rapt". ³
128	<i>Macbeth.</i> To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.	129: If Macbeth must feel his crime to the full, then he would rather be unconscious (Kittredge, p. 73); ³ Stevenson glosses, "Rather than realize what I have done, it would be better for me to forget everything" (p. 106); ⁵ and Jowett, "for me to face what I have done, I must abandon my true nature" (p. 2523). ⁷
130		
	[<i>Knocking within.</i>]	131: the knocking shakes Macbeth out of his trance.
132	<u>Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!</u>	133: <i>Wake Duncan with thy knocking</i> = the persistent knocking is so loud, it could wake the dead king. <i>I would thou couldst</i> = Macbeth wishes (he <i>would</i>) the knocking could in fact return the king to life; his regret and horror are palpable.
134		
	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	<u>ACT II, SCENE III.</u>	

The same: the South Gate

*Enter a Porter.
Knocking within.*

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' th' name of
Belzebub? Here's a farmer that hanged himself on th'

expectation of plenty: – come in time, have napkins
enow about you, here you'll sweat for't.

[Knocking within.]

Knock, knock! Who's there, i' th' other devil's name?

Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both

The Setting: it is from the South Gate to Macbeth's castle that the continuous knocking has been coming.

Entering Character: the **Porter**, or gatekeeper, has charge of the castle's south gate. Our Porter serves as *Macbeth's* comic relief. The startling timing of his burlesque appearance – immediately after the murder of Duncan – creates a tension-heightening delay in the discovery of the king's body.

The Porter too has been roused by the incessant knocking at the gate, and must go see who is there. He is somewhat drunk, and obviously annoyed that he must see to the persistent disturbance.

1-2: acknowledging the persistent knocking at the gate, the Porter imagines himself to be the gatekeeper of hell itself (which, given what just took place in Duncan's chamber, may be closer to the truth than he realizes), where he reckons that he would certainly have plenty of (*should have old*)² gate-opening to do – a comment on the sinning nature of man!

old = colloquial term meaning "abundant amount" or "plenty of".^{3,4}

turning the key = ie. unlocking the entrance to hell.

6: this appears to be the first appearance of a proto-knock-knock joke in literature!

7: **Belzebub** = ie. Beelzebub, the devil.

7-8: **Here's a...plenty** = the Porter imagines the first sinner he admits into hell is a farmer who has committed suicide: killing oneself was considered a grave sin, and the suicide would not be permitted to enter Heaven.

On the surface, the line seems to simply describe a farmer who killed himself when his crop failed – he had an expectation of abundant crops (*plenty*) which failed to materialize.

However, many editors believe that the Porter is alluding to a tactic that was common enough in old England to merit frequent censure in the literature: during a famine or period of poor crops, a farmer might hold onto his grain to make extra profit from rising prices, even as the poor and hungry multiplied around him. In this case, however, when an unexpected good harvest caused a drop in prices, the hoarding farmer, ruined, hanged himself.^{3,4,5}

8-9: **come in...for't** = with dark humour, the Porter imagines himself welcoming the suicide farmer into hell.

come in time = "you have arrived on time".^{1,5}

napkins enow = ie. enough handkerchiefs (for wiping off the sweat he will experience in the extreme heat of hell).

enow = a variant of *enough*, used to modify plural nouns.

= Kittredge points out that the Porter, in his inebriation, cannot remember the name of any demon other than Beelzebub.

14-17: the Porter greets the next sinner.

16	the scales against either scale, <u>who committed treason</u>	<i>Faith</i> = ie. "in faith", a simple oath.
18	enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to Heaven: – Oh, come in, equivocator.	<i>an equivocator</i> = one who makes statements which can be interpreted in opposite ways. ⁵
		14-15: <i>that could...either scale</i> = the equivocator could make an ambiguous statement – one whose meaning was open to two contradictory interpretations – and swear that he meant either. ³
		The <i>scales</i> represent the equally-valid opposing interpretations of the equivocator's avowal (and thus were equally balanced on the scales), and he could swear that either was true to tip the scales one way or the other.
		These lines are thought to allude to the Jesuits in general, or to the Catholic prelate Henry Garnet in particular: Garnet was convicted for participating in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 (a plan to kill King James I by blowing up Parliament); Garnet was thought to have asserted at his trial that it was permissible to equivocate upon oath. ^{3,4,5}
		<i>who committed treason</i> = possible reference to the Gunpowder Plot. ^{3,5}
		16-17: <i>yet could not...Heaven</i> = but the Equivocator could not gain admittance into Heaven with his equivocation, ie. he could not deceive God with his sophistry; hence, his present entry into hell.
20	[Knocking within.]	
22	Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? 'Faith, here's	21-24: the last guest to arrive in hell is an English tailor. The tailor's crime seems to be that he tried to steal some cloth from a pair of tight-fitting French hose to use for his own customers. ³ Editors have speculated as to the exact joke being made here, but none are entirely convincing, or even funny.
24	an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: – come in tailor, here you may roast your <u>goose</u> .	23-24: <i>roast your goose</i> = ie. "heat your pressing iron" (called a <i>goose</i>), with obvious pun.
26	[Knocking within.]	
28	Knock, knock! Never at quiet: <u>what</u> are you? But <u>this place is too cold for hell</u> . I'll <u>devil-porter</u> it no	28-32 (below): the Porter gives up his game of pretending he is the gatekeeper of hell.
		= who.
		29: <i>this place...hell</i> = the Porter alludes to the chilly Scottish nighttime air.
		<i>devil-porter</i> = ie. play the combination devil and porter of hell.
30	further: I had thought to have <u>let in</u> some of all	30: <i>let in</i> = admit (into hell).
		30-31: <i>some of all professions</i> = ie. representatives of all the occupations, suggesting that there exist sinners in all walks of life.
	professions, that <u>go the primrose way</u> to th'	= literally, to travel a path strewn or covered with <i>primroses</i> (a yellow flower); the sense is, "to pursue a source of pleasure which might bring ruin or disastrous consequences" (OED). The metaphor of the <i>primrose path</i> or <i>way</i> seems to be Shakespeare's own invention; the conceit also appears in Hamlet: " <i>Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads...</i> "
32	<u>everlasting bonfire</u> .	= ie. eternal flames of hell.

34	[Knocking within.]	
36	<u>Anon</u> , anon, I pray you, remember the porter.	36: <i>Anon</i> = "wait a moment", "right away". ^{3,5} <i>I pray you</i> = please. <i>remember the porter</i> = a hint asking for a tip or his fee. ^{5,8}
38	[Opens the gate.]	
40	Enter Macduff and Lennox.	Entering Characters: <i>Macduff</i> and <i>Lennox</i> are two more Scottish nobles.
42	<i>Macduff</i> . Was it <u>so late</u> , friend, <u>ere</u> you went to bed, That you do lie <u>so late</u> ?	42-43: ie. "did you go to bed <i>so late</i> last night that you are still lying in bed (<i>you do lie</i>) <i>so late</i> this morning?" Note Macduff's light humour with his repetition of <i>so late</i> . <i>ere</i> = before.
44	<i>Porter</i> . Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second	
46	cock: and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.	45-46: <i>the second cock</i> = ie. the second cockcrow, which would have occurred sometime just before dawn, perhaps between 3 and 5:00 A.M. ^{3,8} = causer.
48	<i>Macduff</i> . What three things does drink especially	
50	provoke?	
52	<i>Porter</i> . <u>Marry</u> , sir, <u>nose-painting</u> , sleep, and urine.	52: the Porter lists three effects of excessive drinking. <i>Marry</i> = a common oath, derived from the name of the Virgin Mary. <i>nose-painting</i> = ie. reddening of the nose.
54	Lechery, sir, it provokes and unprovokes: it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance.	53-54: drinking has a contradictory effect on sexual activity: it stimulates arousal but impairs the ability to perform.
	Therefore, <u>much</u> drink may be said to be an	= ie. too much.
56	<u>equivocator</u> with Lechery: it makes him, and it mars	56-60: the dirty-minded Porter strings together a series of antitheses explaining the effects of drink on a man's libido – specifically, suggesting that at first, a man's increased lust is manifested physically by the rising of his member, but then he is ultimately unable to perform. <i>equivocator</i> = like the second sinner mentioned by the Porter (see lines 14-17 above) who could mean two opposing things with any particular vow, drinking has contradictory effects on a man's sexual capacity. 56-57: <i>it makes him, and it mars him</i> = it both brings him success (ie. it enables him) and spoils him. ⁶
	him; it sets him on, and it takes him off; it persuades	57-58: <i>persuades him</i> = ie. urges him on (sexually).
58	him, and disheartens him; makes him <u>stand to</u> , and	= meaning both (1) "get to work" or "apply himself", and (2) become physically aroused: more explicitly bawdy. ^{1,7}
	not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him <u>in a</u>	59-60: <i>equivocates...sleep</i> = the alcohol deceives the drinker, by seeming to promise successful sexual performance, but in the end, it only puts him to sleep, leaving him unfulfilled. <i>in a</i> = into. ⁸
60	sleep, and <u>giving him the lie</u> , <u>leaves him</u> .	60: <i>giving him the lie</i> = a pun on the common expression meaning "to accuse someone of lying". Here it literally suggests, "causing him to lie down (and sleep)", while also

62 **Macduff.** I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

64 **Porter.** That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me: but I

requited him for his lie, and (I think) being too strong

66 for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I

made a shift to cast him.

68 **Macduff.** Is thy master stirring?
70

Enter Macbeth.

72 Our knocking has awaked him: here he comes.
74

74 **Lennox.** Good morrow, noble sir.
76

76 **Macbeth.** Good morrow, both.
78

78 **Macduff.** Is the king stirring, worthy thane?
80

80 **Macbeth.** Not yet.
82

82 **Macduff.** He did command me to call timely on him:
84 I have almost slipped the hour.

86 **Macbeth.** I'll bring you to him.

88 **Macduff.** I know this is a joyful trouble to you:
But yet 'tis one.

90 **Macbeth.** The labour we delight in, physics pain. –
92 This is the door.

94 **Macduff.** I'll make so bold to call,
96 For 'tis my limited service.

[Exit Macduff.]

98 **Lennox.** Goes the king hence today?

reinforcing the point, made in the previous clause, that the alcohol has failed to live up to its promise of sexual success.

Jowett also sees a pun with **lie**: the homonym *lye* meant "urine" (especially when used as a detergent).^{1,7}

leaves him = and finally, the alcohol abandons him, leaving him in an incapacitated state.

62: Macduff, with good humour, suggests that the Porter himself was overcome with drink.

= the Porter means the alcohol "lied in my throat"; to "lie in one's throat" was a common expression meaning "to tell a blatant lie".¹

65: **requited him** = paid personified drink back.

65-67: **and (I think)...cast him** = the Porter employs a silly wrestling metaphor.

being = ie. "me being".

= the drink managed to throw him off his feet; terminology from wrestling.^{3,4}

67: "managed or contrived (**made a shift**)³ to throw (**cast**) the alcohol down (in return); there is a pun on **cast**, which could also mean "vomit".^{1,3}

= ie. Macbeth.

= early.

= failed to keep, missed.¹

= conduct.³

88-89: Macduff acknowledges that Macbeth has been inconvenienced by being obliged to host the king at his home, even if the responsibility brings him great honour (hence, it is **a joyful trouble**).

91: work that gives us pleasure cures or alleviates (**physics**) any pain associated with it.^{1,5}

= ie. the door to the staircase leading to Duncan's chamber.³

= ie. as to call on the king.

95: "for this is my appointed (**limited**) task;"^{1,4} see line 83 above.

= from here.

100	Macbeth. He does. He did <u>appoint so</u> .	= resolve or plan to do so. ¹
102		
104	Lennox. The night has been <u>unruly</u> : Where we lay, our chimneys were blown down, And (<u>as they say</u>) <u>lamentings</u> heard i' th' air;	103-111 (below): Lennox describes the tumultuous night just passed, filled with violent disturbances, ominous sounds, and possibly earthquakes, all of which Waith describes as "dire portents and disorders in nature [that] accompany disruptions of the social order, such as the assassination of Duncan" (p. 1153). ⁴ = stormy, tempestuous. ¹
106	Strange screams of death, And prophesying, <u>with accents terrible</u> ,	105: Lennox was told (as they say) that cries of grief (lamentings) were heard, though he himself did not hear them. 106: supernatural sounds such as these were thought to be made by Death itself announcing its approach. ¹¹ = cried out in terrifying or formidable voices. ⁶
108	Of <u>dire combustion</u> , and <u>confused</u> events, <u>New-hatched toth'</u> <u>woeful</u> time.	108: of terrible or evil (dire) social upheaval or tumults (combustion), and chaotic or disordered (confused) happenings. ^{1,3} 109: newly emerging in this distressing (woeful) period. New hatched = literally, newly born, like a hatchling. toth' = ie. "to the", printed in the Folio as shown; though this contraction of <i>to the</i> was frequently printed as the single word toth in 16th and 17th centuries texts, it is not recognized as a distinct word in the OED.
110	The <u>obscure</u> bird <u>clamoured</u> the <u>live-long</u> night.	110: the owl shrieked throughout the night. obscure bird = ie. the bird of darkness; obscure means "hidden or concealed in darkness". ^{1,4} clamoured = continuously cried out. ¹ live-long = entire. ¹ The still-familiar expression "livelong day" dates back to the 15th century.
	Some say, the earth was feverous, and did shake.	111: even earthquakes may have occurred during the night. Note the medical metaphor of the earth <i>shaking</i> as if it had a <i>fever</i> .
112	Macbeth. 'Twas a <u>rough</u> night.	= wild and stormy. ¹
114	Lennox. My young remembrance cannot <u>parallel</u>	115-6: Lennox's youthful or inexperienced memory cannot recall a night equal to the one that just passed.
116	A <u>fellow</u> to it.	parallel = find an equal for. fellow = an equal, a match. ^{1,2}
118	<i>Enter Macduff.</i>	
120	Macduff. O horror, horror, horror!	121: ie. the tongue cannot give a name to, nor the heart
122	<u>Tongue</u> nor <u>heart</u> cannot <u>conceive</u> nor <u>name</u> thee!	conceive , the horror Macduff has just discovered. Note that the line's parallel structure is faulty: the way the line is written makes it seem that the <i>tongue</i> cannot <i>conceive</i> and the <i>heart</i> cannot <i>name</i> , when it should be the other way around. Shakespeare may have been focused more on keeping the line in proper iambic rhythm, than worrying about writing with perfectly correct form.

124 **Macbeth and Lennox.** What's the matter?

124 **Macduff.** Confusion now hath made his masterpiece:

126 Most sacrilegious murther hath broke ope

128 The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' th' building.

130 **Macbeth.** What is't you say, "the life"?

132 **Lennox.** Mean you his majesty?

134 **Macduff.** Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon. Do not bid me speak:

136 See, and then speak yourselves.

138 [Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.]

140 Awake, awake! –

Ring the alarum-bell: – Murther, and treason!

142 Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,

144 And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm, Banquo,

146 As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,

The multiple negatives in the line were grammatically acceptable in Elizabethan writing, but they also serve to highlight Macduff's overwhelmed sense of shock in the moment.

125: personified ruin or destruction (**Confusion**) has reached its peak or highest state; the rough sense being, things could not possibly be worse.^{1,5}

masterpiece = greatest achievement (ironic).¹

126-8: Murder is personified as having broken into the "**temple**" that represents the king's body, and robbed it of its life.

The dense and slightly obscure metaphor confuses Macbeth and Lennox, who ask Macduff to clarify what he means.

murther = common variant of "murder".

The Lord's anointed = a term often used for the monarch.¹

thence = from there.

130: ie. "what do you mean by, *the life*?"

= ie. go blind.

135: **a new Gorgon** = ie. "a modern version of the Gorgon"; the **Gorgon** was a famous mythological monster with hair of snakes, whose face caused anyone who glanced at it to turn to stone. Macduff implies that the sight of what he has just seen (which he still cannot explicitly name) will bring the same result as looking at the Gorgon.

bid = "ask me to".

= a bell rung to signal sudden danger or an emergency (especially a call to arms); **alarum** = alarm.^{1,3}

143: **downy** = soft as down, hence "comfort-giving", ie. comfortable and inviting.²

death's counterfeit = it was common to describe **sleep** as an imitation of **death**: e.g., (1) from 1572: "*God taketh care for us in our sleep (which is an image or counterfeit of death)*"; and (2) "*death-counterfeiting sleep*" (Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1600).

= ie. Macduff contrasts the imitation of death (ie. sleep) of the other guests in the castle with Duncan's actual death.

145: the dreadful scene of Duncan's stabbing is compared to the image of Doomsday, the Day of Judgment (**doom**).^{2,8}

146: the conflated imagery of sleep and death continues: Macduff cries for Malcolm and Banquo to rise up from their beds in the same way that spirits (**sprites**) rise up from their graves to haunt the nighttime. Kittredge further connects this

		line to Macduff's mention of Judgment Day, during which the dead are resurrected.
148	<u>To countenance this horror!</u> – Ring the bell!	= could simply mean, "to look upon the scene of the tragedy." ⁴ However, some editors suggest that To countenance bears a unique sense of "to keep in accord with", thus linking lines 146 and 147 more tightly: "rise from your graves like spirits, which would be more in keeping with the horror of the scene". ^{1,3,5}
	[<i>Bell rings.</i>]	
150	<i>Enter Lady Macbeth.</i>	
152	L. Macbeth. What's the business,	
154	That such a hideous trumpet calls to <u>parley</u>	154: Lady Macbeth compares the frightful ringing of the alarm bell to the call of a trumpet sounded on a battlefield to summon the enemy's commanders to meet and discuss a truce, surrender, or negotiation (to parley).
	The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!	
156	Macduff. O gentle lady,	157-160: Macduff does not wish to distress Lady Macbeth's feminine sensitivities by explaining what happened.
158	'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:	
160	The <u>repetition</u> , in a woman's ear,	159-160: the recounting (repetition) ¹ of the horror would kill her even as he spoke it.
162	Would murder as it fell.	
	<i>Enter Banquo.</i>	
164	O Banquo, Banquo! our royal master's murdered!	
166	L. Macbeth. Woe, alas!	
	What, in our house?	167: this is not the reaction of an innocent person! had Lady Macbeth been genuinely surprised by the announcement, she would have expressed shock at the news of the murder itself, not with concern over its location.
168	Banquo. Too cruel <u>anywhere</u> . –	= ie. no matter where it occurred; is Banquo a little contentious here?
170	Dear <u>Duff</u> , <u>I prythee</u> contradict thyself,	= a nickname for MacDuff. = please, or "I beg you".
172	And say, it is not so.	171: this is the earliest appearance of the still-used expression "say it is not so", asking someone to deny or retract a statement.
	<i>Enter Macbeth, Lennox, and Ross.</i>	
174	Macbeth. Had I but died an hour before this <u>chance</u> ,	175-6: Had I...time = Macbeth would have been better off if he had not lived to see this. chance = event, happening. ² time (line 176) = lifetime, life. ²
176	I had lived a blessed time: for from this instant,	176-180: for from...brag of = with Duncan dead and gone, life no longer has meaning or value.
	There's nothing <u>serious</u> in <u>mortality</u> :	177: there is no longer anything worthwhile (serious) in human life (mortality), ^{3,4} ie. there is no point in living anymore.

178	All is but <u>toys</u> , <u>renown</u> and <u>grace</u> is dead,	178: all that remains in life are trifles (<i>toys</i>), now that honour (<i>renown</i>) and virtue (<i>grace</i>) are gone. ^{2,3,5}
180	The wine of life is <u>drawn</u> , and the mere <u>lees</u> Is left this vault, to brag of.	179-180: metaphorically, just as when all the wine has been emptied from a cask (<i>drawn</i>), leaving no more to enjoy, everything that gave pleasure to life is now gone, leaving only the dregs (<i>lees</i>) of life. <i>Is left this vault</i> = are all that remain in the wine cellar (<i>vault</i>) that is this world; <i>vault</i> was also a term for the sky. ^{1,3,5} <i>to brag of</i> = to boast about. ⁶
182	<i>Enter Malcolm and Donalbain.</i>	Entering Characters: <i>Malcolm</i> and <i>Donalbain</i> are Duncan's older and younger sons.
184	Donal. What is <u>amiss</u> ?	= wrong.
186	Macbeth. <u>You are</u> , and do not know't:	= Donalbain is now "out of order", or <i>amiss</i> , because he no longer has a father. ³
188	The <u>spring</u> , the <u>head</u> , the <u>fountain</u> of your blood Is <u>stopped</u> : the very <u>source</u> of it is stopped.	187-8: Macbeth uses three essentially synonymous words – <i>spring</i> , <i>head</i> , and <i>fountain</i> – to describe Duncan as the <i>source</i> or origin of the boy's own blood; the <i>stopped</i> flow of the water represents Duncan's being dead. <i>head</i> = the headwaters, or source, of a river. ¹ <i>fountain</i> = spring.
190	Macduff. Your royal father's murdered.	
192	Malc. Oh, by whom?	
194	Lennox. <u>Those of his chamber</u> , as it seemed, had done't:	= ie. Duncan's chamberlains.
196	Their hands and faces were all <u>badged</u> with blood; So were their daggers, which unwiped, we found Upon their pillows: <u>they stared, and were distracted</u> ;	= marked or stained, as with a badge. ^{2,5} = ie. upon being roused from their drugged sleep, the guards could only stare in confusion and be perplexed (<i>distracted</i>). ¹
198	No man's life was to be trusted with them.	
200	Macbeth. O, yet I do repent me of my <u>fury</u> , That I did kill them.	200-1: naturally, Macbeth then killed the guards to keep them from denying that they were guilty of the king's murder. <i>fury</i> = fit of madness or frenzy. ³
202	Macduff. <u>Wherefore</u> did you so?	203: "why (<i>Wherefore</i>) did you do this?" Macduff seems to be expressing some skepticism here.
204	Macbeth. Who can be <u>wise</u> , <u>amazed</u> , <u>temperate</u> , and <u>furiously</u> ,	205-6: Macbeth explains his actions by asking how anyone can act rationally when in such a heightened emotional state. <i>wise</i> = ie. sensible. ² <i>amazed</i> = dumbfounded. ³ <i>temperate</i> = self-controlled, calm. ³ <i>furiously</i> = in a frenzy. ³
206	<u>Loyal and neutral</u> , <u>in a moment</u> ? No man:	<i>Loyal and neutral</i> = dutiful or faithful on the one hand, and objective or taking no sides on the other. <i>in a moment</i> = in the space of a moment, ie. at the same time. ¹
	Th[e] <u>expedition</u> of my <u>violent</u> love	207-8: <i>The expedition...Reason</i> = Macbeth's intense

208	Out-run the <u>pauser</u> , <u>Reason</u> . Here lay Duncan,	(<i>violent</i>) love for his king possessed great speed (<i>expedition</i>) which ran faster than, ie. got ahead of, his <i>Reason</i> (the <i>pauser</i>). ¹ That is, Macbeth's passionate emotional response caused him to act hastily (<i>expedition</i> = haste) in killing the guards; if rationality (<i>Reason</i>) had been in control, he would have <i>paused</i> to consider carefully what action to take next, if any. ⁵ Allusions to humanity's perpetual struggle between emotion and reason were frequent in Elizabethan poetry.
	His <u>silver skin</u> <u>laced</u> with his <u>golden blood</u> ,	209: <i>silver skin</i> = suggestive of the dead body's "bloodless pallor" (Kittredge, p. 146). ³ <i>laced</i> = streaked or ornamented, as if embroidered. ¹ <i>golden blood</i> = ie. royal blood, contrasted with Duncan's <i>silver skin</i> . See also the note above at Act II.ii.92-94 that explains that it was not unusual to describe the colour red as <i>golden</i> .
210	And his gashed stabs looked like <u>a breach in nature</u> , For <u>ruin's wasteful</u> entrance: there, the murtherers,	210-1: <i>his gashed...entrance</i> = the cuts in Duncan's body are like a ruptured opening (<i>breach</i>) in the wall of a fortified city, through which destructive (<i>wasteful</i>) forces (personified <i>ruin</i>) may enter to lay waste. ^{1,5} <i>a breach in nature</i> = an opening in a naturally-occurring thing (ie. the king's body) as opposed to one in a man-made structure (a wall).
212	<u>Steeped</u> in <u>the colours of their trade</u> ; their daggers	= soaked. = ie. red (from blood).
214	<u>Unmannerly breeched</u> with gore; who could refrain, <u>That had</u> a heart to love; and in that heart, Courage to <u>make's</u> love known?	213: <i>Unmannerly breeched</i> = excessively or immoderately covered. ¹ <i>breeched</i> = covered, as with breeches. ⁵ 213-5: <i>who could...known</i> = what man with a loving heart could have stopped himself from acting boldly to express that love? Macbeth justifies his impulsive killing of the guards as a noble deed. <i>That had</i> = who had. <i>make's</i> = make his. ³
216	<i>L. Macbeth.</i>	
218	Help me <u>hence</u> , <u>hoa</u> !	217: in many editions, stage directions are added to indicate Lady Macbeth faints here; however, she may simply feel faint, and is asking for assistance to leave the scene <i>hence</i> = from here. <i>hoa</i> = ie. "ho!", an exclamation used to call for attention. ¹
220	<i>Macduff.</i> Look to the lady.	
222	<i>Malc.</i> [<i>Aside to Donalbain.</i>] Why do we hold our tongues, That most may claim this <u>argument</u> for ours?	221-233 (below): as the nobles and servants fuss over Lady Macbeth, Malcolm and Donalbain take advantage to hold a private conversation. 222-3: Duncan's elder son asks his brother why they remain silent, since they have the greatest right to speak – after all, it was their father who was murdered. <i>argument</i> = topic, subject matter. ^{2,3}
224	<i>Donal.</i> [<i>Aside to Malcolm.</i>]	225-9: Donalbain believes he and his brother are in danger, and proposes that they flee: he senses that, because they are Duncan's heirs to the throne, suspicion for the murder

		could easily fall on them.
226	What should be spoken <u>here</u> ,	226: ie. "what can we possibly say here that would help us?" By here , Donalbain means the castle.
228	Where our <u>fate</u> , hid in an <u>auger-hole</u> , May rush and seize us? Let's away.	227-8: where the brother's destruction (fate) ¹ might take place suddenly before they can escape. Fate is personified as hiding in a hole, prepared to spring out and capture them; Donalbain worries that the castle may prove to be a trap, from which, once they are held for suspicion of murder, there is no getting away. auger-hole = a hole bored by an auger, a hand tool for making small holes. The metaphorical sense is that, because the hole is small, and thus may avoid notice, the boys' ruin (their Fate), which is imagined to be concealed in a hole, might appear suddenly and without warning. ⁵
230	Our tears are not yet <u>brewed</u> .	229: there has not been enough time, or the proper time has not yet arrived, to shed tears. ^{3,4} As an old commentator put it, "Sorrow in its first strength is motionless, and cannot express itself in words or tears" (Furnace, quoting Clarendon, p. 164). ⁸ brewed = prepared or brought about, with a possible association to the brewing of other liquids such as ale. ^{1,6} Shakespeare used the same conceit in <i>Titus Andronicus</i> : " <i>She says she drinks no other drink but tears, / Brew'd with her sorrow...</i> "
232	Malc. [<i>Aside to Donalbain.</i>] Nor our strong sorrow Upon the foot of motion.	232-3: ie. nor has the great sorrow the brothers feel yet expressed itself in action, ie. their emotions are felt, but not yet visible. ³
234	Banquo. Look to the lady –	
236	[<i>Exeunt Lady Macbeth with Attendants.</i>]	235: Lady Macbeth is either carried or escorted out, depending on whether or not she actually fainted.
238	And when we have our <u>naked frailties</u> hid,	239-240: literally, "and after we conceal our inadequately clothed (naked) bodies (frailties), which suffer in being uncovered (in exposure), let us meet". ¹
240	That suffer <u>in exposure</u> , let us meet,	Waith reminds us that everyone present (excepting Macduff and Lennox) are in their nightclothes, and, as Stevenson adds, shivering in the cold. ^{3,4} naked frailties = editors generally interpret this to mean "underdressed bodies", but frailties also bears a more literal sense of "weakness", suggesting that the party is emotionally, as well as physically, vulnerable. ^{1,6}
	And <u>question</u> this most <u>bloody piece of work</u> ,	241: question = examine, ie. investigate, or discuss. ^{1,7} bloody piece of work = ie. Duncan's murder; the still-common expression piece of work was used in various senses, including, as here, to refer indirectly to the result of someone's actions. ¹
242	<u>To know it further.</u> <u>Fears and scruples shake us:</u>	242: To know it further = ie. to learn or discover the facts of the murder. Fears and scruples shake us = "fear and uncertainty (scruples) upset or disturb (shake) us." ^{1,5}

	In the great hand of God I stand, <u>and thence</u> ,	243: <i>In the great hand of God I stand</i> = Banquo places himself under the guidance and protection of God. <i>and thence</i> = and from that (secure) place (ie. in God's hand).
244	Against the <u>undivulged pretence</u> , I fight Of <u>treasonous malice</u> .	244-5: Banquo intends to uncover the perpetrator's unknown or hidden purpose or design (<i>undivulged pretence</i>) in committing this treasonous act of evil, or evil in general (<i>treasonous malice</i>). ^{1,3,4}
246	<i>Macduff.</i> And so do I.	247: ie. Macduff will also <i>fight</i> .
248	<i>All.</i> So all.	
250	<i>Macbeth.</i> Let's <u>briefly put on manly readiness</u> ,	251: <i>briefly</i> = within a short period of time, ie. sooner rather than later, or quickly. ^{1,4} <i>put on manly readiness</i> = prepare (ie. fortify) ourselves with courage or self-possession; ^{1,3,6} or, "dress ourselves properly, and get into the proper frame of mind". ³ Kittredge points out that in Shakespeare's time, " <i>ready</i> " and " <i>unready</i> " were frequently used to mean "dressed" and "undressed", and further observes that <i>manly</i> refers to an attitude of spirit that Banquo hopes everyone will adopt. ^{3,8}
252	And meet i' th' hall together.	
254	<i>All.</i> Well contented.	254: ie. "we are satisfied (to do so)."
256	[<i>Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.</i>]	
		258-269 (below): Duncan's sons hint at their suspicion that Macbeth, as their closest relative, may be the author of the murder of the king (but as will be shown later, Malcolm is not without worry that other nobles are acting as his accomplices). The boys also recognize that, as the natural heirs to the throne, their own lives are in danger, and they may be the next victims of the killers, or they may be accused of this crime, with a similar ending.
258	<i>Malc.</i> What will you do? Let's not <u>consort with them</u> . To <u>shew</u> an unfelt sorrow, is an <u>office</u>	= ie. remain in the company of the others. ¹ 259-260: <i>To shew...easy</i> = it is an easy task or function (<i>office</i>) for a disloyal or treacherous (<i>false</i>) man to display (<i>shew</i>) grief that he does not genuinely feel. ^{2,3} Malcolm is suggesting that any of the others could be the murderer, whether or not they are shedding tears. <i>shew</i> = show, a common variant.
260	Which the false man does easy. <u>I'll to England</u> .	= ie. Malcolm will flee to England (still a separate kingdom from Scotland at this time) before suspicion for the murder falls on him. Holinshed writes that the brothers fled Scotland for fear of their lives, expecting Macbeth to do away with them to make his own possession of the throne more secure.
262	<i>Donal.</i> To Ireland, I: <u>our separated fortune</u> Shall keep us both the safer: where we are,	262-3: <i>our separated...safer</i> = the brothers will be safer separated than together. <i>our separated fortune</i> = the brothers should try their luck apart from each other. ³ 263-4: <i>where we are...smiles</i> = in Scotland, the brothers

264	There's daggers in men's smiles;	can never be sure whether someone who appears friendly and respectful is actually plotting against them, ready to accuse or even kill them.
	The <u>near in blood</u> , the nearer bloody.	265: the more closely related people are (ie. near in blood), the more likely they are to harm each other; Macbeth, we remember, was Duncan's first cousin.
266		
268	Malc. This murtherous <u>shaft</u> that's shot, Hath not yet lighted: and our safest way,	267-9: This murtherous...aim = Malcolm compares Duncan's killing to a murderous arrow (shaft) that has been fired, but has not yet landed (lighted), ie. struck anyone else – yet. The only way for Duncan's sons to avoid becoming the arrow's next victims is to flee. The arrow thus could be seen as representing the murderous plot itself that has not yet been completed: the king is now gone, but Malcolm and Donalbain believe the violence will not end until they too are killed. ³
	Is to avoid the aim. Therefore <u>to horse</u> ,	= ie. "let us mount our horses".
270	And let us not be <u>dainty</u> of <u>leave-taking</u> ,	270: the boys shouldn't be scrupulous or particular (dainty) about saying their farewells to everyone (their leave-taking): it would be best to get away as quickly as possible. ^{1,4}
	But <u>shift away</u> : there's warrant in that theft	271: shift away = slip or steal away quietly. ^{3,5}
272	Which steals itself, when there's no <u>mercy</u> left.	271-2: there's warrant...left = a theft is justified (there's warrant in that theft) if it involves a man stealing himself away, when a man can expect no mercy in the place he is at (ie. when his life is in peril). ^{3,5} This brief but dense metaphor relies on the dual-meaning of steal : (1) theft generally, and (2) stealing, or slipping, away for safety.
274	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	<u>ACT II, SCENE IV.</u>	
	<i>The same.</i> <i>Without the Castle.</i>	
	<i>Enter Ross, with an Old Man.</i>	The Setting: between Scenes iii and iv, Duncan's sons have fled, and Macbeth has been elected king (see lines 55-56 below). Scene iv takes place later the same morning, outside of Macbeth's castle at Inverness. ³
1	Old Man. Threescore and ten I can remember well,	Entering Characters: we have previously met with the nobleman Ross ; the Old Man is presumably a man of rank who has seen much in his day. The pair discuss the portentous natural phenomena (which were already commented on at Act II.iii.103-116 above) of the previous night.
2	<u>Within the volume of which time</u> , I have seen	1: the Old Man can remember seven decades of events. The line echoes the Bible's description of the normal human lifespan; from Psalms 90:10 (Geneva Bible): " <i>The time of our life is threescore years and ten.</i> " = ie. "within this space or span (volume) of time"; volume may also suggest a book containing a record of everything the Old Man has experienced. ^{1,6}

4	Hours <u>dreadful</u> , and things strange: but this <u>sore</u> night Hath <u>trifled</u> <u>former knowings</u> .	= terrible times. ⁶ = violent, severe. ^{1,2} 4: "has made all previous experiences (<i>former knowings</i>) seem trivial (<i>trifled</i>) in comparison." ^{1,3,4}
6	Ross. Ha, good <u>father</u> , <u>Thou seest</u> the <u>heavens</u> , as troubled with man's act,	= respectful form of address to an older man. ¹ 7-8: <i>Thou seest...stage</i> = "you can see (<i>Thou seest</i>) that the <i>heavens</i> , as if disturbed by man's actions (specifically, Dun- can's murder), seem to threaten the earth, the metaphorical <i>stage</i> on which this bloody deed was performed." Ross is commenting on the unnatural phenomena witnessed the previous night. <i>heavens</i> = pronounced as a single syllable: <i>hea'ens</i> . <i>bloody stage</i> (line 8) = Elizabethan literature – both in prose and verse – frequently compared the world to a stage on which people only play a part.
8	Threatens his bloody stage: <u>by th' clock 'tis day</u> , And yet dark night <u>strangles</u> the <u>travailing lamp</u> :	= according to the clock, it is daytime. 9: yet the darkness blocks the sun, metaphorically described as a <i>travailing lamp</i> . <i>travailing</i> = frequently used to mean both "travelling" (appropriate to describe the sun's motion across the sky) and "labouring". Editors often emend <i>travailing</i> to "travelling". Note the use of <i>strangles</i> to emphasize nature's violence, matching that of the king's killer. Shakespeare seems to have derived the idea for the non- appearing sun from Holinshed, who wrote, " <i>For the space of</i> <i>six months together, after this heinous murder thus</i> <i>committed, there appeared no sun by day, nor moon by night</i> <i>in any part of the realm, but still (always) was the sky</i> <i>covered with continual clouds...</i> " Note, though, that Holinshed only said it was continuously cloudy for half a year; Shakespeare's suggestion that it was practically night around the clock is more ominous!
10	Is't night's <u>predominance</u> , or the day's shame,	10-12: employing multiple metaphors, Ross inquires as
12	That darkness does the face of earth entomb,	to the reason the earth is shrouded in darkness: is it
	When living light should kiss it?	because night has greater power (<i>predominance</i>), ¹ or
		is the daytime just ashamed to show itself or look upon
		the earth (because of humanity's deplorable deeds)?
14	Old Man. 'Tis <u>unnatural</u> , Even like <u>the deed that's done</u> : on Tuesday last,	14-15: <i>'Tis unnatural...done</i> = <i>unnatural</i> bears two different senses: the weather is unnatural (<i>'Tis unnatural</i>), because it is behaving in a manner contrary to the normal rules of nature; and the murder of Duncan (<i>the deed that's</i> <i>done</i>) was unnatural, because it was an act that went against expected human behaviour, and the natural feelings one should have for one's kin and king. ⁶
16	A falcon <u>towering</u> in her <u>pride of place</u> ,	16: <i>towering</i> = soaring. ² <i>pride of place</i> = the greatest height to which a bird of prey rises before swooping down to catch its prey. ¹ Both of these words or expressions are terms from falconry.
18	Was by a <u>mousing owl</u> <u>hawked at</u> and killed.	17: <i>mousing</i> = hunting for mice; Waith notes that <i>mousing</i> implies the owl was hunting close to the ground, making its attack on a soaring falcon that much more freakish. ⁴ <i>hawked at</i> = attacked in flight. ¹

20	Ross. And Duncan's horses (A thing most strange and certain) Beauteous, and swift, <u>the minions of their race</u> ,	= the finest of all horses (<i>their race</i>). <i>minions</i> = properly means "favourites", ^{1,6} hence "most favoured", emphasizing that the king's horses possess those qualities most desired in a horse. ¹
22	Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, <u>flung out</u> , <u>Contending 'gainst obedience</u> , <u>as</u> they would make	= kicked and plunged violently. ¹ 23: Contending 'gainst obedience = struggling against or resisting authority; ^{1,2} the sense is, the horses could not be controlled. <i>as</i> = ie. as if.
24	War with mankind.	
26	Old Man. 'Tis said they <u>eat</u> each other.	= ie. "it was said". = ie. ate.
28	Ross. They did so:	
30	To th' <u>amazement</u> of mine eyes that looked upon't. –	= stupefaction. ³
32	<i>Enter Macduff.</i>	31: Macduff comes out of the castle, in which the nobles have already elected Macbeth to be the next sovereign; see lines 55-56 below.
34	Here comes the good Macduff. – How goes the world, sir, now?	
36	Macduff. Why, see you not?	
38	Ross. Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?	
40	Macduff. Those that Macbeth hath slain.	
42	Ross. Alas, the day! What good could they <u>pretend</u> ?	40: ie. it was the guards – the ones Macbeth killed – who murdered the king. 43: what benefit could the guards possibly have sought or been aiming at in killing Duncan? ⁵ <i>pretend</i> = seek, look for, or aspire to. ^{1,5}
44	Macduff. They were <u>suborned</u> .	= bribed or similarly induced (to kill the king). ^{1,3,5}
46	Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,	
48	Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them Suspicion of the deed.	
50	Ross. 'Gainst <u>nature</u> still!	50: <i>nature</i> = the natural feelings one was supposed to have for one's family; any crime committed against one's kin was considered "unnatural".
	<u>Thrifless</u> ambition, that will <u>ravin</u> up	51-52: Thrifless...means = ambition is without profit

52	Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like,	(<i>Thrifless</i>) when it devours or preys upon (<i>ravins up</i>) its own means of support; ^{1,2} Ross points out that it could do Duncan's sons no good to kill their father, on whom they were dependent. ⁵ Kittredge, however, argues that Ross is making a more direct point: by slaying their father to gain the throne, the brothers have instead destroyed their own prospects.
	The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.	
54	Macduff. He is already <u>named</u> , and gone to <u>Scone</u>	55: <i>named</i> = elected or chosen (by the council of nobles). ³ <i>Scone</i> = ancient royal city in Scotland, where its kings were throned. Located two miles north of Perth. ¹⁰ = formally coronated as king. ¹
56	To be <u>invested</u> .	
58	Ross. Where is Duncan's body?	
60	Macduff. Carried to <u>Colmekill</u> ,	60-62: Duncan's corpse has been brought to the island of <i>Colmekill</i> (today called Iona), one of the West Hebrides. Here were buried many of the early Scottish kings. ¹⁰
62	The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,	
64	And guardian of their bones.	
64	Ross. Will you <u>to Scone</u> ?	= ie. go to Scone (to be present for the ceremony of Macbeth's investiture).
66	Macduff. No, cousin, I'll to <u>Fife</u> .	66: Macduff will head to home (Fife, just north of the Firth of Forth), rather than attend Macbeth's coronation. Macduff's defiant act hints of his suspicion of Macbeth.
68	Ross. Well, I <u>will thither</u> .	= will go there, ie. to Scone.
70	Macduff. Well, may you see things well done there: adieu!	70: ie. may Macbeth's coronation go well, or be a good thing, for Scotland. ³ One early commentator sees Macduff's repetition of Ross's "well" twice as signifying his contempt for Ross, who he may be thinking is a supporter of Macbeth's usurpation. This is part of an old tradition that sees Ross as a sinister character who shifts his allegiance with the circumstances. ⁸
	Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!	71: literally, "for fear that the king's clothes might be found to have fit the old king better than they do the new one," ie. Macduff worries that Macbeth's reign may be more troubled than was Duncan's.
72		
	Ross. Farewell, father.	
74	Old Man. God's <u>benison</u> go with you, and with those	75-76: "may God's blessing (<i>benison</i>) go with you and with all those who fail to recognize bad actors when they see them;" with this ambiguous concluding line, the Old Man may be expressing his hope for reconciliation and peace; on the other hand, he may be more skeptically cautioning Scotland's nobility against going along with the present evil and turning it to their own personal advantage. ⁸
76	That would make good of bad, and friends of foes!	
78	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	END OF ACT II.	

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Forres.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter Banquo.

1 **Banquo.** Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
2 As the weyard women promised: and I fear

4 Thou playd'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,

6 Of many kings. If there come truth from them –
As upon thee Macbeth, their speeches shine –

8 Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,

10 And set me up in hope? – But hush, no more.

12 *Sennet sounded.*
14 *Enter Macbeth as King, Lady Macbeth as Queen,*
Lennox, Ross, Lords, Ladies, and Attendants.

16 **Macbeth.** Here's our chief guest.

18 **L. Macbeth.** If he had been forgotten,

It had been as a gap in our great feast,
20 And all-thing unbecoming.

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

The Setting: Scene i takes place perhaps a day or so later; Macbeth has been crowned King of Scotland. The castle at Forres, as noted earlier, served occasionally as the residence of the early Scottish monarchs.¹⁰

Entering Character: in his opening soliloquy (lines 1-10), Banquo apostrophizes Macbeth.

2: **the weyard women** = the Weird sisters, ie. the Witches.
2-3: **and I fear...for't** = Banquo admits to suspecting that Macbeth killed Duncan to gain the crown.

Thou playd'st most foully for't = "you used the most wicked means to attain it."

3-4: **yet it...posterity** = Banquo recalls that the Witches also predicted that the throne would not pass to Macbeth's descendants (his **posterity**).²

5-6: **myself...kings** = in this agricultural metaphor, Banquo sees himself as the source (**root**) from which a future line of kings will grow.

= "if the Witches predict truly (for me)".

7: just as the Witches foretold Macbeth's future.

shine = suggests the Witches' predictions for Macbeth have been brilliantly fulfilled.³

= by the truthful prophecies that have been fulfilled in Macbeth's case; **verities** = truths.²

= predictions, prognostications.¹

10: **set me up in hope** = give Banquo similar expectations (that the Witches' prophecy for him will also come true).

But hush, no more = Banquo sees the royal party approaching.

= flourish of trumpets, often used to announce the entrance of the monarch or other head of city or state. Macbeth and his wife are now the King and Queen of Scotland.

= ie. Banquo.

18: if the new royal couple had failed to invite Banquo to supper (see lines 22-23 below).

= would be like.

20: and entirely (**all-thing**) improper.^{1,6}

= a ceremonious supper, ie. a state banquet.⁵

= ie. "I request".

As king, Macbeth may properly employ the royal "we" (as he does below at line 34), but his use of "I" here provides a personal touch to his invitation to Banquo. Banquo's response will be stiff and formal, as befits an address to the king.³

24	Banquo. Let your Highness	25-26: <i>Let your...me</i> = ie. "your Majesty may command me".
26	Command upon me, <u>to the which</u> my <u>duties</u>	26-28: <i>to the which...knit</i> = ie. "my allegiance and responsibility (<i>duties</i>) to follow your commands (<i>to the which</i>) are forever bound to you, and cannot be broken."
28	Are with a most <u>indissoluble tie</u>	Note Banquo's metaphor of binding: his loyalty is <i>knit</i> (ie. fastened) to the king with a <i>tie</i> (a knot) that is <i>indissoluble</i> (it cannot be undone or destroyed). ^{1,2}
	Forever <u>knit</u> .	<i>indissoluble</i> = stressed on second and fourth syllables: <i>in-DI-so-LU-ble</i> . ³
30	Macbeth. <u>Ride you</u> this afternoon?	= ie. "are you going out for a horseback ride".
32	Banquo. Ay, my good lord.	
34	Macbeth. <u>We should have else</u> desired your good advice	34: <i>We</i> = ie. "I"; now that he is king, Macbeth assumes the royal "we". <i>should have else</i> = ie. would have.
	(Which <u>still</u> hath been both <u>grave</u> and <u>prosperous</u>)	35: <i>still</i> = always. <i>grave</i> = wise, weighty. ^{2,5} <i>prosperous</i> = beneficial or favourable in its results. ^{3,5}
36	In this day's council: but we'll <u>take tomorrow</u> .	= go with, or accept, tomorrow (to meet with Banquo).
38	Is't far you ride?	
	Banquo. As far, my lord, as will <u>fill up</u> the time	= use up, pass.
40	'Twill <u>this</u> , and supper. Go not my horse <u>the better</u> ,	40: <i>'Twill now</i> = between now.
42	I must become a <u>borrower</u> of the night,	40-42: <i>Go not...twain</i> = Banquo hopes to get back before dark, but if his horse cannot travel faster (<i>the better</i>), he may not return until an hour or two (<i>twain</i>) after nightfall. ^{1,3}
	For a dark hour, or <u>twain</u> .	Line 41: note Banquo's playful metaphor of <i>borrowing</i> a part of the night – as if he were taking some of it on credit to complete his ride. ¹
44	Macbeth. Fail not <u>our</u> feast.	= ie. to return in time to attend.
46	Banquo. My lord, I will not.	
48	Macbeth. We hear <u>our bloody cousins</u> are <u>bestowed</u>	48: <i>our bloody cousins</i> = ie. Malcolm and Donalbain, who are stained with bloodshed: Macbeth carefully implies it is accepted fact that the brothers are guilty of killing their father. <i>bestowed</i> = lodging, staying, quartered, ^{1,2} ie. the brothers are now established in their countries of refuge. ³
	In England, and in Ireland, not confessing	50: <i>parricide</i> = patricide, ie. the murder of one's father.
50	Their cruël <u>parricide</u> , filling their hearers	50-51: <i>filling...invention</i> = Malcolm and Donalbain are telling unexpected or surprising (<i>strange</i>) ¹ made-up stories (<i>invention</i>) to anyone who will listen; Macbeth may be implying that reports have filtered back to Scotland that the brothers are accusing him of killing Duncan. ³
	With strange invention. But of that tomorrow,	51-53: <i>But of...jointly</i> = "but we will address that tomorrow, when, at the same time (<i>therewithal</i>), we will have public
52	When <u>therewithal</u> , we shall have <u>cause of state</u> ,	

	<u>To be thus</u> , is nothing,	81-82: <i>To be...safely thus</i> = it is not worth it to be king (<i>To be thus</i>), unless (<i>But</i>) I can remain king in safety. ^{4,5}
82	But to be safely thus: our fears in Banquo	82-83: <i>our fears...deep</i> = the sense is, Macbeth's fear of what Banquo will do is deep-seated and firmly lodged. <i>Stick deep</i> (line 83) = literally, pierce him and remain fastened or fixed in place; a common expression used to describe ideas, emotions, and knowledge that are not easily forgotten. ¹
	Stick deep, and in his <u>royalty of nature</u>	83-84: <i>in his...feared</i> = ie. Macbeth sees Banquo's honourable character as a potential threat. Using a complimentary metaphor, Macbeth describes Banquo's natural nobility as kingly in itself (his <i>royalty of nature</i>), ruling his motives and actions.
84	Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares,	= Banquo is bold and courageous.
86	<u>And to that dauntless temper</u> of his mind, He hath a wisdom, that doth <u>guide his valour</u> , To <u>act in safety</u> . There is none but he	85-87: <i>And to that...safety</i> = and in addition to (<i>And to</i>) his fearless temperament (<i>dauntless temper</i>), Banquo possesses good sense which governs his bravery (it <i>guides his valour</i>), preventing him from endangering himself unnecessarily (he <i>acts in safety</i>). ^{1,6}
88	Whose <u>being</u> I do fear: and <u>under him</u> My <u>genius</u> is <u>rebuked</u> , as it is said	88: <i>being</i> = existence, life. ² 88-90: <i>under him...Caesar</i> = so long as Banquo is around, Macbeth's guardian angel (his <i>genius</i>) is checked or cowed (<i>rebuked</i>), ^{4,5} ie. Macbeth's spirit, feeling inadequate, cannot protect him. In other words, Macbeth loses his confidence whenever he is near Banquo. Macbeth alludes to a scene from Plutarch's <i>Life of Antony</i> , in which a soothsayer warns Mark Antony to keep his distance from Octavius Caesar ; in Shakespeare's retelling in <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> , Antony's spirit becomes fearful when near Octavius, as if it is being overpowered (Act II.iii): <i>Thy demon (guardian spirit), that's thy spirit which keeps (protects) thee, is Noble, courageous high, unmatchable, Where Caesar's is not; but, near him, thy angel Becomes a fear (afraid), as being o'erpower'd: therefore Make space enough between you.</i>
90	Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He <u>chid the sisters</u> ,	90-92: <i>He chid...to him</i> = Banquo scolded (<i>chid</i>) the Witches (<i>the sisters</i>) after they predicted Macbeth would be king, and asked (<i>bad</i>) them to address and make a prediction for him (see lines 75-84 at Act I.iii above).
92	When first they put the name of king upon me, And <u>bad</u> them speak to him. Then, prophet-like,	Macbeth's contention that Banquo "chided" the Witches is a bit exaggerated, but it reveals his fear of and respect for Banquo.
94	They hailed him father to a line of kings. Upon my head they placed a <u>fruitless crown</u> , And put a barren sceptre in my <u>gripe</u> ,	93: see Act I.iii.96 above. = a crown which will figuratively bear no fruit, meaning that Macbeth himself will beget no kings. = grasp, ie. hands. ²

96 Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,

98 No son of mine succeeding: if't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;

100 For them, the gracious Duncan have I murdered;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace

102 Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,

To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo kings!

104 Rather than so, come Fate into the list,
And champion me to th' utterance! –

106 Who's there? –

108 *Enter Servant, and two Murderers.*

110 [*To Servant.*]
Now go to the door, and stay there till we call. –

112 [*Exit Servant.*]

114 Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

116 *1st Murd.* It was, so please your Highness.

118

96: from his grasp (*Thence*), the crown and sceptre will be forcibly taken (*wrenched*) by (*with*) a hand that does not belong to any his own descendants (and hence is *unlineal*).¹

= ie. if this prophecy is correct.

98: it is for the benefit Banquo's descendants (his *issue*) that Macbeth has morally corrupted or defiled (*filed*) his own mind.^{1,5}

99-101: *For them...for them* = metaphorically, Macbeth has disturbed his peace of mind (by murdering Duncan) only for the benefit of Banquo's offspring. The image is of Macbeth having mixed or poured a poison – malice (*rancours*) – into the cup (*vessel*) filled with a wholesome liquid that represents his former contentment and tranquility.^{3,4,5}

rancours = *rancour* was often used in the plural in contemporary literature.

101-2: *and mine...man* = and Macbeth has sacrificed his immortal soul (his *eternal jewel*) to Satan.⁸

the common enemy of man = the devil; more commonly expressed as *the common enemy of mankind*.

= ie. Banquo's descendants. = progeny, descendants.¹

104-5: rather than passively allow Banquo's descendants to become kings of Scotland (thus fulfilling Fate's plan), Macbeth challenges *Fate* itself to enter *the lists* and engage in combat with him to the death (so that either Macbeth or Fate, ie. Banquo's line, emerges victorious). Macbeth seems to be unable to tolerate the uncertainty of the future, and thus wants to see his situation brought to an unambiguous conclusion.^{3,5}

the list = ie. the lists, the enclosed arena in which jousts and tournaments were held.

champion = challenge.¹

to th' utterance = to a decisive conclusion.¹

= ie. to keep a lookout, should anyone approach.

The Two Murderers: the men Macbeth hopes to persuade to kill Banquo are no ordinary criminals: instead, they are nobles or soldiers who have fallen on hard times, blocked from advancement and perhaps impoverished; who had, until now – perhaps correctly – blamed Macbeth for their troubles. Now, Macbeth seeks to convince them that it was in fact Banquo, not he, who has been responsible for their

120 **Macbeth.** Well then, now,
Have you considered of my speeches? Know,
That it was he, in the times past, which held you
122 So under fortune, which you thought had been

Our innocent self.
124 This I made good to you, in our last conference,
Passed in probation with you:

126 How you were borne in hand: how crossed:

The instruments: who wrought with them:

128 and all things else, that might
To half a soul, and to a notion crazed,
130 Say, "Thus did Banquo."

132 **Ist Murd.** You made it known to us.

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

That you can let this go? Are you so gospelled,
138 To pray for this good man, and for his issue,

Whose heavy hand hath bowed you to the grave,

140 And beggared yours forever?

142 **Ist Murd.** We are men, my liege.

misfortunes.³

= thought over what Macbeth had previously told them.

121: **he** = ie. Banquo.

121-2: **which held...fortune** = "who kept you down in your fortunes".³

= ie. "me, who was in fact innocent of doing you harm."

= proved, demonstrated.¹ = meeting.

125: spent in proving this (**in probation**) to you."^{1,5}

126: **borne in hand** = deceived or misled with false hopes; a common expression, suggestive of the modern phrase "led on".

crossed = thwarted, ie. blocked from success.

127: the tools or means used (the **instruments**), and who used (**wrought with**) them.^{2,5}

128-130: "and everything else that would convince even a man with half his wits (**half a soul**), or one with a deranged, weak, or irrational intellect (**a notion crazed**) that Banquo did this to you."^{1,3,5,6}

135: **Our point of** = ie. "the point of our having a".

135-7: **Do you...this go** = "does patience dominate your temperament to such an extent, that you allow this slight to go unrevenged?"; Macbeth now begins to taunt and shame the murderers in order to provoke them into action against Banquo.

137-8: **Are you...issue** = "have you been so converted to the gospel" (Crystal),² or "are you so firm in your Christian faith" (Schmidt),⁶ "that you actually pray for Banquo and his offspring (**issue**)?"

139: **heavy hand** = common expression used to describe oppressive behaviour.¹

bowed you to the grave = the sense is, "crushed you down towards your death". Shakespeare used the same expression a bit less intensely in *Henry VI, Part II*: "*in duty bend thy knee to me / That bows unto the grave with mickle age*" (ie. "kneel before me, you whose advanced age causes you to sink towards death").

140: "and impoverished (**beggared**) your family forever?"

142: **We are men** = the sense is, "there is only so much a man can endure, before he takes action."

my liege = formal address used to one whom the speaker owes feudal allegiance.

144-160 (below): Macbeth continues to goad the two men before him: "sure, you are technically **men** (line 144); but

144 *Macbeth.* Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;

146 As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clipt

All by the name of dogs: the valued file

148 Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one

150 According to the gift which bounteous nature

152 Hath in him closed: whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill

That writes them all alike: and so of men.

154 Now, if you have a station in the file,

Not i' th' worst rank of manhood, say't,

just as the word "dog" alone doesn't convey a true sense of the wide variety of dogs that exist – both useful and not – so it is with word **men** (lines 145-153); but if you are not in the lowest category of men (154-5), then take on this task: kill your enemy, and bring me peace (lines 156-160).

144: Macbeth responds with sarcasm to the 1st Murderer's last line: "sure, in the register (*catalogue*), you pass for men."

catalogue = the sense is of a census or roll of all men.

145-7: *As hounds...dogs* = Macbeth lists a wide range of dog-types, all of whom are called (*clipt*) dogs. The first two (*hounds* and *greyhounds*) are useful (for hunting) and to be admired; the remainder are held in disdain.

spaniels = often used as a scornful term to describe one who overly-fawns or is obsequious.

curs = **cur** is another contemptuous term, used for a worthless or low-bred dog.¹

Shoughs = a species of small dogs with a shaggy coat;¹ Waith notes that the word should be pronounced "*shocks*".

water-rugs = perhaps referring to some type of shag-haired water-dog; the term is unique to Shakespeare, and remains obscure.¹

demi-wolves = perhaps referring to a mixed breed of dog and wolf; another term unique to Shakespeare.¹

clipt = called, a variation of *cleped*; the obsolete root word, *clepe*, meaning "called by the name of", was already archaic in Shakespeare's day.

= the file which notes the value of each type of dog.³

148-149: classifies or differentiates the types of dogs based on each one's qualities.

subtle = cunning, sly.¹ In contemporary literature, *subtle* was much more likely to be applied to a fox than a dog.

housekeeper = watchdog.¹

= corresponding.¹ = beneficent, full of goodness.¹

151: *Hath in him closed* = has in each dog included or enclosed (*closed*).^{1,5}

151-3: *whereby...alike* = by virtue of which (*whereby*) each dog receives a special or distinctive title or name (*particular addition*), as opposed to (*from*) the document (*bill*, the *catalogue* of line 145 above) that merely identifies them all as "dogs" (hence, *alike*);^{1,3} that is, each dog is given a name (e.g., greyhound, spaniel, etc.) to distinguish it from the general category of *dogs* (Waith, p. 1137).⁴

= so it is with.

154: ie. "now, if you are included in the list of men".³

station in the file = place on the list.⁵

155: "and you are not included in the lowest or meanest category (*worst rank*) of *men*, then say so".

156 And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off,

158 Grapples you to the heart and love of us,

Who wear our health but sickly in his life,

160 Which in his death were perfect.

162 **2nd Murd.** I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
164 Hath so incensed, that I am reckless what
I do, to spite the world.

166 **1st Murd.** And I another,
168 So weary with disasters, tugged with fortune,

That I would set my life on any chance,
170 To mend it or be rid on't.

172 **Macbeth.** Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

174 **Both Murds.** True, my lord.

176 **Macbeth.** So is he mine; and in such bloody distance,
178 That every minute of his being thrusts

Against my near'st of life: and though I could
180 With barefaced power sweep him from my sight,
And bid my will avouch it; yet I must not,

182 For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall,

156-7: "and I will assign you that task (**business**) that will remove Banquo (**your enemy**) if you carry it out".
in your bosoms = "into your hearts".²

158: figuratively, eliminating Banquo will also create a bond of loyalty between Macbeth and the murderers, ie. they will win the king's favour.³

Grapples = joins or fastens; there is a military metaphor here: sailors of an attacking ship would sometimes pull up alongside another ship and attach themselves to it by means of a grappling-iron, which would allow the attackers to board the other ship and confront the enemy face to face.¹
us = ie. "me".

159: Macbeth's well-being is weakened by Banquo's remaining alive (**in his life**), ie. Macbeth enjoys no comfort, and perhaps suffers feeble health, so long as Banquo is alive.³ Shakespeare's metaphor of **health** as something that he **wears** is unique.

160: but Macbeth's health would be perfected by Banquo's death (**his death**).

162-5: the 2nd Murderer is one who has become so enraged (**incensed**) by the wretched and degrading (**vile blows**) of life, that he no longer cares (is **reckless**) what deeds he performs, acting purely **to spite the world**.^{1,6}
buffets = synonymous with **blows**.¹

168: **weary with** = wearied by.

tugged with fortune = perhaps, "yanked about by misfortune",⁵ suggesting he has been roughly handled by bad luck.³

= bet, gamble, risk.² = opportunity or possibility.²

170: to improve his life or just end it.

on't = of it.

177-9: **and in...of life** = "and so deadly (**bloody**) is our enmity (**distance**), that every minute he lives (**of his being**) strikes (**thrusts**) at my vital parts (**Against my near'st of life**), ie. at my very life."^{1,4,5}

180-2: **though I...must not** = though Macbeth could (by virtue of his royal authority) eliminate Banquo using unconcealed (**barefaced**)¹ power, and justify (**avouch**) the deed on the ground that it is his **will** (as king) to do so, he cannot in fact openly eliminate Banquo.^{3,5}

182-4: **For certain...down** = because Macbeth and Banquo have mutual friends, whose loyalty Macbeth cannot afford to lose (he **may not**, ie. must not, **drop** them); instead, he must himself be seen to lament (**wail**)¹ the death of the man

		Macbeth himself killed. ^{3,4}
184	Who I myself struck down: <u>and thence it is</u> ,	= ie. "and it is from that series of points that leads me to the next step".
	That I to your assistance do make love,	185: metaphorically, Macbeth is wooing, or trying to win over, the men to help him.
186	<u>Masking the business</u> from the common eye,	186: hiding (Masking) the deed from the public's view (ie. knowledge); Macbeth refers to the murder euphemistically as the business .
	For <u>sundry</u> weighty reasons.	187: for various (sundry) important reasons.
188	2nd Murd. We shall, my lord,	
190	Perform what you command us.	
192	1st Murd. Though our lives –	192: the 1st Murderer begins to attest to his own willingness to take on the job; but now that Macbeth sees he has got his men, he interrupts the 1st Murderer to move the conversation along.
194	Macbeth. Your spirits shine through you.	194: Macbeth can see the men's eagerness just by looking at them; ⁵ his flattery is fairly transparent.
	Within this hour at most,	
196	I will <u>advise</u> you where to <u>plant</u> yourselves,	= inform. ⁴ = station, situate.
198	Acquaint you, <u>with the perfect spy, o' th' time</u> , The moment <u>on't</u> ; for't must be done tonight,	197-8: Acquaint...on't = perhaps, Macbeth will let the Murderers know, by means of his own (or another's) precise observation (with the perfect spy), of the exact moment the deed should be committed. ³ spy = the OED glosses spy here as "an act of secret watching." ¹ However, spy could just as well refer to a third man who will join the two murderers in Scene iii below. ⁸ with the perfect spy, o' th' time = the clause is typically printed without the comma; the meaning, however, remains obscure. Jowett glosses, "with the exact arrangements for place and time" (p. 2531). ⁷ on't = ie. for it (the murder).
	And <u>something</u> from the palace: <u>always thought</u> ,	= some distance. = it must be kept in mind. ⁴
200	That I require <u>a clearness</u> ; and <u>with him</u> ,	200: a clearness = to be viewed as innocent or clear of blame. ^{1,4,5} 200-205: with him...hour = for the job to be done cleanly and without bungling, Fleance (Banquo's son) will also have to be killed. with him = ie. along with Banquo.
	(To leave no <u>rubs</u> nor <u>botches</u> in the work)	201: so that the job can be completed without hindrances or imperfections (rubs) or flaws (botches). rubs = a term from bowling: a rub was an obstruction or unevenness of the ground which caused the bowled ball to deflect from its intended course. The sense, thus, is that a rub could represent anything that might thwart the successful commission of the crime. ^{1,3,8}
202	Fleance, his son, <u>that keeps him company</u> ,	= ie. Fleance is riding with his father; that = who.
	Whose <u>absence</u> is no less <u>material</u> to me,	= removal, death: a euphemism. ⁶ = important.
204	Than is his father's, must <u>embrace</u> the fate	= suffer. ⁶

	Of that dark hour: <u>resolve yourselves apart</u> .	= "confer privately and make up your minds (as to whether you want to go through with this)." ³ resolve = frequently used reflexively to mean "convince oneself" or "assure oneself" of something. ¹
206	I'll come to you <u>anon</u> .	= shortly.
208	Both Murderers. We are <u>resolved</u> , my lord.	= decided, determined.
210	Macbeth. I'll call upon you <u>straight</u> : <u>abide within</u> .	= right away. = "wait inside."
212	[<i>Exeunt Murderers.</i>]	
214	It is concluded: – Banquo, thy soul's flight, If it find Heaven, must find it out tonight.	214-5: thy soul's...tonight = Banquo's soul will learn tonight whether it is destined for Heaven or not.
216	[<i>Exit.</i>]	
	<u>ACT III, SCENE II.</u>	
	<i>The same.</i> <i>Another Room in the Palace.</i>	
	<i>Enter Lady Macbeth, and a Servant.</i>	
1	L. Macbeth. Is Banquo gone from court?	
2		
4	Serv. Ay, madam, but returns again tonight.	
6	L. Macbeth. Say to the king, I <u>would attend his leisure</u> , For a few words.	= ie. "would like to meet with him when he has time".
8	Serv. Madam, I will.	
10	[<i>Exit Servant.</i>]	
		12-15 (below): Lady Macbeth reveals her melancholy feelings in this short soliloquy comprised of aphorisms expressed in a pair of rhyming couplets. She does not, however, tell us why exactly she is so uneasy.
12	L. Macbeth. <u>Naught's</u> had, all's <u>spent</u> , Where our desire is got without content:	12-13: nothing has (Naught's) been gained, and everything has been used up (spent), when you get what you want but are still not satisfied. ^{1,5} That is, the Macbeth's now have what they want, but at the expense of their peace of mind and happiness.
14	<u>'Tis safer</u> to be that which we destroy, Than by destruction dwell in <u>doubtful</u> joy.	14-15: there is more security ('Tis safer) in being the one we killed than there is in killing someone else and living as a result in apprehensive or uncertain (doubtful) happiness. ^{1,5}
16		12-15 (above): more than one commentator has suggested that these lines belong to Macbeth, given their brooding and morbid nature.
18	<i>Enter Macbeth.</i>	17: notice how Lady Macbeth rouses herself at the entrance of her husband, not wanting him to sense her own anxiety. In lines 67-68 of the previous scene, Macbeth had

20 How now, my lord? why do you keep alone, Of <u>sorriest fancies</u> your companions making,	announced he would remain alone till supper; Lady Macbeth does not know that he has, during this space of time, been plotting the murder of Banquo and Fleance. = the most melancholy ideas or thoughts.^{1,5}
<u>Using</u> those thoughts, which should indeed have <u>died</u>	21-22: Using...think on = entertaining (Using) those thoughts, which should have disappeared (died) at the same time the person (them, ie. Duncan) with whom those thoughts are preoccupied died. Lady Macbeth assumes that her husband has been keeping to himself because he is depressed over the murder of the king.
22 With <u>them</u> they think on? Things <u>without all remedy</u> Should be without regard: <u>what'st done, is done</u>.	22-23: Things...regard = the sense is, one should not expend time thinking about things that cannot be changed or fixed. without all remedy = beyond redress;^{3,6} in the 16th and 17th centuries, this expression, now obsolete, was used with equal frequency as "without any remedy". regard (line 25) = consideration, thought.² = this still-common expression is Shakespeare's pithy version of the 16th century maxim, "<i>that that is done, is done</i>".
24 Macbeth. We have <u>scorched the snake</u>, not killed it:	25-27 (below): with a deceptively complex metaphor, Macbeth expresses his unease that he is not yet out of danger. 25: scorched = slashed or wounded with a knife.¹ the snake = the obstacles to Macbeth fully and securely enjoying the crown.³
26 <u>She'll close, and be herself</u>; whilst our <u>poor malice</u> Remains in danger of her <u>former tooth</u>. –	26: She'll close, and be herself = the cuts will heal, and the snake will return to its old self again.⁴ Macbeth seems to be worrying that the threat to his crown has not been fully removed with Duncan's death, and that a new threat can be expected to arise. An alternate interpretation is: "the snake will join together, and be its complete self again." Kittredge explains that this is an allusion to an old superstition that a snake that has been cut in two will reunite unless its head is crushed. 26-27: whilst our...tooth = "our feeble hatred (poor malice) is still threatened by, or vulnerable to, (a bite from) the snake's front teeth (former tooth), ie. its fangs.³ former tooth = some commentators have interpreted this to mean "the fangs as they previously were, before the snake was injured";^{3,7} but in the 16th and 17th century, former was frequently used to refer to the forward part of certain body parts (including the head and neck), and former teeth specifically to the front teeth.
28 But let the <u>frame of things</u> <u>disjoint</u>,	28-29: But let...nightly = but let the whole scheme of things

	Both the worlds <u>suffer</u> ,	(or the whole universe) fall to pieces (<i>disjoint</i>), so that both Heaven and earth (<i>Both the worlds</i>) are destroyed or die (<i>suffer</i>). ^{1,2,3,5} <i>frame of things</i> = <i>frame</i> alone could mean "the universe" or "structure"; ¹ <i>frame of things</i> thus suggests "the framework of the universe". ^{3,5} <i>Both the worlds</i> = both the celestial and terrestrial realms. ⁴
30	Ere <u>we</u> will eat our meal in fear, and sleep In the affliction of these terrible dreams,	30-31: "before (<i>ere</i>) I will lose my appetite or endure sleep afflicted with nightmares". <i>we</i> = ie. "I", the royal "we".
32	That <u>shake</u> us nightly: <u>better</u> be with <u>the dead</u> , Whom we, <u>to gain our peace</u> , have sent to <u>peace</u> ,	= unsettle, frighten. ⁶ = ie. it is better to. = ie. Duncan. 33: the first <i>peace</i> refers to Macbeth's peace of mind; the second <i>peace</i> refers to the rest and quiet of death, gained in escaping the troubles of the world. <i>to gain our peace</i> = an illogical clause; Macbeth has committed murder to gain the crown, not peace. It has been suggested that this first <i>peace</i> was printed in error. ⁸
34	Than on the torture of the mind to lie In restless <u>ecstasy</u> .	34-35: (it is better to be dead) than to allow the mind to be tortured, and thus thrown into a trance or state of frenzy (<i>ecstasy</i>), accompanied by sleeplessness or unrest. ^{1,3,5} These lines conclude the comparison begun in the second half of line 32. To the minds of some editors, <i>torture</i> evokes an image of the mind being tormented on a rack.
36	Duncan is in his grave: After life's <u>fitful</u> fever, he sleeps well:	37: Macbeth describes Duncan as at peace in death, after living a life that was like a recurring or fit-inducing (<i>fitful</i>) fever – "now hot, now cold, never at rest" (Kittredge, p. 163). ^{1,3} The reference may be to ague, which is accompanied by intermittent spikes of fever. ^{3,5}
38	Treason has done <u>his</u> worst: <u>nor steel</u> , nor poison,	38-40: treason – the crime of which Macbeth is guilty – has done the worst thing it could have done (ie. killed the king); there is nothing else that can harm (<i>touch</i>) Duncan any further. <i>his</i> = ie. its. <i>nor steel</i> = neither a sword. <i>Malice domestic</i> = malicious acts arising within Scotland; a probable reference to the rebellions of Act I. <i>foreign levy</i> = literally, the raising of troops in another country; a likely reference to the attack of the Norwegians.
40	Can <u>touch</u> him further.	
42	<i>L. Macbeth.</i> Come on: <u>Gentle my lord</u> , <u>sleek o'er your rugged looks</u> ,	43: <i>Gentle my lord</i> = a vocative; the usual form of address was "gentle lord", sometimes preceded by "my" or "most". This variation appears unique to Shakespeare, who also used it in <i>Measure for Measure</i> and <i>Winter's Tale</i> . <i>Gentle</i> = suggests "noble" and "refined". ¹ <i>sleek o'er your rugged looks</i> = "smooth out (<i>sleek o'er</i>) your brow, which is wrinkled with cares or agitation (<i>rugged</i>)"; ^{1,2} Lady Macbeth understands that her husband must compose himself for the evening's royal banquet, so that he presents an outward appearance of calm and

		amiability despite his inner anxiety.
44	Be <u>bright</u> and jovial among your guests tonight.	= cheerful and upbeat. ¹
46	Macbeth. So shall I, love, and <u>so I pray be you</u> .	= "I ask you also to be so;" his confidence surging, Macbeth now takes charge of the situation.
	Let your <u>remembrance</u> <u>apply to</u> Banquo:	47: literally, "let your consideration and regards (remembrance) be directed to (apply to) Banquo", ie. "be particularly attentive to Banquo". ^{1,2,3,6} remembrance = pronounced with four syllables: <i>re-mem-ber-ance</i> . ⁴
48	<u>Present</u> him <u>eminence</u> , <u>both with eye and tongue</u> :	48: Present him eminence = "show (Present) him exceptional homage (eminence)", ie. treat him with special honour. ^{1,2,3,5} both with eye and tongue = "both by unmistakably looking at him with regard, and speaking to him frequently." ³
	<u>Unsafe the while</u> , that we must <u>lave</u> Our honours in these flattering streams, And make our faces <u>vizards</u> to our <u>hearts</u> , Disguising what they are.	49-52 (below): Macbeth rues that he and his wife must deceive Banquo by flattering him, even as they themselves remain in danger. 49-52: = ie. "we remain in danger or in a precarious position for the present (Unsafe the while), so long as we must flatter others and present false faces in order to keep our honours intact". ^{5,8} In the first metaphor (lines 49-50), Macbeth suggests that the royal couple can keep their honour "clean" (ie. intact) only by washing it (lave = bathe or wash) in a stream that represents the flattery they must shower on Banquo. ^{1,3,5} In the second metaphor (lines 51-52), the couple's faces are described as masks (vizards) that conceal their true thoughts and feelings (their hearts).
54	L. Macbeth. You must <u>leave</u> this.	54: Macbeth must stop talking or thinking this way. leave = cease. ³
56	Macbeth. O, full of <u>scorpions</u> is my mind, dear wife!	56: Macbeth graphically describes his mental agitation through the image of scorpions stinging and poisoning him inside his head.
	Thou know'st, that Banquo and his Fleance lives.	57: Macbeth obliquely notes that so long as Banquo and his son remain alive, his own hold on the throne remains insecure.
58	L. Macbeth. But in them, nature's <u>copy's</u> not <u>eterne</u> .	59: "nature has not granted Banquo and his son a perpetual lease (a copy) of life, ^{3,5} ie. they will die sometime in the future; Lady Macbeth points out that Banquo and Fleance can't live forever, and so Macbeth should not obsess over them. copy's = a copy was a copyhold , a medieval form of tenure similar to a lease, granting another possession of land for a limited period, but one that could be terminated at any time. ^{1,3} eterne = ie. eternal; pronounced as a disyllable: <i>e-tern</i> . ¹
60	Macbeth. There's <u>comfort</u> yet, they are <u>assailable</u> :	60-61: "that is comforting", or "there is hope or relief (comfort) yet", because Banquo and Fleance are

62 Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown

64 His cloistered flight; ere to black Hecat's summons
The shard-born beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal,

66 There shall be done a deed of dreadful note.

68 **L. Macbeth.** What's to be done?

70 **Macbeth.** Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,

72 Till thou applaud the deed. – Come, seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,

vulnerable to attack (they are *assailable*).¹

Macbeth provides a strong hint of his plans for his rival.

62: **Then be thou *jocund*** = Macbeth's sense is, "so cheer up!"

jocund = merry.²

Lines 62-66: *ere the...note* = with rich, dark imagery, Macbeth comes closer to explicitly stating that he has arranged for Banquo and Fleance to be killed before (*ere*) night is fully underway.

Lines 62-63: *ere the bat...flight* = before the bat begins to fly in covered walkways or arcades (called *cloisters*); or, more figuratively, before the bat begins its secluded flights, ie. before night has fully fallen. Either way, the intended image is of a bat flying alone in the dark.^{3,4,5}

Cloisters were usually associated with monasteries and colleges.¹

63-65: ***ere to...peal*** = before the dung-born (*shard-born*) beetle, with its sleepy droning, responds to Hecat's summons to ring the bell announcing the arrival of night.

Hecat's = ie. Hecate, a Greek deity, here invoked in her role as goddess of the night.

shard-born beetle = reference to the beetle that either (1) makes its home in dung (*shard*), described here as having been *born* in it,^{1,2} or (2) is carried aloft on wings which resemble fragments of pottery, or *shards* (in which case the spelling should be *shard-borne*).^{1,3}

With *drowsy* and *yawning*, Macbeth emphasizes the sleepy onset of night.

= terrible distinction;^{1,6} note the alliteration in this line.

70-71: ***Be innocent...deed*** = Macbeth will not tell his wife of his plan to kill Banquo and Fleance until the deed is done, at which point, he expects, she will approve and praise (*applaud*) it.¹

chuck = term of endearment which came into use in the very late 16th century.¹

71-72: ***Come...day*** = in this deceptively complex metaphor, Macbeth calls on *night* to cover or blindfold (*Scarf up*) the eyes of the daytime; Macbeth wants night to arrive so that the killing of his rivals may be carried out unseen.

seeling night = night which closes the eyes; the sense is layered: it may refer to the closing of literal eyes of all those who sleep at night, and also to the figurative muffling of the eyes of daylight, as described in line 72; in addition, *eye* could be a description specifically of the sun, which was often called the *eye of the world* and the *eye of Heaven*.

seeling = a term from falconry. During training, the bird's eyelids were sometimes temporarily sewn shut (*seeled*), blinding the bird in order to keep it under control.¹

Scarf up = cover, as with a scarf.¹

Line 72: *pitiful* is ambiguous, and suggests two related senses:

(1) *day* itself is compassionate (*pitiful*), and so its

74	And with <u>thy bloody and invisible hand</u> , Cancel and tear to pieces <u>that great bond</u> ,	sensitive (<i>tender</i>) eye should be covered, perhaps so that Macbeth can avoid its implied judgment of his actions; and (2) <i>day</i> is a time which arouses pity: that is, in the day, people, being awake, would see the crime, and be moved to pity for the victims.
76	Which keeps me pale! – <u>Light thickens</u> , and the crow Makes wing <u>toth'</u> <u>rooky</u> wood:	73-75: <i>And with...pale</i> = Macbeth continues his apostrophe to the night, summoning it to destroy the troubling prophecy of the Witches (the <i>bond</i>), which frightens him. ^{3,4} <i>thy bloody and invisible hand</i> = represents the act of killing Banquo and Fleance; the <i>hand</i> is <i>invisible</i> because the murder is to occur at night in the dark, hidden from sight. <i>that great bond</i> = a <i>bond</i> is anything which binds a man, like a legal document; here, it represents the Witches' prediction that it is Banquo's descendants, not Macbeth's, who will rule Scotland. ³ Some commentators have suggested that the <i>great bond</i> refers to Banquo's "lease" on life. ^{7,8} <i>keeps me pale</i> (line 75) = makes him afraid; a person's countenance was frequently described as <i>pale for fear</i> .
78	<u>Good things</u> of day begin to <u>droop</u> , and <u>drowse</u> , Whiles <u>Night's black agents</u> to <u>their preys</u> do <u>rouse</u> . –	75: <i>Light thickens</i> = the light is growing dim or dark. ^{1,3} <i>Lines 75-76: the crow...wood</i> = the crow flies into the woods, which are already filled with its fellow crows (<i>rooky</i> ; a <i>rook</i> is a species of crow); <i>rooky</i> seems to have been coined by Shakespeare here. ^{1,8} <i>rooky</i> = there is also a possibility that <i>rooky</i> is just a variant spelling, or misspelling, for <i>roky</i> or <i>rawky</i> , both of which mean "misty"; ^{1,8} if this were the case, Shakespeare may have intended a pun here, based on <i>rook's</i> being a name for a crow. Rooks were considered birds of good omen, and as a result, Thiselton-Dyer tells us, nobles often kept rooks on their properties; however, when the rooks abandoned their rookery (breeding ground) on the castle's property, it was viewed as an omen of the downfall of the family who owned that land (p. 144). ¹¹ Thus, Macbeth may be hinting that Banquo's rooks have left his property, symbolically predicting the end of Banquo's line. <i>toth'</i> = ie. to the.
80	Thou <u>marvell'st</u> at my words: but <u>hold thee still</u> : Things bad begun, make strong themselves by ill:	77-78: as the innocent and gentle creatures (<i>Good things</i>) of the day sink or languish (<i>droop</i>) and become heavy with sleepiness (<i>drowse</i>), the evil actors of the night awaken (<i>rouse</i>) and prepare to hunt their victims (<i>their preys</i>). ⁶ <i>Night's black agents</i> = the foul or wicked (<i>black</i>) predators – "beasts of prey" (Kittredge, p. 167), which includes murderers such as the ones about to eliminate Banquo ³ – are described as creatures acting on behalf of personified Night. = are astonished. ¹ = "remain quiet", ie. "ask no questions." 80: evil schemes that are already set in motion (alluding elliptically to Duncan's murder) grow stronger through further wrongdoing (the approaching killing of Banquo); that is, once one has begun to commit evil, the only way to

82	So <u>prythee</u> go with me.		secure its benefits is to engage in further wicked acts.
		[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	= please.
	<u>ACT III, SCENE III.</u>		
	<i>The same.</i> <i>A Park or Lawn, with a gate leading to the Palace.</i>		The Setting: the scene takes place about a mile from the Palace gate (see line 25 below).
		<i>Enter three Murderers.</i>	Entering Characters: the original two Murderers have been joined by a third, who is the agent Macbeth had promised to send with further instructions (see Act III.i. 196-9 above). The conversation is joined after the 3rd Murderer has passed on the instructions for the killing of Banquo.
1	1st Murd. But who did <u>bid</u> thee join with us?		1: the 1st Murderer is not sure yet whether the 3rd Murderer is to be trusted.
2			bid = instruct. ¹
4	3rd Murd. Macbeth.		
6	2nd Murd. He needs not our mistrust, since he <u>delivers</u> Our <u>offices</u> , and what we have to do, <u>To the direction just</u> .		5-7: the 2nd Murderer assures the 1st that the newcomer need not be mistrusted, since he has correctly (just) communicated their duties (offices). ^{1,3} delivers = sets forth, reports. ⁶ To the direction just = the sense is, "in a manner that corresponds precisely to the instructions Macbeth gave us." ³
8			= join, come along. ¹
10	1st Murd. Then <u>stand</u> with us: The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.		10: the western sky is not yet dark.
	Now spurs the <u>lated</u> traveller <u>apace</u> ,		11-12: Now spurs...inn = the traveller, overtaken by night (lated), spurs his horse to run quickly (apace) to reach the inn promptly (timely): ¹ a general observation.
12	To gain the timely inn: and near approaches <u>The subject of our watch</u> .		12-13: and near...watch = and the person they are lying in wait for (The subject of our watch – Banquo) is drawing near; though the 1st Murderer is referring only to Banquo (see line 19 below, in which the 2nd Murderer says, " Then 'tis he. "), Fleance, whom they also intend to kill, is with his father. The OED defines subject as it is used in this line as a "phrase indicating a specified action or activity;" this would change the meaning of this sequence to, "and the time for the murder to take place is drawing near." It is unclear, and has been argued both ways, whether the 1st Murderer actually hears the horses of Banquo and Fleance approaching. ^{3,8}
14			= listen.
16	3rd Murd. <u>Hark</u> , I hear horses.		
	Banquo. [<i>Within.</i>] Give us a light there, <u>hoa</u> !		17: Banquo shouts from off-stage: having reached the end of his ride, he calls for someone to provide light. Though the 3rd Murderer tells us in line 25 below that

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2nd Murd. Then 'tis he: the rest
That are within the note of expectation
Already are i' th' court.

1st Murd. His horses go about.

3rd Murd. Almost a mile: but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence toth' palace gate
Make it their walk.

Enter Banquo and Fleance, with a torch.

2nd Murd. A light, a light!

3rd Murd. 'Tis he.

1st Murd. Stand to't.

Banquo. It will be rain tonight.

1st Murd. Let it come down.

[They set upon Banquo.]

Banquo. O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou mayst revenge – O slave!

[Banquo dies. Fleance escapes.]

3rd Murd. Who did strike out the light?

1st Murd. Was't not the way?

3rd Murd. There's but one down: the son is fled.

2nd Murd. We have lost best half of our affair.

1st Murd. Well, let's away, and say how much is done.

the killers are a mile from the palace gate, it is clear that Banquo has arrived at some building or structure, though Shakespeare does not specify what exactly it is (Macbeth has made certain, however, that the location was one at which Banquo would be expected to dismount). Jowett suggests there is a stable in which Banquo drops off the horses;⁷ Kittredge asserts that Banquo has handed the horses off to a servant, who takes them to the castle.³

hoa = ie. "ho!", an exclamation used to call for attention.¹

19-21: *the rest...court* = all the other expected guests that are on the list of invitees (*within the note of expectation*) to the king's banquet are already inside.⁵

23: another line that has attracted multiple interpretations:
(1) Banquo's horses are being walked to a stable;⁷ or
(2) a servant is riding the horses away,³ perhaps back to the castle.⁵

25-27: how did Macbeth and the murderers correctly anticipate that Banquo and Fleance would leave their horses here, a mile from the palace gate? every visitor does this, says the 3rd Murderer, and they all walk to the gate from here (*from hence*).

31: the 2nd Murderer suddenly notices the torch carried by the noble pair!

35: ie. "let's do this bravely";¹ the 1st Murderer gives this mini-pep-talk to his co-conspirators before the attack.

39: the 1st Murderer jests grimly on Banquo's innocuous comment about the weather.

= flee.

44: *revenge* = ie. avenge this deed.

slave = wretch; directed toward the attackers.

48: someone extinguished the torch.

50: ie. "isn't that what we were supposed to do?"

52: the murderers have succeeded in striking down Banquo only.

54: half of the quarry – Fleance – has escaped; he was the *best half* in the sense, perhaps, that Fleance was the more important intended victim, since he represents the first of Banquo's descendants predicted to gain the throne, fulfilling the Witches' prophecy. Of course, we may ask how the 2nd Murderer would know any of this.

56: *let's away* = the sense is, "let's get out of here".

say how much is done = ie. "report to Macbeth what we accomplished."

ACT III, SCENE IV.

Inverness.

A Room of State in the Palace.

A banquet prepared.

*Enter Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox,
Lords, and Attendants.*

1 **Macbeth.** You know your own degrees, sit down:

2 At first and last the hearty welcome.

4 **Lords.** Thanks to your Majesty.

6 **Macbeth.** Ourself will mingle with society,
And play the humble host:

8 Our hostess keeps her state; but in best time,
We will require her welcome.

10 **L. Macbeth.** Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,
12 For my heart speaks, they are welcome.

14 *Enter First Murderer [at the door].*

16 **Macbeth.** See, they encounter thee with their hearts'
thanks. —

Both sides are even: here I'll sit i' th' midst. —

18 Be large in mirth: anon we'll drink a measure
The table round.

The Setting: a banqueting hall in Macbeth's palace; in addition to a table surrounded by stools on which the guests may sit, there is a dais on which rest two chairs of state for use by the king and queen.

Entering Characters: the attendees all enter the stage, where the royal banquet awaits them.

1: as everyone knows their own ranks (**degrees**), the guests can seat themselves accordingly; the closer one sat to the royal couple, the higher one's social rank.

2: ie. "I give a hearty welcome to one and all (**first and last**)."¹

6-7: rather than remain aloof on his throne, Macbeth intends to sit at the tables where he can interact with his guests in some intimacy.

8-9: "Lady Macbeth will remain seated on her throne, but at the appropriate time, I will ask (**require**) her to formally welcome her guests."¹

keeps her state = observes the formal ceremony and pomp of her position as queen.¹

= ie. "speak the welcome on my behalf".

16: the guests respond to the queen's welcome with their own expressions of thanks.³

encounter thee = the OED defines **encounter** as "to meet", suggesting the sense here to be something like, "they meet thee with a corresponding response", ie. a murmur of thanks, perhaps accompanied with some bowing in her direction.

17: Macbeth observes that the guests are sitting in equal numbers on both sides of the banquet table (ie. are **even**), and then declares his intention to sit the middle of his men (**th' midst**).¹

18: **Be large in mirth** = "be abundant or unrestrained (**large**) in your merriment", ie. "enjoy yourselves freely".^{2,3}

anon = in a moment; Macbeth needs to confer with the 1st Murderer before sharing a drink with his guests.

Lines 18-19: we'll...round = either, (1) "we will, all together, take a drink," or (2) "we will pass the goblet around the table for everyone to drink from."³

measure = the OED defines **measure** here as "a certain quantity"; some editors, however, gloss **measure** to mean "full vessel" or even "goblet".^{2,3,4}

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22		[<i>Macbeth approaching the door.</i>]	21: having noticed the 1st Murderer at the door, even as he was speaking to his guests, Macbeth goes to meet him.
24		There's blood upon thy face.	
26	1st Murd.	'Tis Banquo's then.	
28	Macbeth.	'Tis better thee without, than <u>he within</u> .	27: "it is better for blood to be on your outside than to still be flowing inside him (<i>he within</i>)."
30	1st Murd.	My lord, his throat is cut, that I did for him.	= done away with, ie. killed. ¹
32	Macbeth.	Thou art the best o' th' cut-throats: Yet he's good that did the like for Fleance:	33: ie. yet he who killed Fleance is also a good cut-throat (as compared to the 1st Murderer, who is the <i>best</i>). 34: if the 1st Murderer killed both of them, then he is without equal (<i>nonpareil</i>). ¹
34		If thou didst it, thou art the <u>nonpareil</u> .	= ie. escaped.
36	Murd.	Most royal sir, Fleance is ' <u>scaped</u> .	= episode of terror, agitation, or anxiety; ^{3,5} Macbeth recognizes that he has lost his composure.
38	Macbeth.	Then comes my <u>fit</u> again: I had <u>else</u> been <u>perfect</u> ;	= otherwise. = ie. perfectly contented. ¹
40		<u>Whole</u> as the marble, <u>founded</u> as the rock, As <u>broad</u> , and <u>general</u> , as the <u>casing</u> air:	40-43 (below): Macbeth describes his mental state using a somewhat abstract contrast: if both Banquo and Fleance had been killed, then he would feel free and unconfined, ie. secure and expansive (lines 40-41); but now that he has learned Fleance has escaped, he feels confined and trapped in anxiety (lines 42-43). 40: sound or unbroken (<i>whole</i>) as marble, well-grounded (<i>founded</i>) as rock. ^{1,2,6} 41: as diffused (<i>broad</i>) and free (<i>general</i>) as the surrounding or all-embracing (<i>casing</i>) air; ^{1,3,4} <i>broad</i> = was sometimes used in collocation with <i>air</i> , e.g., "the earth his hollowness up to the top of the broad air" (1567).
42		But now I am <u>cabined</u> , <u>cribbed</u> , <u>confined</u> , <u>bound in</u>	= synonyms for restricted, confined, or trapped, ie. wrapped in mental constraint.
44		To <u>saucy</u> doubts, and fears. – But Banquo's <u>safe</u> ?	= extravagant or sharp. ^{5,6} = ie. safely disposed of.
46	1st Murd.	Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he <u>bides</u> , With twenty <u>trenchèd</u> gashes on his head;	= dwells, remains. The 1st Murderer grimly puns on <i>safe</i> . = deep, resembling trenches. ²
48		The least a death to nature.	47: even the smallest of the wounds would have been enough to kill him.
50	Macbeth.	Thanks for that: There the grown serpent lies: the <u>worm</u> that's fled Hath nature that in time will venom breed,	50-52: <i>There the...present</i> = Macbeth compares the father who has been eliminated (Banquo) to an adult snake, and his son Fleance to an immature snake (<i>worm</i>) that is yet to grow its poison-filled, and hence dangerous, fangs (<i>teeth</i>), ie. Fleance is not yet a threat, but has the potential to become one. ¹
52		No <u>teeth</u> for th' present. – Get thee gone, tomorrow	
		We'll <u>hear ourselves</u> again.	53: either, (1) literally, "we will listen to each other (<i>ourselves</i>) ⁵ again", ie. they will revisit the matter; or

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[Exit 1st Murderer.]

L. Macbeth. My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold
That is not often vouched, while 'tis a-making:

'Tis given with welcome: to feed were best at home:

From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony:

Meeting were bare without it.

*Enter the Ghost of Banquo,
and sits in Macbeth's place.*

Macbeth. Sweet remembrancer! –

Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!

Lennox. May't please your highness sit.

Macbeth. Here had we now our country's honour, roofed,
Were the graced person of our Banquo present:

Who may I rather challenge for unkindness,
Than pity for mischance!

(2) using the royal "we", "I will listen to you recount what happened again"; in this latter reading, *ourselves* means "for our part".¹ Waith glosses *hear ourselves* simply as "confer".

55: Macbeth returns to the banquet, likely approaching Lady Macbeth, who has noticed Macbeth's absence and mildly scolds him for ignoring his guests.

58: *give the cheer* = "make your guests feel cordially welcome" (Kittredge, p. 170).³

58-60: *the feast...welcome* = literally, "the feast which is not regularly certified (*vouched*) (that is, as a banquet being provided by a host) while it is ongoing (*while 'tis a making*) is more like a meal that has been sold rather than given."

In other words, the feast at which the host does not make his guests feel welcome is more like a meal that the guests purchased, as at an inn.^{3,4}

= ie. in which case – if the host isn't present to make the guests feel welcome – one might as well eat at home.

61: but when eating away from home (*From thence*), it is the outward show of deference, formality, and ceremoniousness (*ceremony*) that gives food (*meat*) its flavour (*sauce*), ie. meaning and enjoyment.

62: without ceremony, however, the gathering is empty of significance, and the meal is just a meal.

Meeting = puns with *meat* of line 61.

bare = the food described as served without sauce.

Entering Character: the *Ghost of Banquo* – who only just died – sits in the empty seat that has been reserved for Macbeth, who will be the only person who can see it.

67: Macbeth acknowledges that his wife has reminded him of his duties to his guests.

remembrancer = a person who reminds another of something.

= attend.

69: and may good health accompany both (*digestion* and *appetite*).

73-74: "we would now have all the distinguished men (ie. the nobles) of Scotland (*our country's honour*) here under this roof (*roofed*), if the noble embodiment (*graced person*) of Banquo were here."^{1,3,5}

the person of = a very common expression that feels periphrastic (unnecessarily wordy, ie. a circumlocutionary) today; e.g., "*be contented to prefer a cottage before a crown, and the person of a poor labourer before the love of a prince*" (Robert Greene, 1591).¹

75-76: "whom I would rather reproach (*challenge*) for his ingratitude or discourtesy (*unkindness*) than pity for some ill fortune or accident (*mischance*);" that is,

78 **Ross.** His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your highness
80 To grace us with your royal company?

82 **Macbeth.** The table's full.

84 **Lennox.** Here is a place reserved, sir.

86 **Macbeth.** Where?

88 **Lennox.** Here, my good lord. – What is't that moves
your highness?

90 **Macbeth.** Which of you have done this?

92 **Lords.** What, my good lord?

94 **Macbeth.** [To the Ghost.]
Thou canst not say I did it: never shake
96 Thy gory locks at me.

98 **Ross.** Gentlemen, rise, his highness is not well.

100 **L. Macbeth.** Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,

And hath been from his youth. Pray you, keep seat,

The fit is momentary: upon a thought
He will again be well. If much you note him,
104 You shall offend him, and extend his passion:

Feed, and regard him not. –
106 [Aside to Macbeth.] Are you a man?

108 **Macbeth.** Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.

110 **L. Macbeth.** [Aside to Macbeth.] O proper stuff!

112 This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger which you said

while Macbeth would rather not have to admonish Banquo for his absence, that would still be preferable to Banquo's having met with a mishap or other harm.^{1,2,3,6}

78-79: **His absence...promise** = Banquo's absence makes it appear he has broken his commitment to be here.

82: Macbeth notices that all the seats – including his – are occupied, but has not yet recognized the image sitting in his seat.

= disturbs.³

= ie. killed Banquo; Macbeth's next line ("Thou canst not say I did it" at line 95 below) confirms this is the correct interpretation.³

= ie. do not.

= ie. the ghost's blood-matted hair.

= like this, ie. subject to fits of abstraction (Kittredge, p. 172).³

= since he was a child. = please, remain seated.

keep seat = Shakespeare's unique contribution to the very old use of similar, common phrases with *keep* that omit an article or possessives (ie. *keep seat* vs. *keep your seat*), such as *keep company*, *keep peace* and *keep promise*.

= "as fast as a thought", ie. "in a moment".^{3,8}

103: "if you pay too much attention to, or stare at, him".

104: **offend** = Kittredge suggests, "make him worse".³
extend his passion = prolong or increase his fit or attack.^{3,4,5}

= "eat", ie. "continue eating".

= ie. the ghost of a dead man.

= horrify.¹

111: sarcastic: "this is a fine (**proper**) thing!"^{3,5}

112-4: **This is...Duncan** = whatever it is Macbeth sees is merely a hallucination produced by his fear, just as was the dagger he imagined floating before him at Act II.i.64f above.

Note the nice metaphor of the vision as a **painting** created by his fear, just as the dagger was **air-drawn**; Kittredge proposes that **air-drawn** also serves to describe the dagger as "unsheathed (ie. drawn) in the air", suggesting some word-

114	Led you to Duncan. O, these <u>flaws and starts</u> (<u>Impostors to true fear</u>) would well <u>become</u>	play. = outbursts of passion and sudden fits of shock or terror. ¹
116	A woman's story, at a winter's fire, <u>Authórized by her grandam: Shame itself!</u>	115: Imposters to true fear = pretenders compared to (to) real fear; that is, Macbeth's attacks are "mere tricks of [his] nerves, unworthy to be called genuine fear" (Kittredge, p. 172). ³ become = suit. 116: a fantastic story as would be told by a woman during the winter, ie. a winter's tale. 117: Authorized by her grandam = ie. a story whose veracity has been vouched for (Authorized) by her grandmother. Authorized = always stressed on its second syllable in Shakespeare. Shame itself = ie. this behaviour is the personification of shame itself.
118	Why do you make such faces? <u>When all's done</u> , You look but on a <u>stool</u> .	= common precursor to "when all is said and done". 119: Macbeth is only looking at an empty seat (of course, only Macbeth sees the ghost sitting there). stool = chairs were exceedingly rare in Elizabethan times.
120	Macbeth. Prythee, see there!	121: "please, look there!"
122	Behold! look! lo! <u>how say you?</u> – [<i>To Ghost.</i>]	= "what do you say?" 123-9: as Macbeth addresses Banquo's ghost, the ghost nods, then rises and moves slowly away from the table. ³ 125-7: if the normal repositories of the dead (charnel houses and graves) must send those bodies back to us, then the only monuments we shall give them will be the stomachs (maws) of birds of prey (such as kites). In other words, if the dead are to come back to life like this, then we will no longer bury them, but instead leave them to be devoured by scavenging birds. charnel houses = vaults where bones of the dead are collected. ¹
124	Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too. If <u>charnel houses</u> and our <u>graves</u> must send	
126	Those that we bury back, our monuments Shall be the <u>maws</u> of <u>kites</u> .	
128		
130	[<i>Ghost vanishes.</i>]	129: Kittredge imagines the Ghost as exiting a door at the back of the stage, perhaps the same one through which it entered at line 64 above.
132	L. Macbeth. [<i>Aside to Macbeth.</i>] What? <u>quite unmanned in folly?</u>	= ie. "have you been completely stripped of your manhood by your foolishness?" Lady Macbeth repeatedly attacks her husband for his failure to act like a real man. unmanned = also suggests "made weak or timid". ¹
134	Macbeth. <u>If</u> I stand here, I saw him.	= ie. as surely as.
136	L. Macbeth. [<i>Aside to Macbeth.</i>] <u>Fie</u> , for shame!	= common exclamation expressing disgust or reproach. ¹
138	Macbeth. Blood hath been shed <u>ere now</u> , i' th' olden time,	138: since ancient times, people have been killed. ere now = before today.

	Ere <u>humane</u> statute <u>purged</u> the <u>gentle weal</u> :	139: before benevolent (<i>humane</i>) laws cleansed or purified (<i>purged</i>) the state (<i>weal</i>), making it civilized (<i>gentle</i>); ^{2,3,4,6} the sense is that a barbarous society is refined by the introduction of laws. <i>humane</i> = used in the 16th and 17th centuries to mean both "human" and "humane"; the stress is on the first syllable. ⁴
140	Ay, <u>and since too</u> , murders have been performed Too terrible <u>for the ear</u> . The <u>times has</u> been,	= ie. and even after the times when such laws were implemented. 141: <i>for the ear</i> = ie. to listen to descriptions of. <i>times has</i> = probably an error: should be <i>time has</i> or <i>times have</i> . = ie. when a man's brains were smashed.
142	That, <u>when the brains were out</u> , the man would die, And there an end: but now they rise again	
144	With twenty <u>mortal murders</u> on their <u>crowns</u> , And <u>push us from our stools</u> . <u>This</u> is more strange	144: ie. bearing multiple fatal wounds (<i>mortal murders</i>) on their heads (<i>crowns</i>); ³ Macbeth alludes to the 1st Murderer's earlier description of Banquo's head as containing " <i>twenty treched gashes</i> " (line 46 above). 145: <i>push us from our stools</i> = "prevent us from sitting on our own stools." <i>This</i> = ie. the appearance of the ghost.
146	Than such a murder is.	
148	<i>L. Macbeth.</i> My worthy lord, Your noble friends do <u>lack</u> you.	148-9: Lady Macbeth now speaks so that the guests may hear her. <i>lack</i> = miss. ¹
150	<i>Macbeth.</i> I do forget: –	
152	Do not <u>muse at</u> me, my most worthy friends: I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing	= be astonished by. ³
154	To those that know me. Come, <u>love and health to all</u> , Then I'll sit down: – Give me some wine; <u>fill full</u> : –	= Macbeth calls for a general toast. = "fill it completely"; a common playful collocation.
156		
158	[<i>Re-enter Ghost.</i>]	
160	I drink to th' general joy o' th' whole table, And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss: <u>Would</u> he were here: to all, and him, we <u>thirst</u> ,	159-162: Macbeth does not immediately notice the Ghost. 161: <i>Would</i> = if only. <i>thirst</i> = Jowett suggests, "to drink a toast", but this definition of <i>thirst</i> is not supported by the OED.
162	And all to all!	162: "let everyone drink to everyone"; ³ a final, all-encompassing toast to the guests.
164	<i>Lords.</i> <u>Our duties</u> , and the <u>pledge</u> .	164: ie. "we accept the obligation of loyalty (<i>our duties</i>) and return the toast (<i>pledge</i>). ^{1,5}
166	<i>Macbeth.</i> [<i>To Ghost.</i>] <u>Avant</u> and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!	166: Macbeth suddenly notices Banquo's Ghost is back! = "begone!" A common variant form of <i>avaunt</i> .
168	<u>Thy bones are marrowless</u> , <u>thy blood is cold</u> :	168: <i>Thy bones are marrowless</i> = the <i>marrow</i> is the soft substance contained in the cavities of bone, and was thought to be the seat of a person's vitality; ¹ Macbeth is thus telling the ghost he has been stripped of life. <i>thy blood is cold</i> = ie. "you are dead"; warm blood is associated with the living.

	Thou hast no <u>speculation</u> in those eyes	169: the eyes of the Ghost see, but there is no comprehending perception behind them. ⁴ <i>speculation</i> = intelligent sight. ¹
170	Which thou dost glare with!	
172	L. Macbeth. Think of this, good peers, But as a <u>thing of custom</u> : 'tis <u>no other</u> ,	173: <i>a thing of custom</i> = ie. something that happens all the time, there is nothing unusual in this behaviour. <i>no other</i> = nothing else. ³
174	Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.	
176	Macbeth. What <u>man</u> dare, I dare: <u>Approach thou</u> like the <u>rugged Russian bear</u> ,	176f: Macbeth suggests he is as brave as any man. <i>man</i> = ie. any man. 177: <i>Approach thou</i> = ie. "come at me". <i>rugged Russian bear</i> = hairy or shaggy Russian bear; ¹ Kittredge tells us that bears were imported from Russia for bear-baiting. Shakespeare likely borrowed the collocation <i>rugged bear</i> from Edmund Spenser's <i>The Faerie Queene</i> (1590), a favourite source of linguistic expression.
178	The <u>armed rhinoceros</u> , or th' <u>Hyrcean tiger</u> ;	178: <i>armed rhinoceros</i> = the rhinoceros' tough outer skin is described as being like protective armour. ¹ Shakespeare may have borrowed this figure from Sir Philip Sidney's <i>The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia</i> (1590), in which a monster is described as " <i>armed like a rhinoceros</i> "; Sidney's work was another favourite source from which Elizabethan authors frequently drew appealing or striking language. <i>Hyrcean tiger</i> = tigers from Hyrcania, the region comprising the land directly south and east of the Caspian Sea, were proverbial for their savageness. ¹⁰
180	Take any shape but <u>that</u> , and my firm <u>nerve</u> Shall never tremble; or be alive again, And dare me to the desert with thy sword:	= ie. that of a ghost, or of Banquo's ghost. ⁷ = sinews. ^{3,4} 181: ie. "and meet me in the desert (ie. any solitary place) for a duel". ^{3,4} In Act IV.i.73 of Shakespeare's <i>Richard II</i> , we find a similar challenge: " <i>I dare meet Surrey in a wilderness</i> ".
182	If trembling I <u>inhabit</u> then, <u>protest</u> me	182-3: <i>If trembling...girl</i> = the sense is, "if I tremble then (ie. as I do now), then you may proclaim (<i>protest</i>) me to be a girl's doll. ^{1,7} <i>baby of a girl</i> = some editors gloss this to mean "a young girl's baby", ie. a weak and puny baby. ^{3,5} <i>inhabit</i> = the sense seems to be, "remain in a state of", but the exact meaning of <i>inhabit</i> – or whether this is even Shakespeare's intended word here – has been argued about for two centuries. ^{3,4}
	The baby of a girl. <u>Hence</u> , horrible <u>shadow</u> !	= away! = phantom or shade. ¹
184	<u>Unreal mock'ry</u> , hence!	184: a vocative: "illusory imitation (of a person)"; ³ Macbeth tries to convince himself the Ghost is but a figment of his imagination.
186		
188	Why, so: <u>being gone</u> , I am a man again: – <u>Pray you sit still</u> .	= now that the ghost is gone. = "please sit down again (<i>still</i>)"; the guests, no longer able to ignore Macbeth's agitation, have in the interim risen from their seats. ⁸

190	L. Macbeth. You have <u>displaced</u> the mirth, <u>broke</u> the good meeting,	= banished. ¹ = ie. broken up.
192	With <u>most admired</u> <u>disorder</u> .	= a mental disturbance (disorder) that is to be much wondered at; most admired may be ironic. ^{1,3,5}
194	Macbeth. Can <u>such things</u> <u>be</u> , And <u>overcome</u> us like a summer's <u>cloud</u> ,	= ie. ghosts. = exist. 195-6: And overcome...wonder = "and pass over (overcome) all of us as suddenly as a cloud in summer, without our reacting with particular astonishment (special wonder)?" ^{1,2,3}
196	Without our special wonder? You make me <u>strange</u> Even to the <u>disposition</u> that I <u>owe</u> ,	196-7: You make...owe = "you make me feel that I am unfamiliar (strange) with my own nature (disposition)", ⁴ ie. "you make me not to know myself", perhaps alluding to his inability to determine if he is brave or cowardly. ⁶ disposition = settled mental constitution. ^{1,8} owe = possess, own. ⁵
198	When <u>now I think you</u> can behold such sights, And keep the natural <u>ruby</u> of your cheeks,	= "I realize that". ² = ie. "you all", 2nd person plural. = redness.
200	When <u>mine is</u> <u>blanched</u> with fear.	200: mine is = probably referring to Macbeth's cheeks; ⁸ sometimes emended to " mine are ". blanched = "made pale". ⁶
202	Ross. What sights, my lord?	
204	L. Macbeth. <u>I pray you speak not</u> : he grows worse and worse; Question <u>enrages him</u> : <u>at once</u> , good night.	= "please do not say anything to him"; Lady Macbeth addresses Ross and the other nobles. 205: enrages him = throws him into a rage or frenzy. ^{1,3} at once = immediately (spoken to all). ¹
206	Stand not upon the order of your going, But go at once.	206-7: Lady Macbeth asks her guests to leave quickly, without observing the usual formal order of their departure; ordinarily, the guests would leave slowly and ceremoniously according to rank. ¹
208	Lennox. Good night; and better health Attend his majesty!	
212	L. Macbeth. A kind good night to all!	
214	[<i>Exeunt all but Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.</i>]	214: it has been noted that Macbeth himself did not offer any farewell to his guests.
216	Macbeth. It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood.	216: blood will have blood = acts of violence can be expected to be avenged (ie. revenge is inevitable); a common expression around the turn of the 17th century. Some editions repunctuate the line to highlight the proverbial nature of the line's last clause: " <i>It will have blood: they say, blood will have blood.</i> "
	Stones have been known to move and trees to speak:	217-220 (below) : Macbeth lists various means by which murder has been brought to light. 217: the sense is, some crimes are so terrible that even natural objects themselves will speak to reveal the perpetrator. Commentators have longed scratched their heads in

		trying to determine the source or inspiration for this line. We may take note of this line from a 1577 work, <i>The Works of a Young Wit</i> , by Shakespeare's well known contemporary Nicholas Breton: " <i>and in old time, when trees, and stones could speak</i> ".
218	<u>Augurs</u> , and <u>understood relations</u> , have By <u>magot-pies</u> , and <u>choughs</u> , and <u>rooks</u> <u>brought forth</u>	218-220: Augurs...blood = the flights of birds, interpreted properly, have revealed (brought forth) even the most hidden murderer (The secret'st man of blood). Augurs = omens, auguries; the allusion is to the ancient world's practice of predicting the future by reading natural signs, specifically the flight of birds. ^{1,3} understood relations = may mean: (1) correctly interpreted reports (relations), referring to the actions of the birds; ³ or (2) correct understanding of the relationship between the sign (the movement of the birds) and the thing it signifies. ^{2,4} magot-pies = <i>magot-pie</i> was a rare alternate name for the magpie. ¹ choughs and rooks = both names for members of the crow family. ¹
220	The secret'st man of blood. – <u>What is the night?</u>	= ie. "what time of night is it?" A phrasing unique to Shakespeare.
222	L. Macbeth. Almost <u>at odds with</u> morning, which is which.	222: ie. it is very late at night, nearing morning; Kittredge, however, states that Lady Macbeth is indicating it is about midnight. at odds with = disputing, in variance, or in conflict with. ^{1,4}
224	Macbeth. <u>How say'st thou</u> , that Macduff <u>denies his person</u> At our <u>great bidding</u> ?	224-5: we learn that Macduff has failed to appear at court, despite Macbeth's formal summons or command (great bidding) for him to do so; ^{1,2} Macbeth may be referring to only a general summons he gave to all the nobles to attend the banquet, since he seems to suggest at line 229 below that he has not yet sent a direct command to Macduff to appear before him. Macduff stated at Act II.iv.66 above, after the discovery of the murder of the king, that he was going to Fife. He has remained withdrawn from court ever since. ³ How say'st thou = "what do you say to this". ⁵ denies his person = refuses to appear in person.
226	L. Macbeth. Did you <u>send</u> to him, sir?	= ie. send a command to appear.
228	Macbeth. I hear it <u>by the way</u> : but I will send.	229: "I heard this incidentally or in passing (by the way); but I will send him a summons." That is, Macbeth has only heard (through a third party, as he indicates in the next lines) that Macduff refuses to come to court.
230	There's not a one of them but in his house I keep a servant <u>fee'd</u> . I will tomorrow	230-1: There's not...fee'd = Macbeth has a paid informer in every noble's household; thus, it was from one of the king's spies that he received the notice of Macduff's refusal to appear. ³ The notion was borrowed from Holinshed, who wrote, " <i>for Macbeth had in every noble man's house, one sly fellow or other in fee with him, to reveal all that was said or done within the same, by which slight he oppressed the most part of the nobles of his realm.</i> "

232 (And betimes I will) to the weyard sisters.
More shall they speak: for now I am bent to know,

234 By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good,

236 All causes shall give way. I am in blood
Stepped in so far, that should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er:

238 Strange things I have in head, that will to hand,
Which must be acted, ere they may be scanned.

240 **L. Macbeth.** You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

242 **Macbeth.** Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
244 Is the initiate fear that wants hard use:

We are yet but young in deed.

fee'd = bribed, hired.¹

= early.⁶ = ie. go to visit.

= ie. "tell me." = determined.³

234: **By the...the worst** = by the most foul or evil way possible, the worst about what will happen.

For mine own good = ie. "for my own benefit"; **mine** was often used for *my* when followed by a word beginning with a vowel.

235: **All causes shall give way** = all other considerations (such as moral obligations, or scruples about consulting evil powers – any consideration not related to his own survival or benefit) are to be ignored.³

235-7: **I am...o'er** = There is an implied metaphor of Macbeth wading across a stream or pool of blood: the further he wades, the greater the amount of bloodshed he engages in.

A paraphrase for this extract, then, is: Macbeth has **waded** or proceeded into the blood (ie. immersed himself in bloodshed) to such a great extent, that turning back (which would represent a decision to shed no more blood) would be (**were**) as laborious and disagreeable (**tedious**) as to proceed forward and go all the way across (**as go o'er**), ie. to continue to commit acts of violence as necessary to maintain his course.^{1,5,6}

Stepped = entered.

no more = no further.

go o'er = to **go over** means to "to cross to the other side of a stretch of water" (OED); the sense here, then, is that, in "going over" the blood, Macbeth is signaling his intent to see the blood-letting all the way through.

238-9: "I have disturbing things in my mind, that I will soon put into action (**that will to hand**), and must be carried out (**acted**) before I pause to think about them", ie. because that might lead him to change his mind.^{3,4,5}

scanned = considered, weighed.⁶

241: Macbeth needs sleep. We may recall that earlier, Macbeth had heard a voice announce "**Macbeth shall sleep no more!**" (Act II.ii.75 above).

With **season**, **sleep** is metaphorically described as either the flavour or relish (OED) of all creatures' constitutions (**natures**), or the preservative that keeps nature fresh.^{1,3,4,8}

season = that which is necessary for a man to remain sound and wholesome.^{3,5}

243-4: **My strange...use** = "my strange self-deception (**self-abuse**) is the fear of one who is a novice in crime, and who lacks (**wants**) the tough experience which would harden him (**hard use**)."^{3,5}

initiate = describes one who is unpracticed or a novice; the OED categorizes **initiate** as used here as an adjective.

Macbeth claims to now believe that the Ghost was a product of the imagination of a rookie in murder.

245: "I am (**We are**) as yet inexperienced (**young**) in practice

[Exeunt.]

ACT III, SCENE V.*The heath.**Thunder.**Enter the three Witches, meeting Hecat.*1 **1st Witch.** Why, how now Hecat? you look angerly.

2

Hecat. Have I not reason, beldams as you are?4 Saucy, and overbold, how did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth,6 In riddles, and affairs of death;And I, the mistress of your charms,8 The close contriver of all harms,10 Was never called to bear my part,
Or shew the glory of our art?
And which is worse, all you have done12 Hath been but for a wayward son,Spiteful, and wrathful, who (as others do)*(in deed)*, ie. in crime.¹*in deed* = sometimes emended to *indeed*.**Scene V:** it is believed that this scene, which adds little to the play, was added later by either playwright Thomas Middleton or one of his contemporaries.**Entering Characters:** The three *Witches* meet *Hecate*, the goddess of witches and the night.1: *how now* = ie. "how is it now?" This was a greeting often used in the sense "what is the matter?" or "what is happening?"¹*look angerly* = ie. "appear angry";¹ the OED categorizes *angerly* here as an adjective. As an adverb, *angerly* was more commonly used than *angrily* until the mid-17th century.**3f (below):** Hecate is angry because the Witches propounded their prophecies to Macbeth without her!

Note that Hecate speaks in rhyming couplets, mostly in lines of four iambs, but sometimes using five (an iamb is a metrical foot, comprised of two syllables, the first unstressed, the second stressed).

3: ie. "do I not have reason to be angry, hags (*beldams*) that you are?"¹= presumptuous, impudent.^{2,6} = excessively bold.¹= synonyms for "have dealings with";¹ a commercial metaphor.= mysteries, enigmas.^{1,6}7: Hecate is the ruler or controller (*mistress*) of the Witches' magic (*charms*).⁶8: the secret (*close*) planner of all the harm the Witches bring about;² Hecate points out that evil and chaos only appear to come from the Witches, but in reality, she is their true source.⁸*contriver* suggests "one who artfully devises schemes".¹

= ie. what.

= ie. Macbeth. Kittredge notes that there is no good reason for Hecate to refer to Macbeth as *son* (implying that he is a disciple of the black arts), thus providing good evidence the scene was not written by Shakespeare. The descriptions of Macbeth as *wayward*, *spiteful*, and *wrathful* (the latter two are found in line 13) are equally inapplicable.*wayward* = capricious, obstinate.⁶

= like other men.

14	Loves for his own ends, not for you.	14: Macbeth participates only for his own benefit, and not out of any regard for the Witches.
16	But make amends now. Get you gone, And at <u>the pit of Acheron</u>	= a deep hole or abyss near <i>Acheron</i> , a river in Hades (the underworld), perhaps suggesting the entrance to hell. ^{1,5} Again, completely inappropriate, as Macbeth will be meeting again with the Witches in a cavern on the surface of the earth (Act IV.i). ³
18	Meet me i' th' morning: <u>thither</u> he Will come, to know his destiny.	= to there.
20	Your <u>vessels</u> , and your spells <u>provide</u> Your charms, and everything beside;	19-20: the usual gloss is, "bring your vessels, spells and charms, and everything else you need." ^{3,5} <i>vessels</i> = receptacles for liquids. ¹ <i>provide</i> = prepare, furnish. ^{1,6}
22	<u>I am for th' air</u> : this night I'll spend Unto a <u>dismal</u> and a fatal end.	= Hecate is about to take flight. 22: "working towards a disastrous (<i>dismal</i>) ¹ and deadly conclusion;" Hecate will spend the night planning Macbeth's downfall.
	Great business must be <u>wrought</u> ere noon.	23: Hecate has much important work to do before noon. <i>wrought</i> = carried out, accomplished.
24	Upon the <u>corner</u> of the moon	24: the imagery here requires the moon to be perceived in its crescent shape. <i>corner</i> = horn.
	There hangs a <u>vap'rous</u> drop, <u>profound</u> ,	25: Hecate describes a drop of liquid hanging from the horn of the moon. The reference may be to "lunar venom", a foamy essence with magical powers exuded by the moon. ^{3,11} <i>vap'rous</i> = consisting of vapours, misty; ^{1,6} thus, perhaps meaning "condensed". ³ <i>profound</i> = (1) with deep and meaningful qualities, or (2) deep-hanging, ie. ready to fall. ^{3,6}
26	I'll catch it ere it <u>come to ground</u> ;	= reaches, ie. falls to, the ground.
28	<u>And that</u> distilled by magic <u>sleights</u> , Shall raise such <u>artificial sprites</u> ,	27-28: "and that drop (<i>And that</i>), or distillation, of the lunar venom, summoned by magical means, has the power to raise such spirits (<i>sprites</i>)..." Hecate foreshadows the apparitions that will manifest in Act IV.i. <i>sleights</i> = trickery, cunning. ^{2,3} <i>artificial</i> = produced by the art of magic. ³
30	As by the strength of their <u>illusion</u> , Shall <u>draw</u> him on to his <u>confusion</u> .	29-30: that by the power of their deception (<i>illusion</i>), they shall lead (<i>draw</i>) Macbeth to his own ruin (<i>confusion</i>). ²
32	He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear His <u>hopes</u> 'bove wisdom, <u>grace</u> , and fear:	31-32: consequently, he will reject his fate, scorn death, and trust in his expectations (<i>hopes</i>), acting without wisdom, virtue (<i>grace</i>), and concern of his future. ^{3,5} In other words, Macbeth will recklessly put his full faith into the predictions of the Witches, with tragic results.
34	And you all know, <u>security</u> Is mortals' chiefest enemy.	33-34: <i>security...enemy</i> = proverbial: overconfidence in one's safety (<i>security</i>) leads one to neglect taking proper precautions; the implied result is one's own destruction.

36	[<i>Music, and a song within:</i> "Come away, come away," &c.]	36-37: the song " <i>Come Away, Come Away</i> " appears in Thomas Middleton's play <i>The Witch</i> (written c. 1613-16) and is also included in the 1673 reprint of <i>Macbeth</i> .
38		
40	Hark, I am <u>called</u> : <u>my little spirit</u> , see, Sits in a <u>foggy cloud</u> , and <u>stays</u> for me.	= listen. = summoned. = Hecate's small attendant spirit. = mist, or murky cloud or vapour. ¹ = waits.
42	[<i>Exit Hecat.</i>]	
44	1st Witch. Come, let's make haste, she'll soon be back again.	
46	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	ACT III, SCENE VI.	
	<i>Forres.</i> <i>The Palace.</i>	The Setting: we return to the castle at Forres , where Macbeth's court currently resides. Forres, located 160 miles north of Edinburgh, was an occasional residence of Scotland's early kings, . ¹⁰
	<i>Enter Lennox, and another Lord.</i>	Entering Characters: Lennox has been recounting to the other Lord what occurred at the banquet. Stevenson observes that the nobles have discovered that the king's spies have infiltrated each of their households, so that they must be guarded in their speech. Consequently, Lennox's first speech is spoken with great irony, as he is careful not to make any open accusations against Macbeth, whom he now suspects is guilty of arranging the murders of Duncan and Banquo. ⁸
1	Lennox. My former speeches have <u>but hit</u> your thoughts,	1: "what I have previously said matches (has but hit) what you are thinking". ³
2	<u>Which can interpret farther: only I say</u>	2: Which can interpret farther = "and your thoughts (Which) can understand more than I have explicitly told you;" ^{3,5} that is, Lennox has only hinted at what he has been thinking, but expects the Lord to understand him fully. only I say = "all I have to say is". ³
4	Things have been <u>strangely borne</u> . The gracious Duncan Was pitied <u>of</u> Macbeth: <u>marry</u> , he was dead:	= carried out or managed oddly. ³ 4: "was pitied by (of) Macbeth, once he was dead." marry = a common oath, derived from the Virgin Mary.
	And the right valiant Banquo <u>walked too late</u> :	= was out too late at night – which is why he was killed.
6	Whom, you may say (if't please you) Fleance killed,	6: "whom you could say – if you want – was killed by his son Fleance." Lennox is pretending to accept the official story.
	<u>For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.</u>	7: For Fleance fled = Fleance's escape from Scotland is evidence of his guilt. men must not walk too late = profoundly ironic.
8	Who <u>cannot want</u> the thought, how <u>monstrous</u>	= cannot lack, ie. can avoid. ⁴ = a trisyllable: <i>mon-ster-ous</i> .
10	It was for Malcolm, and for Donalbain To kill their gracious father? <u>damned fact</u> ,	= a wicked deed or crime (fact) it was. ¹

12	How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not <u>straight</u> In <u>pious rage</u> , the two <u>delinquents</u> tear,	11-12: <i>did he...tear</i> = "didn't Macbeth immediately (<i>straight</i>) fall into a fit of fury (<i>rage</i>) born of loyalty (hence, <i>pious</i>) and kill the two guards (the <i>delinquents tear</i>)". ^{2,3} <i>delinquents</i> = offenders, referring to Duncan's guards; perhaps with an additional sense that they had acted negligently in their duties to protect the king. ^{1,6} <i>tear</i> = rip apart, ie. destroy, by laceration. ^{1,8}
	<u>That</u> were the slaves of drink, and <u>thralls</u> of sleep?	= who. = slaves. Duncan's guards, we remember, were drunk and asleep at the time he was killed.
14	Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too:	14-16: <i>Ay...deny't</i> = ie. it was smartly done to kill the guards, because no man could have tolerated hearing them
16	For 'twould have angered any heart alive To hear the men deny't. So that I say,	lamely deny their guilt. This line is especially laden with double-meaning: Lennox is hinting that it was shrewd of Macbeth specifically to eliminate the guards, before they had a chance to protest their innocence, just in case anyone might believe them!
18	<u>He</u> has <u>borne</u> all things well, and I do think, That had he Duncan's sons <u>under his key</u> (As, <u>and't</u> please Heaven, he shall not) they should find	= ie. Macbeth. = handled. = locked up, and hence in his power. 19: <i>and 't please Heaven</i> = ie. Heaven forbid; <i>and't</i> = if it. 19-20: <i>they should...father</i> = they would learn what it means to kill a father, ie. they could expect to be put to death themselves. The parenthetical comment may be an aside, heard only by members of the audience, to let them know Lennox's true feelings, and clarify that he is otherwise addressing the Lord ironically. ⁸
20	What 'twere to kill a father: <u>so should Fleance</u> . –	= the same can be said for Fleance. Lines 21ff (below): from this point on, Lennox gradually abandons his caution, and speaks more frankly and openly about current conditions. ⁸
22	But, <u>peace!</u> <u>for from broad words</u> , and 'cause he failed His presence at the <u>tyrant's</u> feast, I hear Macduff lives <u>in disgrace</u> . Sir, can you tell	21: <i>peace!</i> = "hush!" Lennox checks himself from pursuing this line of thought any further, from fear that his overly-bold remarks might be overheard. Lennox shifts to a safer subject, asking about Macduff. Note that despite his supposed caution, Lennox explicitly refers to Macbeth as a <i>tyrant</i> . 21-23: <i>for from...disgrace</i> = because (<i>for</i>) Macduff (1) has spoken too unrestrainedly (<i>from broad words</i>), and (2) did not appear at the royal banquet, he is now out of Macbeth's favour (<i>in disgrace</i>). ^{1,2} <i>broad words</i> = words spoken too frankly or freely: Macduff has perhaps expressed his distrust or suspicions regarding Macbeth. ^{2,4,6} Lines 21-22: <i>failed / His presence at</i> = ie. failed to be present at. <i>tyrant's</i> = <i>tyrant</i> here means "usurper". ^{2,3}
24	Where he <u>bestows himself</u> ?	= lodges; ¹ Kittredge interprets, "taken refuge". ³

26	Lord. <u>The son of Duncan,</u> (From whom this tyrant <u>holds the due of birth</u>)	26: ie. Malcolm, Duncan's elder son; for son , the Folio prints " <i>sonnes</i> ". = "withholds his birthright", ie. the crown, which should be Malcolm's.
28	<u>Lives in the English court</u> , and is <u>received</u> <u>Of the most pious Edward</u> with such <u>grace</u> ,	28: Lives in...court = Malcolm announced his intention to flee to England at Act II.iii.260 above. received = welcomed. ²
30	That the <u>malevolence</u> of fortune nothing Takes from his high respect. <u>Thither</u> Macduff	29: Of = by. most pious Edward = Edward the Confessor, king of England 1042-1066, known for his piety; Edward was frequently called "pious" in contemporary literature. grace = favour. ³
32	Is gone, <u>to pray the holy king, upon his aid</u> , To <u>wake Northumberland</u> , and <u>warlike</u> Siward,	30-31: That the...respect = that the ill will (malevolence) of Malcolm's bad luck has not diminished at all the high regard (respect) Edward has for him. ^{1,3} 32-39 (below): Thither Macduff...now = Macduff has gone to England to ask for King Edward's assistance: he is petitioning the king to raise a force to attack Scotland, and, with its help, return normalcy to Scotland. ^{1,3} = to there: Macduff has followed Malcolm to Edward's court in England. = to ask (pray) the saintly (holy) Edward, relying on his assistance (upon his aid); ⁴ Jowett, however, asserts that upon his aid means "on Malcolm's behalf" (p. 2542). ⁷
34	That, by the help of these (with Him above To <u>ratify</u> the work) we may again	33: to rouse to action (wake) both the people of Northumberland and the fierce Earl of Northumberland, Siward ; Macduff is asking Edward to raise an army, led by the earl himself, to help overthrow Macbeth. ^{1,3} Northumberland = England's northernmost county, which borders Scotland. warlike = describes one possessing all the qualities of a good soldier, e.g., courage, willingness to fight, etc. ¹ Siward = written as <i>Seyward</i> throughout the Folio; we will employ the generally-accepted spelling Siward , since the pronunciation is about the same.
36	Give to our tables <u>meat</u> , sleep to our nights; Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives;	34-39 (below): That, by...for now = "so that, with their help we may restore normal life to Scotland." Lines 36-38 give examples of what the Scottish long for in their lives. 34-35: (with Him...work) = with God to sanction or validate the project. 36: "bring food (meat) back to our tables and restful sleep to our nights". 37: ie. "free our feasts and banquets from bloody knives", meaning "free our celebrations and gatherings from bloodshed and murder." This is a good example of how Shakespeare, by slightly rearranging the words of an otherwise straightforward sentence in order to satisfy the meter, created a line that is

38	Do <u>faithful</u> homage, and <u>receive free honours</u> ,	puzzling enough to lead commentators to have to explain it.
		38: render sincere (<i>faithful</i>) homage (ie. declare allegiance and offer feudal submission) to the king, and receive freely bestowed or unconstrained (<i>free</i>) honours from him in return. ^{1,8}
		The Lord is hinting that at present, relations between the king and the nobles are completely distorted: the nobles feel no genuine loyalty to Macbeth, and he in return gives no rewards purely out of love and respect, but only out of fear and as a means of political manipulation. ³
		<i>receive free honours</i> = Waith interprets, "not bought by subservience to the tyrant" (p. 1141). ⁴
40	All which we <u>pine</u> for now. And this report Hath so <u>exasperate their king</u> , that he Prepares for some attempt of war.	39: <i>pine</i> = yearn. ¹ 39-41: <i>And this...war</i> = Malcolm's report of conditions in Scotland has so provoked or enraged (<i>exasperate</i> = exasperated) Edward (<i>their king</i> , ie. the English people's), that he is now preparing for some kind of military action.
		There is another interpretation, favoured by Kittredge and Jowett: that <i>their king</i> is Macbeth, not Edward (<i>their</i> referring to Malcolm and Macduff), thus: Macbeth is so provoked by the report he has received of Malcolm's reception in England, that he (<i>Macbeth</i>) is the one preparing for war.
		The problem with this interpretation is three-fold: (1) it requires emending <i>their king</i> to <i>the king</i> , <i>our king</i> , or <i>this king</i> , because Macbeth is still Lennox and the Lord's king too; (2) Lennox and the Lord only refer to Macbeth by name, or as <i>tyrant</i> , but never as <i>king</i> ; and (3) there is no antecedent for "king" other than Edward in the immediate context.
42	<i>Lennox.</i> Sent he to Macduff?	43: "had Macbeth (<i>he</i>) sent for Macduff?" The pronoun here must refer to Macbeth, as Edward would not have sent for Macduff.
44	<i>Lord.</i> He did: and with <u>an absolute "Sir, not I,"</u>	= Macduff responded to Macbeth's messenger with an outright or unconditional (<i>absolute</i>) refusal. ⁴
		It is also possible that it is the messenger who states " <i>Sir, not I</i> ", referring to his contemptuous refusal to deliver Macduff's rebuff of Macbeth's command. ⁸
46	The <u>cloudy</u> messenger <u>turns me</u> his back,	46: the sullen or frowning (<i>cloudy</i>) messenger then turned away from Lennox. ^{1,2}
		<i>turns me</i> = an example of the grammatical form called the <i>ethical dative</i> : the extra <i>me</i> suggests an added interest which the Lord has in the messenger's actions – and adds an extra syllable to fill out the line's meter.
48	And hums, as who should say, "You'll <u>rue</u> the time That <u>clogs</u> me with this answer."	47-48: the messenger made a humming sound, which the Lord recognized as expressing his displeasure, and perhaps an implicit threat: the messenger was unhappy because Macduff was putting him in a precarious position – having to report the noble's refusal of Macbeth's summons – to the king. No messenger wanted to be the bearer of bad news, which could lead to his abuse by the recipient.
		<i>rue</i> = regret <i>clogs</i> = burdens. ^{2,6}

50 **Lennox.** And that well might
Advise him to a caution, t' hold what distance
52 His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel

Fly to the court of England, and unfold

54 His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country,
56 Under a hand accursed!

58 **Lord.** I'll send my prayers with him.

60 [Exeunt.]

END OF ACT III.

50-52: *And that...provide* = the messenger's reaction is likely a good indication that Macduff should keep as far away (*hold what distance*) from Macbeth's court as his judgment can safely manage (*His wisdom can provide*).
provide = arrange with prudent or careful foresight.⁶

53-54: *and unfold...come* = and reveal (*unfold*) Macduff's appeal to Edward (*His message*) before (*ere*) Macduff himself arrives. Lennox is emphasizing the urgency of the situation.

54-56: *that a...accursed* = "so that liberation and prosperity (which would be a *blessing*) may quickly return to Scotland, which is suffering under the detestable or hateful (*accursed*) hand of a tyrant."

Lennox is impatient for Edward's intervention to arrive in Scotland as quickly as possible to free it from the yoke of Macbeth's rule.

= ie. Macduff.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A cavern.

In the middle, a boiling cauldron.

Thunder.

Enter the three Witches.

1 **1st Witch.** Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed.

2 **2nd Witch.** Thrice, and once the hedge-pig whined.

4 **3rd Witch.** Harpier cries, "'Tis time, 'tis time."

6

8 **1st Witch.** Round about the cauldron go:
In the poisoned entrails throw.

10 Toad, that under cold stone,
Days and nights, has thirty-one
12 Sweltered venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' th' charmed pot.

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

16 **2nd Witch.** Fillet of a fenny snake,
18 In the cauldron boil and bake:
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,

The Setting: there is no indication within the scene itself as to the location of the Witches' meeting. However, it has become traditional to place the scene in a cavern.

Entering Characters: in this scene's opening lines, the Witches allude to their respective familiars, or attendant spirits.

1: **brinded** = striped or streaked, perhaps of a brownish colour.¹

mewed = ie. meowed; in Shakespeare's time, *mew* was the most common onomatopoeic word to describe the sound a cat makes.

In the play's opening scene, the 1st Witch identified her feline familiar by the name **Gray Malkin** (line 15).

3: either (1) the 2nd Witch repeats that the cat had mewed three times, and then the hedgehog whined once; or (2) the hedgehog whined three times, then once more, for a total of four whines.⁸

hedge-pig = ie. hedgehog. As "hedgehog" was already the commonly-used name for this animal, it is unknown why Shakespeare would insert **pig** for **hog** – perhaps as a small joke of some kind?

whined = cried, made a plaintive sound.^{1,6}

In the play's opening scene, the 2nd Witch's attendant was a toad (see line 17).

= a proper name. The form of the 3rd Witch's familiar is never specified. Some editors speculate that **Harpier** is derived from the mythological half-bird half-human monster known as a *harpy*.³

7-47 (below): the Witches recite incantations in rhyming couplets as they mix their hellish brew; each of the ingredients added to the pot is delightfully gruesome and repulsive.⁵

7: the Witches circle the cauldron.

8: ie. "throw in the poisoned entrails". Shakespeare has mangled the line's syntax in order to achieve a rhyme with line 7 while preserving the meter.

9-11: the toad has been accumulating venom, while sleeping under a rock, for a month.

sweltered venom = the toad's poison is sweated out.⁸

= slice (of meat).¹ = snake that lives in a fen or bog.¹

20	Wool of bat, and tongue of dog:	= in the 17th century, wool was used to describe the soft fur of seemingly any animal, not just sheep: we find references to the wool of the hare, bear, goat, beaver, and even hog.
	Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,	21: Adder's fork = ie. the forked tongue of the adder. ¹ blind-worm's sting = the blindworm is actually the slow-worm, a limbless lizard which was thought to be blind, but whose small eyes are in fact functional. The blindworm was also thought to be poisonous, hence the Witches inclusion of its sting in the cauldron. ^{1,5}
22	Lizard's leg, and howlet's wing:	= ie. owl's.
24	For a charm of powerful trouble, Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble.	= hellish brew, or "infernal porridge" (Schmidt, Vol. II, p. 531). ⁶
		3, 17, 19, 21 (above): it is interesting to surmise whether Shakespeare had, in composing the Witches' incantation, consulted the fairies' song of Act II.ii of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> for inspiration, since so many elements of the song's first three lines (note the boldfaced items below) found their way into the early part of this scene: <i>You spotted snakes, with double tongue, Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen, Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong, Come not near our Fairy Queen.</i>
26	All. Double, double, toil and trouble;	
	Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.	
28		
	3rd Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,	
30	Witch's mummy, maw and gulf	30: Witch's mummy = dried or embalmed carcass of a witch; ^{3,4,5} preparations made from embalmed flesh were thought to have magical or curative properties. ^{8,11} maw and gulf = in combination, meaning "stomach and gullet", though which word meant which is unclear. ^{1,2}
	Of the ravined salt-sea shark:	= ravenous or gluttoned. ^{1,2,5}
32	Root of hemlock, digged i' th' dark:	= hemlock is of course famously poisonous. = ie. dug out.
	Liver of blaspheming Jew,	= in contemporary religious literature, Jews were commonly described as blasphemous, primarily because they do not accept Christ as the son of God.
34	Gall of goat, and slips of yew,	34: slips = small shoots. ¹ yew = the yew tree, with its poisonous leaves, was burdened with numerous superstitions, as detailed by Thiselton-Dyer (see pp. 233-5). ¹¹
	Slivered in the moon's eclipse:	35: Slivered = broken into pieces or slivers. moon's eclipse = an eclipse of the moon was considered ominous. ¹¹
36	Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips:	36: the Tartars (today called <i>Tatars</i>), a central-Asian people, were associated (in Elizabethan understanding) with the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, occupying a vaguely defined region of northern Asia. Both the Tartars and Turks

		were frequently alluded to in Elizabethan literature as examples of perceived heathen barbarianism.
	Finger of <u>birth-strangled babe</u> ,	Tartar's lips = there may have been a stereotype of the Tartars having thick lips in Shakespeare's time; a 1630 work describes the Tartar as having "a great thick lip".
38	Ditch-delivered by a <u>drab</u> :	= baby strangled at birth, and hence unbaptized; the souls of these tiny victims were thought to haunt the earth, and their flesh efficacious in evil spells. ^{3,11}
	Make the <u>gruël</u> thick and <u>slab</u> .	38: the baby of line 37 having been delivered in a ditch to a prostitute (drab), and hence being illegitimate. ^{1,3} 39: gruel = properly a semi-liquid food made by cooking oatmeal added to water or milk; here, meaning simply a mixture. ¹ slab = viscous, congealed. ^{1,2}
40	Add thereto a tiger's <u>chaudron</u> ,	= entrails. ¹
42	For th' <u>ingredience</u> of our <u>caudron</u> .	41: ingredience = could mean (1) ingredients of a potion specifically, or (2) mixture generally. ¹ Frequently emended to <i>ingredients</i> . caudron = ie. cauldron, a common variant spelling. ¹
44	All. Double, double, toil and trouble, Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.	
46	2nd Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood, Then the charm is firm and good.	
48	<i>Enter Hecat to the other three Witches.</i>	49: as she did in Act III.v, Hecate will speak in iambic tetrameter. For the stage direction here, the Folio prints, " <i>Enter Hecat, and the other three Witches</i> ", making it sound like we are about to meet a different trio of Witches; however, it is generally assumed that the original three Witches are intended.
50	Hecat. O, well done: I commend your <u>pains</u> ,	= efforts.
52	And everyone shall share i' th' <u>gains</u> :	= profits; ¹ Kittredge notes the error here, as the Witches expect no benefit or reward in return for their work with Macbeth.
	And now <u>about</u> the cauldron sing,	= around.
54	Like <u>elves</u> and <u>fairies in a ring</u> ,	54: fairies were imagined to delight in dancing in circles (in a ring). Elves and fairies were sometimes mentioned together in contemporary literature without distinguishing between them. ¹¹ A 1572 work, for example, tells us, " <i>there be certain elves or fairies of the earth</i> ".
56	Enchanting <u>all</u> that you put in.	= ie. every ingredient.
58	<i>[Music and a song: "Black Spirits," &c.]</i>	57: this song is also included in Thomas Middleton's play <i>The Witch</i> .
60	<i>[Exit Hecat.]</i>	

	2nd Witch. By the <u>pricking</u> of my thumbs,	= tingling; ¹ allusion to the apparent belief that itchy thumbs signaled the approach of something evil. ³
62	Something wicked this way comes: –	
64	Open, locks, whoever knocks!	
66	<i>Enter Macbeth.</i>	
	Macbeth. How now, you <u>secret</u> , <u>black</u> , and <u>midnight</u> hags?	63: the Witches can control the locks of their hideout with their spells. ³
		67: Macbeth's choice of adjectives reflects his view of the Witches as possessors of dark supernatural powers. <i>secret</i> = dealing in supernatural forces. ¹ <i>black</i> = wicked, evil; ⁶ in the early 1600s, the term <i>black witch</i> came to be used to describe a witch who practiced black magic, as opposed to a <i>white witch</i> , whose work was more benign. ^{1,8} <i>midnight</i> = evokes the darkest time of night.
68	What is't you do?	
70	All. A deed without a name.	70: the Witches' answer suggest they are engaged in an activity so unnatural and monstrous it cannot be named.
72	Macbeth. I <u>conjure</u> you, <u>by that which you profess</u> ,	72: <i>conjure</i> = entreat solemnly; ² of course, the usual meaning of <i>conjure</i> – to summon a spirit – is suggested as well, given the spooky nature of the scene, and foreshadows events about to unfold. <i>by that which you profess</i> = "in the name of the prophetic power you profess to possess": an oath. ³
	(Howe'er you come to know it) answer me:	74-83 (below): Macbeth, unafraid, challenges the Witches: he demands they answer his questions, even as he acknowledges their ability to raise preternatural winds and storms of such power as to cause overwhelming destruction.
74	Though you <u>untie</u> the winds, and let them fight Against the churches; though the <u>yesty waves</u>	= free, loose. ¹ = foamy waves (raised by the unleashed winds). ¹
76	<u>Confound</u> and <u>swallow navigation</u> up;	76: destroy (<i>Confound</i>) and engulf (<i>swallow up</i>) all ships, ie. the winds are so strong that sea travel has become impossible. ^{1,3} <i>navigation</i> = properly, sea travel, but here suggesting ships or vessels specifically.
	<u>Though bladed corn be lodged</u> , and trees blown down;	= though young grains (<i>corn</i>) be beaten down flat (<i>lodged</i>); the implied result is a failed crop, followed by famine. ^{1,3,4} <i>bladed corn</i> = grain which has just sprouted, hence appearing only as leaves or blades, not yet in ear. ^{1,3,5}
78	Though castles topple on their <u>warders'</u> heads;	= sentinels, keepers; ^{1,6} note how the imagined devastation caused by the winds increases in scope throughout this speech.
	Though palaces, and pyramids do slope	79-80: <i>Though palaces...foundations</i> = the sense is that the Witches' winds can cause great buildings to tilt or even blow down. ^{1,5} 79-80: <i>slope...foundations</i> = literally, the tops (<i>heads</i>) of the structures have been brought down to the level of their foundations, ie. the ground. ⁶
80	Their heads to their foundations; though the <u>treasure</u>	80-82: <i>though the...sicken</i> = though the great store (<i>treas-</i>

82 Of nature's germens tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me

To what I ask you.

84 **1st Witch.** Speak.

86 **2nd Witch.** Demand.

88 **3rd Witch.** We'll answer.

90 **1st Witch.** Say if th'hadst rather hear it from our mouths,
92 Or from our masters'?

94 **Macbeth.** Call 'em: let me see 'em.

96 **1st Witch.** Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten

Her nine farrow: grease that's sweaten
98 From the murderer's gibbet, throw
Into the flame.

100 **All.** Come, high or low;
102 Thyself and office deftly show!

104 [Thunder.
First Apparition: an armed Head rises.]

106

Macbeth. Tell me, thou unknown power, –

sure) of seeds (**germens**) of all nature collapses or falls (**tumble all together**), leading to such a great destruction, that even personified Destruction itself grows sick of its own excess (does **sicken**).^{1,4,5}

nature's germens = the seeds or embryos from which all life springs.⁵

tumble all together = the implied image is of the universe returning to chaos.³

91-92: "tell us if you would rather hear your future from us directly, or from those higher powers of fate we serve (**our masters**)?"³

th'hadst = ie. thou hadst.

our masters' = masters may be possessive (as it appears here, though it is not always printed as such), hence meaning, "our masters' mouths".

= ie. into the cauldron.

97: **Her nine farrow** = the sow's litter (**farrow**) of nine piglets.^{1,5}

97-98: **grease...gibbet** = add fat (**grease**), which has been obtained from the sweat of a murderer's hanging body, to the fire under the cauldron; the effect would be to cause the flame to flare up.³

grease = usually used to refer to the fat or rendered fat of animals,¹ but here grotesquely applied to a human.

sweaten = sweated or exuded (in death).^{1,3}

gibbet = could be a gallows, or a post with an extending arm from which an executed criminal has been hung.¹

101-2: The Witches summon their superior spirits.

high or low = the sense is, "from wherever you are", ie. from whichever realm – from high above the earth, on the earth or below it – they exist".³

Line 102: "skillfully (**deftly**) show us yourself and your function (**office**)!"^{1,3,4}

Stage Effect #1: the apparitions in this scene are typically imagined as rising through the stage's trapdoor, so as to appear to emerge from the earth, or from the cauldron itself.

The 1st Apparition likely represents Macduff's head, though some commentators believe it to be Macbeth's own decapitated head (cut off by Macduff), prefiguring his future execution.^{3,4,5} However, since the other apparitions will represent figures of danger to Macbeth, the first interpretation makes more sense.

armed Head = a disembodied head wearing a helmet.

armed = in armour.

108	1st Witch. He knows thy thought:	109: the 1st Witch interrupts Macbeth: he need not ask his question, as the spirit already knows what he is thinking. = to Macbeth: "say nothing."
110	Hear his speech, but <u>say thou nought</u> .	
112	1st Appar. Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth! Beware Macduff,	112-3: the 1st Apparition's brief speech comprises a rhyming couplet.
114	Beware the <u>Thane of Fife</u> : – <u>Dismiss me. Enough</u> .	113: Thane of Fife = we are again reminded that Fife is Macduff's homeland. Dismiss me. Enough. = the spirit is eager to leave. ³ The summoned spirit in <i>Henry VI, Part II</i> , at Act I.iv.31, is willing to answer questions, but also anxious to depart: "Ask what thou wilt. That I had said and done!"
116	[<i>First Apparition descends.</i>]	
118	Macbeth. Whate'er thou art, for thy good <u>caution</u> , thanks. Thou hast <u>harped</u> my fear <u>aright</u> : but one word more, –	= warning. ⁶ = guessed, given voice to, touch upon. ^{1,5} = correctly.
120	1st Witch. <u>He will not be commanded</u> : – here's another, More <u>potent</u> than the first.	= ie. it is futile to issue a command to the apparition. = powerful.
122	[<i>Thunder.</i>	
124	<i>Second Apparition: a bloody Child rises.</i>]	Stage Effect #2: the symbolism of this 2nd Apparition will be unclear until later in the play, but we may observe that it represents Macduff.
126	2nd Appar. Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth!	
128	Macbeth. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.	128: there does not seem to be a convincing explanation of what exactly Macbeth means here; however, commentators generally agree that Macbeth is trying convey his eagerness to hear the 2nd Apparition's message; the three ears may also be intended to simply match the Apparition's three cries of "Macbeth".
130	2nd Appar. Be bloody, bold, and resolute: <u>Laugh to scorn</u> the power of man,	130-1: the 2nd Apparition's message seems reassuring: Macbeth should be ruthless and decisive (line 130), and treat any human threat against him with contempt (131). Laugh to scorn = literally, to scorn something by laughing at it; a very common expression. ¹
132	For none of woman born shall harm Macbeth.	132: here is the key prophecy: no man born of woman shall harm Macbeth. On its face, this seems to be an airtight guarantee of his safety, for what man is not born of woman?
134	[<i>Second Apparition Descends.</i>]	
136	Macbeth. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee? But yet I'll make assurance double sure,	137-8: although the prophecy (and thus Fate) seems to Macbeth to assure his safety, he wants to make that certainty doubly sure by killing Macduff. take a bond of fate = a legal metaphor meaning, "obtain a bond – an enforceable contract – from Fate itself (to fulfill its promise)." ^{1,3,5}
138	And <u>take a bond of fate</u> : <u>thou</u> shalt not live,	thou = ie. Macduff.
	That I may <u>tell pale-hearted fear it lies</u> ,	139: the sense is, eliminating Macduff would act like a contract underwritten by Fate itself guaranteeing Macbeth's survival, ie. with Macduff dead, he has nothing to fear.

140 And sleep in spite of thunder.

142 [Thunder.
144 *Third Apparition: a Child crowned,
with a tree in his hand, rises.*]

146 What is this,
That rises like the issue of a king,

148 And wears upon his baby-brow, the round
150 And top of sovereignty?

152 *All.* Listen, but speak not to't.

3rd Appar. Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care,

154 Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until
156 Great Birnam Wood, to high Dunsinane hill
158 Shall come against him.

[*Third Apparition descends.*]

160 *Macbeth.* That will never be:
162 Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements, good! –

164 Rebellious dead, rise never till the wood

tell pale-hearted fear it lies = accuse personified Fear of informing him incorrectly that he should be afraid for his life, ie. fear has no right to control him.

pale-hearted = a pale colour – usually said of one's complexion – was associated with fear. Macbeth describes personified Fear as having a pale heart.

140: symbolically, "and rest easily no matter what danger seems to surround him"; *thunder* represents any external disturbances that might otherwise shatter Macbeth's peace of mind.

Stage Effect #3: the 3rd Apparition represents Duncan's son Malcolm as king; the significance of the mysterious tree the 3rd Apparition is holding, and the meaning of its prophecy, will not be made clear until the end of the play.

147: the crown on the child's head suggests he is the offspring (*issue*) of a king, and thus heir to the throne.
like = in the shape of.³

148: *baby-brow* = *brow* means "forehead".

148-9: *the round...sovereignty* = ie. the crown.

round = "ring"; Lady Macbeth referred to the crown as a "*golden round*" at Act I.v.30 above.

top = perhaps referring to the "upper part of the crown" or "the ornament above the part that circles the head".^{3,6,8}

153-6 (below): the 3rd Apparition speaks in rhyming couplets.

153: *Be lion-mettled* = "have the disposition or character of a lion".¹

take no care = do not worry, pay no heed to.¹

= rages.⁶ = worries, is discontented.¹

155-7: an even more obscure pronouncement.

Birnam is the name of a woods, located on the right bank of the River Tay, opposite Dunkeld, in Perthshire; *Dunsinane Hill* is 12 miles east of Birnam.¹⁰

Dunsinane = here likely stressed on its second syllable, though later in the play the stress will always fall on the first.

161-8: Macbeth responds in rhyming couplets as well.
= force into military service.

163: *unfix* = loosen, undo from a fixed position.¹
bodements = omens, ie. prophecies.^{1,3}

= perhaps refers to the dead Banquo, but most editors believe the intended words to be "*rebellious head*", alluding to the armed head of Macduff, the 1st Apparition, and emend the text accordingly.^{3,4,8}

	Of Birnam rise, and our <u>high-placed</u> Macbeth	= elevated in a high or exalted position – the throne. ⁶
166	Shall live the <u>lease of nature</u> , pay his breath To time and mortal custom. – Yet my heart	166-7: <i>Shall live...custom</i> = shall live out the normal life-span of man, dying a natural death. <i>the lease of nature</i> = suggests life is a temporary grant from nature; in a similar vein, death was often described in contemporary literature as a "debt to nature." 166-7: <i>pay his...custom</i> = a paraphrase might be, "surrender his life to the passage of time and the ordinary human custom of dying." ³
168	<u>Throbs</u> to know one thing: tell me, if your art	= pounds, aches. ¹
170	Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever Reign in this kingdom?	
172	All. Seek to know no more.	
174	Macbeth. <u>I will be satisfied</u> . Deny me this,	= ie. "I demand an answer."
176	And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know. – <u>Why sinks that cauldron?</u> and what <u>noise</u> is this?	176: <i>Why sinks that cauldron</i> = the cauldron disappears, lowered through the trapdoor. <i>noise</i> = the music of the hautboys; in this period, <i>noise</i> also was used to refer to a company of musicians, e.g., " <i>a noise of instruments</i> ", or " <i>a noise of musicians</i> ". ¹
178	[<u>Hautboys.</u>]	Stage Direction: music plays; a hautboy was an oboe-like instrument.
180	1st Witch. <u>Shew!</u>	180-4: the Witches command the new apparitions to appear. <i>Shew</i> = ie. "show yourselves!"
182	2nd Witch. Shew!	
184	3rd Witch. Shew!	
186	All. Shew his eyes, and grieve his heart, Come like <u>shadows</u> , <u>so</u> depart!	186: "appear before Macbeth's eyes, and cause him grief". 187: <i>shadows</i> = spirits, but also meaning "imitations" or "likenesses", since the entering apparitions are meant to represent real figures. <i>so</i> = ie. "and likewise".
188		
190	[<i>A <u>shew</u> of eight kings appears, the last with a <u>glass</u> in his hand; Banquo's Ghost following.</i>]	189-191: eight kings, followed by Banquo's Ghost, enter one at a time, and pass across the stage. The eighth king is carrying a mirror (<i>glass</i>). <i>shew</i> = ie. a dumbshow, or pantomime. ³ Dumb shows, mini-stage performances without spoken words, appeared frequently within Tudor and Elizabethan plays. The kings are thought to represent the Stuart kings of Scotland, ancestors of King James I, thus complimenting England's reigning monarch. The Stuarts claimed to be descended from Banquo, James being the 9th Stuart king. ⁴
192		193-205 (below): as each of the spirit-kings enters successively onto the stage, Macbeth becomes increasingly frantic and despondent. He addresses the first two kings directly at first, before only wildly commenting individually on the rest.
	Macbeth. <u>Thou</u> are too like the spirit of Banquo: <u>down!</u>	193: Macbeth observes that the first king (<i>Thou</i>) to appear looks like Banquo. <i>down</i> = "sink back to from where you came!", ie.

		"vanish!"
194	Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. – And thy hair, Thou other <u>gold-bound brow</u> , <u>is like the first</u> :	194-5: <i>And thy hair...first</i> = spoken to the second king.
196	A third is like the former. – Filthy hags!	195: <i>gold-bound brow</i> = forehead or head encircled by a golden crown.
198	Why do you shew me this? – A fourth! <u>Start</u> , eyes! – What, will the line stretch out to <u>th' crack of doom</u> ?	<i>is like the first</i> = Macbeth will recognize the resemblance of the kings to each other and to Banquo.
200	Another yet? – A seventh? – I'll see no more: And yet the eight[h] appears, who bears a glass Which shews me many more: and some I see	= burst out from the sockets. ¹ = Judgment day, the end of the world.
202	That <u>twofold balls</u> , and <u>treble sceptres</u> carry.	200-1: <i>who bears...many more</i> = Macbeth can see the images of many more kings appearing in the magic mirror carried by the eighth king; Waith suggests these represent James' descendants, kings of England yet to come.
	Horrible sight! now I see 'tis true, For the <u>blood-boltered</u> Banquo smiles upon me, And points at them for his.	202: the orbs (<i>balls</i>) and <i>sceptres</i> are items of royal regalia. ⁴ Some of the descendant kings carry two orbs (<i>twofold balls</i>), representing England and Scotland: James was the first king to rule both realms. Others carry three (<i>treble</i>) sceptres: these are thought to represent either (1) England, Scotland, and Ireland (over which James was king), or (2) Great Britain (a term introduced in James' reign to describe the combined kingdom of England and Scotland), France, and Ireland; this latter grouping comprised the fuller royal style usually used during James' reign. ^{3,4}
206		= blood-clotted, referring to Banquo's hair; ^{1,5} note the line's alliteration.
208		= Banquo points at all the kings in front of him, confirming they are his descendants.
210	What! is this <u>so</u> ?	= the truth; ³ Macbeth is stunned by the revelations he has just learned.
212	<i>Ist Witch.</i> Ay sir, all this is so. – But why Stands Macbeth thus <u>amazèdly</u> ? – Come sisters, cheer we up his <u>sprites</u> ,	= dumbfoundedly. ² = spirits; a common one-syllable variant.
214	And shew the best of our delights. I'll charm the air to <u>give a sound</u> ,	= ie. make music.
216	While you perform your <u>antic round</u> : That this great king may kindly say,	= fantastical circle dance. ¹
218	Our duties did his welcome pay.	218: the sense is, "we repaid him for his welcome." Kittredge points out that this doesn't really make any sense, as Macbeth has given the Witches no welcome, and they in turn owe him nothing. More than one commentator has suggested the whole speech was an interpolation, or later insertion, written by someone other than Shakespeare. ^{5,8}
220		
222		
224	<i>Macbeth.</i> Where are they? Gone? – Let this <u>pernicious</u> hour Stand <u>aye</u> accursèd in the calendar! –	= insidious, destructive, evil. ¹ = forever.

	Come in, <u>without there</u> !	= ie. "whoever is out there!" Macbeth is calling Lennox, who has been standing guard at the cave's entrance. ³
226		
	<i>Enter Lennox.</i>	Entering Character: Kittredge observes that Lennox is still trusted by Macbeth, though he is in fact now a leader of the conspiracy to bring down the king.
228		
230	Lennox. What's your Grace's will?	
232	Macbeth. Saw you the weyard sisters?	
234	Lennox. No, my lord.	
236	Macbeth. <u>Came</u> they not by you?	= ie. passed.
238	Lennox. No indeed, my lord.	
	Macbeth. <u>Infected</u> be the air <u>whereon they ride</u> ,	239: Infected = corrupted, tainted, poisoned. ^{1,6} whereon they ride = through which they travel; witches were believed to travel easily through the atmosphere.
240	And <u>damned all those that trust them</u> ! – I did hear	= Macbeth implicitly curses himself; despite his self-condemnation, he will continue to rely on the Witches' prophecies to the end of the play. ³
	The galloping of <u>horse</u> . Who was't came by?	= ie. horses. ³
242		
244	Lennox. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word: Macduff is fled to England.	
246	Macbeth. Fled to England?	
248	Lennox. Ay, my good lord.	
		250-5 (below): Macbeth laments that Macduff has left Scotland before he (Macbeth) had time to move against him, and resolves to act immediately on any impulse that enters his head in the future. ³
250	Macbeth. Time, thou <u>anticipat'st</u> my <u>dread exploits</u> :	250: Macbeth apostrophizes Time, whose passage has forestalled (anticipated) the terrible deed (dread exploits) – specifically, the killing of Macduff – he had intended to commit. ^{1,2,6} anticipat'st = ie. anticipates, ie. prevents by removing an opportunity. ^{1,8} exploits = typically describes an act performed with great daring; ¹ exploit is generally stressed on its second syllable, as here.
	<u>The flighty purpose</u> never is o'ertook	251-2: The flighty...with it = a fleeting intention (The flighty purpose) is never accomplished (o'ertook) unless the concomitant action accompanies it; ie. a momentary idea is never fulfilled unless you act on it. ^{1,5} The notion that hesitation in action leads to failure is raised frequently in Elizabethan drama.
252	Unless the deed go with it. From this moment,	There is a neat metaphor suggested here: the root word flight bears a sense of "running away" or "fleeing", and overtook could also mean "caught up to"; so, a secondary nuance is that a fleeting thought – one that quickly escapes –

	The very <u>firstlings</u> of my heart shall be	is only caught up to when it is translated into action.
254	The firstlings of my hand. And <u>even now</u> <u>To crown my thoughts</u> with acts, <u>be it thought and done</u> :	253-4: The very...hand = "the first impulses The very firstlings) arising in my heart will be the first things I do," ie. he will act immediately on any feeling or impulse that comes to mind. firstlings = a <i>firstling</i> is the first of anything to be produced or to appear. ¹
256	The castle of Macduff, I will <u>surprise</u> , <u>Seize upon Fife, give to th' edge o' th' sword</u>	254-5: even now...done = "to immediately (even now) bring my thoughts to a successful conclusion (To crown my thoughts) through action, I will no sooner think an idea than complete it (be it thought and done);" Macbeth emphasizes his determination to change by eliminating the time between an impulse to do something and its fulfillment. ¹ = attack and capture suddenly. ^{1,3}
258	His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls That trace him in his line. <u>No boasting like a fool</u> ,	257: Seize upon Fife = ie. take control of or occupy Fife, Macduff's domain. give to th' edge o' th' sword = ie. "kill"; edge of the sword was a common collocation used to suggest violent murder or destruction: for example, the Geneva Bible describes the slaughter of the residents of the city of Ai with the phrase, " <i>they were all fallen on the edge of the sword.</i> "
260	This deed I'll do <u>before this purpose cool</u> : <u>But no more sights!</u> – Where are <u>these gentlemen</u> ?	258-9: all unfortunate...line = literally, every person who is unlucky enough to follow (trace) Macduff in his lineage, here meaning all who are related to him, ie. his entire family. ^{1,2,4,5} = Macbeth recognizes that someone who brags that they will do something without ever doing it always appears foolish. = ie. "before my resolve weakens."
262	Come bring me where they are.	261: But no more sights = ie. "I want to see no more visions!" ⁵ these gentlemen = ie. the riders of lines 243-4 above who bring word that Macduff is escaped to England.
264	[Exeunt.]	
	<u>ACT IV, SCENE II.</u>	
	<i>Fife.</i> <i>A Room in Macduff's Castle.</i>	
	<i>Enter Lady Macduff, her Son, and Ross.</i>	Entering Characters: Ross has travelled to Fife to inform Lady Macduff that her husband has fled to England.
1	L. Macduff. What had <u>he</u> done, to make him <u>fly the land</u> ?	= ie. her husband. = flee Scotland.
2	Ross. You must have patience madam.	
4		

	<i>L. Macduff.</i>	He had none:	5: by fleeing Scotland so impulsively, Macduff has acted without patience, or self-control. ³
6	His flight was madness: when our actions do not, Our fears do make us traitors.		6-7: <i>when our...traitors</i> = Lady Macduff's aphoristic comment is ambiguous, and could be interpreted in a couple of ways: even though Macduff had not done anything dishonourable, his fear has now driven him to do something – leave Scotland hastily – that either (1) makes him a traitor to his family, or (2) might be viewed as evidence that he has been a traitor to his country after all. ^{3,5,8}
8			
	<i>Ross.</i>	You know not	9-10: Ross diplomatically suggests that it may have in fact been wise of Macduff to leave Scotland
10	Whether it was his wisdom, or his fear.		
12	<i>L. Macduff.</i> Wisdom? to leave his wife, to leave his babes,		12-14: <i>Wisdom...fly</i> = ie. how can it be wise for Macduff to leave behind everything that is valuable to him? <i>titles</i> = property, possessions. ^{2,6} <i>From whence</i> = ie. from where. <i>fly</i> = flee.
	His mansion, and his <u>titles</u> , in a place		
14	<u>From whence</u> himself does <u>fly</u> ? He loves us not,		15: <i>He wants the natural touch</i> = ie. Macduff lacks (<i>wants</i>) the natural instinct to protect his family. <i>For</i> = ie. even.
	<u>He wants the natural touch</u> . <u>For</u> the poor wren,		= smallest; <i>diminutive</i> was a common variant spelling of "diminutive". ¹
16	(The <u>most diminutive</u> of birds) will fight,		18: Macduff has allowed himself to be ruled completely by his fear, and not at all by love.
	Her young ones in her nest, against the owl:		
18	All is the fear, and nothing is the love;		19-20: Macduff's flight is completely irrational (<i>runs against all reason</i>), demonstrating he acted without wisdom.
	As little is the wisdom, where the flight		= ie. coz, short for cousin, an affectionate form of address; <i>cooz</i> is a rare variant spelling.
20	So <u>runs against all reason</u> .		23: <i>I pray you school yourself</i> = "please control yourself," ie. "calm down." <i>school</i> = to bring oneself under control. ¹ <i>But for</i> = ie. but as for. ³
22	<i>Ross.</i>	My dearest <u>cooz</u> ,	24-25: <i>best knows...season</i> = best understands the disordered conditions (<i>fits</i>) of the times (<i>season</i>) (hence Lady Macduff should trust her husband to make the best decision). ⁴ <i>fits</i> = could also mean "crisis", "turmoil", or "spasmodic irregular happenings". ^{1,2,3}
	<u>I pray you school yourself</u> . <u>But for</u> your husband,		= say any more; Ross knows that Macbeth's spies are everywhere.
24	He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows		26-27: <i>when we...ourselves</i> = "when we are seen as traitors (in Macbeth's eyes), even if we do not know ourselves to be traitors", ie. "have not consciously done anything treasonous". ^{3,5,8}
	The fits o' th' season. I dare not <u>speak much further</u> ,		27-28: <i>when we...we fear</i> = "when we believe every rumour
26	But cruël are the times, when we are traitors		
	And do not know ourselves: when we hold rumour		

28	From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,	out of fear, even though we do not really know what there is to be afraid of". ³
30	But float upon a wild and violent sea <u>Each way, and none</u> . I take my leave of you:	29-30: <i>But float...and none</i> = metaphorically, the Scots world has become chaotic, without stability, their emotions jerked back and forth with every new rumour: the image is of a scared body (or wrecked hulk) being tossed this way and that by a rough ocean, without direction, ultimately getting nowhere. <i>Each way, and none</i> = the Folio prints, " <i>Each way, and mone</i> ", the last word an apparent typo: some editions emend <i>mone</i> to <i>move</i> , which is reasonable, as in 16th and 17th century publications, the letter "v", which was usually printed as a "u", was frequently printed upside-down. However, <i>none</i> for <i>mone</i> (<i>none</i> as a contrast to <i>Each way</i>) makes more sense in trying to interpret this line.
	<u>Shall</u> not be long but I'll <u>be here again</u> :	= ie. it shall. ³ = be back again, ie. return.
32	Things at the worst will cease, or else <u>climb upward</u> ,	32-33: <i>Things at...before</i> = when conditions are at their worst, they will either cease to be so bad, or will get better (<i>climb upward</i>), returning to how things were before.
34	To what they were before. – My pretty cousin, Blessing upon you.	33-34: <i>My pretty...you</i> = spoken to Lady Macduff's son. ⁵
36	L. Macduff. Fathered he is, and yet he's fatherless.	36: "he has a father, yet he is fatherless": Lady Macduff once again bitterly alludes to Macduff's absence.
38	Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer, It would be <u>my disgrace</u> , and <u>your discomfort</u> .	38-39: Ross elliptically expresses his worry that he will shed tears if he stays any longer: weeping would be disgraceful for him (<i>my disgrace</i>), and uncomfortable for her (<i>your discomfort</i>)! The notion that crying is effeminate is ubiquitous in the period's drama.
40	I take my leave at once.	
42	[Exit Ross.]	
		44-103 (below): we find in these lines a common-enough digression found in many plays of Shakespeare's time – the question-and-answer-form dialogue with the "too clever child", in which an adult playfully asks a series of serious-sounding questions to a youngster who answers them earnestly and with unnatural intelligence and wit. A similar conversation appears in Act II.ii of <i>Richard III</i> , in which the young and precocious Duke of York is interrogated by Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York; in that scene too, the discussion is terminated by the entrance of a Messenger.
44	L. Macduff. <u>Sirrah, your father's dead</u> :	44: <i>Sirrah</i> = common affectionate form of address to a boy. ¹ <i>your father's dead</i> = Lady Macduff exaggerates to make the point that Macduff has abandoned them, in effect ceasing to be a father.
46	And what will you do now? How will you live? Son. As birds do, mother.	45: Lady Macduff's point is, how will they support themselves now?

48	L. Macduff. What, with worms and flies?	
50	Son. With what I get, I mean: and so do they.	51: like birds, the boy is confident they will find food when they need it.
52	L. Macduff. Poor bird! Thou'dst never fear the <u>net</u> , nor <u>lime</u> ,	53-54: the boy is unconcerned about getting captured like a bird; this is naturally due to his innocent young mind's lack of understanding of the political situation in Scotland.
54	The <u>pit-fall</u> , nor the <u>gin</u> .	net = birds were frequently hunted with nets. ¹ lime = a sticky substance (prepared from the bark of the holly) spread onto small branches to catch birds. ¹ pit-fall = "a trap for catching birds, in which a trapdoor falls over a cavity or hollow" (OED). ¹ gin = any snare used to catch game. ^{1,2}
56	Son. Why should I, mother? <u>Poor birds</u> <u>they</u> are not set for:	57: the Son punningly compares himself to a Poor bird – poor meaning both "pitiable" (as Lady Macduff meant it in line 53 above) and "scrawny" – who needs not worry about being hunted. ^{1,3,5} they = the various traps mentioned by Lady Macduff.
58	My father is not dead, <u>for all your saying</u> .	= ie. "despite what you say."
60	L. Macduff. Yes, he is dead: <u>how wilt thou do for a father?</u>	= ie. "what will you do in place of a father?"
62	Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?	
64	L. Macduff. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.	
66	Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.	66: ie. the boy's mother will then be treating her many husbands like a tradeable commodity.
68	L. Macduff. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, And yet, <u>i' faith</u> , with wit enough for thee.	68-69: ie. the boy speaks with all the cleverness of a child – and yet, he speaks with enough cleverness for her; Lady Macduff is gently teasing the boy. i' faith = truly.
70		
72	Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?	
74	L. Macduff. Ay, that he was.	
76	Son. What is a traitor?	
78	L. Macduff. Why, one that swears, and lies.	77: ie. one that makes a vow and then breaks or violates it. Kittredge asserts that Lady Macduff is thinking of her husband's marriage vow to protect his wife. ³
80	Son. And be all traitors, that do so?	
82	L. Macduff. Every one that does so, is a traitor, And must be hanged.	
84	Son. And must they all be hanged, that swear and lie?	
86	L. Macduff. Every one.	
88	Son. Who must hang them?	
90	L. Macduff. Why, the honest men.	
92	Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools: for there are liars and swearers <u>enow</u> , to beat the honest men,	92-94: those that swear and lie are stupid for letting themselves get hanged: they should be able to take advantage

94	and hang up them.	of the fact that they outnumber the honest men and eliminate them instead. enow = plural form of "enough".
96	L. Macduff. Now God help thee, poor monkey: but <u>how</u> wilt thou do for a father?	= ie. what.
98	Son. If he were dead, you'd weep for him: if you would not, <u>it were</u> a good sign, that I should quickly have a new father.	99-100: if you would not = ie. but if you are not weeping for him. it were = "it would be" or "it is".
102	L. Macduff. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!	
104	<i>Enter a Messenger.</i>	
106	Mess. Bless you, fair dame: <u>I am not to you known</u> , Though in your <u>state of honour</u> I am <u>perfect</u> :	= ie. "you don't know me". 108: "though I am fully aware or informed (perfect) of your noble rank and position (state of honour). ^{2,3,5}
110	I <u>doubt</u> some danger <u>does approach you nearly</u> . If you will take a <u>homely man's</u> advice, Be not found here: <u>hence</u> with your little ones.	= fear. ^{1,3} = is getting close or is within a short distance. ¹ = by homely man , the messenger means he is a man of humble rank or background, ie. not a noble. ^{1,3} = leave at once.
112	To <u>fright</u> you thus, <u>methinks</u> I am too <u>savage</u> ; To do worse to you, <u>were</u> <u>fell</u> cruelty,	112-4: To fright...person = on the one hand, to frighten (fright) Lady Macduff with this warning is too crude (savage); on the other hand, anything done to her that would be worse than this (ie. to actually harm her directly) would be (were) terrible (fell) cruelty – and this latter level of harm is very close by (nigh) to her. With a bit of sputtering indirectness, the Messenger is telling Lady Macduff to flee now, which he knows is harsh to do to her, but it would be worse if he hadn't said anything, leaving her to her fate, as Macbeth's net is closing in on her. ³ methinks = "it seems to me". ⁵
114	Which is too <u>nigh</u> your person. Heaven preserve you,	=remain; ² out of fear for his own person, the Messenger wants out.
116	I dare <u>abide</u> no longer.	
118	<i>[Exit Messenger.]</i>	
120	L. Macduff. <u>Whither</u> should I <u>fly</u> ?	= to where. = flee.
122	I have done no harm. But I remember now, I am in this earthly world: where to do harm Is often <u>laudable</u> , to do good sometime Accounted dangerous folly. Why then (alas)	120-3: But I...folly = with good sense and irony, Lady Macduff understands that the logic of ethical behaviour is flipped upside-down in the real world, where to hurt others is deemed praiseworthy (laudable), but to do good is considered foolish.
124	Do I put up that <u>womanly defence</u> ,	= womanish (ie. feeble) justification (for staying put); Lady Macduff's safety cannot be guaranteed by simply pointing out to her accusers that she has done nothing wrong; a manly response would be one of preventive action.
126	To say I have done no harm?	
128	<i>Enter Murderers.</i>	
130	What are these faces?	

132 **1st Murd.** Where is your husband?
 134 **L. Macduff.** I hope in no place so unsanctified
 136 Where such as thou mayst find him.
 138 **1st Murd.** He's a traitor.
 138 **Son.** Thou liest, thou shag-eared villain!
 140 **1st Murd.** What, you egg!
 142 [Stabbing him.]
 144 Young fry of treachery!
 146 **Son.** He has killed me, mother,
 148 Run away, I pray you!
 150 [Son dies.
 Exit Lady Macduff, crying "Murder!"
 152 Exeunt Murderers following her.]

ACT IV, SCENE III.

*England.
 Before the King's Palace.*

Enter Malcolm and Macduff.

1 **Malc.** Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
 2 Weep our sad bosoms empty.
 4 **Macduff.** Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword: and like good men,
 6 Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom: each new morn,

New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows

8 Strike Heaven on the face, that it resounds
 As if it felt with Scotland, and yelled out
 10 Like syllable of dolour.

134-5: that is, she expects (**hopes**) her husband is in no place so unholy or wicked that people as violent and malevolent as the Murderers could find him there.²

= having shaggy hair worn down to the ears.^{1,8}

= "term of reproach for a malapert boy" (Schmidt, p. 352, V. II);⁶ the word is suggestive of the Son's youth.

= spawn.³

Entering Characters: **Macduff** has reached England, where he meets with Duncan's eldest son **Malcolm**.

= solitary;⁶ Malcolm wants to find a place for the two men to express their grief in private.
 = used for "hearts", the seat of emotions.

= instead.

= grasp, hold firmly.¹ = deadly.⁵ = real, honourable.¹

6: **Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom** = "stand over and defend (**Bestride**) the diminished or ruined (**down-fall'n**) kingdom of our birth (**birthdom**)," ie. "plant ourselves firmly over our fallen homeland and defend and reclaim it."

Bestride = often used to describe one who stands over a man who has fallen in battle in order to protect him from the enemy.¹

birthdom = a word likely coined by Shakespeare, that combines the root word *birth* to the suffix *-dom* (as in *kingdom* or *dukedom*).

each new morn = ie. every day; Macduff goes on to poetically and metaphorically describe the outrages taking place seemingly daily in Scotland.

= ie. newly-made.

8: **Strike Heaven on the face** = as Heaven learns of each new outrage perpetrated by Macbeth, it feels like another slap or blow to the face.

8-10: **that it...dolour** = so that Heaven itself echoes (**resounds**) with implied cries of grief, as if it shared

		Scotland's pain, and cried out similar or equal (<i>Like</i> , an adjective) sounds or words (<i>syllable</i>) of suffering and distress (<i>dolour</i>). ^{1,5,6} This is a good example of the type of obscure sentences that saturate Shakespeare's plays – dense in meaning, awkward in structure, and elliptical in meaning.
12	<i>Malc.</i> What I believe, I'll <u>wail</u> ;	12-21 (below): Malcolm is not sure he can trust Macduff, and wonders if the latter is actually working for Macbeth, trying to lure Malcolm back to Scotland only to betray him.
14	What know, believe; and what I can <u>redress</u> , <u>As I shall find the time to friend</u> , I will.	12-13: <i>What I believe...believe</i> = "I will lament (<i>wail</i>) what I believe to be true, and what I know to be true, I will believe." ¹ Malcolm is hinting that he cannot automatically believe any information he is getting second-hand from Macduff. 13-14: <i>and what...I will</i> = "and what I can make right or remedy (<i>redress</i>), I will, at the favourable or opportune moment." <i>As I shall find time to friend</i> = "as I shall find <i>time</i> itself to be an ally or to be acting in a friendly way (<i>to friend</i>)", ie. when the time is right or favourable. ^{1,7} = "it may be true – maybe (<i>perchance</i>)."
16	What you have spoke, <u>it may be so perchance</u> . This tyrant, whose <u>sole name blisters</u> our <u>tongues</u> ,	16: ie. just saying Macbeth's name alone causes the <i>tongue</i> to <i>blister</i> ; the image of a <i>blistered tongue</i> was sometimes used to suggest a kind of punishment for speaking falsely or, as here, simply naming something evil. <i>sole name</i> = mere name.
	Was once thought <u>honest</u> ; you have loved him well,	17: <i>honest</i> = honourable, noble. ³ 17-18: <i>you have...you yet</i> = Malcolm more strongly suggests that he has no reason to trust Macduff. <i>touched</i> (line 18) = struck, injured, wronged; ^{2,6} neither of the two men has learned yet that Macduff's family has been wiped out.
18	He hath not <u>touched</u> you yet. I am young, but something	18-19: <i>I am young...through me</i> = this line has long puzzled commentators. One possible meaning is, "I may be young, but you may learn something about Macbeth's character through my plight", ⁴ or "you may see some benefit in betraying me". ⁸ Some editors emend <i>discern</i> (line 19) to <i>deserve</i> , changing the sense entirely: now, Malcolm's thought is darker – perhaps Macduff intends to earn (<i>deserve</i>) a reward from Macbeth (<i>of him</i>), by using Malcolm illy (ie. by luring him back to Scotland). ^{3,5} This alternate interpretation certainly leads more logically to Malcolm's next line.
20	You may discern of him through me, and wisdom To offer up a weak, poor innocent <u>lamb</u>	19-21: <i>and wisdom...God</i> = "and you may perceive it would be considered wise (or, "it is wisdom") to sacrifice a guiltless, helpless victim (Malcolm himself, figured as a <i>lamb</i>) in order to placate Macbeth (described in biblical terms as <i>an angry God</i>). ^{3,5}
22	T' appease <u>an angry God</u> . <i>Macduff.</i> I am not treacherous.	

24			25-31 (below): Malcolm now speaks mostly in general terms to indirectly describe Macduff, and his own attitude towards him: a virtuous man may choose to become evil, yet it is usually impossible to tell, based on appearance alone, which master – good or malevolent – he is serving.
26	<i>Malc.</i> But Macbeth is. A good and virtuous nature may <u>recoil</u>		26-27: <i>A good...charge</i> = ie. "even a noble man may fall away (ie. <i>recoil</i> from goodness) when carrying out the king's command (<i>an imperial charge</i>). ^{1,2,5} <i>recoil</i> = Kittredge suggests "become corrupt"; Waith, "give way under pressure".
	In an imperial charge. – <u>But I shall crave your pardon:</u>		= Kittredge suggests that Malcolm asks for forgiveness in response to the pained look he sees on the face of Macduff, who is hurt by the suggestion that he is planning to betray the younger man.
28	That which you are, my thoughts cannot <u>transpose</u> . Angels are <u>bright still</u> , though the brightest fell.		28: "whatever your character is (ie. good or evil), my thoughts cannot alter (<i>transpose</i>) it;" ie. "you are what you are, and what I think cannot change that." 29: angels are always (<i>still</i>) radiant (<i>bright</i>), but even the best of them fell. ⁶ The allusion is to Lucifer, the most beautiful of all the angels, who fell from God's grace, and was cast out of Heaven when he rebelled. Similarly, though Macduff may appear to be the most honourable of men, he too may have rebelled against the side of good.
30	Though all things <u>foul</u> would <u>wear the brows of grace</u> , Yet <u>grace</u> must still look <u>so</u> .		30-31: though all things evil (<i>foul</i>) strive to appear virtuous (<i>wear the brows of grace</i>), virtue (<i>grace</i> of line 31) itself must still appear like itself (<i>so</i>), ie. virtuous. <i>wear the brows of grace</i> = bear a countenance (ie. appearance) of virtue. Malcolm's general point is that there is no reliable way to judge whether another is good or evil, since either way, the other is likely to appear outwardly good, regardless of whichever he or she is. ⁵
32	<i>Macduff.</i>		
34	I have lost my hopes.		33: Macduff is despondent: there seems to be no chance of convincing Malcolm to lead a revolt against Macbeth.
			35-38 (below): Malcolm hints that it is the fact that Macduff left his family behind in Scotland that causes him (Malcolm) to be suspicious of Macduff's motives: Macduff could hardly be expected to have done this unless he was confident Macbeth would not harm his wife and son. ³
	<i>Malc.</i> <u>Perchance</u> even there where I did find my <u>doubts</u> .		35: ie. perhaps (<i>Perchance</i>) Macduff <i>lost his hopes</i> (line 33) in the very facts in which Malcolm found his suspicions (<i>doubts</i>) of Macduff's sincerity. Note the clever linguistic tie between <i>lost</i> and <i>find</i> .
36	Why in <u>that rawness</u> left you wife, and child,		= that unprotected or vulnerable state. ²

	Those <u>precious motives</u> , those strong <u>knots</u> of love,	37: <i>Those precious motives</i> = Malcolm describes Macduff's family as what should be the driving force of Macduff's decisions, or more specifically, inducements that should have kept him from leaving Scotland. ³ <i>knots</i> = ties that should be difficult to undo – as Macduff seems to have done by abandoning his family.
38	Without <u>leave-taking</u> ? I pray you,	= ie. even saying good-bye.
40	Let not my <u>jealousies</u> be your <u>dishonours</u> , But mine own <u>safeties</u> : you may be <u>rightly just</u> , Whatever I shall think.	39-41: Malcolm excuses his hesitance to trust Macduff: Macduff should not take Malcolm's suspicions (<i>jealousies</i>) as an insult (they should not be his <i>dishonours</i>), but rather as precautions for Malcolm's own safety or security (<i>safeties</i>); Malcolm allows that Macduff may very well be honest and honourable (<i>rightly just</i>), no matter what he (Malcolm) thinks. ¹ Kittredge points out that <i>dishonours</i> and <i>safeties</i> , which would normally be written in the singular (<i>dishonour</i> and <i>safety</i>), are plural here only to match <i>jealousies</i> .
42	<i>Macduff</i> . Bleed, bleed poor country! –	43-46: <i>Bleed...affeer'd</i> = Macduff gives up, feeling that it is impossible to convince Malcolm of his genuine intentions.
44	<u>Great tyranny</u> , lay thou thy <u>basis sure</u> ,	44-45: <i>Great...check thee</i> = Malcolm apostrophizes Macbeth's cruel regime (<i>Great tyranny</i>), bitterly acknowledging that it is setting its foundation (<i>basis</i>) (ie. entrenching itself) securely (<i>sure</i>), since there is no force for <i>goodness</i> (represented by Malcolm) which is prepared to restrain or oppose (<i>check</i>) it. ¹
	For goodness dare not check thee: <u>wear thou thy wrongs</u> ;	= metaphorically, Macbeth's tyranny (ie. Macbeth) may govern with violence and immorality in an open fashion; the image is of Macbeth wearing his wrongfully gotten gains – his titles, properties, and honours – like clothing, visible to all. ³
46	<u>The title is affeer'd</u> . – Far[e] thee well, lord,	= Macbeth's title to his crown is legally confirmed (<i>affeer'd</i>), and beyond dispute (since Malcolm will not contest it). ³
48	I would not be the villain that thou think'st For the whole <u>space</u> that's in <u>the tyrant's grasp</u> , And <u>the rich East to boot</u> .	47-49: Macduff claims he would not be the miscreant Malcolm suspects him to be, not even for all the territory (<i>space</i>) controlled by Macbeth (ie. all of Scotland), plus the wealthy lands of the east as well. ² <i>the tyrant's grasp</i> = ie. Macbeth's possession. <i>the rich East</i> = a generalized reference to the imagined fabulously rich lands of the east, including Persia, Asia, and India. <i>to boot</i> = moreover, in addition. ¹
50		
52	<i>Malc.</i> Be not offended: I speak not as in <u>absolute</u> fear of you:	52: ie. Malcolm's distrust of Macduff is not unqualified or complete (<i>absolute</i>): ⁶ Malcolm offers Macduff hope.
	I <u>think</u> our country sinks beneath the <u>yoke</u> :	53: Malcolm knows that Scotland is heavily oppressed, existing under a heavy burden; he presents an image of his homeland as an ox weighed down by a <i>yoke</i> , which represents Macbeth's crushing rule. <i>think</i> = am aware. ⁵

54 It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds. I think withal,
56 There would be hands uplifted in my right:
And here from gracious England have I offer
58 Of goodly thousands. But for all this,

When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,

60 Or wear it on my sword; yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,

62 More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

64 **Macduff.** What should he be?

66 **Malc.** It is myself I mean: in whom I know
68 All the particulars of vice so grafted,

That when they shall be opened, black Macbeth

70 Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state

72 Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my confineless harms.

74 **Macduff.** Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damned
76 In evils to top Macbeth.

78 **Malc.** I grant him bloody,

Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,

80 Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin

= besides.⁵

= Scots who would support his right to the throne.

= ie. King Edward.

= ie. an army of thousands (to take down Macbeth).

59-175 (below): in this lengthy section, Malcolm tries a different tack to test out whether Macduff can be trusted: he claims that his own character is so dissolute, that Scotland would actually be no better off if he were to become king than it already is under Macbeth.

= walk on Macbeth's head (as a symbol of Malcolm's successfully defeating him).

= display the king's decapitated head on his sword.

= evil, wickedness, corruption, immorality.^{1,6}

62: shall suffer more, in a greater variety of ways (**sundry ways**), than ever before.

= ie. come after Macbeth on the throne.

65: "what worse king than Macbeth can you mean?"³

= ie. particular forms or kinds.^{3,5} = engrafted, implanted.^{1,3}
Malcolm suggests his vices have grown to become a very part of his essence.

= revealed; Malcolm continues the horticultural metaphor begun with **grafted** in the previous line, imagining his vices as *opening* like buds.³

70: **seem** = ie. seem in comparison to be.

pure = innocent, free from moral stain.¹

pure as snow = a unique Shakespearean variation on the common expression *white as snow*; we find the same expression in *Hamlet*.

the poor state = ie. suffering Scotland.

= will consider Macbeth to be a lamb (symbol of innocence).

= boundless evils or mischiefs.^{1,5}

= armed forces or hosts.^{1,6}

= exceed, outdo.⁵

78-80: Malcolm's list of seven of Macbeth's vices evokes (without exactly matching) the seven deadly sins.⁸

grant him = ie. acknowledge him to be.

= lascivious;^{2,6} this does not really describe Macbeth, but is included in a list whose purpose it is to suggest that, for the sake of argument, Macbeth is the embodiment of every known vice.³

80: **Sudden** = prone to sudden violence, impetuous.^{1,2,6}
smacking of = tasting of, used figuratively.

	That has a name. But there's no bottom, none	81-82: <i>there's no...voluptuousness</i> = there is no limit to Malcolm's voracity for sensual pleasure (<i>voluptuousness</i>). ¹
82	In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters, Your <u>matrons</u> , and your maids, could not fill up	82-84: <i>your wives...lust</i> = metaphorically, "there are not enough women to satisfy my lust." Malcolm compares his voracious sexual appetite to a reservoir or large tank (<i>cistern</i>) that is impossible to fill, or satiate. ^{1,3} <i>matrons</i> = elderly married women. ¹
84	The cistern of my lust, and my <u>desire</u> All <u>continent impediments</u> would o'erbear,	84-86: <i>my desire...my will</i> = Malcolm's craving for women (his <i>desire</i>) would overpower or overwhelm (<i>o'erbear</i>) any restraining obstacles (<i>continent impediments</i>) that might act to suppress or counter his sexual passions (<i>will</i>), ie. nothing exists that could successfully keep his lust in check. ^{1,2,3,6} <i>desire</i> = can bear a stronger sense than in its modern usage, suggesting a craving so strong that it is sinful. ¹
86	That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth Than <u>such an one</u> to reign.	86-87: <i>Better...reign</i> = Scotland is better off having Macbeth as king than to be ruled by someone like Malcolm (<i>such an one</i>). <i>such an one</i> = common variant of " <i>such a one</i> ".
88	<i>Macduff.</i> <u>Boundless intemperance</u>	89-90: <i>Boundless...tyranny</i> = limitless lack of self-restraint (<i>Boundless intemperance</i>) in a man's nature is itself a form of tyranny – because it rules absolutely over the man's character and passions. ^{1,5} To Kittredge, <i>tyranny</i> suggests a usurpation, describing the incontinence as a force which has appropriated all sway over the individual at the expense of his other qualities. ³
90	In nature is a tyranny: it hath been Th' <u>untimely</u> emptying of the happy throne,	90-92: <i>it hath...many kings</i> = ie. many kings have lost their crowns prematurely because of their insatiable appetites. <i>untimely</i> = coming before the proper or natural time. ¹
92	And fall of many kings. But fear not <u>yet</u>	92-93: <i>But fear...yours</i> = "despite what you said (<i>yet</i>), don't fear to take possession of that which is yours by right (ie. the kingship)." Even as Malcolm is testing Macduff's character, Macduff in turn now tests Malcolm's. ³
94	To take upon you what is yours: you may <u>Convey your pleasures</u> in a <u>spacious plenty</u> ,	93-95: <i>you may...cold</i> = Malcolm can manage his delights in secret (<i>Convey your pleasures</i>), while appearing to be chaste (<i>And yet seem cold</i>), ie. he may indulge his desires discreetly while seeming to be virtuous in public. ^{1,2,5} <i>spacious plenty</i> = extensive abundance, suggesting "ample scope". ¹
	And yet seem cold. <u>The time you may so hoodwink:</u>	= Malcolm can (easily) deceive (<i>hoodwink</i>) the people (<i>The time</i>). ^{3,5}
96	<u>We have willing dames enough</u> : there cannot be That <u>vulture</u> in you, to <u>devour</u> so many	96: <i>We have...enough</i> = "there are plenty of women who would be willing to give themselves to you."
98	As will to <u>greatness</u> <u>dedicate</u> themselves, <u>Finding it so inclined</u> .	96-99: <i>there cannot...inclined</i> = metaphorically, "(surely) your sexual appetite cannot be so voracious that you can enjoy every woman who willingly gives herself to you if she sees you disposed towards her (<i>Finding it so inclined</i>)." ³ Malcolm's overpowering lust is likened to a <i>vulture's</i> ravenous appetite, ³ and <i>devour</i> extends the metaphor:

100

102

104

106

108

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120

Malc. With this, there grows
In my most ill-composed affection, such
A stanchless avarice, that were I king,

I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
Desire his jewëls, and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

Macduff. This avarice
Sticks deeper: grows with more pernicious root

Than summer-seeming lust: and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear,
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will,

Of your mere own. All these are portable,
With other graces weighed.

Malc. But I have none. The king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temp'rance, stableness,

Macduff suggests Malcolm's behaviour is predatory, describing him as *devouring* women, just as a vulture *devours* a carcass.

97-98: *so many...themselves* = ie. so many women who will offer up (*dedicate*) themselves to one of high rank (*greatness*).^{3,6}

Finding it so inclined = when a woman recognizes that King Malcolm is attracted to her; *it* refers to *greatness* in line 98.

101-9 (below): Malcolm adds another vice to his character – greed. He describes his avarice as so destructive that he would go out of his way to eliminate his subjects to get at their wealth.

101-3: *with this...avarice* = "alongside licentiousness (*With this*), there is growing in my most evil disposition (*ill-composed affection*) such an insatiable (*stanchless*) greed".^{1,2,3,6}

ill-composed = made up of wicked qualities.²

stanchless = cannot be stanchd, ie. satisfied.⁴

= kill.² = ie. to take possession of.

= the sense is, "this man's".³

= ie. having more, ie. amassing of wealth. = like.

= ie. for more. = invent, contrive.²

= unfair or unwarranted causes of complaint.^{1,3}

111-3: *This avarice...lust* = in this botanical metaphor, Malcolm's avarice is compared to a plant that grows with a more dangerous or destructive (*pernicious*) root than does his lust, and is more firmly embedded (it *Sticks deeper*), ie. it is harder to uproot.^{1,3}

summer-seeming lust (line 113) = the sense seems to be that lust, like the heat of summer, will be intense, but last for only a short period of time, compared to greed: that is, lust fades with time (perhaps as a man grows older), but greed is more enduring,^{3,5} and hence is a more insidious vice.

113-4: *it hath...kings* = uncontrolled greed (*it*) has been the cause of many Scottish kings' deaths.

115-6: *Scotland hath...mere own* = Scotland has abundance (*foisons*) enough to satisfy Malcolm's desires (his *will*) entirely from out of his own property (*Of your mere own*),^{1,2,3,4} ie. he can possess what he wants without stealing from someone else.

116-7: *All these...weighed* = the faults Malcolm has admitted to (*All these*) can be tolerated (*are portable*), when balanced against or counterbalanced by (*weighed* against) his good qualities (*graces*).^{1,3}

= virtues (*graces*) that are fitting or appropriate for a king.³
= ie. such as. = truthfulness. = stability.^{1,2}

	<u>Bounty</u> , <u>perseverance</u> , mercy, <u>lowliness</u> ,	121: Bounty = generosity. perseverance = pronounced <i>per-SE-v'rance</i> , stressed on the second syllable. ⁴ lowliness = humility, meekness. ¹
122	Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,	
124	I have no <u>relish</u> of them, but <u>abound</u> In <u>the division</u> of each <u>several</u> crime,	123: relish of = "flavour or trace of", ^{3,4} though the OED suggests "taste for". 123-5: but abound...ways = "but I possess in abundance (abound) variations or forms (the division) of every individual (several) sin, and practice each one in multiple ways." Even for Shakespeare, this language is dense and cryptic.
	Acting it many ways. Nay, <u>had I power</u> , I <u>should</u>	125-8: had I...on each = Malcolm uses a series of increasingly strident images to claim that if he had the power to do so, he would destroy the harmony of the whole universe! Malcolm's portrait of his own evil reaches a rather ridiculous crescendo. had I power = ie. "had I the power". should = would.
126	Pour the sweet <u>milk</u> of <u>concord</u> into hell,	126: milk once again is used as a metaphor for anything considered healthy, pleasant or nourishing (see Act I.v.18 above, " the milk of human kindness "). By pouring the milk of human harmony (concord) ¹ into hell, he destroys or eliminates it. Stevenson glosses line 126, "banish peace and good will from the earth" (p. 131). ⁵
	<u>Uproar</u> the universal peace, <u>confound</u>	= throw into turmoil or chaos. ^{1,2} = overthrow, ruin. ¹
128	All unity on earth.	126-8: concord , peace , and unity were very frequently grouped together in 16th and 17th century literature as theological and political ideals; other virtues, such as <i>love</i> and <i>justice</i> , were also often included in these rhetorical clusters.
130	Macduff. O Scotland, Scotland!	
132	Malc. If such a one be fit to govern, speak: I am as I have spoken.	132: "if such a person as the one I am describing is fit to govern Scotland, say so." 133: ie. "I am exactly as I have described myself."
134	Macduff. Fit to govern?	
136	No, not to live. – O nation miserable!	136-141: O nation...breed = Macduff apostrophizes Scotland.
	<u>With an untitled tyrant</u> , <u>bloody-sceptered</u> ,	137: With an untitled tyrant = Scotland is now led by a usurper, one without a rightful title to the throne. ^{3,5} bloody-sceptred = metaphorically, Macbeth rules through bloodshed and violence.
138	When shalt thou see thy <u>wholesome</u> days again?	= healthy, ie. prosperous. ^{1,6}
140	Since that the <u>truest issue</u> of thy throne By his own <u>interdiction</u> <u>stands accused</u> ,	139-140: since the most legitimate heir (truest issue) to the throne of Scotland has effectively barred himself from rule as a result of his charging himself with disqualifying crimes (he stands accused); that is, Malcolm's own confession of his moral failures acts as a prohibition (an interdiction) to

	<u>And does blaspheme his breed?</u> – <u>Thy royal father</u>	his wearing the crown. ¹
142	Was a most sainted king: the queen that <u>bore</u> thee, Oft'ner <u>upon her knees</u> , than on her feet,	141: <i>And does blaspheme his breed</i> = and slanders his parents (by suggesting that they could produce an offspring of such grotesqueness). ^{3,5} <i>breed</i> = lineage. ² <i>Thy royal father</i> = ie. Duncan. = gave birth to.
144	<u>Died every day she lived.</u> – Fare thee well, These evils thou <u>repeat'st upon</u> thyself,	143: Malcolm's mother could more often be found in prayer (<i>upon her knees</i>) than not; the line emphasizes her piety. = ie. she lived every day always prepared for death or in self-castigation; the reference is to 1 Corinthians 15:31: "I die daily." Here Paul was probably alluding to the daily suffering and persecution he endured at Ephesus. ^{8,14}
146	Have banished me from Scotland. – O my <u>breast</u> ,	145-6: <i>These evils...Scotland</i> = the wickedness Malcolm has described in himself has driven Macduff into permanent exile; in other words, with Macduff's enemy Macbeth on the throne now, and Malcolm, the only viable alternative, disqualified by his own admission, Macduff believes there is no way he can return safely to Scotland. ³ <i>repeat'st upon</i> = recites or rehearses against. ^{1,3}
148	Thy hope ends here!	= ie. heart.
150	<i>Malc.</i> Macduff, this <u>noble passion</u> , <u>Child of integrity</u> , hath from my soul <u>Wiped the black scruples</u> , <u>reconciled my thoughts</u>	149-172 (below): Malcolm suddenly admits that the confession of his sinful nature was completely fabricated, and that he is in fact a worthy successor to Duncan, making it clear that in some way he has been testing Macduff's character, and that Macduff has proven himself honourable and trustworthy. The entire episode is awkward, discomfiting, and frankly not believable, primarily due to the absurdly excessive portrait Malcolm painted of his own failings. 149-152: <i>this noble...honour</i> = "this virtuous emotion (<i>noble passion</i>) of yours, which can only proceed from decency of character (hence, it is the <i>Child of integrity</i>), has erased the dark or dismal doubts or suspicions (<i>Wiped the black scruples</i>) that I had of you, and brought my opinion of you into concord (<i>reconciled my thoughts</i>) with your genuine loyalty and honour." ^{1,2,3} <i>passion</i> = could specifically mean "rage". ^{1,2}
152	To thy good truth and honour. <u>Devilish</u> Macbeth, By many of these <u>trains</u> , hath sought to win me	= fiendish, wicked. ¹ 153-4: <i>By many...power</i> = has used numerous traps and artifices (<i>trains</i>) to get me into his clutches (<i>win me / Into his power</i>). ^{1,3,6}
154	Into his power: and <u>modest wisdom</u> <u>plucks</u> me	154-5: <i>modest wisdom...haste</i> = sober caution (<i>modest wisdom</i>) stops Malcolm from trusting anyone too quickly; ^{2,6} Malcolm explains why he was slow to believe Macduff. <i>plucks</i> = implies an image of prudence reaching out and pulling Malcolm back from danger. ¹

		<i>over-credulous</i> (line 155) = excessively credulous, hence "easily deceived". ¹
156	From over-credulous haste: but God above <u>Deal between</u> thee and me! for even now	155-6: God above...and me! = let God act as the honest mediator between Malcolm and Macduff: the sense is, Malcolm wants the two of them to deal with each other openly and honestly going forward. Deal between = in pre-Shakespearean usage, <i>deal between</i> was used to describe one who acted as a go-between to two parties who did not necessarily trust each other, or between two hostile parties: e.g., " <i>Solon by subtlety set order betwixt the poor and rich...was very scrupulous to deal between them, fearing the covetousness of the one and arrogance of the other</i> " (from Thomas North's influential 1579 translation of Plutarch's <i>Lives</i>). = "under your guidance". ³
	I put myself <u>to thy direction</u> , and	158-167 (below): Malcolm now pleads that he is the complete opposite of how he has been describing himself.
158	<u>Unspeak mine own detraction</u> ; here <u>abjure</u> The <u>taints and blames</u> I laid upon myself,	158: Unspeak mine own detraction = retract my self-defamation (<i>detraction</i>). ¹ Unspeak = unsay, take back; the obvious antonym to "speak". mine own = "my own;" <i>mine</i> was often used for <i>my</i> when followed by a word beginning with a vowel. 158-9: here abjure...myself = "here and now recant or renounce (<i>abjure</i>) the faults I attributed to myself". ¹ taints and blames = essentially synonyms for sins or offenses; <i>taint</i> also bears a sense of corruption and discredit. ²
160	<u>For strangers to my nature</u> . I am yet	= (these malignant qualities) are foreign to Malcolm's character. strangers = foreigners; common term to describe one who comes from another country. ¹
162	<u>Unknown to woman</u> , <u>never was forsworn</u> , Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,	= ie. still a virgin. = has never perjured himself. 162: "I have hardly even desired to keep what already belongs to me".
164	At no time <u>broke my faith</u> , would not betray The devil to <u>his fellow</u> , and delight	= broken a promise or vow. ¹ = ie. a fellow devil.
	No less in truth than life. My first false-speaking	165-6: My first...myself = "my speaking against myself was the first time in my life I ever lied."
166	Was this upon myself. What I am truly Is thine, and my poor country's, to command:	166-7: What I...command = Malcolm's true attitude is that he puts himself completely at the service of Macduff and Scotland.
168	<u>Whither</u> indeed, before thy <u>here-approach</u> , Old Siward, with ten thousand <u>warlike men</u> ,	168-170: even before he had this conversation with Macduff, Siward, the Earl of Northumberland, had already begun to march with an army towards Scotland. Whither = to where (referring to <i>my poor country</i> of the previous line). here-approach = arrival here. ² warlike men = ie. soldiers, men ready for battle. ⁶
170	Already <u>at a point</u> , was setting forth:	

	Now <u>we'll together</u> , and the chance of goodness	<i>at a point</i> = in readiness, fully prepared. ³
		171: <i>we'll together</i> = ie. "we will set out together". ³
		171-2: <i>the chance...quarrel</i> = "may the probability of our success (in overthrowing Macbeth) be as good as our cause is just", ³ or "be equal or proportionate to the justness of our cause." ^{4,5}
		<i>warranted quarrel</i> (line 172) = legitimate ground of complaint. ^{1,2}
172	Be like our warranted quarrel. – <u>Why are you silent?</u>	= Macduff is (understandably) astonished at Malcolm's about-face, and perhaps the news of the imminent English invasion of Scotland.
174	Macduff. Such <u>welcome and unwelcome things</u> at once 'Tis hard to reconcile.	174-5: Macduff is having a hard time processing the contradictory messages he has just received from Malcolm. <i>welcome and unwelcome things</i> = allusion to the repulsive and pleasing claims Malcolm has presented about himself in such quick succession.
176		
	<i>Enter a Doctor.</i>	Entering Character: King Edward's Doctor enters the stage. Edward the Confessor was the first English monarch whose touch (called the "royal touch") was thought to heal maladies, especially the "condition of swollen and discharging tuberculous lymph glands of the neck", called scrofula. The practice of the king bestowing his touch continued until the English Civil War of the 17th century. ¹⁵
178	Malc. Well, <u>more anon</u> . – Comes the King forth, I pray you?	= ie. "we will speak more about this soon."
180	Doct. Ay, sir: there are a <u>crew</u> of wretched souls	= group, company. ¹
182	That <u>stay</u> his cure: their malady <u>convinces</u> The <u>great assay</u> of <u>art</u> . But at his touch,	182: <i>stay</i> = await. 182-3: <i>their malady...of art</i> = the people's disease baffles the ability of medical science to cure it. ^{3,5} <i>convinces</i> = defeats, vanquishes. ^{1,2} <i>great assay</i> = concerted efforts. ² <i>art</i> = knowledge, science. ²
184	Such <u>sanctity</u> hath <u>Heaven given</u> his hand, They <u>presently amend</u> .	= holiness. ⁶ = pronounced, " <i>Heaven gi'en</i> ". = immediately or instantly heal, ie. are made well. ³
186		
188	Malc. I thank you, doctor.	
	<i>[Exit Doctor.]</i>	
190		
192	Macduff. What's the disease he means?	
194	Malc. 'Tis called " <i>the evil</i> ": A most miraculous work in this good king, Which often since <u>my here-remain</u> in England, I have seen him do: how he <u>solicits Heaven</u> , Himself best knows. But <u>strangely-visited</u> people,	= short for the "king's evil", ie. scrofula. ¹ = ie. "during my stay here". = moves or prevails upon Heaven (to grant him the power to heal). ^{2,3} = horribly or extremely afflicted. ^{2,3}

198	All <u>swol'n and ulcerous</u> , pitiful to the eye, <u>The mere despair of surgery</u> , he cures,	= scrofula causes the lymph nodes to swell and may also produce open sores on the mouth or neck. ¹⁶ = the utter or absolute (mere) despair of surgery, ie. completely beyond the ability of medicine to remedy. ³
200	Hanging a <u>golden stamp</u> about their necks,	200: until the 13th century, victims of scrofula whom the king had touched were maintained at the king's expense until they were healed. Then, in the 13th century, the custom of giving a coin to each patient touched by the king was instituted. ¹⁵ During the reign of James I, a gold coin was donated to the patient. ³ stamp = stamped coin. ⁴
	Put on with holy prayers: and <u>'tis spoken</u> ,	= ie. it is said.
202	To the succeeding royalty he leaves	202-3: To the...benediction = King Edward will pass on the healing power to his descendants who will be kings. As noted above, monarchs through Charles I were believed to possess the king's touch. benediction (line 203) = spiritual gift. ²
	The healing benediction. <u>With this strange virtue</u> ,	= in addition to this strange power (the king's touch).
204	He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,	204: Edward was thought to have prophesied on his death-bed that England would be estranged from the Catholic religion before returning to the true church. ¹⁷
	And <u>sundry blessings hang about</u> his throne,	205: and various (sundry) signs of divine favour attend (hang about) Edward.
206	That speak him full of grace.	206: that are evidence that he is blessed by God.
208	<i>Enter Ross.</i>	Entering Character: we last saw Ross in Act IV.ii, when he briefly visited Lady Macduff to warn her of the danger she was in, before he himself fled Scotland.
210	Macduff. See who comes here.	
212	Malc. My countryman: but yet I know him <u>not</u> .	212: that is, Malcolm may recognize Ross as a Scotsman by his dress, but does not know him personally. ⁵ not = the Folio prints "nor", typically emended to not .
214	Macduff. My <u>ever-gentle</u> cousin, welcome hither.	= always noble.
216	Malc. I know him now. – Good God, <u>betimes</u> remove	216-7: Good God...strangers = a prayer beseeching God to quickly (betimes) remove the cause or agency (means , meaning Macbeth) that makes Scotsmen unknown to each other. ^{1,2}
218	The <u>means</u> that makes us <u>strangers</u> !	strangers = may also bear its secondary sense of "foreigners", since Macbeth's cruel reign has forced so many nobles to emigrate.
	Ross. Sir, amen.	
220	Macduff. Stands Scotland where it did?	221: ie. "is Scotland in the same condition as it has been?" ⁵
222	Ross. Alas, poor country,	
224	Almost afraid <u>to know itself</u> ! It cannot	224: to know itself = to face its own misfortunes. ³ 224-5: It cannot...grave = Scotland is no longer like a protective parent, but rather a place to die: the natural order has been inverted.
	Be called our mother, but our grave; where <u>nothing</u> ,	225-6: where nothing...smile = a place where no one

226	But <u>who</u> knows nothing, is once seen to smile:	(<i>nothing</i>) smiles, except for the ignorant person who is unaware of what is happening. <i>But who</i> = ie. but one who. ³
	Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that <u>rent the air</u> ,	227-232 (below): Ross describes Scotland as a realm saturated with, even numb to, violence and death, and the endless grief that accompanies them. = pierce the air, a common expression; <i>rent</i> is a variant spelling for "rend". ¹
228	Are made, <u>not marked</u> : where violent sorrow seems	228: <i>not marked</i> = ie. "but not noted" or "but do not attract attention" (because they are so common). ^{3,5} 228-9: <i>where violent...ecstasy</i> = where extreme or intense (<i>violent</i>) sorrow has become the commonplace or ordinary (<i>modern</i>) state of feeling. ^{1,2,5} <i>ecstasy</i> (line 229) = fit of excitement or frenzy caused by a strong emotion such as fear. ^{1,3}
	A modern ecstasy: <u>the dead man's knell</u>	229-230: <i>the dead...for who</i> = when people hear the bell rung slowly during or after a funeral (<i>the dead man's knell</i>), they no longer ask for whom the bell tolls, because they are so jaded by the great number of Macbeth's dead victims.
230	Is there scarce asked for who, and good men's lives Expire before the flowers in their caps,	230-1: <i>good men's...caps</i> = good men's lives are ending (<i>Expire</i>) even before the flowers that they wear in their caps die. ¹ Kittredge notes the Elizabethan fashion of wearing a flower in one's cap. ³
232	Dying <u>or ere</u> they sicken.	232: (good men are) dying before (<i>or ere</i>) ¹ they have even gotten mortally sick, ie. they are dying violent, rather than natural, deaths.
234	<i>Macduff.</i> Oh, <u>relation</u> :	= account, report. ²
	Too <u>nice</u> , and yet too true!	= minutely detailed or accurate. ^{3,5}
236	<i>Malc.</i> What's the newest grief?	237ff: it will take Ross almost 60 lines to finally bring himself to give Macduff the news of his family's slaughter.
238	<i>Ross.</i> That of an hour's age doth <u>hiss</u> the speaker:	239: when one reports the <i>newest grief</i> , the speaker is <i>hissed</i> at, because what he or she thinks is the most recent news is already stale, being an hour old.
240	Each minute <u>teems</u> a new one.	240: each minute brings forth (<i>teems</i>) a new grief. ¹ Note that Ross has not answered Malcolm's question: this is actually quite unusual in Elizabethan drama, and indicates that Ross is at a loss how to tell Macduff the tragic news he bears.
242	<i>Macduff.</i> How does my wife?	242: ie. "how is my wife doing?"
244	<i>Ross.</i> Why, <u>well</u> .	= a weak and even ambiguous adjective.
246	<i>Macduff.</i> And all my children?	
248	<i>Ross.</i> Well too.	
250	<i>Macduff.</i> The tyrant has not <u>battered at</u> their peace?	= shaken, struck successive blows against. ^{1,6}

252	Ross. No, they were well <u>at peace</u> , when I did leave 'em.	252: Ross equivocates; literally, what he said is true: when he last saw Macduff's family, they were unharmed. But " <u>at peace</u> " is also a euphemistic – and misleading – way of saying they are dead. Either way, Ross is finding it difficult to give Macduff the bad news.
254	Macduff. <u>Be not a niggard of your speech</u> : how goes't?	= ie. "do not be so stingy with your words;" Macduff is annoyed that Ross is not responding to his questions with any details. niggard = miser. ²
256	Ross. When I came <u>hither</u> to <u>transport</u> the <u>tidings</u> Which I have <u>heavily</u> borne, <u>there ran</u> a rumour	= to here. = carry, bear. ⁶ = news. = with a heavy heart, sadly. ^{3,5} = the sense is, "I heard". ³
258	Of many worthy fellows that were <u>out</u> ;	258: that numerous honourable Scotsmen were up in arms (out), ie. in rebellion against Macbeth. ^{3,5} out = properly, "at war". ¹
260	Which was to my belief <u>witnessed</u> the <u>rather</u> , <u>For that</u> I saw the tyrant's <u>power</u> <u>afoot</u> .	259-260: the rumour was attested (witnessed) as all the more (the rather) likely to be true, because (For that) Ross saw Macbeth's armed forces (power) on the move (afoot). ^{1,2,3,6}
	Now is the time <u>of</u> help: <u>your eye</u> in Scotland	262: of = ie. for, to. your eye in Scotland = "your being seen in Scotland", ie. the very presence of Malcolm and Macduff in Scotland.
262	Would create soldiers, make our women fight, To <u>doff</u> their dire <u>distresses</u> .	= cast off. ¹ = commonly used in the plural, as here. Note the alliteration in line 263.
264	Malc. Be't their comfort	
266	We are coming thither: <u>gracious</u> <u>England</u> hath Lent us good Siward, and ten thousand men:	= ie. King Edward.
268	An older, and a better soldier, <u>none</u> That Christendom <u>gives out</u> .	= ie. there is none. = "sends forth" or "proclaims". ^{1,3}
270	Ross. Would I could answer	
272	This comfort with the like! but I have words	271-2: Would I...like = Ross wishes he could respond to this news with something similarly cheery.
	That <u>would be</u> howled out in the desert air, Where hearing should not <u>latch</u> them.	= should be. ³ 274: ie. where no one could hear them. latch = catch, receive, hence "hear". ¹
276	Macduff. What concern they, The general <u>cause</u> , or is it a <u>fee-grief</u>	276-8: do the words Ross needs to speak (ie. the news he has to deliver) concern the affairs (cause) of Scotland in general, or an individual grief?
278	<u>Due to</u> some single breast?	fee-grief = grief with a single owner; ¹ a metaphor from real estate law, analogous to the term fee-simple , which means "in complete and unrestricted possession". ^{1,3} Due to = belonging to. ³
280	Ross. No mind that's honest But in it shares some woe, though the main part	280-2: Ross's news pertains to Macduff alone, but no conscientious person could help but feel sorrow at hearing it.
282	Pertains to you alone.	
284	Macduff. If it be mine, Keep it not from me: quickly let me have it.	
286	Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,	

288	<u>Which</u> shall <u>possess</u> <u>them</u> with the heaviest <u>sound</u>	288-9: Ross's tongue (Which) shall acquaint (possess)
290	That ever yet they heard.	Macduff's ears (them) with the saddest sound (ie. words or news) that they have ever heard. ^{2,3}
		possess = more literally, "put them in possession of". ³
292	Macduff. Humh: I guess at it.	
294	Ross. Your castle <u>is surprised</u> : your wife, and babes	= ie. was taken or captured by surprise. ^{1,3}
296	Savagely slaughtered: to relate the manner Were, on the <u>quarry</u> of these murdered <u>deer</u> , To add the death of you.	294-6: to relate...of you = to provide a detailed account of the murders would, on top of the heap or collection of dead bodies (quarry) of these metaphorical deer (Macduff's slain family), likely kill Macduff too. ^{1,5}
298	Malc. Merciful Heaven! –	quarry = could simply mean "killed prey", but more likely refers specifically to the accumulated deer carcasses collected <i>after a hunt</i> , which makes Ross's metaphorical use of the term that much more graphic and poignant. ¹
	What, man, <u>ne'er pull your hat upon your brows</u> :	
300	Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak, <u>Whispers the o'er-fraught</u> heart, and <u>bids</u> it break.	299-301 (below): a pause may occur here, as Macduff digests Ross's report; Malcolm sees that Macduff, externally at least, appears unmoved, and responds by telling Macduff he should express his grief for the sake of his own mental health.
302		= the expression, "to pull one's hat (or cap) over one's brows" meant "to hide one's emotions".
304	Macduff. My children too?	300-1: if grief does not find an outlet, it whispers to the heavily burdened (o'er fraught) heart, urging it to break; ⁵ that is, unexpressed grief corrodes insidiously from within.
306	Ross. Wife, children, servants, all that could be found.	Whispers the = ie. whispers to the.
	Macduff. <u>And I must be from thence</u> ? My wife killed too?	bids = tells, commands.
308		= ie. "and I had to be away from home (when this happened)?" ⁷
310	Ross. I have said.	The verb must here is used in the past, or "preterite", tense. ³
	Malc. Be comforted:	309: ie. "yes, just as I said."
312	Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge, To cure this deadly grief.	311: the sense in context is, "try to find consolation – and here is how you can do so:"
314	Macduff. <u>He has no children</u> . – All my pretty ones?	312-3: the cure for Macduff's grief – which is like a fatal disease – is to get revenge on Macbeth. Through this medical metaphor, Malcolm encourages Macduff to convert his feelings into decisive action.
		= it has been debated as to what Macduff means in this observation that Macbeth (He) is childless. He may be thinking about revenging himself by slaying the king's children, if he had any. On the other hand, many commentators believe that Macduff is referring to Malcolm, who, because he has no children of his own, could not possibly

316	Did you say all? O <u>hell-kite</u> ! All?	understand Macduff's need to grieve. = Macduff calls Macbeth a hellish kite (a kite being a bird of prey, hence a cruel savage). ^{1,2,3}
318	What, all my pretty chickens and their <u>dam</u> At <u>one fell swoop</u> ?	317-8: Macduff continues the metaphor introduced with hell-kite , likening his murdered family to a brood of chickens who, together with their mother (dam), have been caught by the predator Macbeth in a single cruel (fell) blow or stroke (swoop). While the expression one fell swoop , coined here by Shakespeare, is common today, it does not seem to appear in any succeeding 17th century publication, suggesting its popularity was a delayed development.
320	Malc. <u>Dispute it</u> like a man.	= ie. "contest it", ie. avenge it. ⁴ Some editors think Malcolm is encouraging Macduff to resist his sorrow; but Waith points out that this doesn't really make sense, as Malcolm has just told Macduff that he should express his grief. ⁴
322	Macduff. I shall do so; But I must also feel it as a man;	323-4: Macduff will indeed transform his grief into revenge, but it does not mean he will shut himself off from grieving; Macduff's definition of manhood includes having feelings.
324	I cannot but remember such things were, That were most precious to me: did Heaven look on,	324: Macduff cannot help but think about his wife and children. 325-6: did Heaven...part = did God really just watch passively as Macduff's family was slaughtered, and not fight on their behalf (take their part)? Macduff's anguished cry is one of disbelief.
326	And would not take their part? – <u>Sinful Macduff</u> , They were all <u>strook for thee</u> ! – <u>Naught</u> that I am,	= Macduff, distraught, feels immense guilt for his not being in Scotland to protect his wife and children. 327: strook = ie. struck, meaning "struck down"; a common variant spelling. for thee = ie. "because of thee." Naught = worthless or wicked. ^{3,4,5}
328	Not for their own <u>demerits</u> , but for mine, <u>Fell slaughter on their souls</u> : Heaven rest them now.	328-9: Not for...souls = they were killed because of his own blameworthy actions (demerits), not their own. ¹ Fell slaughter on their souls = did murder fall upon them; Fell is a verb here.
330	Malc. <u>Be this the whetstone of your sword</u> , let grief	= metaphorically, Macduff's feelings of grief should be the motivation for him to rouse himself to get his revenge on Macbeth. A whetstone is a stone upon which cutting tools are sharpened.
332	Convert to anger: <u>blunt</u> not the heart, enrage it.	= dullen (the feelings of). ¹
334	Macduff. O I could <u>play the woman</u> with mine eyes, <u>And braggart with my tongue</u> . – But gentle heavens,	= ie. cry; the idea that weeping was a feminine trait is ubiquitous in drama of the era. 335: And braggart with my tongue = ie. it would be easy for Macduff to boast about what he will do to Macbeth. 335-9: But gentle...him too = Macduff prays that he may have an early opportunity to revenge himself on

		Macbeth in a one-on-one encounter.
336	<u>Cut short all intermission: front to front,</u>	336: <i>Cut short all intermission</i> = "reduce the interval of time or delay (<i>intermission</i>) between this moment and the moment when I can finally meet Macbeth." ^{3,4} <i>front to front</i> = face-to-face. ¹
338	Bring thou this fiend of Scotland, and myself; Within my sword's length <u>set</u> him; <u>if</u> he 'scape, Heaven forgive him too!	= place. = ie. "if he escapes death at my sword". 339: ie. "then I will forgive him, and I pray that God will forgive him too", ie. "if he escapes me, then may he escape Heaven's vengeance (ie. damnation) as well." Macduff emphasizes his determination to kill Macbeth, with a terrible consequence – Macbeth's escape from punishment both on earth and in the afterlife – if he fails. ^{3,5}
340	Malc. This <u>tune</u> goes manly:	341: "this speech strikes the right note", ie. this is how a real man responds. The Folio prints " <i>This time goes manly</i> "; <i>time</i> is usually emended to <i>tune</i> .
342	Come go we to <u>the king</u> , our <u>power</u> is ready. <u>Our lack is nothing but our leave</u> . Macbeth	= ie. Edward. = forces are. ³ 343: <i>Our lack is nothing but our leave</i> = "the only thing missing is our taking leave." ⁵ 343-4: <i>Macbeth...shaking</i> = like a tree's ripened fruit which is ready to be brought down by shaking the tree, Macbeth too is ready to be taken down.
344	Is ripe for shaking, and the <u>powers</u> above <u>Put on</u> their <u>instruments</u> .	344-5: <i>the powers...instruments</i> = either: (1) "Heaven's forces (<i>powers above</i>) urge forward (<i>Put on</i>) their agents (<i>instruments</i>) – ie. we Scotsmen and the English army here on earth – to action"; ³ or (2) "Heaven's forces are putting on their armour (<i>instruments</i>)", ie. in order to fight on our behalf. ^{2,5} Kittredge suggests that Malcolm is raising their cause to the level of a holy war.
346	(<i>To Macduff.</i>) Receive what <u>cheer</u> you <u>may</u> ,	346-7: <i>receive...the day</i> = one last time, Malcolm encourages Macduff to do what is necessary to get beyond his grief. <i>cheer</i> = comfort. ³ <i>may</i> = can. ³
348	The night is long, that never finds the <u>day</u> .	Line 347: metaphorically, if Macduff gives in to grief, it turns his life into a night that never ends, but if he converts grief into action – revenge – then " <i>day</i> " can come again.
		[<i>Exeunt.</i>]
	END OF ACT IV.	

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Dunsinane.

A Room in the Castle.

*Enter a Doctor of Physic,
and a Waiting-Gentlewoman.*

Doct. I have two nights watched with you, but can
perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last
walked?

G.Woman. Since his majesty went into the field, I

have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown
upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it,
write upon't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again
return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doct. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at
once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of

watching. In this slumbry agitation, besides her
walking, and other actual performances, what (at any
time) have you heard her say?

G.Woman. That sir, which I will not report after her.

Doct. You may to me, and 'tis most meet you should.

G.Woman. Neither to you, nor anyone, having no
witness to confirm my speech.

Enter Lady Macbeth with a taper.

The Setting: Macbeth and his wife are now at the royal castle in Dunsinane, located 7 miles northeast of Perth and 15 miles southeast of Birnam Wood.¹⁰

Entering Characters: the **Doctor** of medicine (**Physic**) has been called to attend Lady Macbeth; the **Waiting-Gentlewoman** is one of Lady Macbeth's attendants.

The Gentlewoman has witnessed Lady Macbeth sleepwalking at night, and the Doctor has been called to investigate and treat her.

It is now the third time in which the pair have stayed up all night to observe Lady Macbeth sleepwalking, but they have yet to catch her doing so.

= stayed awake.¹

= has found no evidence of the Gentlewoman's claim that

Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking.

= ie. sleepwalked.

= Macbeth has taken the field with his army (to suppress the numerous rebellions that Ross reported to have arisen at Act IV.iii.258 above).⁴ When the English army arrives, Macbeth will retreat into the castle

= dressing gown, ie. loose gown worn over one's night-clothes.

7: **closet** = private repository for holding valuables.⁴

take forth paper = ie. take out a piece of paper.

= time.³ = deep, as in modern usage.¹

11-13: **A great...watching** = the Doctor describes sleepwalking as a disturbance or disorder (**perturbation**) of nature, one in which the sleeper both gets the benefits of sleep and performs actions properly belonging to a waking state (**do the effects of watching**).^{3,4,5}

13: disturbance of the mind occurring during sleep.³

= performed actions (as opposed to words).⁵

actual = in the nature of actions.

17: the Gentlewoman has heard Lady Macbeth say things which she dare not repeat.

= appropriate.

21-22: the Gentlewoman does not want to be accused of making up anything she heard from Lady Macbeth's mouth.

confirm my speech = attest to or corroborate what the the Gentlewoman would report she heard Lady Macbeth say.

= candle.

26 Lo you, here she comes! this is her very guise, and

upon my life, fast asleep: observe her, stand close.

28 **Doct.** How came she by that light?

30 **G.Woman.** Why, it stood by her: she has light by her

32 continually, 'tis her command.

34 **Doct.** You see her eyes are open.

36 **G.Woman.** Ay, but their sense are shut.

38 **Doct.** What is it she does now? Look how she rubs

40 her hands.

42 **G.Woman.** It is an accustomed action with her, to

44 seem thus washing her hands: I have known her

continue in this a quarter of an hour.

L. Macbeth. Yet here's a spot.

Doct. Hark, she speaks! I will set down what comes

48 from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more

50 strongly.

L. Macbeth. Out, damned spot! out, I say! – One:

52 two: why, then 'tis time to do't. – Hell is murky! –

Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afear'd? What need

54 we fear who knows it, when none can call our power

26: **Lo** = look.¹
this is her very guise = ie. this is the very manner (**guise**) in which she has sleepwalked prior, ie. just as the Gentlewoman described her.^{1,3}

27: **upon my life** = an oath.
stand close = stand out of sight, concealed;^{1,3} Kittredge suggests the pair pull back at Lady Macbeth's appearance, even as they know that she does not see them.

29: ie. "where did she get that candle?"

31-32: by her own order, Lady Macbeth keeps a lit candle in her chamber at night.

= ie. they perceive nothing; note the antithesis of **shut** with **open**.

= ie. Lady Macbeth regularly does this (while sleepwalking).

= ie. doing this for.

45: ie. "even after all this washing, the stain of blood on my hands remains."

= ie. write.

48-49: **to satisfy...strongly** = "so my memory of her words will be more accurate or reliable."

51 (below): Out, damned spot = when Shakespeare wrote Lady Macbeth's famous line, "*Out, damned spot!*", he may have been recalling a similar line appearing in *Arden of Faversham*, a true-crime drama published anonymously in 1592, which many believe Shakespeare had a hand in writing. This play had as its climax the murder of the female lead's husband. Fearful of getting caught, she orders her servant Susan to wash her husband's blood off the floor. Unable to remove the blood, Susan cries out, "*The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not out!*"

51-52: **One...do't** = reliving the hour of Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth first hears the clock chiming **one**, then **two** o'clock, then announces **it is time** to kill the king.^{3,8}

52: **Hell is murky** = ie. hell is dark and gloomy;¹ Lady Macbeth may be recalling the feeling of horror she had while she waited for Macbeth to slay Duncan, her fear of future punishment, or simply repeating what she imagines Macbeth has just said to her.^{3,8}

53-55: **Fie...accompt** = the murder behind them, Lady Macbeth chides Macbeth for his alarm.
Fie = the sense is, "for shame!", an exclamation of disgust.¹

56 to accompt? yet who would have thought the old
man to have had so much blood in him?

58 **Doct.** Do you mark that?

60 **L. Macbeth.** The Thane of Fife had a wife: where is
she now? – What, will these hands ne'er be clean? –
62 No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar
all with this starting.

64
66 **Doct.** Go to, go to! – you have known what you
should not.

68 **G.Woman.** She has spoke what she should not, I am
sure of that: Heaven knows what she has known.

70
72 **L. Macbeth.** Here's the smell of the blood still: all
the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little

hand. Oh...oh...oh!

74
76 **Doct.** What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely
charged.

78 **G.Woman.** I would not have such a heart in my
bosom, for the dignity of the whole body.

80
82 **Doct.** Well, well, well. –

afeard = afraid.

54-55: *none can call our power to accompt* = there is no
one with enough strength or influence to force Macbeth and
his wife to answer for their actions, ie. bring them to justice.

call to accompt = ie. "call to account", a common
expression, though it was more usual to call a person to
account rather than an attribute of the person (here, the
couple's *power*); *accompt* was a common variant form of
account, but is pronounced the same.

55-56: *yet who...in him* = Lady Macbeth seems to be
reacting with horrified surprise at the messiness of the
actual murder.

= observe, ie. hear.

= ie. Macduff; Lady Macbeth recalls that Macduff's wife
has been killed on her husband's orders.

62-63: Lady Macbeth admonishes her husband for his
sudden movements or flinching (*this starting*), which
will ruin everything (*mar all*), ie. she fears he will give
away their guilt with his obvious flinching and startled
behaviour.^{1,2,6}

65-66: "*Go to*" could be addressed to either Lady Macbeth
or the Gentlewoman: (1) the Doctor admonishes Lady
Macbeth (though he is aware she cannot hear him) to say no
more; or (2) realizing that Lady Macbeth seems to be
revealing guilt to various crimes, the Doctor suggests to the
Gentlewoman that she has heard more than she should have.

Either way, the remainder of the speech ("*you have
known...*") is spoken to the Gentlewoman.

Go to = used here as a gentle but firm expression of
reproof, similar to "come, come," or "enough!"^{1,4}

= what Lady Macbeth has said is dangerous and should
never have been stated out loud.

= God alone knows the extent of what Lady Macbeth has
been involved with.

71-73: the bloodstain is finally gone, but the *smell* of the
blood on her hands still lingers.

perfumes of Arabia = the allusion is to Arabia's spices,
famed for their appealing fragrances.¹

= Lady Macbeth sighs deeply.

75-76: *sorely charged* = greatly burdened.³

78-79: the Gentlewoman would not want to be the owner of
such a tormented heart, even in exchange for high status or
rank (*dignity*); there is some light wordplay here: she con-
trasts the *dignity* which would apply to her *whole body* to
the *torment* which would affect only her *heart*.

Waith glosses *dignity* as "worth".

	G.Woman. Pray God it be, sir.	83: ie. "pray God it be well;" the Gentlewoman responds to the Doctor's rhetorical " <i>Well, well, well.</i> "
84	Doct. This disease is <u>beyond my practice</u> : yet	= ie. beyond the Doctor's ability to cure. practice = skill obtained through experience. ⁶
86	I have known those which have walked in their sleep, who have died <u>holily</u> in their beds.	86-87: the Doctor is aware of many cases of sleepwalkers who died piously (holily), ie. not everyone who walks in their sleep is guilty of a crime. The Doctor may be giving Lady Macbeth the benefit of the doubt, explaining (perhaps without too much conviction) that Lady Macbeth's nocturnal wanderings do not necessarily point to any guilt. However, Lady Macbeth's immediate next speech goes a long way to erasing his generous interpretation of what he has seen and heard.
88	L. Macbeth. Wash your hands, put on your	
90	nightgown: <u>look not so pale</u> : I tell you yet again,	89-91: still asleep, Lady Macbeth instructs her husband. = ie. Macbeth's fear should not be so obvious.
92	Banquo's buried; he cannot come out <u>on's</u> grave.	= ie. of his
94	Doct. Even so?	93: "indeed?" The Doctor recognizes what sounds like a confession.
96	L. Macbeth. To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the	
98	gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand: <u>what's done, cannot be undone</u> . – To bed, to bed, to bed!	95-98: Lady Macbeth recalls the moment, after Macbeth has killed Duncan, when the couple hurried to pretend they had been in bed at the same time Macduff arrived to wake the king early in the morning, and was pounding on the gate to be admitted. what's done, cannot be undone = recalls Lady Macbeth's assurance, " <i>what'st done, is done</i> " at Act III.ii.23 above.
100		
	[Exit Lady Macbeth.]	
102	Doct. Will she go now to bed?	
104	G.Woman. Directly.	
106	Doct. <u>Foul whisp'rings</u> are abroad: <u>unnatural</u> deeds	106: Foul whisp'rings are abroad = loathsome rumours are being whispered about or all over (abroad): ⁶ the Doctor has heard talk of Macbeth's guilt. ³ 106-7: unnatural deeds...troubles = morally monstrous (unnatural in line 106) acts (the murders of Duncan and others) cause phenomena which go against the natural order of things (unnatural in line 107) to arise: the Doctor may be alluding to Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking and imaginary hand-washing as unnatural disturbances produced by a guilty mind.
108	Do breed unnatural troubles: <u>infected</u> minds To their <u>deaf pillows</u> will <u>discharge</u> their secrets:	107-8: infected minds...secrets = tainted (infected) minds (ie. minds corrupted with guilt) will reveal (discharge) their secret guilt when no one can hear them; ³ with great psychological insight, Shakespeare recognizes that those guilty of great crimes feel terrific pressure to unburden their consciences; at a minimum, confession may be made even to inanimate objects, such as to one's deaf pillows .
	More needs she the <u>divine</u> than the physician: –	109: in order to be "healed", Lady Macbeth needs a priest (a divine) more than a doctor: the Doctor recognizes that his patient's problem is spiritual, not physical, arising

6

Angus. Near Birnam Wood

8 Shall we well meet them, that way are they coming.

10 **Caith.** Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

12 **Lennox.** For certain sir, he is not: I have a file
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,

14 And many unrough youths, that even now
Protest their first of manhood.

16 **Ment.** What does the tyrant?

18 **Caith.** Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:

20 Some say he's mad: others, that lesser hate him,
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,

22 He cannot buckle his distempered cause
Within the belt of rule.

24 **Angus.** Now does he feel
26 His secret murders sticking on his hands;

arms or battle (*alarm*).^{1,3,4,6}

dear causes = causes which are close to one's heart.³

mortified man = collocation used in this period to describe a purely spiritual person, one who has renounced worldly desires or is detached from earthly concerns; however, later scholars have suggested other meanings for *mortified man* in this speech, such as "one numbed or deadened in the senses", "a dead man", or "one who is indifferent to the world."^{4,5,8}

= located about 12 miles west of Dunsinane castle.¹⁰

= probably, likely.³

10: Donalbain, we remember, is the younger brother of Malcolm; Donalbain had told us back in Act II.iii.262 that he would flee to Ireland while his brother went to England.

Who knows = ie. "does anyone know".

12-13: *file...gentry* = list (*file*) of all the men of high rank (*gentry*) accompanying the English army.^{1,5}

14-15: in addition to Siward's son, many young English lads had joined the army for an opportunity to prove their manhood by taking part in battle.

unrough = smooth, specifically smooth-faced, or unbearded, meaning very young men, with an additional sense that they are not yet hardened by war.³

Line 15: advance the claim or declare (*Protest*) that they are now men (by joining the army).^{1,3}

17: ie. "what is Macbeth doing?"

19: Macbeth seems to have been driven into a defensive posture in the castle at Dunsinane, where he expects to be besieged by the combined English and Scottish forces.

= ie. those who view Macbeth with less hostility.

= "the frenzy of desperate valour" (Kittredge, p. 214).³

22-23: a difficult passage to interpret: perhaps, "Macbeth is unable to act on his disordered or even insane (*distempered*) affairs (*cause*) in a controlled way;"^{1,2,5} or, "the cause for which he fights is so diseased or deranged (also *distempered*) that he cannot keep himself within the limits (metaphorically, a *belt*) of acceptable conduct (*rule*).^{1,3} The *belt* seems to represent a boundary of behaviour which one should not cross.

Some editors see a metaphor here of a body so bloated with dropsy, or a corpse so swollen, that an ordinary *belt* cannot be *buckled* onto it.^{3,4}

25-26: the line suggests a literal sense of the blood from the murders sticking to Macbeth's hands; according to the OED, there is also an idiomatic sense based on the expression "*to stick on*", meaning "to affect the character of", so that Angus can be taken to be saying, "now Macbeth is experiencing the loss of control and stability – a reshaping of his nature – resulting from his murders." This interpretation would follow nicely on the heels of Caithness' immediately

	Now <u>minutely</u> revolts <u>upbraid</u> his <u>faith-breach</u> :	preceding suggestion regarding Macbeth's instability.
27:		now, every minute (<i>minutely</i>), new revolts arise that reproach (<i>upbraid</i>) Macbeth's having broken faith (his <i>faith-breach</i>) with his subjects; ^{1,5} that is, each new rebellion is a living rebuke to his betrayals.
		<i>minutely</i> = stressed on the first syllable, to echo the root word <i>minute</i> : <i>MI-nute-ly</i> .
28	Those he commands move only in command,	28-29: <i>Those he...love</i> = those serving under Macbeth only do his bidding when they are ordered by him to do so, and not at all out of (<i>nothing in</i>) any feelings of affection or loyalty to him. ⁵
29-31:	Nothing in love: now does he feel <u>his title</u> <u>Hang loose</u> about him, like a giant's robe Upon a dwarfish thief.	<i>now does...thief</i> = a vivid and demeaning metaphor to describe how the job of king (<i>his title</i>) is ill-fitting or too large (it <i>hangs loose</i>), like an oversized robe, suggesting Macbeth's inadequacy in and inability to live up to the role.
32	<i>Ment.</i> Who then shall blame	33-36: who can blame Macbeth's troubled mind (his <i>pestered senses</i>) for causing him to continuously flinch and be startled (<i>recoil</i> and <i>start</i> , essentially synonyms), when everything that makes up his inner core (<i>all that is within him</i>) effectively incriminates him? That is, it is easy to understand how his own guilty conscience convicts him, causing him to react nervously to everything around him. ^{4,5}
34	His <u>pestered senses</u> to <u>recoil</u> , and <u>start</u> ,	<i>recoil</i> = also suggests Macbeth is drawing back from action or shrinking at the prospect of a fight with his enemies, due to his sense of guilt. ^{1,3,6}
36	When <u>all that is within him</u> does condemn Itself for being there?	39: ie. to submit or offer allegiance to the rightful sovereign.
38	<i>Caith.</i> Well, march we on, To give obedience, where 'tis truly owed:	40: "let us go forward to meet Malcolm", who is figured as the physician (<i>med'cine</i>) who will cure the ailing commonwealth or state (<i>sickly weal</i>), ie. Scotland. ^{4,5,6}
40	Meet we the <u>med'cine</u> of the <u>sickly weal</u> ,	<i>weal</i> = "the collective welfare of a community" (OED).
41-42:	And with him <u>pour</u> we in our country's <u>purge</u> , <u>Each drop of us</u> .	41-42: together with Malcolm, the Scottish nobles will cleanse Scotland, committing themselves to give everything they have (<i>Each drop of us</i>) to the cause.
		<i>purge</i> = a complete cleansing or expulsion of all that is foul and evil; the medical metaphor begun in the previous line is extended: the fight to remove Macbeth is like a purgative or laxative (a <i>purge</i>) administered to the land.
		<i>Each drop of us</i> = ie. "each man contributing every drop of blood", or "to the last drop of blood"; but the phrasing also may be suggestive of the liquid <i>purge</i> that will be <i>poured</i> into (ie. administered to) Scotland to the last drop, so as to be as efficacious as possible.
44	<i>Lennox.</i> Or so much as it needs, To dew <u>the sovereign flower</u> , and <u>drown the weeds</u> :	44-45: Lennox qualifies Caithness' enthusiasm: the men should contribute only as much blood as is necessary to accomplish the goals. Their spilled blood is compared to water which will (1) like dew, give much-needed moisture to nourish the flower representing the legitimate and rightful sovereignty of Malcolm (<i>the sovereign flower</i>), and (2) kill off the undesirable plants (<i>drown the weeds</i>), which

46 Make we our march towards Birnam.
 48 [Exeunt, marching.]

ACT V, SCENE III.

Dunsinane.
A Room in the Castle.

Enter Macbeth, Doctor, and Attendants.

1 **Macbeth.** Bring me no more reports, let them fly all! –

2 Till Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane,

I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?

4 Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:

6 “Fear not, Macbeth; no man that’s born of woman

8 Shall e’er have power upon thee.” – Then fly, false thanes,
 And mingle with the English epicures:

symbolize the tyranny and misrule of Macbeth and his supporters.^{3,4}

= ie. where Malcolm and the English army are located.

The Setting: the castle at Dunsinane has been fortified, its defensive posture strengthened, as Macbeth awaits his foes.

Entering Characters: the **Doctor** is presumably the same one who witnessed Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking in Act V.i above. Even as **Macbeth** has turned into a true tyrant, bullying everyone around him, he still has faith in the truth of the Witches' predictions, thus remaining confident that his life and crown are both safe.

As a reminder, the Weird Sisters predicted

(1) "*For none of woman born shall harm Macbeth*" (Act IV.i.132), and

(2) "*Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until great Birnam Wood, to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him*" (Act IV.i.155-7).

1: Macbeth waves off his visitors: he has been receiving multiple reports of Scottish nobles (**them**) who have deserted to the enemy, and does not want to hear any more.

fly = flee.

2ff: Macbeth will regurgitate the Witches' prophecies regularly to reassure himself that he will come to no harm.

3: **taint with fear** = become tainted or infected with fear,^{3,4,5} or fade or lose courage out of fear.^{1,2}

What's the boy Malcolm = ie. who is Malcolm that Macbeth should be afraid of him?

5: **All mortal consequences** = all that will come to pass in human affairs or life.^{3,4,6}

pronounced me = ie. "announced to me".⁵

6-7: **Fear not...upon thee** = while correct in meaning, Macbeth's recall of the Witches' exact words is faulty; see Act IV.i.132 above.

= ie. ever. = disloyal.

8: Macbeth sneeringly portrays the English as **epicures** – given to luxurious living generally, and perhaps lovers of eating and drinking specifically.^{3,5,6,10}

Shakespeare may have also borrowed this idea from Holinshed, who mentioned the Scots' distaste for English sumptuary habits more than one time, e.g., "*abhorring the riotous manners and superfluous gormandizing brought in among them by the Englishmen.*"

		9-10 (below): Shakespeare once again employs some parallel phrasing to make his point: Macbeth's <i>mind</i> shall never <i>sag</i>, and his <i>heart</i> shall never <i>shake</i>. = there is a general consensus that the meaning is "the mind I am ruled or governed by", or "the mind I move by"; in this interpretation, the sense is that the mind is the faculty that controls Macbeth's actions. However, there is no support in the OED or in contemporary literature that <i>sway</i> itself can mean "be swayed by"; the more natural meaning of the clause is, "the mind by which I govern or rule".
	The <u>mind</u> I sway by, and the heart I bear,	
10	Shall never <u>sag</u> with doubt, nor shake with fear.	= decline in strength, droop, or give way. ^{1,3,5}
		Lines 9-10: note how Macbeth employs a rhyming couplet to signal the end of his monologue (heard only by the audience, of course).
12	<i>Enter a Servant.</i>	Entering Character: an obviously terrified <i>Servant</i> enters to report on the movements of the enemy: the Servant has much to fear, including the military situation generally and Macbeth's wrath specifically.
14	The devil damn thee black, thou <u>cream-faced loon</u> !	14: Macbeth curses the Servant for his cowardly manner; unable to stand the look of fear on the man's face (represented by its white or pale colour), Macbeth angrily expresses a wish to see it any colour but white. <i>cream-faced</i> = face as white as cream. <i>loon</i> = rascal or idiot. ^{1,5}
	Where <u>got'st thou</u> that <u>goose-look</u> ?	15: <i>got'st thou</i> = ie. "did you get". <i>goose-look</i> = look of a goose, often a symbol of a simpleton, but occasionally, as here, that of a coward. ^{1,2,8}
16	<i>Serv.</i> There is ten thousand –	
18	<i>Macbeth.</i> Geese, <u>villain</u> ?	= scoundrel. ²
20	<i>Serv.</i> Soldiers, sir.	
22	<i>Macbeth.</i> Go <u>prick</u> thy face, and <u>over-red</u> thy fear,	23: annoyed with the Servant's pale countenance, Macbeth instructs him to pierce or scratch (<i>prick</i>) his face to cause it to bleed, and thus cover over the white skin with red. <i>over-red</i> = a verb, "to cover with red". ¹
24	Thou <u>lily-livered</u> boy. What soldiers, <u>patch</u> ?	24: <i>lily-livered</i> = a <i>liver</i> that is white like a <i>lily</i> , ie. cowardly; cowardice was thought to be caused by the absence of red blood in the liver. ¹¹ Your editor remembers the cartoon character Yosemite Sam frequently calling his enemies " <i>lily-livered</i> ". <i>patch</i> = fool.
	Death of thy soul! those <u>linen</u> cheeks of thine	= white like the colour of linen.
26	<u>Are counsellors to fear</u> . What soldiers, <u>why-face</u> ?	26: <i>Are counsellors to fear</i> = act to spread fear to others (literally, "are advisors to fear"). ^{2,3} <i>why-face</i> = a vocative, meaning one with a face as white as <i>why</i> , <i>why</i> being the "watery part of milk which remains after the separation of the curd by coagulation" (OED).

28	<i>Serv.</i> The English force, <u>so please you</u> .	= ie. "if it pleases you", a simple expression of deference.
30	<i>Macbeth.</i> Take thy face <u>hence</u> .	= ie. "away from here."
32	[<i>Exit Servant.</i>]	
34	<u>Seyton!</u> – I am sick at heart,	34-44: Macbeth will interrupt this monologue repeatedly to call for his attendant or armour-bearer Seyton. ⁵
36	<u>When I behold</u> – Seyton, I say! – This <u>push</u> Will <u>cheer</u> me ever, or <u>disseat</u> me now.	35: <i>When I behold</i> = Macbeth leaves his thought unfinished. 35-36: <i>This push...me now</i> = Macbeth senses the approaching denouement: this final effort or expected assault (both meanings appropriate for <i>push</i>) will either <i>cheer</i> him by giving him – finally – peaceful enjoyment of the crown, or unseat (<i>disseat</i> , ie. dethrone) him once and for all. ^{1,3,5} <i>cheer</i> = Waith notes the similar pronunciation of <i>cheer</i> and <i>chair</i> , creating a potential bit of wordplay with <i>disseat</i> . ⁴ Kittredge notes that this line has been the object of much abuse: some editors have actually emended <i>cheer</i> to <i>chair</i> to make explicit the contrast with <i>disseat</i> , while others have instead changed <i>disseat</i> to <i>disease</i> . ³
	I have lived long enough: <u>my way of life</u>	
38	Is fall'n into <u>the sear</u> , the yellow leaf;	37-43 (below): Macbeth complains of weariness with life, the result of a long reign over a land continuously in disturbance and nobility repeatedly in revolt. Kittredge observes that this speech suggests a long time has passed since Macbeth assumed the throne. = ie. "the course of my life". ⁵
40	And <u>that</u> which should accompany old age, <u>As</u> honour, love, obedience, <u>troops of</u> friends, I must not <u>look</u> to have; but in their <u>steed</u> ,	38: ie. "has reached the withered state (<i>the sear</i>), like the yellow leaves of autumn;" ³ Macbeth sees his life as one of decreasing vitality, the end drawing near. = ie. those things. = ie. such as. = groups or herds of, ie. many. ¹
42	<u>Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath</u>	41: <i>look</i> = ie. expect. <i>steed</i> = place; <i>steed</i> is a variant spelling of <i>stead</i> . ¹
44	Which the poor heart would <u>fain</u> deny, and dare not. – Seyton!	42: <i>Curses, not loud but deep</i> = people curse him silently, quietly or under their breath (it would be dangerous to speak ill of Macbeth too loudly), but the curses are still spoken with genuine feeling (<i>deep</i>). <i>mouth-honour</i> = respect expressed but not meant. ⁶ 42-43: <i>breath...dare not</i> = people speak respectful words to him (all of this is captured in the word <i>breath</i>) whose meaning they would prefer (<i>fain</i>) to reject or deny the truth of, but they don't dare do so; that is, they are afraid to tell Macbeth what they really think, and instead speak to him with insincere politeness and respect.
46	<i>Enter Seyton.</i>	
48	<i>Seyt.</i> What's your gracious pleasure?	
50	<i>Macbeth.</i> What news more?	
52	<i>Seyt.</i> All is confirmed my lord, which was reported.	52: the previous reports of the approaching enemy have been confirmed to be correct.
54	<i>Macbeth.</i> I'll fight, till from my bones, my flesh be <u>hacked</u> .	54: <i>hacked</i> = chopped or cut off (in battle). ¹

56	Give me my armour.	
57	<i>Seyt.</i> 'Tis not needed yet.	
58	<i>Macbeth.</i> I'll put it on:	
60	Send out <u>mo horses</u> , <u>skirr</u> the country round,	'= ie. more. = riders, ie. scouts. ⁴ = scour. ^{1,4}
61	Hang those that <u>talk of fear</u> . Give me mine armour. –	= ie. express their fear.
62	How does <u>your patient</u> , doctor?	= ie. Lady Macbeth.
64	<i>Doct.</i> <u>Not so sick</u> , my lord,	= ie. not so much suffering from a physical malady.
	As she is troubled with <u>thick-coming fancies</u>	= rapidly appearing hallucinations or flights of imagination; ^{1,2} thick suggests denseness and crowding of her conceptions as they come on her one after another.
66	That keep her from her rest.	
68	<i>Macbeth.</i> Cure [her] of that:	68: Kittredge suggests, "that is why I called you here: to cure her of that very thing."
	Canst thou not <u>minister to</u> a mind diseased,	= attend, serve, ^{1,6} ie. treat; in contemporary literature, the more common way to express the same idea was to "minister a remedy", or, less commonly, "minister a cure".
70	Pluck from the memory a <u>rooted</u> sorrow,	70: remove a deeply entrenched (rooted) sorrow from Lady Macbeth's mind, ie. one that won't go away.
	<u>Raze out</u> the <u>written</u> troubles of the brain,	71: a nice metaphor: "erase (Raze out) the troubles engraved (written) onto her brain". ^{1,2,6}
72	And with some sweet <u>oblivious antidote</u>	= ie. remedy causing forgetfulness. ^{1,6}
	Cleanse the <u>stuffed</u> bosom of that <u>perilous stuff</u>	= obstructed, weighed down. ¹ = dangerous matter. ⁶ Note the line's wordplay with stuffed / stuff . stuffed = often used to describe a diseased organ as stopped up. ¹
74	Which weighs upon the heart?	
76	<i>Doct.</i> <u>Therein</u> the patient	76-77: the Doctor, in suggesting Lady Macbeth must cure herself, admits her ailment is beyond his ability to treat.
	Must minister to <u>himself</u> .	Note also, the Doctor's statement is generalized, not referring to Lady Macbeth directly, hence himself : the Doctor may recognize that Macbeth is actually seeking a cure for himself! ³ Therein = in that matter. ^{1,3}
78		79-88 (below): during this monologue, Seyton is helping Macbeth put on his armour; Macbeth quickly switches back and forth between addressing the Doctor and his attendant.
	<i>Macbeth.</i> Throw <u>physic</u> to the dogs, <u>I'll none of it</u> . –	= medicines. ¹ = "I want nothing to do with it". ³
80	Come, put mine armour on: give me my <u>staff</u> :	= lance; or rod or baton, as a symbol of Macbeth's role as commander in chief. ^{1,3,7}
	<u>Seyton, send out</u> . – Doctor, the Thanes fly from me: –	81: send out = Macbeth repeats his instruction from line 60 above to deploy scouts.
82	<u>Come, sir, dispatch</u> . – If thou couldst, doctor, <u>cast</u>	82: Come, sir, dispatch = to Seyton: "hurry!"

	The <u>water</u> of my land, find <u>her disease</u> ,	82-83: <i>cast...disease</i> = personifying Scotland as a female patient (hence <i>her</i>), Macbeth, with grim humour, asks the Doctor to diagnose Scotland's illness (<i>her disease</i>) by analyzing "her" urine (he asks him to <i>cast</i> Scotland's <i>water</i>). "Casting water" was a well-known way of analyzing one's health, and often referred to in the period's drama for its obvious humour potential.
84	And <u>purge</u> it to a <u>sound</u> and <u>pristine health</u> ,	84: <i>purge</i> = cleanse. ¹ <i>sound</i> = wholesome, healthy. ² <i>pristine health</i> = health as it was formerly. ^{1,5}
	I would <u>applaud</u> thee <u>to the very echo</u> ,	85: <i>applaud</i> = extol, express approval of. ^{1,6} <i>to the very echo</i> = so loudly that it would echo. ¹
86	<u>That should applaud again</u> . – <u>Pull't off</u> , I say. –	86: <i>That should applaud again</i> = the echo of the applause would reverberate, creating the appearance of even more applause. <i>Pull't off</i> = Macbeth instructs Seyton to remove a piece of armour, which perhaps he has put on incorrectly. ³
	What <u>rhubarb</u> , <u>senna</u> , or what purgative drug	87-88: <i>What rhubarb...hence</i> = Macbeth continues his medical metaphors: is there no herb that can "cure" Scotland of her invaders? <i>rhubarb</i> = long known for its cathartic properties, rhubarb was frequently referred to for its supposed ability to purge cholera (one of the four humours, which cause ill temper when present in excess) and melancholia. <i>senna</i> = shrub which was frequently mentioned in the 16th and 17th centuries to have purgative properties. The Folio prints <i>cyme</i> , which has long been assumed to be an error for <i>senna</i> . It is slightly possible that Shakespeare did in fact mean <i>cyma</i> , or <i>cymæ</i> , here: In the ancient Roman Pliny the Elder's lengthy and influential treatise, known today as <i>The Natural History</i> , Pliny, in a chapter on cabbages, mentions <i>cyma</i> as the name for the sprouts of the young cabbage plant; in a separate chapter, Pliny recommends curly cabbage as a purgative, because it is "moderately relaxing to the bowels." ⁹ A 16th century source identifies <i>cyma</i> as the colewort plant. <i>scour</i> (line 88) = discharge, purge: a medical term; hence, "drive away". ¹ <i>hence</i> (line 88) = from here.
88	Would scour these English hence? <u>Hear'st thou of them?</u>	= by asking the Doctor if he has any news of the English forces, Macbeth reveals his anxiety and even paranoia, not knowing who he can trust.
90	<i>Doct.</i> Ay, my good lord: your royal preparation Makes us hear something.	90-91: <i>your royal...something</i> = ie. "your extensive military preparations (ie. Macbeth's fortifying) inevitably results in our hearing something." The Doctor is evasive in his answer.
92	<i>Macbeth.</i> Bring it after me: –	93: to Seyton: as Macbeth prepares to exit, he instructs the attendant to bring the just-removed piece of armour after him. ³ 94-99 (below): note the pair of rhyming couplets that end the scene; Macbeth's is first, followed by the weary

94 I will not be afraid of death and bane,
96 Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

Doct. [*Aside.*]
98 Were I from Dunsinane away, and clear,
100 Profit again should hardly draw me here.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V, SCENE IV.

Country near Dunsinane: a Wood in view.

Drum and colours.

*Enter Malcolm, old Siward and his Son, Macduff,
Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox, Ross,
and Soldiers, marching.*

1 **Malc.** Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
2 That chambers will be safe.

4 **Ment.** We doubt it nothing.

6 **Siw.** What wood is this before us?

8 **Ment.** The wood of Birnam.

10 **Malc.** Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear't before him: thereby shall we shadow

12 The numbers of our host, and make discovery
14 Err in report of us.

Doctor's.

= ruin, destruction.

98-99: "if I were away from here (**Dunsinane**), and out of reach (**clear**), even the prospect of gaining some reward, advancement, or benefit (**Profit**) would hardly be enough to induce me to come here."^{1,2,6} For **Profit**, Jowett suggests "fee".

The Setting: the scene shifts to Birnam Wood, where the English army pauses before its final advance against Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane.

= banners.

Entering Characters: the Scottish nobles have joined the English army, led by the Earl of Northumberland (**old Siward**); the earl's **Son** is one of the young men accompanying the English army in the hopes of formally entering manhood by proving themselves in battle (see Act V.ii.14-15 above).

2: when bedrooms (**chambers**) will be safe, ie. from murderers and spies;⁵ Waith interprets, "when we can sleep in security" (p. 1148);⁴ Malcolm clearly has his father's murder in his sleep in mind.

= not at all.³

10-13 (below): we learn the strategy the English army will employ to approach Macbeth's castle: in Holinshed's words, Malcolm "*commanded every man to get a bough of some tree or other of the wood in his hand, as big as he might bear, and to march therewith in such wise (ie. in this manner), that on the next morrow they might come closely and without sight (ie. without being seen) in this manner within view of the enemy.*"

= cut.

= ie. "hold it in front of himself." = conceal, screen.¹

12: **The numbers of our host** = "the size or number of men in our army (**host**)".

12-13: **and make...of us** = and cause those scouts who are sent out to learn the size of the English force to be mistaken.

make discovery = the action of finding out, ie.

		reconnaissance; ^{1,4} a common expression, often used in a military context, as here.
16	<i>Soldiers.</i> It shall be done.	
	<i>Siw.</i> <u>We learn no other</u> , but the confident tyrant	= the English commanders have learned – presumably from their own scouts – only the following information. ³
18	<u>Keeps still</u> in Dunsinane, and will endure Our setting down before't.	18: <i>Keeps still</i> = continues to remain. 18-19: <i>and will...before't</i> = and is prepared to hold out in the face of the siege expected from the English army. ⁴
20	<i>Malc.</i> 'Tis his main hope:	21: ie. Macbeth's best chance of success is to do as he is doing.
22	For where there is advantage to be given, Both <u>more and less</u> have <u>given him the revolt</u> ,	22-23: whenever the opportunity has arisen, people of all ranks, high and low (<i>more and less</i>), from noble to commoner, have rebelled against Macbeth (<i>given him the revolt</i>). ^{1,3,4}
24	And none serve with him, but <u>constrained things</u> , Whose <u>hearts are absent</u> too.	24-25: no men serve Macbeth, except those who are compelled (<i>constrained</i>) to do so, and who have no loyalty to him (their <i>hearts are absent</i>). <i>things</i> = contemptuous term for those who remain with Macbeth. ^{1,3}
26	<i>Macduff.</i> Let our <u>just censures</u>	27-28: <i>Let our...event</i> = ie. "to make sure our judgment or assessment (<i>censures</i>) of the situation (or of the supposed involuntary service of Macbeth's subordinates) is accurate (<i>just</i>), we should await (<i>Attend</i>) the outcome (<i>event</i>) of the battle, which will disclose the truth." ^{2,3,4,8}
28	Attend the true event, and <u>put we on</u> <u>Industrious</u> soldiership.	28-29: <i>and put...soldiership</i> = "and (in the meantime) let us assume the roles (<i>put we on</i>) of zealous and diligent (<i>Industrious</i>) soldiers". ^{1,2,3}
30		
32	<i>Siw.</i> The time approaches, That will with <u>due decision</u> <u>make us know</u> What we shall <u>say we have</u> , and what we <u>owe</u> :	31-33: the decisive moment which will lead to a precise outcome (<i>due decision</i>), and reveal to us (<i>make us know</i>) the difference between what we only <i>claim</i> to possess (<i>say we have</i>) and what we actually do, is nearing. ³ Siward, the experienced and patient soldier, recognizes the gulf between what the rebels actually control at the moment and what they hope to control, and suggests the battle with decide the truth. <i>owe</i> = often used to mean "own"; here, though, <i>owe</i> could bear its ordinary sense, so that the meaning of line 33 becomes, in one interpretation, "what we truly possess, and what our duty is yet." ⁸
34	<u>Thoughts speculative</u> their unsure <u>hopes</u> relate, But <u>certain issue strokes</u> must <u>arbitrate</u> ,	34: "guesses (<i>thoughts speculative</i>) only express what their uncertain expectations (<i>hopes</i>) are"; in other words, "optimistic conjecture is mere wishful thinking" (Waith, p. 1154). ⁴
36	Towards which advance the war.	35: but the blows of battle (<i>strokes</i>) will determine (<i>arbitrate</i>) the actual outcome (<i>certain issue</i>). ^{3,5}
38	[<i>Exeunt, marching.</i>]	36: ie. "fighting will move us towards the decisive result."

ACT V, SCENE V.

Dunsinane.

Within the castle.

*Enter Macbeth, Seyton, and Soldiers,
with drum and colours.*

1 **Macbeth.** Hang out the banners on the outward walls,

2 The cry is still, "They come!" Our castle's strength

Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie,

4 Till famine and the ague eat them up:

Were they not forced with those that should be ours,

6 We might have met them dareful, beard-to-beard,

And beat them backward home.

8

[*A cry of women within.*]

10

What is that noise?

12

Seyt. It is the cry of women, my good lord.

14

[*Exit Seyton.*]

16

Macbeth. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:

18 The time has been, my senses would have cooled

To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair

20 Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir

1: **banners** = flags, standards.

outward walls = Shakespeare imagines the castle as being surrounded by defensive walls or curtains.³

= ie. the repeated alarm is being shouted, "the enemy is approaching!"

3: **Will laugh a siege to scorn** = will ridicule (**laugh to scorn**), ie. make a mockery of, the enemy's siege.¹
them lie = ie. the enemy soldiers remain.

4: till they are consumed by starvation and fever.
ague = any malaria-like disease.¹

5: "if the enemy had not been reinforced (**forced**) with men (ie. the rebellious Scottish nobles) who should have been fighting for me".^{1,5}

6: "we might have met them bravely and boldly (**dareful**), face-to-face", ie. in hand-to-hand combat on the field, rather than remain besieged within the castle walls.⁵
beard-to-beard = suggestive of close fighting; an expression that appears only in Shakespeare, and in only one other of his plays, **Coriolanus**.

7: "and drive them back to where they came from."

= from offstage.

15: Seyton goes to determine the reason for the outcry.³

17: metaphorically, Macbeth barely remembers what it is like to be afraid.³

= ie. there was once a time. = chilled with fear.¹

19: **night-shriek** = a cry of anguish in the night.⁶

fell of hair = hide or skin, ie. head, of hair;^{1,3,5} **fell** was an Old English word referring to the "skin" or "hide" of an animal, including the hair; in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of the mechanicals wears "a lion fell" in playing a part of a lion; the collocation **fell of hair** is unique to Shakespeare.

20-21: **Would at...were in't** = (Macbeth's hair) would rise (**rouse**), ie. stand on end from fear, and move about as if

	As life were in't. <u>I have supped full with horrors;</u>	it were alive (<i>As life were in't</i>), when he heard a terrible or horrifying story (<i>dismal treatise</i>). ^{1,5}
22	<u>Direness</u> , familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,	= "I am satiated with, ie. have had my fill of, horrors."
24	Cannot once <u>start</u> me.	22-23: now that Macbeth's murderous mind has become accustomed to terror (<i>direness</i>), terror can no longer startle (<i>start</i>) him, ie. he being used to thinking horrible things, external horrors no longer frighten him. ^{1,3}
	<i>Re-enter Seyton.</i>	
26	<u>Wherefore</u> was <u>that cry</u> ?	= why, ie. what. = ie. the women's cries of line 9 above.
28	<i>Seyt.</i> The Queen (my lord) is dead.	
30		31-42 (below): Macbeth has removed himself from normal human feeling to such a degree that, even to news of his wife's death, he only reacts with apathy. He goes on to expound on the brevity and meaninglessness of life.
	<i>Macbeth.</i> She <u>should</u> have died hereafter;	31: Lady Macbeth would (<i>should</i>) have died sometime anyway. ^{3,5}
32	There would have been a time for such a <u>word</u> :	32: perhaps "such a message (<i>word</i>), ie. word of her death, would have come one day anyway." ^{3,4}
	Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, <u>Creeps</u> in this <u>petty pace</u> from day to day, To the last <u>syllable</u> of <u>recorded</u> time:	33-35: each day, one after the other, crawls or moves slowly (<i>creeps</i>) at this trivial (ie. tedious) speed (<i>petty pace</i>), to the end of time. ^{1,3} Line 35: Macbeth imagines human history as preserved in a written account (<i>recorded</i>), the days passing until the last <i>syllable</i> of the account has been registered, ie. the end of human history has been reached. ³
36	And all our yesterdays have <u>lighted</u> <u>fools</u>	36-37: <i>And all...death</i> = and every day we have been alive guides us, like a torch or candle, to inevitable death. <i>lighted</i> = showed the way with light. <i>fools</i> = ie. men in general as ignorant mortals. ³ <i>dusty death</i> (line 37) = perhaps an allusion to Psalms 22:15(Geneva Bible): "thou hast brought me into the dust of death." ⁸
	The way to dusty death. – <u>Out, out, brief candle!</u> –	= life is compared to a candle, which is extinguished too soon; Macbeth may be reflecting on the eclipsing of his wife's death (ie. her candle of life). ⁸
38	<u>Life's</u> but a walking shadow, a poor player, That <u>struts and frets</u> his hour upon the stage,	38: <i>Life's but a walking shadow</i> = suggests a man's life is without substance, ie. is not real. ⁵ The reference may be to Psalms 39: "Doubtless man walketh in a shadow..." ³ <i>walking</i> = represents man's passing through the course of life. 38-40: <i>a poor...no more</i> = a bad actor (<i>poor player</i>) who puts in a showy performance for the time he is on the stage, only to be forgotten when he is gone; a lament for the briefness of life; Kittredge, however, suggests <i>poor</i> means "pitiable" rather than "bad". ³ <i>struts and frets</i> = distresses himself (<i>frets</i>) as he parades around the stage with an affected air of dignity (<i>struts</i>). ^{1,2}
40	And then is heard no more. It is a tale	40-42: <i>It is a tale...nothing</i> = Macbeth now compares life

42	Told by an idiot, <u>full of sound and fury</u> Signifying nothing.	to a tale told by an incompetent story-teller: noisy and chaotic (<i>full of sound and fury</i>), but in the end without meaning. ⁵ Shakespeare was the coiner of the collocation "sound and fury".
44	<i>Enter a Messenger.</i>	
46	Thou com'st to use thy tongue: thy story quickly.	46: ie. "you have approached me to tell me something; say it quickly."
48	Mess. <u>Gracious my lord,</u>	48: ie. "my gracious lord"; the inversion of this vocative is unique to Shakespeare, who also used it in <i>King Lear</i> and <i>The Winter's Tale</i> .
50	I should report that which I say I saw, But know not how to do't.	49-50: the Messenger knows he should report what he saw, but doesn't know how to say it, because it makes no sense.
52	Macbeth. Well, say, sir.	
54	Mess. <u>As I did stand my watch</u> upon the hill, I looked toward Birnam, and <u>anon methought</u> The <u>wood</u> began to move.	= ie. while the Messenger was standing guard, ie. during his shift as sentinel. ⁵ = "presently it seemed to me". ² = ie. woods.
56		
58	Macbeth. Liar, and <u>slave</u> !	58: Macbeth's apathy turns to violent shock, as the Messenger's vision touches directly on the prophecy of the 3rd Apparition. <i>slave</i> = term of contempt.
60	Mess. Let me endure your wrath, <u>if't be not so</u> : Within this three mile <u>may you</u> see it coming.	= ie. "if I am not telling the truth." = ie. "you may".
62	I say, a moving grove.	62: the Messenger bravely stands his ground against the tyrant, insisting he is telling the truth. ³
64	Macbeth. If thou speak'st false, Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive	
66	<u>Till famine cling thee</u> : if thy speech be <u>sooth</u> ,	66: <i>Till famine cling thee</i> = ie. "till starvation causes you to shrivel up (<i>cling</i>)". ^{1,5} <i>sooth</i> = truth.
	I care not if thou dost for me as much. –	67: ie. "you can do the same to me."
68	<u>I pull in resolution</u> , and begin To <u>doubt</u> th' equivocation of the <u>fiend</u> ,	68: <i>I pull in resolution</i> = "my courage and determination begin to flag"; <i>pull in</i> = reign in.
70	<u>That</u> lies like truth. "Fear not, till Birnam Wood	68-70: <i>and begin...like truth</i> = Macbeth begins to suspect (<i>doubt</i>) he has been tricked: like many a recorded prophecy throughout ancient history, the Witches' prediction is equivocal, ie. it has a double-meaning: typically, the listener interprets the prophecy in a way that is to his benefit, not realizing that there is an alternate interpretation which he needs to be wary of. To Macbeth's mind, then, the Witches, like the devil (<i>fiend</i>), misled him with a prophecy that only sounded reassuring, but in fact predicted his doom. <i>That</i> = ie. who.
72	Do come to Dunsinane," and now a wood Comes toward Dunsinane. – <u>Arm, arm, and out!</u> –	= "everyone arm themselves and sally forth to meet the enemy!" the realization hits Macbeth that the Witches'

	If this which <u>he avouches</u> , does appear,	prediction, which he thought represented an impossibility, is actually coming true!
74	There is <u>nor flying hence</u> , <u>nor tarrying here</u> .	= ie. the Messenger claims or declares. ² 74: there is safety in neither fleeing from here (flying hence), nor lingering within the castle (tarrying here). nor...nor = neither...nor.
76	I 'gin to be aweary of <u>the sun</u> , And wish th' <u>estate</u> o' th' world were now <u>undone</u> . –	= ie. begin. = metaphorically, life. 76: And wish the settled condition (estate) of the world were destroyed (undone). ^{1,5}
	Ring the <u>alarum bell</u> ! – <u>Blow wind, come wrack</u> ,	77: alarum bell = a bell rung to signal sudden danger or an emergency (especially a call to arms). alarum = alarm. ^{1,3} Blow wind, come wrack = ie. "let the wind blow and destruction (wrack) come".
78	At least we'll die with <u>harness</u> on our back. [Exeunt.]	78: the sense is, "at least we can die fighting." harness = body armour. ¹
	ACT V, SCENE VI. <i>The same.</i> <i>A Plain before the Castle.</i> <i>Drum and colours.</i> <i>Enter Malcolm, old Siward, Macduff,</i> <i>and their Army, <u>with boughs</u>.</i>	The Setting: each soldier is carrying a bough in front of him to disguise his approach to Macbeth's castle.
1	Malc. <u>Now near enough</u> : your <u>leavy screens</u> throw down,	1: Now near enough = ie. "we are close enough now." leavy screens = ie. the boughs which the soldiers are holding up in front of them to screen them from Macbeth's view. leavy = leafy, ie. covered with leaves.
2	And <u>shew like those you are</u> : – You (<u>worthy uncle</u>) Shall with <u>my cousin</u> , your right noble son,	= ie. appear as you really are, ie. unconcealed. = ie. Siward. = ie. Young Siward.
4	<u>Lead our first battle</u> . Worthy Macduff and <u>we</u> Shall take <u>upon's</u> what else remains to do,	4: Lead our first battle = command the first battalion to attack. 4-6: Worthy...order = "Macduff and I (the royal we), leading the rest of the army, will follow and take care of whatever remains to be done, based on the arrangements or plan (order) we have made." ^{3,5}
6	According to our <u>order</u> .	upon's = ie. upon us.
8	Siw. Fare you well. – Do we but find the tyrant's power tonight,	9: "if we succeed in meeting Macbeth's forces (power) tonight". ³
10	Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.	10: the sense is, "if we lose, so be it"; Siward, as always, is more fatalistic than his younger companions.
12	Macduff. Make all our trumpets <u>speak</u> ; <u>give them all breath</u> ,	12: poetically, "blow the trumpets loudly"; trumpets were used to give broad military instructions over a wide area quickly.

14 Those clamorous harbingers of blood, and death.

16 [Exeunt.]
[Alarums continued.]

ACT V, SCENE VII.

The same.

Another part of the Plain.

Alarums. Enter Macbeth.

1 **Macbeth.** They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,

2 But bear-like I must fight the course. What's he
4 That was not born of woman? such a one
4 Am I to fear, or none.

6 *Enter young Siward.*

8 **Y. Siw.** What is thy name?

10 **Macbeth.** Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

12 **Y. Siw.** No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
14 Than any is in hell.

16 **Macbeth.** My name's Macbeth.

18 **Y. Siw.** The devil himself could not pronounce a title
18 More hateful to mine ear.

20 **Macbeth.** No; nor more fearful.

22 **Y. Siw.** Thou liest, abhorred tyrant: with my sword
24 I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

26 [They fight, and young Siward is slain.]

28 **Macbeth.** Thou wast born of woman;
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandished by man that's of a woman born.

Macduff possibly employs a delightful biblical allusion: just as God first created the form of a man, then "*breathed in his face breath of life, and the man was a living soul*" (Genesis 2:7, Geneva Bible), so the musicians, by blowing into the trumpets, *give them all breath*, permitting them to *speak*.

13: the trumpets are loud heralds (*harbingers*) announcing the bloodshed and death to come in the approaching battle.

1-2: *They have...course* = Macbeth compares himself to a bear that has been chained or *tied* to a *stake* in a bear-baiting contest, in which dogs are set upon the bear, a popular form of public entertainment in Shakespeare's time. Macbeth's point is that, since there is no direction available towards which he can flee (*fly*), his only remaining option is to fight. *course* (line 2) = term for each round of attack by the dogs against the bear.¹

2-4: *What's he...or none* = Macbeth reminds us that the only person who he has to worry about – if such a one exists – is he who was "*not born of woman*".
What's = ie. who is.

12-13: ie. Young Siward would not fear the man in front of him, even if his name were (in Schmidt's paraphrase) "worse than that of a devil in hottest hell" (p. 555).⁶
is in = ie. that is in.⁵

= pronounced as a monosyllable: *de'il*. = name.²

= ie. causing fear, hence, "terrifying".²

= ie. Macbeth's name is not terrifying at all.

23: by fighting Macbeth, Young Siward will prove he is not afraid of him or his name.

27-29: Macbeth has regained his confidence: since he believes that every human is born from a woman, at least he need not fear being killed by any man flourishing a sword or any other weapon.

		<i>weapons laugh to scorn</i> = "and I laugh in scorn at weapons". <i>Brandished</i> = waved about, often said of a weapon. ¹
30		
32	[Exit Macbeth.]	31: the stage is left empty, except for Young Siward's slain body.
34	Alarums. Enter Macduff.	34: Macduff will not see the body of Young Siward, suggesting Macduff is on a different part of the field; or, possibly, the boy's corpse has been removed from the "field", and thus the stage, by his fellow soldiers (see Act V.viii.75 below, where Ross mentions that Young Siward has been "brought off the field"). ⁴
36	Macduff. That way the noise is: – Tyrant, <u>shew</u> thy face!	= ie. show.
38	If thou be'st slain, and with no stroke of mine, My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me <u>still</u> :	37-38: Macduff is determined to be the one to kill Macbeth, to revenge the slaying of his family. <i>still</i> = ever. ⁵
	I cannot strike at wretched <u>kerns</u> , whose <u>arms</u>	39-40: <i>I cannot...staves</i> = Macduff, laser-focused on finding Macbeth, will not stop to fight the miserable or contemptible (<i>wretched</i>) ^{1,6} mercenaries who fight on behalf of the usurper only because they have been paid (<i>hired</i>) to do so; there is a sense that fighting the lowly kerns is beneath Macduff. <i>kerns</i> = light-armed foot-soldiers; the term was usually applied to Irishmen, but sometimes, as perhaps here, to Scottish Highlanders. ¹ <i>arms</i> = upper limbs, not weapons, though the wording obviously suggests the latter. <i>bear their staves</i> (line 40) = carry their spears or lances; <i>staves</i> is the plural of <i>staff</i> . ^{1,2,4}
40	Are hired to bear their staves; – either thou, Macbeth, Or else my sword with an <u>unbattered edge</u>	40-42: <i>either thou...undeeded</i> = ie. Macduff will either fight Macbeth, or no one. <i>unbattered edge</i> = the edge of Macduff's sword will remain unworn and unblemished because he won't strike at anyone other than Macbeth. <i>sheathe again</i> (line 42) = replace his sword into its scabbard. ¹ <i>undeeded</i> (line 42) = ie. unused; ⁵ an invented word from Shakespeare's pen.
42	I sheathe again undeeded. – There thou shouldst be:	42-44: <i>There thou...bruted</i> = Macduff is trying to find Macbeth by moving towards whatever part of the battlefield is producing the most noise (<i>clatter</i>); the greatest sounds of battle should indicate the location where the fighting is the heaviest, and thus where the king would be expected to be.
44	By this great <u>clatter</u> , one of <u>greatest note</u> Seems <u>bruted</u> . – Let me find him, Fortune,	43-44: <i>By this...bruted</i> = ie. the loud fighting would be expected to have announced or proclaimed (<i>bruted</i>) the presence of a person of the highest standing (<i>greatest note</i>), ie. Macbeth. ^{2,5}
	And more I <u>beg</u> not.	= ask.
46		
48	[Exit Macduff. Alarums.]	

50	<i>Enter Malcolm and old Siward.</i>	50: here too, neither Malcolm nor Siward will notice the body of the latter's son, if it is still onstage. ⁴
52	Siw. This way, my lord; <u>the castle's gently rendered</u> :	= ie. the castle has been surrendered (rendered) without much or any resistance (gently). ^{1,4,5}
	The tyrant's people on both sides do fight,	53: the sense is, some of those who are supposed to be fighting on behalf of Macbeth have defected and are now fighting on Malcolm's side.
54	The noble thanes do bravely in the war, The day almost itself <u>professes</u> yours,	54: the Scottish nobles are fighting worthily or splendidly. ^{3,4} 55: ie. the battle is almost won. professes = announces. ⁵
56	And <u>little is</u> to do.	= ie. there is little left.
58	Malc. We have met with foes That <u>strike beside</u> us.	58-59: Malcolm has noticed the defections as well: men who were at first on the enemy side are now fighting (they strike) alongside (beside) the attackers. They strike beside us = some commentators interpret this to mean, "that strike deliberately so as to miss us." ^{4,5}
60		
62	Siw. Enter, sir, the castle.	
64	<i>[Exeunt. Alarums.]</i>	
	ACT V, SCENE VIII.	
	<i>The same. Another part of the field.</i>	
	<i>Enter Macbeth.</i>	Scene viii: in the Folio, there was no separate Scene 8: rather, modern editions usually carve it out of Scene 7 in order to have a separate scene for Macbeth's final confrontation. This decision is more of a stylistic choice with the written play, however, than with the staged performance: with players coming on and off the stage throughout Scene 7, leaving a bare stage repeatedly, an audience member would never notice a "break" that would signify the end of Scene 7 and a new scene, Scene 8.
1	Macbeth. Why should I play the Roman fool, and die	1-2: Why should...sword = since Macbeth believes he is still protected by the Witches' second prophecy, he sees no reason to kill himself in the honourable Roman fashion, by falling on his sword. The Shakespeare aficionado may remember that in <i>Julius Caesar</i> , both Cassius and Brutus committed suicide by running into their swords; and Mark Antony attempted the same in <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> , but he lingered on a bit before dying.
2	On mine own sword? <u>whiles</u> I see <u>lives</u> , the gashes	2-3: whiles I...upon them = as long as any enemy soldiers remain on the field, any wounds which Macbeth might have inflicted on himself would be better spent on them.
4	Do better upon them.	whiles = used frequently for <i>while</i> . lives = ie. living foes; ⁴ a noun (rhymes with <i>knives</i>).
	<i>Enter Macduff.</i>	
6	Macduff. Turn, <u>hell-hound</u> , turn!	= common epithet for an evil person; sometimes used to describe Cerberus, the mythological three-headed guard dog of hell, or Satan himself. ¹
8		

10 **Macbeth.** Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back, my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

12 **MacduffD** I have no words,
14 My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out!

16
18 [They fight.]
[Alarum.]

20 **Macbeth.** Thou lovest labour,
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
22 With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed:

Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests,
24 I bear a charmèd life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

26 **Macduff.** Despair thy charm,

28 And let the angel whom thou still hast served

30 Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripped.

9-11: Macbeth admits to deliberately staying away from Macduff on the battlefield, burdened with guilt for killing the latter's family; but there may be a more practical reason for doing so: back at Act IV.i.112-3, the 1st Apparition told Macbeth to "*beware Macduff, beware the Thane of Fife*."

men else = ie. other men.

get thee back = ie. "get away from me".

too much charged = weighed down too heavily (with guilt).²

13: ie. Macduff does not want to exchange words with Macbeth.

15: ie. "than words can describe you."

20: common expression for, "you are wasting your effort".

21-22: it would be just as easy for Macduff to print a mark or make an impression on (**impress**) the uncuttable (**intrenchant**) air with his sword as to cut Macbeth – that is, it is impossible.^{1,3}

intrenchant = another invented word from Shakespeare; *trenchant* had, to this point in time, been used to describe sharp weapons such as swords and arrows as "capable of cutting"; Shakespeare modified the meaning of *trenchant* to "capable of being cut",¹ then added the prefix "*in*" to negate it.

Shakespeare similarly described the **air** as both *woundless* and *invulnerable* in Hamlet.⁸

23: helmets (**crests**, representing their wearers' heads) which are capable of being smashed.

24: **charmèd life** = Shakespeare appears to have originated this still common collocation.

must not yield = ie. cannot or will not be given up.

= ie. "despair of thy charm"; the sense is, "cease to have hope that thy charm will protect thee".

28: Macduff suggests Macbeth has been serving a demon (**angel**).⁶

still = always.⁴

29-30: Macduff announces he was born prematurely (**Untimely**) via Caesarean section. The 2nd Apparition had told Macbeth that he would suffer no harm from any man "*of woman born*" (Act IV.i.132 above), but because Macduff had been **ripped** from his mother's womb through an incision in her abdomen, Macduff's birth does not qualify as being "of a woman born". Macbeth immediately recognizes that he therefore is not safe from Macduff after all, and will curse the ambiguity of the Witches' prophecies.

The symbolism of the shape of the 2nd Apparition – a bloody child – now becomes apparent (Act IV.i.124 above).

Many readers will be disappointed by this climactic equivocation: to our modern sensibilities, one born via C-section can hardly be thought to have not been born from woman. We may simply point out, that the idea for the specific ambiguous prophecies was not Shakespeare's; rather, he lifted them directly from Holinshed, who quoted Macduff as saying to Macbeth when they met, "*for I am even he that thy wizards have told thee of, who was never born of my mother, but **ripped** out of her womb.*"

33: this new information has dispirited (**cowed**) the better part of Macbeth's manhood, ie. his courage and valour (his **better part of man**).^{1,3,8}

34-37: **And be...our hope** = Macbeth curses the deceiving (**juggling**) supernatural, evil beings (**fiends**, ie. the Witches) who equivocate (**palter**) with their ambiguous prophecies that bear two meanings (**double sense**) – one that sounds wonderful when it is heard, but the other which crushes the receiver's expectations (**hope**).^{1,5}

Note the subtle metaphor: the prophecy is like a **promise** made to the recipient's **ear**; but then, when the true meaning of the prediction comes to bear, it feels as if the prophecy has broken the illusory promise.

= "yield yourself", ie. surrender.

40: and remain alive to become the spectacle (**shew**, ie. show) of the age (**o' th' time**), something to be looked upon and stared at (a **gaze**).^{1,2}
gaze = a noun here, meaning "the object of gazing".¹

41-43: **We'll have...pole** = just as is done with uncommon deformed or abnormal creatures or prodigies (**rarer monsters**), images of Macbeth will be painted onto cloths or canvases and hung from a pole.^{3,4,6}

45-47: Macbeth refuses Macduff's demand to surrender: he will neither humiliatingly grovel (**kiss the ground**) at Malcolm's feet, nor endure the persistent harassment and torment of the mob (**the rabble's curse**).

With **baited**, Macbeth recalls the image of bear-baiting (see Act V.vii.1 above), comparing the anticipated verbal assaults from the crowd to the attacks and worrying by a pack of dogs against a chained-up bear. His use of **rabble** suggests his contempt for his enemies.

48-49: ie. even though both criteria for Macbeth's doom from the Witches' prophecies have been fulfilled.
opposed = ie. "set against me".⁶

50: **try the last** = ie. fight it out to the very end.²
Before = in front of.

51: **throw** = the sense seems to be "place" or "raise".
warlike shield = Shakespeare likely borrowed this collocation from Edmund Spenser's highly influential epic poem, *The Faerie Queene*: "*his warlike shield all closely*

32 **Macbeth.** Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so;
For it hath cowed my better part of man!

34 And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense,
36 That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope! – I'll not fight with thee.

38 **Macduff.** Then yield thee, coward,
40 And live to be the shew and gaze o' th' time.

We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
42 Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
"Here may you see the tyrant."

44 **Macbeth.** I will not yield
46 To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.

48 Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,

50 Yet I will try the last. Before my body

I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff,

52 And damned be him that first cries, "Hold, enough!"

54 *[Exeunt fighting.
Alarums.*

56 *Retreat and flourish.*

58 *Enter, with drum and colours,
Malcolm, old Siward, Ross, Thanes and Soldiers.*

60 **Malc.** I would the friends we miss, were safe arrived.

62 **Siw.** Some must go off: and yet by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

64

66 **Malc.** Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

Ross. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt,

68 He only lived but till he was a man,

The which no sooner had his prowess confirmed

70 In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.

72

74 **Siw.** Then he is dead?

76 **Ross.** Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

78

80 **Siw.** Had he his hurts before?

Ross. Ay, on the front.

82

covered was" (both the 1590 and 1596 editions).

lay on = "attack" or "strike", an imperative to Macduff to begin the combat.^{1,3}

= stop, cease.

55: trumpet calls and the noise of battle continue offstage.

56: **Retreat** = a trumpet signal commanding the attackers to cease their pursuit of the defeated foe.^{4,7}

flourish = a fanfare is heard, perhaps to announce the arrival of the commanders of the attacking army.²

60: ie. "I wish (**would**) the friends we are missing were safely here": Malcolm worries about his companions who are unaccounted for.

= ie. die.¹ = ie. "to judge by the men I see around us".³

63: the sense is, victory has been achieved at a relatively low cost, ie. with few casualties to the victorious combined English-Scottish army.

= that which a soldier naturally owes by assuming his profession, ie. his life.

68: Young Siward lived just long enough to prove he was a man, ie. by bravely entering the fight; we may be reminded of the conversation at Act V.ii.14-15, in which it was noted that many English youths had joined Siward's army specifically to prove their manhood in war.

69: "no sooner had Young Siward, with his bravery (**prow-ess**), proved (**confirmed**) his manhood (**The which**)".⁶

= unflinching position;⁶ the sense is, Young Siward did not shy away or recoil from fear when it was his time to fight.

75: **brought off the field** = Ross confirms that Young Siward's body has been removed from the stage at some point before the victorious commanders entered the stage.

75-77: **your cause...no end** = ie. if his son's death is to cause a level of grief in Siward that is commensurate with his son's merit (**his worth**), then his grief would be infinite (because his son proved his infinite excellence and value).

79: "were his wounds in the front of his body (**before**)?" – which would mean the boy died facing his enemy; Siward wants confirmation that his son was not shamefully killed running away from the foe, which would be shown by wounds appearing on his back.

	Siw. Why then, <u>God's soldier be he!</u>	= perhaps suggesting, "he fought for a righteous cause and died honourably for it, like a true soldier of God."
84	Had I as many sons as I have <u>hairs</u> , I would not wish them to a fairer death:	84-85: ie. if Siward had many more sons, he could not have wished for any of them to die a more honourable death. hairs = possible pun with <i>heirs</i> .
86	And so <u>his knell is knolled</u> .	= the bell announcing his death has been rung or tolled.
88	Malc. He's worth more sorrow, And that I'll spend for him.	88-89: Malcolm agrees that Young Siward is worth grieving over more, and so will give him the appropriate amount of mourning.
90	Siw. He's worth no more.	91: Siward suggests that Malcolm should not grieve beyond what is appropriate.
92	They say he parted well, and paid his <u>score</u> ,	92: Siward has been told that his son died in a becoming way, metaphorically having paid off his debt (score), ie. by fulfilling his duty as a soldier, owing nothing more. ^{1,5}
	And so God be with him! – Here comes <u>newer comfort</u> .	= ie. fresh and comforting good news.
94		
96	<i>Enter Macduff, with Macbeth's head.</i>	
	Macduff. [To Malcolm.]	
98	Hail, King! for so thou art. Behold where stands Th' usurper's cursèd head: <u>the time is free</u> :	= the world, or the people living in it, are now free (from Macbeth's tyranny). ^{3,5}
100	I see thee <u>compassed</u> with <u>thy kingdom's pearl</u> ,	100: compassed = surrounded. thy kingdom's pearl = metaphorically, the worthiest men or elite of Malcolm's kingdom. ^{2,6}
	That speak my salutation in their minds:	101: all the nobles are thinking (with approval) the same salute to the new king just expressed by Macduff.
102	Whose voices I desire <u>aloud with mine</u> .	= ie. "to speak or shout aloud with me;" for mine , the Folio prints <i>thine</i> , usually emended as shown.
	Hail, King of Scotland!	
104	All. Hail, King of Scotland!	
106		
108	[<i>Flourish.</i>]	
110	Malc. <u>We</u> shall not spend a large expense of time, Before we <u>reckon with</u> your <u>several loves</u> ,	109-110: "I will not wait a long time (ie. will not unduly delay) to reward each of you for your loyalty to me". ³ We = note how Malcolm, now that he is king, has immediately adopted the royal "we". reckon with = literally, "settle accounts with". ¹ several loves = individual loyalties.
	<u>And make us even with you</u> . My thanes and kinsmen,	= ie. so that neither party – neither the king nor the nobles – owe anything to each other. even = pronounced as a single syllable: <i>e'en</i> .
112	Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland	112-3: Henceforth...named = Holinshed wrote that Malcolm promoted many of his nobles to earls, the first ever named in Scotland. ³ Holinshed specifically named Fife, Mentieth, Caithness, Ross and Angus as

	In such an honour named: <u>what's more to do</u> ,	having been so created.
114	Which would be <u>planted</u> newly with the time,	= ie. what else remains to be done. ³
	<u>As</u> calling home our exiled friends abroad,	114: "which should be newly introduced in these better times or new age"; Malcolm compares his planned reforms to a plant which must be placed into the ground and given time to become established. ^{5,6}
116	<u>That</u> fled the <u>snares</u> of <u>watchful</u> tyranny,	115: Malcolm perhaps has his brother Donalbain, who has been living in Ireland, to mind. ³ As = ie. such as, to wit.
118	<u>Producing forth</u> the cruël <u>ministers</u> Of this dead butcher, and his fiend-like queen;	116: who fled Macbeth's traps (snares) of vigilant oppressions (watchful tyranny), suggesting Macbeth kept a close eye on his subjects, looking for the first opportunity to persecute them. 117-8: bringing to light or exposing (Producing forth) (hence bringing to justice), those cruel servants and agents (ministers) who acted on behalf of Macbeth and his wife. ^{2,3,5}
	Who (as 'tis thought) by <u>self and violent hands</u> ,	119-120: Who...life = it has been reported that Lady Macbeth committed suicide. self and violent hands = ie. her own violent hands. ³
120	Took off her life. This, and what needful else That calls upon us, <u>by the grace of Grace</u> ,	120-1: This...upon us = "these actions, plus whatever additional measures are required of me". calls upon us = ie. "demands my attention (as king)". = with the gracious help of God.
122	We will perform <u>in measure</u> , <u>time</u> , and <u>place</u> :	122: in measure = carefully and with decorum (in contrast with Macbeth's reckless and hasty manner). time = at the right moment. place = in the appropriate setting.
124	So thanks <u>to all at once</u> , and to <u>each one</u> , Whom we invite, to see us crowned at <u>Scone</u> .	= ie. to everyone as a whole and to each of you individually. = ancient royal city in Scotland where its kings were crowned. 121-4 (above) : the speech, the scene, the act, and the play end with a pair of rhyming couplets.
126		[<i>Flourish.</i>
128	FINIS.	<i>Exeunt omnes.</i>] = all, everyone.

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes in the text correspond as follows:

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- 18: *College Arts* (Yale) website. *William Davenant's Macbeth (1674)*. Accessed May 10, 2026: <https://collegearts.yale.edu/events/shows-screenings/william-davenants-macbeth-1674>.