Act I Scene 1. An open place.

Thunder and lightning. Enter three WITCHES.

First Witch.

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

Second Witch.

When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch.

That will be ere\(^1\) the set of sun.

First Witch.

Where the place?

Second Witch. Upon the heath. \(\text{A}\)

Third Witch.

There to meet with Macbeth. \(\text{B}\)

First Witch.

I come, Graymalkin.\(^2\)

Second Witch.

Paddock\(^3\) calls.

Third Witch. Anon!\(^4\)

All.

Fair is foul, and foul is fair. \(\text{C}\)
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

[Exeunt.]\(^5\)

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1. In Shakespeare's time, \textit{ere} meant “before.”
2. Graymalkin is the first witch's attendant or familiar, a gray cat.
3. Paddock is a toad, the second witch's familiar.
4. Anon means “soon.” The third witch means they will meet again soon.
5. \textit{Exeunt} is a stage direction that means “they exit.”

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\(\text{A}\) HERE'S HOW

**Vocabulary**

I did not know the word \textit{heath}, so I looked it up in the dictionary. The dictionary defines \textit{heath} as “an area of wild, relatively flat land where low, shrubby plants grow.” This definition helps me picture the place where the witches want to meet Macbeth.

\(\text{B}\) HERE'S HOW

**Literary Focus**

I know that the full name of this play is \textit{The Tragedy of Macbeth}. So Macbeth must be the tragic hero. I think the witches will cause something to happen which will lead to the hero's downfall. I will keep reading to see if I am right.

\(\text{C}\) HERE'S HOW

**Reading Focus**

\textit{Fair} and \textit{foul} sound like opposites. In this line, however, the witches say, “Fair is foul, and foul is fair.” I have a \textit{question} about that. What does it mean that the witches talk about these two opposite ideas together, as if they were the same?
IN OTHER WORDS  Three witches plan to meet with Macbeth that evening, after a battle has been fought.

Scene 2.  A camp.

Alarum within. Enter KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, with ATTENDANTS, meeting a bleeding CAPTAIN. D

King.

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

Malcolm.  This is the sergeant
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil 6
As thou didst leave it.

Captain.  Doubtful it stood,

As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
And choke their art.7 The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to be a rebel for to that

---

6. A broil is a quarrel or fight.
7. Here, choke their art means “hinder each other’s ability to swim.”
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the Western Isles\(^8\)
Of kerns and gallowglasses\(^9\) is supplied;
And Fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Showed like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel, \(^A\)
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valor's minion\(^{10}\) carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which nev'r shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the nave to th' chops,\(^{11}\)
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

King.
O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman! \(^B\)

Captain.
As whence the sun 'gins his reflection\(^{12}\)
Shipwracking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seemed to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valor armed,
Compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels
But the Norweyan\(^{13}\) lord, surveying vantage,\(^{14}\)
With furbished arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

King. Dismayed not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo? \(^C\)

Captain. Yes;
As\(^{15}\) sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.

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8. The Western Isles are islands off the west coast of Scotland.
9. Kerns and gallowglasses are foot soldiers.
10. A minion is a favorite servant or follower.
11. Unseamed . . . chops means split his enemy's body from navel to jaws.
12. When the sun 'gins his reflection, it rises.
13. Norweyan is an old-fashioned way of saying "Norwegian."
14. Surveying vantage refers to seeing an opportunity.
15. Here, the meaning of as is "No more than."
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks;
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell—
But I am faint; my gashes cry for help.

King.
So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honor both. Go get him surgeons.

[Exit Captain attended.]

[Enter Ross and Angus.]
Who comes here?

Malcolm. The worthy Thane of Ross.

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

Ross. God save the king!

King.
Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

Ross. From Fife, great king;
Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold.
Norway himself, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapped in proof,

17. Here, except means “unless.”
18. To memorize another Golgotha means to “make the place as memorable as Golgotha,” where Jesus Christ was crucified.
19. Thane is a Scottish title of nobility.
20. Here, seems to is short for “seems about to.”
22. Bellona is the goddess of war. Macbeth, who is a great soldier, is called her mate, or Bellona’s bridegroom.
23. Someone who is lapped in proof is wearing armor.
Confronted him with self-comparisons, Point against point, rebellious arm ’gainst arm, Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude, The victory fell on us.

King.  Great happiness!

Ross.  That now

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

King.

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

Ross.

I’ll see it done.

King.

What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

[Exeunt.]
Scene 3. A heath.

Thunder. Enter the three witches.

First Witch.

Where hast thou been, sister?

Second Witch.

Killing swine.

Third Witch.

Sister, where thou?

First Witch.

A sailor’s wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munched, and munched, and munched. “Give me,” quoth I.

“Aroint thee,” the rump-fed ronyon cries.

Her husband’s to Aleppo gone, master o’ th’ Tiger:

But in a sieve I’ll thither sail, C

And, like a rat without a tail,
I’ll do, I’ll do, and I’ll do. D

Second Witch.

I’ll give thee a wind.

First Witch.

Th’ art kind.

Third Witch.

And I another.

First Witch.

I myself have all the other;
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I’ th’ shipman’s card.
I’ll drain him dry as hay:

30. Aroint thee means “begone.”
31. The witch calls the woman who insulted her a rump-fed ronyon—that is, a scabby creature with a fat rear end.
32. But in a sieve refers to witches’ supposed power to sail in sieves, which are full of holes.
33. The ports they blow refers to the harbors where the wind blows the sailors.
34. A card is an old-fashioned word for a compass.
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid;\(^{35}\)
He shall live a man forbid:\(^{36}\)
Weary sev’nings nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak,\(^{37}\) and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.
Look what I have. \(^{A}\)

Second Witch.
Show me, show me.

First Witch.
Here I have a pilot’s thumb,
Wracked as homeward he did come.

[Drum within.]

Third Witch.
A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come. \(^{B}\)

All.
The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters\(^{38}\) of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! The charm’s wound up.

[Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.]

Macbeth.
So foul and fair a day I have not seen. \(^{C}\)

Banquo.
How far is’t called to Forres?\(^{39}\) What are these
So withered, and so wild in their attire,

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35. A penthouse lid refers to an eyelid.
36. Here forbid means “cursed.”
37. Peak means “grow pale.”
38. Posters refers to travelers.
39. Forres is a town in northeast Scotland. Duncan’s castle is located there.
That look not like th’ inhabitants o’ th’ earth,
And yet are on’t? Live you, or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy\(^{40}\) finger laying
Upon her skinny lips. You should\(^{41}\) be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

**Macbeth.** Speak, if you can: what are you?

**First Witch.**

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

**Second Witch.**

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

**Third Witch.**

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

**Banquo.**

Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I’ th’ name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal:\(^{42}\) to me you speak not.

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

**First Witch.** Hail!

**Second Witch.** Hail!

**Third Witch.** Hail!

**First Witch.**

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

40. Here, choppy means “chapped or sore.”
41. Here, should means “must.”
42. The phrase rapt withal means “entranced by it.”
Second Witch.
Not so happy, yet much happier.

Third Witch.
Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none. A
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

First Witch.
Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

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

[witches vanish]

IN OTHER WORDS The three witches gather again. They meet two of the king’s captains, Macbeth and Banquo. The witches predict that Macbeth will become Thane of Cawdor and eventually king. They say that Banquo will never be king, but that his children will be kings. Macbeth tries to ask for clarification but the witches disappear.

What Happens Next
Banquo and Macbeth consider the Witches’ prophecies that Banquo’s children will be kings and Macbeth will be made Thane, or lord, of Cawdor. The king’s messengers arrive to tell Macbeth

43. Here, happy means “lucky.”
44. To get stands for to beget or give birth to.
45. Here, imperfect means “unfinished,” so the imperfect speakers have not finished saying what Macbeth wants to hear.
46. Say from whence... intelligence? In other words, “How do you have this information?”
that the Thane of Cawdor has been sentenced to death for treason and that Macbeth will replace him. Macbeth feels danger may be ahead, but he doesn’t know why. Macbeth and Banquo meet with the king and Macbeth receives the title of thane. Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband telling her his news. A messenger tells Lady Macbeth that the king and Macbeth are on their way.

Scene 5. Inverness. Macbeth’s castle.

Lady Macbeth.

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements.

Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty!

Make thick my blood,
Stop up th’ access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
Th’ effect and it! Come to my woman’s breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd’ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature’s mischief! Come, thick night,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry “Hold, hold!”

[Enter Macbeth.]

Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!

Thy letters have transported me beyond

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47. One meaning of mortal is “deadly.”
48. compunctious . . . nature: natural feelings of compassion.
49. One meaning of the word fell is “savage or cruel.”
50. Gall is a bitter substance. It can also refer to bile in the body.
51. Murd’ring ministers are agents of murder.
52. Here, sightless means “invisible.”
53. Pall means “cover someone or something with a shroud or burial cloth.”
54. Dunnest means “darkest.”
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Macbeth. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here tonight.

Lady Macbeth. And when goes hence?

Macbeth. Tomorrow, as he purposes.

Lady Macbeth. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time, 55
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like th’ innocent flower,
But be the serpent under’t. A He that’s coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night’s great business into my dispatch; 56
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom. B C

55. To beguile the time means to “deceive those around you.”
56. Here, dispatch means “management.”
Macbeth.
   We will speak further. D
Lady Macbeth. Only look up clear.57
   To alter favor ever is to fear.58
   Leave all the rest to me.

[Exeunt.]

**IN OTHER WORDS** Lady Macbeth asks the spirits to make her cruel and murderous, not like a woman. She tells her husband to pretend to welcome Duncan while really planning to murder the king. Lady Macbeth says she will take care of the rest of the plans.

**What Happens Next**

*King Duncan arrives, and is greeted by Lady Macbeth. He asks to be taken to Macbeth.*

**Scene 7. Macbeth’s castle.**

_Hautboys.59 Torches. Enter a sewer,60 and diverse servants with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then enter MACBETH._ E

Macbeth.
   If it were done when ’tis done, then ’twere well
   It were done quickly. If th’ assassination
   Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
   With his surcease,61 success; F that but this blow
   Might be the be-all and the end-all—here,
   But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,

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57. Here, clear means “undisturbed.”
58. To alter . . . fear: In other words, “to show an altered face is dangerous.”
59. Hautboys are oboes, a kind of wind instrument.
60. Here, the sewer is a butler.
61. His surcease refers to Duncan’s death.
We’d jump\(^{62}\) the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague th’ inventor: this even-handed\(^ {63}\) justice
Commends\(^ {64}\) th’ ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. \(A\) He’s here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties\(^ {65}\) so meek, hath been
So clear\(^ {66}\) in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;\(^ {67}\) \(B\)
And pity, like a naked newborn babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven’s cherubin horsed
Upon the sightless couriers\(^ {68}\) of the air, \(C\)
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That\(^ {69}\) tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps itself
And falls on th’ other— \(D\)

[Enter Lady Macbeth.]

How now! What news?

Lady Macbeth.

He has almost supped. Why have you left the chamber?

Macbeth.

Hath he asked for me?

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62. Here, \textit{jump} means “risk.” Macbeth knows he will be condemned to hell for the sin of murder, so he is risking the afterlife.
63. \textit{Even-handed} means “fair and impartial.”
64. Here, \textit{commends} means “offers.”
65. One meaning of the word \textit{faculties} is “powers.”
66. Here, \textit{clear} means “clean and pure.”
67. \textit{Taking-off} refers to murdering Duncan.
68. \textit{Sightless couriers} is a poetic way of referring to winds.
69. Here, \textit{that} means “so that.”
Lady Macbeth.  Know you not he has?
Macbeth.

We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honored me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

**IN OTHER WORDS**  Macbeth reviews arguments against committing the planned murder. Duncan has been a good king. He is under Macbeth’s protection, both as his king and as his guest. The king and others have given Macbeth many honors, and he wants to enjoy the praises. In addition, carrying out this murder will damn Macbeth to hell. All he has to gain is his ambition to rule. He tells his wife that he will not do it.

**What Happens Next**

As Macbeth expresses hesitation about killing the king, Lady Macbeth tells her husband not to be a coward. She claims she could kill her own infant if she wanted to do so as much as Macbeth has wanted to kill Duncan. Lady Macbeth says she will make sure the king’s chamberlains, or attendants, are drunk so they cannot protect the king. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth decide to use the chamberlains’ own daggers to commit the murder. They agree to smear the chamberlains with blood as they sleep so it will look like the king was killed by his own men. Macbeth says he will commit the murder.

**Act II Scene 1. Inverness. Court of Macbeth’s castle.**

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE, with a torch before him (on the way to bed).

Banquo.

How goes the night, boy?
Fleance.

The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

Banquo.

And she goes down at twelve

Fleance. I take’t, ’tis later, sir.

Banquo.

Hold, take my sword. There’s husbandry in heaven. Their candles are all out. Take thee that too. A

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me, And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers, Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature

Gives way to in repose! B

[Enter Macbeth, and a servant with a torch.]

Give me my sword!

Who’s there?

Macbeth.

A friend.

Banquo.

What, sir, not yet at rest? The king’s a-bed: He hath been in unusual pleasure, and Sent forth great largess to your offices: This diamond he greets your wife withal, By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up In measureless content.

Macbeth. Being unprepared,

Our will became the servant to defect, Which else should free have wrought.

Banquo. All’s well.

I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:

To you they have showed some truth. D

70. Husbandry refers to economizing. Here, it specifically refers to putting out the lights to save money on candles.
71. The summons, or call, here is a call to sleep.
72. The king’s largess to your offices refers to gifts he has given out in Macbeth’s servants’ quarters.
73. Here, shut up means “concluded.”
74. Here, giving in to defect refers to making insufficient preparations.
Macbeth. I think not of them.
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.
30 Banquo. At your kind’st leisure.
Macbeth.
If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,75
It shall make honor for you. E
Banquo. So76 I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised77 and allegiance clear,78
I shall be counseled. F
Macbeth. Good repose the while!
Banquo.
Thanks, sir. The like to you!
[Exit Banquo, with Fleance.]

Macbeth.
Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.
40 [Exit servant.]

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible79
To feeling as to sight, or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain? G

75. When Macbeth asks Banquo to cleave . . . ‘tis, he wants Banquo to join his cause, when the time comes and the witches’ prophecy comes true.
76. Here, so means “provided that, or as long as.”
77. Here, franchised means “free (from guilt).”
78. Here, clear means “clean or free.”
79. Here, something sensible is perceptible to the senses.

LITERARY ANALYSIS
In line 26, Macbeth claims that he does not think about the witches’ words. Does his suggestion to Banquo in lines 31–32 support his claim? Why or why not?

YOUR TURN
Literary Focus
Banquo tells Macbeth he is willing to listen to Macbeth’s proposal, as long as he can keep his honor. How does Banquo’s character compare or contrast with the character of Macbeth, the tragic hero?

HERE’S HOW
Reading Focus
Here, Macbeth is imagining that he sees a dagger. I have some questions about people’s beliefs in Shakespeare’s times. Where did people think visions came from? What did they think the visions meant? How might their reaction be different than our reaction today?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable\(^{80}\)
As this which now I draw.
50
Thou marshal’st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o’ th’ other senses,
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon\(^{81}\) gouts\(^{82}\) of blood,
Which was not so before. There’s no such thing.
It is the bloody business which informs\(^{83}\)
Thus to mine eyes. Now o’er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse\(^{84}\)
The curtained sleep; witchcraft celebrates
60
Pale Hecate’s\(^{85}\) offerings; and withered murder,
Alarummed\(^{86}\) by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl’s his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin’s\(^{87}\) ravishing strides, towards his design
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 whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.\(^{88}\) While I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

[A bell rings.]

I go, and it is done: the bell invites me.
70
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell.\(^{\text{B}}\)

[Exit.]
IN OTHER WORDS Ducan has been good to everyone in Macbeth’s household. At night, Macbeth meets Banquo. Macbeth claims not to remember what the witches said to him. Still, he asks for Banquo’s loyalty if he does become king. Then Macbeth prepares to kill Duncan. He is nervous and sees visions of a bloody dagger. As a bell rings, Macbeth heads toward Duncan’s room.

Scene 2. Macbeth’s castle.

Enter LADY MCBETH.

Lady Macbeth.

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quenched them hath given me fire. C
Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern’est good-night. 89 He is about it.
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores. I have drugged their
possets, 90
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

Macbeth (within). Who’s there? What, ho?

Lady Macbeth.

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked.
And ’tis not done! Th’ attempt and not the deed
Confounds 91 us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss ’em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done’t. D

[Enter MACBETH.]

89. It was the owl . . . stern’est good-night: The owl’s call is supposed to predict death. The bellman was a person who rang a bell outside a condemned person’s cell the night before his execution, to warn him to confess his sins.
90. Possets are bedtime drinks.
91. Confounds means “ruins.”
My husband!

Macbeth.  I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise? A

Lady Macbeth.  I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.

Did not you speak?

Macbeth.  When?

Lady Macbeth.  Now.

Macbeth.  As I descended?

Lady Macbeth.  Ay.

Macbeth.  Hark!

Who lies i’ th’ second chamber? B

Lady Macbeth.  Donalbain.

Macbeth.  This is a sorry sight.

Lady Macbeth.

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macbeth.

There’s one did laugh in ’s sleep, and one cried “Murder!”
That they did wake each other. I stood and heard them.
But they did say their prayers, and addressed them
Again to sleep.

Lady Macbeth.  There are two lodged together.

Macbeth.  One cried “God bless us!” and “Amen” the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman’s hands:
List’ning their fear, I could not say “Amen,”
When they did say “God bless us!”

Lady Macbeth.  Consider it not so deeply.

Macbeth.  But wherefore could not I pronounce “Amen”?
I had most need of blessing, and “Amen”
Stuck in my throat. C

Lady Macbeth.  These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.
Macbeth.

Methought I heard a voice cry “Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep”—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the raveled sleave\(^{92}\) of care,
The death of each day’s life, sore labor’s bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature’s second course,\(^{93}\)
Chief nourisher in life’s feast—

Lady Macbeth. What do you mean?

Macbeth.

Still it cried “Sleep no more!” to all the house:
“Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more.”

Lady Macbeth.

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.

Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macbeth. I’ll go no more.
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on ’t again I dare not.

Lady Macbeth. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures. ’Tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I’ll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

[Exit. Knock within.]

Macbeth. Whence is that knocking?
How is’t with me, when every noise appalls me?
What hands are here? Ha! They pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine, \(^94\)
Making the green one red.

[Enter Lady Macbeth.]

Lady Macbeth.
My hands are of your color, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. (Knock.) I hear a knocking
At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber.
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it then! \(^B\) Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. \(^95\) (Knock.) Hark! more knocking.

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94. If something is **incarnadine**, it has been made red.
95. When Lady Macbeth tells her husband, **Your . . . unattended**, she means that his firmness has deserted him.
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts. Macbeth.

To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

[Knock.]

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

[Exeunt.]

IN OTHER WORDS Macbeth tells his wife that he has killed the king. He is very upset. He heard the guards say a prayer, but could not pray himself. Macbeth thinks a voice has told him he will never sleep again, since he has murdered a sleeping man. Lady Macbeth mocks him for acting like a coward. She plants bloody daggers on the guards. As she and Macbeth wash the blood from their hands, they hear a knock at the door. Macbeth wishes Duncan were still alive.

What Happens Next

In the remaining scenes of Act Two, Macduff and Lennox arrive at Macbeth's castle. Macduff discovers the king has been killed. Macbeth claims that the king's chamberlains murdered him. Macbeth explains that in a fit of rage he, Macbeth, killed the chamberlains for their crime.

In Act Three, Banquo tells Macbeth the Witches' prophecies have come true for Macbeth. Banquo wonders if he will become the father of many kings as the Witches have claimed. Unable to bear the thought of Banquo's descendants becoming kings, Macbeth hires two murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. The murderers kill Banquo, but Fleance escapes, which troubles Macbeth. Banquo's ghost appears at a feast the Macbeths hold for the thanes, causing Macbeth further distress.

96. Watchers are people who are up late at night.
Lennox reveals to a rebel lord that he suspects Macbeth killed Duncan. The other lord tells Lennox that Macduff has left Scotland to join forces in England with Malcolm, one of the murdered king’s sons. Both Lennox and the rebel lord pray that Macbeth will receive God’s vengeance and that peace will return to Scotland. A

In Act Four, Macbeth pays another visit to the Weird Sisters. B He asks to be shown visions of what his future holds. In the first vision, the disembodied head of a warrior warns Macbeth that he is in danger from Duncan’s son Malcolm. In the second, a blood-covered child tells Macbeth he cannot be killed by any man “of woman born.” In the third, a child wearing a crown and holding a tree promises Macbeth that he cannot lose in a battle until Birnam Wood physically moves toward Macbeth’s fort at Dunsinane. Happy that these visions show such impossibilities, Macbeth asks whether Banquo’s descendants will reign in the land. The Witches show a procession of kings all descended from Banquo. Furious, Macbeth decides to have the family of Macduff killed. His hired murderers kill Lady Macduff and her son. C

In England, Macduff learns of the slaughter of his family. He agrees to join the rebel army and declares he will take personal revenge upon Macbeth.

Act V Scene 1. Dunsinane. In the castle.

Enter a doctor of physic and a waiting gentlewoman.

Doctor. I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

Gentlewoman. Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet,97 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.

Doctor. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching!98 D In

97. Here, a closet is a chest of drawers or other piece of furniture.
98. The effects of watching refer to the deeds of a person who is awake.
this slumb’ry agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

Gentlewoman. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doctor. You may to me, and 'tis most meet you should.

Gentlewoman. Neither to you nor anyone, having no witness to confirm my speech.

[Enter LADY MACBETH, with a taper.]

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise, and, upon my life, fast asleep! Observe her; stand close.

Doctor. How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman. Why, it stood by her. She has light by her continually. 'Tis her command.

Doctor. You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense are shut.

Doctor. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gentlewoman. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady Macbeth. Yet here's a spot.

Doctor. Hark! she speaks. I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady Macbeth. Out, damned spot! Out, I say! One: two: why, then 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our pow’r to accompt? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doctor. Do you mark that?

Lady Macbeth. The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now? What, will these hands ne’er be clean? No more o’ that, my lord, no more o’ that! You mar all with this starting.

99. Actual performances are real deeds and actions.
100. One definition of the word meet is “suitable.”
101. Here, a guise is a custom.
102. Here, close means “hidden.”
103. Here, sense refers to the powers of sight.
104. Here, satisfy means “confirm.”
105. Accompt is a different way of saying “account.”
Doctor. Go to, go to!\textsuperscript{106} You have known what you should not.

Gentlewoman. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that. Heaven knows what she has known.

Lady Macbeth. Here’s the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh! \textsuperscript{A}

Doctor. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.\textsuperscript{107}

Gentlewoman. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity\textsuperscript{108} of the whole body.

Doctor. Well, well, well—

Gentlewoman. Pray God it be, sir.

Doctor. This disease is beyond my practice.\textsuperscript{109} Yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holy in their beds.

Lady Macbeth. Wash your hands; put on your nightgown; look not so pale! I tell you yet again, Banquo’s buried. He cannot come out on ’s\textsuperscript{110} grave. \textsuperscript{B}

Doctor. Even so?

Lady Macbeth. To bed, to bed! There’s knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand! What’s done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed!

[Exit Lady Macbeth.]

Doctor. Will she go now to bed?

Gentlewoman. Directly.

Doctor. Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets. \textsuperscript{C}

More needs she the divine\textsuperscript{111} than the physician.

God, God forgive us all! Look after her;

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\textsuperscript{106.} Go to, go to! is an exclamation.

\textsuperscript{107.} Charged means “burdened.”

\textsuperscript{108.} Dignity means “worth; rank.”

\textsuperscript{109.} The doctor’s practice is his professional skill.

\textsuperscript{110.} On’s is short for “of his.”

\textsuperscript{111.} A divine is a priest.
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,\textsuperscript{112} And still\textsuperscript{113} keep eyes upon her. So good night.
My mind she has mated\textsuperscript{114} and amazed my sight:
I think, but dare not speak.

\textbf{Gentlewoman.} Good night, good doctor.

\textbf{[Exeunt.]}

\textbf{IN OTHER WORDS} Lady Macbeth has been walking and talking in her sleep. She gets out of bed, makes motions like she is washing her hands, and starts talking about blood and terrible crimes. The doctor and her servant hear her and are shocked. The doctor cannot do anything. He says that her sick mind comes from her actions.

\textbf{What Happens Next}

\textit{Four lords of Scotland—Lennox, Menteith, Angus, and Caithness—agree to help Malcolm and the English forces. The rebel army has marched into Scotland and is encamped at Birnam Wood not far from Dunsinane.}

\textit{Macbeth is confident when faced with the threat of invasion. He trusts the prophecies of the visions, which seemed to promise him victory in battle.} \textbf{D} \textit{He dons his armor to prepare for battle.}

\textit{The English and rebel Scottish armies, led by Malcolm, meet at Birnam Wood. Malcolm orders each soldier to cut a branch and carry it front of him as camouflage so that they can hide the size of their army.}

\textit{Suddenly, Macbeth and his soldiers hear women crying from within the castle.}

\textbf{Scene 5. Dunsinane. Within the castle.}

\textbf{Seyton.}

The queen, my lord, is dead.

\textsuperscript{112} Here, \textit{annoyance} refers to an injury.
\textsuperscript{113} Here, \textit{still} means “continuously.”
\textsuperscript{114} Here, \textit{mated} means “baffled.”
Macbeth.

She should\(^{115}\) have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.\(^{116}\) A

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

**IN OTHER WORDS** Macbeth’s wife is dead, but Macbeth barely cares. He says that time just keeps going on and on and that life is meaningless.

### What Happens Next

A messenger tells Macbeth that he saw Birnam Wood move. In fact, Malcolm and his troops have reached Dunsinane holding branches in front of them. Birnam Wood has come to Dunsinane as the Witches predicted.

Macbeth is challenged by and then kills the bold son of Siward, claiming that no man “of woman born” can overcome him. As the alarms sound, Macduff looks for Macbeth. Malcolm and Siward enter Macbeth’s castle.

**Scene 8. Another part of the field.**

**Enter MACBETH.**

Macbeth.

Why should I play the Roman fool, and die

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\(^{115}\) When Macbeth says that his wife **should** die, he means that she inevitably would.

\(^{116}\) Here, **word** refers to a message.
On mine own sword? While I see lives,\(^{117}\) the gashes Do better upon them. \(^{C}\)

[Enter MACDUFF.]

**Macduff.** Turn, hell-hound, turn!

**Macbeth.**

Of all men else I have avoided thee.  
But get thee back! My soul is too much charged\(^ {118}\)  
With blood of thine already.

**Macduff.** I have no words:  
My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain  
Than terms can give thee out!\(^ {119}\) \(^{D}\)

[Fight. Alarum.]

**Macbeth.** Thou losest labor:  
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant\(^ {120}\) air  
With thy keen sword impress\(^ {121}\) as make me bleed:  
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable\(^ {122}\) crests;  
I bear a charmèd life, which must not yield  
To one of woman born.

**Macduff.** Despair\(^ {123}\) thy charm,  
And let the angel\(^ {124}\) whom thou still hast served  
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb  
Untimely ripped. \(^{E}\)

**Macbeth.**  
Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so,  
For it hath cowed my better part of man!\(^ {125}\) \(^{F}\)  
And be these juggling fiends no more believed,

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\(^{117}\) **Whiles . . . lives** means “so long as I see living men.”

\(^{118}\) **Charged** here means “burdened.”

\(^{119}\) **Terms . . . out:** words can describe you.

\(^{120}\) Something **intrenchant** is impossible to cut.

\(^{121}\) To **impress** is to make a physical mark on someone or something.

\(^{122}\) **Vulnerable crests** are heads that can be wounded.

\(^{123}\) **Despair** here should be read as “despair of.”

\(^{124}\) **Angel** refers to a fallen angel, or fiend.

\(^{125}\) Macbeth’s **better . . . man** is his manly spirit.
That palter\textsuperscript{126} with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. I’ll not fight with thee.

**Macduff.**

Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o’ th’ time:\textsuperscript{127}
We’ll have thee, as our rarer monsters\textsuperscript{128} are,
Painted upon a pole,\textsuperscript{129} and underwrit,
“Here may you see the tyrant.”

**Macbeth.** I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm’s feet,
And to be baited\textsuperscript{130} with the rabble’s curse. \textbullet
Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. \textbullet
Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff;
And damned be him that first cries “Hold, enough!”

\textsuperscript{126.} To palter is to equivocate or speak with double meanings.
\textsuperscript{127.} To be the gaze . . . time is to be the spectacle of the age, open to public view.
\textsuperscript{128.} Here, monsters refers to freaks.
\textsuperscript{129.} Painted . . . pole: pictured on a banner set by a showman’s booth.
\textsuperscript{130.} To be baited means “to be assailed or attacked (like a bear by dogs).”
[Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.]

[Reenter fighting, and Macbeth slain. Exit Macduff, with Macbeth. Retreat and flourish. Enter, with drum and colors, Malcolm, Siward, Ross, Thanes, and soldiers.]

Malcolm.

I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

Siward.

Some must go off; and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

Malcolm.

Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

Ross.

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier’s debt:
He only lived but till he was a man;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirmed In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.

Siward. Then he is dead?

Ross.

Ay, and brought off the field. Your cause of sorrow Must not be measured by his worth, for then It hath no end.

Siward. Had he his hurts before?

Ross.

Ay, on the front.

Siward. Why then, God’s soldier be he!

Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knolled.

Malcolm. He’s worth more sorrow,

And that I’ll spend for him.

131. Retreat and flourish are trumpet calls. To retreat is to withdraw, and a flourish is a fanfare.

132. To go off is to die—the theatrical metaphor refers to going offstage.

133. His unshrinking station is the place at which he stood firmly.
Siward. He’s worth no more:
They say he parted well and paid his score:134
And so God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

[Enter Macduff, with Macbeth’s head.]

Macduff.
Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands
Th’ usurper’s cursèd head.  A
The time is free.135
I see thee compassed136 with thy kingdom’s pearl,
That speak my salutation  B in their minds,
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!

All. Hail, King of Scotland!  C

[Flourish.]

Malcolm.

We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,137
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honor named. What’s more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time138—
As calling home our exiled friends abroad  D
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
Producing forth the cruel ministers139
Of this dead butcher and his fiendlike queen,
Who, as ’tis thought, by self and violent hands140

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134. parted . . . score: departed well and settled his account.
135. The time is free means that “the world is liberated.”
136. To be compassed is to be surrounded.
137. To reckon . . . loves is to reward the devotion of each of you.
138. What’s more . . . time refers to everything else that must be done
    and established in this age of a new king.
139. The ministers here are Macbeth’s agents.
140. Self . . . hands refers to Lady Macbeth’s own violent hands, with
    which she killed herself.
Took off her life—this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure, time, and place:
So thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone.

[Flourish. Exeunt omnes.]

**IN OTHER WORDS** Macduff and Macbeth fight. Macduff says that he was not born naturally from a woman, but rather delivered in what would today be called a Caesarean section. He defeats Macbeth after a bloody battle. Malcom becomes king and plans to undo some of Macbeth’s cruelty and terrible deeds as king.

**HERE’S HOW**

**Literary Focus**

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are both dead. I have also learned that Lady Macbeth killed herself. This sad ending is probably part of what makes this play such a famous tragedy.

**YOUR TURN**

**Reading Focus**

What questions do you have about Malcolm’s plans for the future? How might you answer your questions, since we do not know what will happen in the future?

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141. **Calls upon us** means “demands the new king’s attention.”

142. **In measure . . . place** means “fittingly, at the appropriate time and place.”