

# MACBETH

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1.7 Hautboys. Torches. Enter a Sewer, and divers Servants with dishes and service over the stage. Then enter MACBETH

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, success, that but this blow  
 Might be the be-all and the end-all – here,  
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,

5

Act 1, Scene 7 1.7] F (*Scena Septima.*) 5 be-all] Pope; be all F 5 end-all – here] *Sisson II, 194 (Rowe subst.)*; end all. Heere F 6 shoal] F (*Schoole*)

### Act 1, Scene 7

The opening SD makes this a nocturnal, interior scene at Macbeth's castle; Macbeth has withdrawn from the off-stage ceremonial dinner (see 29) to some more private place. Compare 3.4, where the audience sees another state dinner. For modern productions and their sound effects, see p. 79 above. Lady Macbeth's arguments encouraging her husband to murder are similar to Beatrice's incitement of Benedick to kill Claudio (*Ado* 4.1.255–336) and to Dionyza's arguments justifying a murder she ordered (*Per.* 4.3).

o SD.1 *Hautboys. Torches* An abrupt, theatrical direction for musicians and light-bearers; see 1.6.0 SD n.

o SD.1 *Sewer* 'The Sewer . . . must from the [side]boord convey all manner of potages, meats, and sauces . . . see ye [the sewer] have officers ready to convey, and servants for to beare your dishes' (*The Booke of Carving and Sewing [Serving]*, sig. A6v, appended to Thomas Dawson, *The Second Part of the good Hus-wives Jewell* (1597)). Armstrong (p. 50) sees a parallel between the 'hierarchical relationships' of sewer and servants, Duncan and subjects.

o SD.2 *service* something served as food; course of a meal (*OED Service sb* 27b–c). The audience would see dishes and other utensils. Compare *A banquet brought in, with the limbes of a Man in the service* (*Golden Age*, sig. DIR).

o SD.2 *over the stage* i.e. crossing silently from one side to the other.

1–4 These tongue-twisting lines (compare 1.5.16–23) force the actor either to gabble or to speak very slowly.

1–2 'So, while Duncan is . . . eating his "last supper", Macbeth plays Judas, for to Judas Jesus at the Last Supper said: "That thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27)' (Jones, *Origins*, p. 83).

1 If . . . 'tis done The phrase recalls two proverbs: 'The thing done has an end' (Dent T149) and 'Things done cannot be undone' (Dent T200). See

3.2.12 and 5.1.57–8.

2 **assassination** murder (for political reasons). This line is *OED*'s first citation for the word (Schäfer).

3 **trammel** use nets (to catch fish or fowl); hobble (a horse); bind up or wrap (a corpse). A richly suggestive word; *OED Trammel v* 4 is a figurative meaning, 'to entangle or fasten up', supported first by this line and next by a line (probably an allusion to this one) from Keats.

4 **his surcease** Duncan's death.

4 **success** prosperous achievement (*OED Success sb* 3); succession of heirs (*OED Success sb* 5). This is the play's fourth use of the word and recalls the others, beginning to make them ironic (see 1.3.88, 131; 1.5.1); see the fine discussion of the word in Everett, pp. 96–7.

4–5 **that . . . end-all** i.e. if the murder of Duncan were an act and event complete and completed in itself.

4 **that but** if only.

5 **be-all and the end-all** the whole being and that which ends all. According to *OED Be-all*, Shakespeare invented the phrase and all subsequent uses are quotations; 'end-all' (*OED End-all*: 'the finishing stroke') seems to have a dialect existence independent of this play.

6 **bank and shoal** sand-bank (or river bank) and shallow. F's 'Banke and Schoole' could also be modernised as 'bench and school'; *OED* defines 'bank' (= bench) as referring to the seat of justice, the mountebank's stage, or the rower's bench (*OED Bank sb*<sup>2</sup> 1–3), but does not define 'bank' as 'school bench'. 'Schoole' is a well-attested form of 'shoal' in the period. Although Macbeth soon mentions 'instructions' and 'justice' (which might be anticipated in 'school' and 'bench'), the phrase seems more likely to be a characteristic Shakespearean near-redundancy, treating time as a river: Macbeth momentarily halts time's flow by standing on a shoal or by grasping the bank. See Mahood, p. 24.

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  
 To plague th'inventor. This even-handed justice 10  
 Commends th'ingredience of our poisoned chalice  
 To our own lips. 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, 15  
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan  
 Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against  
 The deep damnation of his taking-off. 20  
 And pity, like a naked newborn babe

13 First, as I] F; First, I Q1673 20 taking-off] Capell; taking off F

7 **jump** hazard (*OED* Jump *v* 11, citing only this line and *Cym.* 5.4.182, neither especially clear in signification); pass or leap over (?). For the latter, see Booth, p. 170.

8 We always ('still') are punished here because we only ('but') teach others (how to commit our own crimes against ourselves).

10–11 NS compares 'auctorem scelus / repetit suoque premitur exemplo nocens' ('upon its author the crime comes back, and the guilty soul is crushed by its own form of guilt' (Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 735–6, trans. F. J. Miller)). Howard Jacobson, *SQ* 35 (1984), 321–2, also cites 'saepe in magistrum scelera redierunt sua' ('often upon the teacher have his bad teachings turned' (Seneca, *Thyestes* 311, trans. F. J. Miller)).

10 even-handed impartial.

11 **ingredience** 'ingredients' considered collectively (*OED* Ingredience 1a). Shakespeare's word is obsolete, but modern 'ingredients' is inadequate; 'ingredience' appears in Shakespeare only here, at 4.1.34, and in *Oth.* Q (1622), sig. F3r (where Folio *Oth.* reads 'ingredients').

12 **double** Macbeth now cites three relations of trust. For two-ness and three-ness, see 1.6.16n., and p. 26 above.

14 **as his host** For social perceptions of a host's duties, see Heal, chapters 2 and 3.

16–20 'Duncane was so soft and gentle of nature, that the people wished the inclinations and manners of these two cousins [Macbeth and Duncan] to have bene . . . interchangeable bestowed betwixt them' (*Scotland*, p. 168b). 'The real Duncan was a weak and worthless youth, who was put out of the way

because that was the best that could be done with him' (White<sup>2</sup>).

16 **this Duncan** this king, who is Duncan (?). While 'this' seems to particularise ('this Duncan rather than another Duncan'), the word also implies that the specific King Duncan who is Macbeth's guest, kinsman, and king belongs to some larger category (of men named Duncan or of kings). The odd formula ('this Duncan') is a form of evasion (compare Lady Macbeth's 'He that's coming' (1.5.64)); it curiously lessens both Duncan's individuality and Macbeth's responsibility and therefore makes killing Duncan less terrible to contemplate.

17 **faculties** powers, privileges (*OED* Faculty *sb* 11a, quoting this line); 'authority delegated to him' (Heath, p. 385).

18 **clear** innocent (*OED* Clear *adj* 15a, quoting this line).

19 **trumpet-tongued** 'Duncan's virtues speak with a trumpet-tongue on this matter of his murder' (Sisson, II, 194); the phrase modifies 'angels'.

21–5 See Brooks (pp. 21–46) for a classic defence 'of the relation of Shakespeare's imagery' here to 'larger symbols' and 'total structures' (p. 30) in the play, and see p. 45 above.

21–2 **newborn babe . . . heaven's cherubin** The alternative offered here between an image of vulnerability ('babe') and one of heavenly power ('heaven's cherubin') at first seems confused, but the compressed images join together Macbeth's future opponents: Banquo's children, who will succeed to Scotland's throne (see 1.3.65), and the near-divinely endorsed forces (see 4.3.240–2) that

Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed  
 Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
 That 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 –

25

*Enter* LADY [MACBETH]

How now? What news?

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

22 cherubin] F (Cherubin); cherubim Q1673; Cherubins Muir 28 th'other –] Rowe; th'other. F

will drive Macbeth from that throne. Brooks (p. 45) comments: 'is Pity like the human and helpless babe, or powerful as the angel that rides the winds? It is both; and it is strong because of its very weakness. The paradox is inherent in the situation itself; and it is the paradox that will destroy the overbrittle rationalism on which Macbeth founds his career.' For a contrary view, see Helen Gardner, *The Business of Criticism*, 1959, pp. 52–61.

22 blast gale; wind of the trumpet-tongued angels.

22 cherubin cherub (second in the traditional nine-fold order of angels). Cherubim commanded the air – '*Seraph* reignes o're Fire; / *Cherub* the Aire' (*Hierarchie*, p. 216) – and were associated with the winds (see Milton, *Paradise Lost* II, 516–18). Renaissance maps often represent the principal winds as cherubs with puffed cheeks. F's 'Cherubin' is a contemporary singular (compare Phrynia's 'cherubin look', *Tim.* 4.3.64); the contemporary plural was 'cherubins' (as at *MV* 5.1.62); modern English follows Hebrew: 'cherub' (singular), 'cherubim' (plural). Some editors choose a plural form ('cherubins' or 'cherubim') because 'couriers' (23) need plural riders, but the condensed metaphorical context makes those choices over-literal, and one cherub might easily be imagined to have charge of four winds.

23 sightless couriers invisible messengers; invisible means of transport, i.e. the winds which invisibly move the air from place to place. The echo of 'sightless substances' (1.5.47) makes plain the contrast of murder and pity, sin and dissuasion from sin. Following Malone and others, Shaheen cites 'He rode upon the Cherubims and dyd flee [fly]: he came fleeyng [flying] upon the wynges of the wynde' (Ps. 18.10, Geneva).

24 blow sound; propel.

24 every eye every organ of sight; every person. The second meaning is a synecdoche.

25 tears i.e. drops of compassion and the 'watering' caused by a foreign object ('the deed') lodged in 'every eye'. Proverbially, 'Little rain lays great winds' (Dent R16), and the line gains its power from hyperbole: 'tears' become rain so powerful as to 'drown' the insubstantial and omnipresent wind.

25–8 I... th'other Two interpretations of Macbeth's images have been offered: (1) continuing the equine images of 22–3, Macbeth distinguishes his intent to murder, which he imagines as an unspurred horse, from his ambition to be king, which he imagines as an eager rider who overdoes his vault ('o'erleaps') and thus fails to land in the saddle; (2) horse and rider together fall when the pair fails to over-leap an obstacle. Catherine Belsey, 'Shakespeare's "vaulting ambition"', *ELN* 10 (1972), 198–201, supports (2) and associates this passage with medieval and later depictions of Pride as a vaulting figure. In either case, the imagery echoes Macbeth's response to the naming of Malcolm as Prince of Cumberland (1.4.48–50). More generally, see R. N. Watson, 'Horsemanship in Shakespeare's second tetralogy', *ELR* 13 (1983), 274–300. Lady Macbeth's entrance interrupts the speech, but the audience may supply 'side' (of the imaginary horse or obstacle) as Macbeth's next (unspoken) word.

29 supped finished dining.

29 Why... chamber For the host to leave the table before the chief guest had finished his meal violated protocol; see 'how does your rising up before all the table shew? and flinging from my friends so uncivilly' (Dekker [and Thomas Middleton], *The Roaring Girl* 3.2.6–7).

- MACBETH Hath he asked for me?  
 LADY MACBETH Know you not, he has? 30  
 MACBETH We will proceed no further in this business.  
 He hath honoured me of late, and I have bought  
 Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
 Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,  
 Not cast aside so soon.
- LADY MACBETH Was the hope drunk 35  
 Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?  
 And wakes it now to look so green and pale  
 At what it did so freely? From this time,  
 Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard  
 To be the same in thine own act and valour, 40  
 As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that  
 Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,  
 And live a coward in thine own esteem,  
 Letting I dare not wait upon I would,  
 Like the poor cat i'th'adage?
- MACBETH Prithee, peace. 45  
 I dare do all that may become a man;

39 afeard] F (affear'd) 43 esteem,] Collier; Esteeme? F; esteem; Capell 45 adage?] Capell; Addage. F

30 **Hath . . . me** Macbeth guiltily supposes Duncan has repeated his earlier praise, or wishes to honour him further.

30 **Know . . . has** Lady Macbeth assumes Macbeth has deliberately withdrawn to avoid Duncan's attention. Capell (*Notes*, p. 10) conjectured 'Know you not? he has.', and his punctuation is more easily spoken. The staging exploits the audience's fluid imagination: 'the precise location is less important than the juxtaposition of Macbeth's isolation with the conviviality taking place in the adjoining room' (Bevington, p. 130).

33 **sorts kinds**; (social) ranks.

34 **worn** Opinions (33) are now treated as garments. Compare 'you in the ruff of your opinions clothed' (V. Gabrieli and G. Melchiori (eds.), *STM*, 1990, 2.3.85).

34 **gloss** superficial lustre (*OED Gloss sb<sup>2</sup> 1a*), shininess. Figuratively, gloss = 'highest value' (because newest); compare 'all his [Achilles'] virtues, / Not virtuously on his own part beheld, / Do in our eyes begin to lose their gloss' (*Tro.* 2.3.117-19).

35 **cast aside** When dirtied, the richest Renaissance garments were discarded or given away because they could not be cleaned.

35-8 **Was . . . freely** Lady Macbeth represents

'hope' as a person – first drunkenly hopeful, then comatose, then hungover – who initially dressed himself in a garment (also = 'hope'), but then sleeps himself into a cowardly sobriety. Compare 2.3.20-30.

37 **green and pale** Popularly imagined consequences of drunkenness, then as now.

39 **Such** i.e. you are like the fearful, hungover drunkard, bold only when inebriated.

39 **account** consider.

39-41 **Art . . . desire** Are you (now sober, unlustful, and detumescent) afraid to be and do what you were and desired to be when you were drunk. For this verbal possibility, see the immediate sexualised language of 'be' (40), 'do' and 'become a man' (46), 'do' (47).

39 **afeard** afraid.

44-5 **Letting . . . adage** The adage is 'The cat would eat fish but she will not wet her feet' (Dent C144). Macbeth wants the kingship, but will risk nothing; later, he will find his feet wet with blood (3.4.136-7). Unlike Lady Macbeth, contemporaries used the proverb positively to exhort 'the idle to action' or to note 'that luxury carries penalties' (Martin Orkin in *Reader*, p. 494).

45 **Prithee, peace** i.e. I pray thee, be quiet.

Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH

What beast was't then

That made you break this enterprise to me?

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

And to be more than what you were, you would

50

Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place

Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.

They have made themselves and that their fitness now

Does unmake you. I have given suck and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

55

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums

And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn

As you have done to this.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail?

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,

60

And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep,

Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey

47 do] *Rowe*; no F 55 me:] *Capell*; me, F; me – *Rowe* 59 We fail?] F (We faile?); We fail! *Rowe* 60 sticking-place] *Steevens*<sup>s</sup>; sticking place F

47 none i.e. no man. For Macbeth at this moment, daring to kill the king would move him beyond humanity. See next n.

47–51 What . . . man Lady Macbeth seems here either to give her version of 1.5 or to be reporting speeches we have not heard: to achieve the kingship ('more than what you were'), Macbeth would necessarily become more intensely masculine ('so much more the man') rather than (as he claims) become no man. See Waith and 4.3.222–6n.

47 beast Lady Macbeth immediately understands Macbeth's 'none' to mean an animal.

48 break disclose, divulge (*OED* Break v 22).

48 enterprise bold, arduous, or momentous undertaking (*OED* Enterprise sb 1).

49 durst dared (an obsolete past tense).

52 adhere agree.

52 make both According to his wife, Macbeth seeks to make both occasion and place, seeks to control time and topography. See 1.1.1 n.

53 that their fitness now i.e. now they have become appropriate ('fit').

54–9 See pp. 36–8 above.

55 milks obtains milk by sucking (sole citation for *OED* Milk v 1d). Compare Cleopatra's description of the deadly asp: 'Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, / That sucks the nurse asleep?' (*Ant.*

5.2.309–10).

57 his The ungendered 'babe' (55) becomes male.

58–9 sworn . . . to this bound myself by oath . . . to this course of action.

59 We fail? F's question mark (which stood for both modern '?' and '!') can represent either interrogation (sincere or scornful) or exclamation (surprised, scornful, or resigned).

60 But Only.

60 screw . . . sticking-place tighten, make taut, your courage to the limit. The underlying metaphor may be from tightening the tuning pegs of a stringed instrument or from winding up the cord on a crossbow. See 79 below, 1.3.35, and 2.2.36; and compare 'wind up invention / Unto his highest bent' (John Marston, *Antonio's Revenge*, ed. Reavley Gair, 1978, 4.3.192–3) and 'Wind up your souls to their full height' (Cyril Tourneur (? but more likely Thomas Middleton), *The Revenger's Tragedy*, ed. R. A. Foakes, 1966, 5.2.7). The 'sticking-place' may also be the place at which a moral individual hesitates or the place beyond which a moral individual refuses to go or a stab-wound (see *OED* Stick v<sup>1</sup> 1a and 3.1.51 n., and *OED* Sticking-place 3).

62 the rather the more readily, all the sooner.

Soundly invite him, his two chamberlains  
 Will I with wine and wassail so convince  
 That memory, the warder of the brain, 65  
 Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason  
 A limbeck only. When in swinish sleep  
 Their drenchèd natures lies as in a death,  
 What cannot you and I perform upon  
 Th'unguarded Duncan? What not put upon 70  
 His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt  
 Of our great quell?

MACBETH                                 Bring forth men-children only,  
 For thy undaunted mettle should compose  
 Nothing but males. Will it not be received,  
 When we have marked with blood those sleepy two 75

65 warder] F; warden conj. Schanzer, p. 224

63 **Soundly** A transferred adverb: Duncan will sleep 'soundly'; there is perhaps the added irony of a 'sound' (= robust, healthy) sleep that is death.

63 **chamberlains** Attendants in the royal bed-chamber (*OED* Chamberlain 1a). See 75–6 n.

64 **wassail** liquor (in which toasts were drunk).

64 **convince** overcome, conquer.

65–7 **memory . . . only** Memory, a guard ('warder') of the brain against irrational thoughts or impulses, will become vapour ('a fume') and reason's chamber ('receipt') will merely receive the condensation of a distilling apparatus ('limbeck') – an elaborate, metaphorical description of drunkenness: 'hote wyne, and strong drinckes . . . fill the braine with vapours' (Barrough, p. 11). See illustration 8, p. 46 above. Arnold Davenport (cited in Schanzer, p. 224) over-rationalises the metaphors: 'the receptacle which should collect only the pure drops of reason . . . will be turned into the retort in which . . . undistilled liquids bubble and fume'. In July 1606 (see p. 8 above), James VI and I and his brother-in-law Christian IV of Denmark witnessed a masque of Hope, Faith, and Charity, when 'wine did so occupy' the actors' 'upper chambers' that 'most of the presenters went backward, or fell down' (*Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington*, ed. N. E. McClure, 1930, pp. 119–20).

65 **warder** Soldier or other person set to guard an entrance; watchman (*OED* Warder sb<sup>1</sup> 1, quoting 4.1.55). Schanzer's conjecture ('warden' for 'warder') apparently assumes that Composer A misread a terminal suspension (in 'wardere'?) and ignores the classical, medieval, and early modern understanding of memory's importance to moral judgement and prudence (see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 1990, pp. 68–71).

66 **fume** vapour.

66 **receipt** receptacle (this line is the latest citation for *OED* Receipt sb 12a).

67 **limbeck** alembic (aphetic form), an apparatus used in distilling. The 'beak' of the alembic 'conveyed the vaporous products to a receiver [see 'receipt' (66)], in which they were condensed' (*OED* Alembic 1). See illustration 8, p. 46 above.

67 **swinish** i.e. drunken. Compare 'As drunk as a swine' (Dent S1042).

68 **lies** Singular verb in -s with plural subject (Abbott 333), assisted here by the figurative link between 'sleep' (67) and 'death' (68); see 'sleep, death's counterfeit' (2.3.70).

70 **put upon** impose; saddle with (*OED* Put v<sup>1</sup> 23a, c). Responsibility for the murder will be laid upon the 'chamberlains' (63).

71 **spongy** absorbent (*OED* Spongy 3b; this line and *Tro.* 2.2.12 are the earliest citations). The men will soak up liquor like sponges.

71 **officers** office-holders, persons who perform certain duties; not 'military personnel'.

72 **quell** slaughter, murder.

72–4 **Bring forth . . . but males** Compare 'if woman do breed man / She ought to teach him manhood' (Webster, *White Devil* 5.6.242–3).

73 **mettle** spirit, courage. Early modern orthography did not distinguish 'mettle' and 'metal', making possible a pun on male children as metallic warriors armoured in mail (see Adelman, pp. 139–40, and the mail/male pun at Dekker [and Thomas Middleton], *The Roaring Girl* 3.3.18–20).

74 **males** There may be a pun on 'mail' (= armour). See 73 n.

74 **received** understood, believed (by others).

75–6 **two . . . chamber** i.e. two members of the king's bedchamber. In the Jacobean court, ap-

Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,  
That they have done't?

LADY MACBETH                      Who dares receive it other,  
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar  
Upon his death?

MACBETH                      I am settled and bend up  
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.                      80  
Away, and mock the time with fairest show,  
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

*Exeunt*

2.1 *Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE, with a Torch[-bearer] before him*

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.                      5

77 done't] F (don't) Act 2, Scene 1 2.1] F (*Actus Secundus. Scena Prima.*) o SD Torch-bearer] F (Torch)  
4 sword. –] Collier (*after Capell*); Sword: F 5 out. – Take] Theobald; out: take F

pointed members of the bedchamber attended the king's personal needs. See Neil Cuddy, 'The revival of the entourage: the bedchamber of James I, 1603–1625', in *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. David Starkey, 1987, pp. 173–225.

76 very own.

77 other otherwise.

78 As When (*Lexicon*); 'Equivalent to *seeing that*' (Clarendon).

79 settled unchanging, undeviating (*OED* Settled *ppl a 1*).

79 bend up brace, tighten, prepare to act; see 60 n.

80 corporal corporeal, bodily. See 1.3.79 n.

80 agent physical resource; muscle (Hunter).

81–2 'Fair face foul heart' (Dent F3). Macbeth now repeats his wife's advice (1.5.61–4); see 3.2.32–4 and n.

81 mock deceive.

Act 2, Scene 1

The scene takes place in Macbeth's castle (fictionally, at Inverness). It is liminal: sufficiently out of doors for stars and moon to be looked for (1–2), sufficiently indoors for Banquo to get ready for 'sleep' (7).

o SD *Torch-bearer* F's SD might mean that Fleance holds a torch and precedes Banquo (*him*), but F's punctuation apparently stipulates a torch-bearer (often referred to as *Torch*), making three actors in all. Compare 3.3.14 SD.

1 *How goes the night* How much of the night has passed? See *OED* Go v 11, quoting 'How goes the time' (John Marston, *Antonio and Mellida* (c. 1600), ed. Reavley Gair, 1991, 3.1.102). Macbeth virtually repeats the question, 'What is the night?' (3.4.126).

4–5 *There's . . . out* Usually understood as: 'There's thrift ("husbandry") in heaven, they have extinguished (put "out") their stars ("candles").' Steevens<sup>3</sup> compares 'Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day / Stands tiptoe' (*Rom.* 3.5.9–10); see also: 'those golden candles fixed in heaven's air' (Sonnet 21.12) and 'these blessed candles of the night' (*MV* 5.1.220). David-Everett Blythe, 'Banquo's candles', *ELH* 58 (1991), 773–8, unconvincingly proposes the paraphrase 'There's concern (= "husbandry") for humankind in heaven, they have displayed (put "out") their candles/stars.'

5 *Take . . . too* Banquo, preparing for rest, disarms himself (4) and now removes some other accoutrement (his dagger or cloak, perhaps, or some