

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

appointed 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* Set-tled *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

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,  
 And yet I would not sleep; merciful powers,  
 Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature  
 Gives way to in repose.

*Enter MACBETH, and a Servant with a torch*

Give me my sword –

Who's there?

10

MACBETH A friend.

BANQUO What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's abed.

He hath been in unusual pleasure

And sent forth great largess to your offices.

This diamond he greets your wife withal,

15

[*Gives Macbeth a diamond*]

By the name of most kind hostess, and shut up

In measureless content.

MACBETH Being unprepared,

Our will became the servant to defect,

9 SD] F (*subst.*); *after sword* (9) *Capell* 13 hath . . . pleasure] F (hath beene in vnusuall Pleasure); has been to night in an unusual pleasure *Davenant* 15 SD] *Folger* (*subst.*); not in F; *Capell* marks as 'a thing deliver'd' (*'Prolusions'*, p. vi) 16 shut] F; shut it F2-4

some ceremonial item associated with the state dinner he has just attended) or (as in some productions) hands Fleance 'This diamond' (15).

7–9 Sleep is not inevitably restorative (2.2.40–3); like drink (2.3.21–2), it can provoke.

8 *cursèd thoughts* ambitious dreams (prompted by the sisters' prophecies and Macbeth's recent success); nightmares (about Macbeth's possible crimes). Macbeth enters before Banquo chooses between these alternatives. See 20 and 50–1; 'unstained thoughts do seldom dream on evil' (*The Rape of Lucrece* 87); and Imogen's bedtime prayer, 'gods, / From fairies and the tempters of the night / Guard me' (*Cym.* 2.2.8–10).

9 SD *Enter . . . torch* F's placing of the SD may indicate the moment when the actors enter; Capell's repositioning makes Banquo anticipate the entrance. F's *Torch* might indicate a torch-bearer, but theatrical economy and F's punctuation suggest one servant holding one torch. Compare o SD and n.

10–11 Challenge and response: Banquo is tense; Macbeth appears as either a 'merciful power' (7) or a 'cursèd thought' (8).

14 *largess . . . offices* gifts to the castle functionaries (Brooke).

15–16 'This diamond' may be a ring or pendant. Banquo, companion to Duncan in 1.6, conveys a royal gift one might expect the king to deliver personally; compare 2.3.39 n., and Textual Analysis, pp. 276–7 below. The gift-giving emphasises Duncan's false sense of security and affirms the social code Macbeth is about to break.

15 *greet*s . . . *withal* salutes your wife with. The verb and its complement control both 'diamond' and 'name' (16).

16 *shut up* went to bed (in a curtained bed (see 51) within a chamber). The phrase could mean 'concluded' (i.e. ended his speech); the grammar is stretched to report what Duncan said ('greet's') and then what he has done ('shut up'). Later Folios make 'shut up' refer to an imaginary case for the diamond.

17 *unprepared* unready, unwarned. This easy social remark (the castle was not prepared to receive a king) anticipates the ways Macbeth and others do not foresee what is to come (see, especially, 2.3.119–27), but also momentarily suggests that Duncan is 'unprepared' for his murder.

18 *Our* An anticipatory royal plural; compare 22 and 5.6.4.

18 *defect* deficiency (*Lexicon*).

Which else should free have wrought.

BANQUO All's well.

I dreamed last night of the three weird sisters;  
To you they have showed some truth. 20

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.

BANQUO At your kind'st leisure.

MACBETH If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis, 25  
It shall make honour for you.

BANQUO So I lose none  
In seeking to augment it, but still keep  
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,  
I shall be counselled.

MACBETH Good repose the while.

BANQUO Thanks, sir; the like to you. 30

[*Exeunt*] Banquo[, Fleance, and Torch-bearer]

MACBETH [*To Servant*] Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,  
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

*Exit* [Servant]

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:

20 weird] *Theobald*; weyward F 23 it in] F; it *Rowe*; omitted by *Rowe*<sup>2</sup> 30 SD] *Capell* (subst.); *Exit Banquo* F 32 SD  
*Exit Servant*] *Rowe*; *Exit* F

19 free . . . wrought liberally have worked.

19 All's well All is not well, as Banquo's next words testify.

22–4 Macbeth's courtly politeness and the apparent royal 'we' intimate his sense of changed (or soon to be changed) status; his desire to talk about the witches contradicts 'I think not of them' (21).

24 If you would grant the time Granting or gaining time will become an important issue; Banquo's descendants overreach Macbeth in time.

24 leisure See 1.3.147n.

25 cleave to my consent agree (or adhere) to my feeling (or opinion); see *OED* Consent *sb* 6.

25 when 'tis when it ('the time' (24)) is.

28 franchised free. Banquo apparently wishes to remain free of obligation to Macbeth or of implication in his schemes.

29 the while in the meantime.

30 sir The respectful title introduces a note of subordination (perhaps prompted by 22–4) not present in 1.3.

30 SD See 0 SD n.

31 drink An imaginary nightcap. As a code-word for murder, 'drink' is appropriate to the drunken grooms (1.7.63–8, 2.2.53), the drunken-hopeful Macbeth (1.7.35–8), and the speeches of the hungover Porter (2.3.1 ff).

32 bell A clapperless bell like a ship's bell, or a gong (see 'strike upon'); this bell is for routine internal communication (compare 'alarum bell' (2.3.68)). See W. J. Lawrence, 'Bells on the Elizabethan stage', *Fortnightly Review* 122 (July 1924), 59–70.

34 handle . . . hand This detail identifies the dagger as a weapon for, rather than a threat to, Macbeth and makes plain the fact that the dagger is invisible to the audience. As a 'visual metonym' (see Michael Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre*, 1982, p. 65), the dagger might have reminded audiences of other literary and dramatic occasions when the secular or demonic realms offer weapons as temptations to despair and suicide – for example, the moment when Tamburlaine's henchmen

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still. 35  
 Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
 To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but  
 A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
 Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?  
 I see thee yet, in form as palpable 40  
 As this which now I draw.  
 Thou marshall'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, 45  
 And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,  
 Which was not so before. There's no such thing:  
 It is the bloody business which informs  
 Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world  
 Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse 50  
 The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates  
 Pale Hecate's off'rings, and withered murder,

49 half-world] *Clarendon*; halfe World F

display a dagger to Agydas and he understands he must either commit suicide or be killed; see *Tamburlaine, Part 1* 3.2.88–106. Compare 64.

**36 fatal** deadly, mortal. The adjective is both active and passive: the vision is of mortality (Duncan's death); the dagger is deadly to vision (Macbeth's own). See 38n.

**36 sensible** perceptible.

**37 as to sight** The question depends upon an optical theory that vision was the product of beams radiated by the eye and reflected to it.

**38 of the mind** imaginary. The phrase also yields an image of a dagger *in* the mind, a keen knife that makes a moral and psychological wound (see 1.3.138 and 1.5.50). Encountering Caesar's ghost, Brutus supposes 'it is the weakness of mine eyes / That shapes this monstrous apparition' (*JC* 4.3.276–7).

**39 heat-oppressèd** subdued, afflicted by heat (considered a quality of the human body and its 'humours'). Macbeth responds to the vision analytically; his explanation is physiological, and the 'heat' might arise from 'anger, or furiousness . . . perturbations of the minde' (Barrough, pp. 2–3).

**40 yet still.**

**40 palpable** tangible; perceptible (*OED* Palpable *a* 1–2).

**42 Thou marshall'st** You guide, usher. Compare 'Our conquering swords shall marshal us the way' (*Tamburlaine, Part 1* 3.3.148).

**46 dudgeon** hilt, handle. This line is the sole

citation under *OED* Dudgeon *sb*<sup>1</sup> 2, and the word may have Scottish associations, since Cotgrave defines *Dague à roëlles* as 'A Scottish dagger; or Dudgeon haft dagger' (Capell, 'Glossary' in *Notes*, 1, 21). The blood Macbeth now sees covers not merely the blade, but the handle (where it will stain his hand). See 2.3.109 n.

**46 gouts** spots, splashes. The word derives from French *goutte* (drop) 'and, according to [nineteenth-century or earlier?] stage-tradition, [is] so pronounced' (Clarendon).

**47 thing** i.e. a dagger. Macbeth corrects his 'eyes', the 'fools' or deceivers of his other senses (44), and says the dagger is imaginary, 'no such thing' (47).

**49–64** 'He that peruses Shakespeare [in these lines], looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone' (Johnson).

**49 half-world** i.e. the hemisphere in darkness.

**50 seems dead** i.e. because nature is asleep. Compare 1.7.68 and 2.3.70.

**50 wicked dreams** Compare Banquo's fears (8–9).

**51 curtained** See 16n.

**51 celebrates** performs the rites; honours.

**52 Hecate's off'rings** Offerings to Hecate, classical goddess of the moon and of sorcery. In Shakespeare's plays, 'Hecate' is always disyllabic and stressed on the first syllable except at *1H6* 3.2.64; F's syncope of 'off'rings' is not metrically necessary, and some editors print 'offerings'. See 3.2.41 n.

Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,  
 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,  
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design 55  
 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,  
 And take the present horror from the time,  
 Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives; 60  
 Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

*A bell rings*

I go, and it is done. The bell invites me.  
 Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell  
 That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

*Exit*

55 strides] *Pope*; sides F 56 sure] F (sowre) 57 way they] *Rome*; they may F 61 SD] F (*Bell*), at right margin

53 **Alarumed** Warned, prompted to action; compare 1.2.0 SD n.

54 **howl's** howl is.

54 **his watch** Murder's time-piece; the wolf's night-duty. On the second possibility, see 'the Wolfe shal be watchman and keepe many wayes' (*Prophesie*, sig. A3r).

54 **stealthy** This line is *OED*'s earliest citation for the word (Schäfer).

55 **Tarquin** Sextus Tarquinius, the Etruscan prince who raped Lucretia, wife of Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus. She committed suicide, and her relatives and friends led a rebellion (c. 509 BC) that overthrew the monarchy and established the Roman republic. See *The Rape of Lucrece* and Iachimo's memory of 'Our Tarquin' when he prepares his mock-rape of Imogen (*Cym.* 2.2.12–14). The analogy here sexualises regicide and was available to contemporaries: addressing Shakespeare, Henry Chettle wrote, 'Shepheard remember our *Elizabeth*, / And sing her Rape, done by that *Tarquin*, Death' (*Englands Mourning Garment* (1603), sig. D3r).

55 **strides** long steps. Compare 'turn two mincing steps / Into a manly stride' (*MV* 3.4.67–8). F's 'sides' has not been satisfactorily interpreted; it is also hard to explain as the copyist's or compositor's misreading of 'strides', but 'Whoever hath experienced walking in the dark must have observed, that a man . . . always feels out his way by strides, by advancing one foot, as far as he finds it safe, before the other' (Heath, p. 387). Elsewhere, 'stalks' (*The Rape of Lucrece* 365) and 'slunk' (*Tit.* 4.1.63) describe the way Tarquin approached Lucrece's bed.

56 **sure** reliable, steady. *OED* *Sure* *a* and *adv* records 'sowr' (F: 'sowre'; Q1673: 'sowr') as a form of 'sure'. NS and Shaheen compare 'He hath made the rounde world so sure: that it can not be moved'

(Ps. 93.2, Psalter version).

56 **firm-set** solidly positioned, stable.

58 **prate** blab, tell tales. Compare 'the land bids me tread no more upon't, / It is ashamed to bear me' (*Ant.* 3.11.1–2). Speaking stones are uncommon; Grey (11, 144) thought Luke 19.40 an analogue, but the context (telling the good word) is far from this one. Dent s895.1 ('The stones would speak') cites Gascoigne (1573): 'When men crye mumme and keepe such silence long, / Then stones must speake, els dead men shall have wrong', and Malone cites 'yet will the very stones / That lie within the streetes cry out for vengeance' (*Warning*, sig. G1r). See 3.4.123, where stones move and trees speak.

58 **whereabout** location, position (*OED* *Whereabout* 4, where this line is the earliest instance given of this interrogative word used as a noun).

59 **take** remove, withhold.

59 **the present horror** i.e. the silence that would be broken by speaking stones.

59 **time** time of night (compare *OED* *Time* sb 13); not, probably, the more general 'circumstances, the times' (*OED* *Time* sb 3d).

60 **threat** threaten. Macbeth accuses himself of bluster.

62 **it** Either (1) Lady Macbeth's preparatory drugging of Duncan's retainers, or (2) the regicide itself.

63–4 The bell has also summoned Macbeth to damnation.

63 **knell** Church bell rung to announce a death. Macbeth imagines he has already committed the murder. See 4.3.172–3 and n, and 5.9.17.

64 SD Henry Irving made an actor's 'point' of this exit when he hesitated an unusually long time before leaving the stage very slowly; see Sprague, p. 241.