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Macbeth:

The Play That Dare Not Speak Its Name

by

Dennis Bohr

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Macbeth: The Play That Dare Not Speak Its Name

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CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

BETHOC (LADY BANQUO): *Duncan's mother*

DOADA (LADY MACDUFF): *Macbeth's mother*

SYBIL (LADY DUNCAN): *mother of Malcolm and Donalbain*

DONALBAIN: *son of Duncan and Sybil; brother of Malcolm*

GRUOCH (LADY MACBETH): *Macbeth's wife*

BANQUO: *General; close friend of Macbeth; married to Bethoc*

MACBETH: *King of Scotland; son of Doada; married to Gruoch*

ROSS: *kinsman*

SIWARD: *English soldier*

PORTER

MACDUFF: *General; stepfather of Macbeth; married to Doada*

MURDERER #1

MURDERER #2

MALCOLM: *son of Duncan and Sybil; brother of Donalbain*

Macbeth: The Play That Dare Not Speak Its Name
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Act I, Scene 1a

(Thunder & lightning—lights up slowly)

BETHOC *(In a portentous voice)*
When shall we three meet again,
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

DOADA
When the hurly burly's done
When the battle's lost and won

SYBIL
That will be ere the set of sun

BETHOC
Wait—what's a hurly burly? Is it like a wooly booly?

DOADA
Or a hurdy gurdy?

(Lights out quickly)

Act I, Scene 1b

(Thunder & lightning—lights up quickly)

BETHOC *(In a portentous voice)*
When shall we three meet again,
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

DOADA
When the wooly-booly's done
When the human race is run

SYBIL
Meanwhile let's all have some fun!

(Lights out quickly.)

Act I, Scene 1c

(Thunder & lightning—lights up.)

BETHOC *(In a portentous voice)*
*When shall we three meet again,
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?*

DOADA
How does next Tuesday sound?

BETHOC
No good. That's the night for my *reiki* class.

SYBIL
And the kids have their art classes.

DOADA
How about the following Thursday?

BETHOC *(As they exit)*
Wooly-booly—

DOADA
Hurly-burly—

SYBIL
Hurdy-gurdy.

(Lights fade to black.)

Act I, Scene 2

(Lights up on DONALBAIN.)

DONALBAIN
What is amiss?
(Pause.)
*What should be spoken here, where our fate,
Hid in an auger hole, may rush, and seize us?
Let's away;
Our tears are not yet brew'd.*
(Pause.)
*To Ireland, I; our separate fortune
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are*

DONALBAIN (*Cont.*)

*There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.*

(*Pause.*)

It is common in the age you live in to tell the stories of those whose stories have not been told—and mine is a prime candidate. Me? I'm Donalbain, son to Duncan, brother to Malcolm. I'm the one who goes off to Ireland.

The words you've just heard are my lines from Shakespeare's play—all fifty-five of them. I've already said more in this play than I get to say in the 'Scottish play.' My brother, Malcolm the Big Head, gets to be king and the damn-near hero of the thing. I guess it would only be worse if the play were called *Malcolm* instead of *Macbeth*.

My mom's story would be an interesting one as well—

(*Enter SYBIL.*)

SYBIL

--But I'm not only *not* in Shakespeare's play, I don't even get named. (It's Sybil by the way.) I guess 'good' king Duncan fathered Malcolm, Maelmore, you, and your two sisters all by himself.

(*Enter DOADA & BETHOC.*)

DOADA

What about our stories?

DONALBAIN (*To audience*)

My aunties: Doado—Macbeth's mother, a.k.a. Lady Macduff, and Sybil's sister; and Bethoc, a.k.a. Lady Banquo—sister to Sybil and Doado.

DOADA

We were labeled 'witches' and 'weird sisters,' but we weren't real people with names—just numbers.

BETHOC

I always thought I was witch number three.

SYBIL

Doado, at least you're in the play and have some lines as Lady Macduff.

DOADA

Aye, named by my marital status and only long enough to be martyred.

(*Enter GRUOCH, LADY MACBETH*)

GRUOCH

And what of me, Gruoch, the infamous Lady Macbeth? Your stories are worthy of telling, aye, but is it worse to be lost to history as you are or to be recorded as I am—an evil bloodthirsty harpy? Women as far back as Eve get the blame for the men’s blood lust, as if men are not capable of insane savagery without us.

DONALBAIN

Ah, but that’s the way of history since history was invented.

SYBIL

Women were left out of the equation because it was the men doing the great deeds—

DOADA

—the killing—

BETHOC

the burning—

SYBIL

and the maiming—

DONALBAIN

—so if you were a writer, of course you’d record their great deeds. Otherwise it might be the last time you took pen to paper. Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* is a tale of the winners. What *we* have is a somewhat-true history of Macbeth, but mostly it’s a story of the losers.

BETHOC (*As the lights fade*)

My thumbs are pricking again.

Act I, Scene 3

(*Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.*)

BANQUO

I’m tired of all this fighting, aren’t you? It’s so hard to get the blood out of my kilt.

MACBETH

Aye. I’d rather read a book, go to the theatre, or ply my cunnilingual skills with Gruoch.

(*They laugh and nudge each other.*)

BANQUO

Hark—who goes there? What are these so wither’d and wild in their attire, that look not like the inhabitants of the earth yet are on it?

MACBETH

It's just the Weird Sisters—mum and her sisters, Lady Duncan and your own Lady Bethoc.

BANQUO

Aye, 'tis my wife, my life. Methinks I smoked too much of that insane root yestermorn. It's confused me mind and senses. What cook'st thou in the charmed pot, wife?

(He and BETHOC cuddle with each other.)

BETHOC

Haggis, neeps, and tatties.

BANQUO

Yummy!

MACBETH

No sheep guts for me. What news? Have you been foreseeing the future again, mom?

DOADA

We hear things by and by from a crow we know. You have the sight too, son, though you pretend you haven't because your boys' club might deem it 'unmanly.'

MACBETH

Speaking of 'un-manly,' where's your husband, my new step-father, Macduff?

DOADA

He's negotiating a truce between your cousins Thorfinn and Duncan.

SYBIL

Come, Macbeth, surely you're not jealous of your mother's remarriage.

DOADA

Oh, he's been reading *Hamlet* again. Just give him a taste of those purple berries and he'll mellow out.

BETHOC

What didst you see on your last journey, Macbeth?

MACBETH

A tale too bloody to tell. And must I be your guinea pig?

SYBIL

We have all eaten of the mekilwort berries, but you wanted to see, to know. 'Show, show, show!' you commanded.

MACBETH

But what about the side effects, Auntie B? These multi-colored striations?

BETHOC

They're the coolest part. Didn't you read the warning labels?

MACBETH

Who has time? Ah, time creeps in this pretty face from date to date—

SYBIL

I believe that's 'Tomorrow.'

MACBETH

Tomorrow this morrow may never see. I get glimpses of the truth, harbingers of what's to come, but they only make sense after they've happened.

BETHOC

Too much of that finger of birth-strangled babe will give you the runs. Any good hallucinations?

MACBETH

Just daggers, oceans of blood, and something called the Mets winning something called the 1969 World Series.

BETHOC

Sour bodements these. Let me check my texts—

(She looks through a huge book.)

Were there horses in the visions? Storms and lightning? Men's faces?

MACBETH

They all wore baklavas.

BETHOC

Men with desserts on their heads?

BANQUO

He means balaclavas.

BETHOC *(Reading from her book)*

Ah, yes, vision #43: 'Daggers and blood suggest death—or birth. Daggers may indicate violence and mayhem—which may lead to death, birth or resurrection of same-said dead. Men in hoods, wild storms and horses screaming could be precursors of death or merely a Picasso painting.'

DOADA

How's my step-daughter, the Lady Macbeth? Is she still troubled by nightmares of her little ones' murder by her first husband?

MACBETH

Aye, Gruoch sleepwalks and talks but seldom sleeps. But that man will not trouble her more.

DOADA

You saw to that, aye, but no mother ever fully recovers from her children's deaths.

MACBETH

Is Duncan coming hither this evening, Aunt Sybil?

SYBIL

He's playing poker at the Rotary Club. He's agreed—in principle—to follow our guidelines for a democratic socialist government.

DOADA

Duncan's too wrapped up in this King-being-next-to-god crap. He'll never relinquish power.

SYBIL

My husband is none too bright, but if we can keep him well 'serviced,' we'll have our plans in motion before he even hears of it.

MACBETH

Warring with the English and the Danes simultaneously is most like to get him assassinated.

SYBIL

Aye, but don't say that elsewhere or rumors will fly that you prefer him dead.

DOADA

I prefer him dead, and if he continues in his present idiocy, his subjects will most like take care of him. I can not abide the way he treats you and the kids.

SYBIL

I can deal with Duncan. So—how does the Scottish Free State sound?

DOADA

Better than the United Republic of Scots, Picts, Saxons, Jutes, Danes and other Freelanders that my son proposed.

MACBETH

You said you wanted a coalition of all tribes.

SYBIL

But you're too wordy. What about slogans?

DOADA

Until the masturbatory patriarchy is brought to its knees and violence against women is curtailed—

MACBETH

And you call me wordy?

BETHOC

Make love, not war!

BANQUO

What a great idea! Let's away, wife, and implement this new strategy.

(They exit arm in arm, laughing.)

MACBETH

One man one vote!

DOADA

One *person* one vote.

MACBETH

Won't women vote as their husbands?

DOADA

Are we not separate people? Equal rights for all—equal access to the law!

MACBETH

Equal access to the king? Won't that make the king too busy to scratch his butt?

SYBIL

Equal access to the law. There will be no king.

MACBETH

No king? No thrones, no crowns and sceptres, no executive privilege? I don't get to be king?

DOADA

Rulers will serve with the consent of the people, and power will be shared by the people!

SYBIL

More money for child care, education, and food—

DOADA

—And less for weapons!

SYBIL

I imagine you will be king—and Thane of Cawdor—at least until we get our system implemented.

MACBETH

Aye, and the way Banquo and Bethoc carry on, he'll be father to a line of kings.

(Enter LADY MACBETH, GRUOCH.)

MACBETH (*Cont.*)

Well, if I'm to be king, here's my queen. Gruoch, Mum and her sisters want to disestablish the monarchy.

GRUOCH

That is a great idea.

MACBETH

But I wanna be king!

GRUOCH

It will only put you in greater danger of being killed. Why be king?

MACBETH

Power?

SYBIL

But you can't go where you want or when you want without an entourage of body guards.

DOADA

And if you were king, you'd have to check polls to see if you should go to Scone for vacation.

GRUOCH

My husband just covets the crown and the fancy clothing.

DOADA

He always did love good fabric.

MACBETH

What's wrong with that?

GRUOCH

Nothing. It's an admirable hobby. But you do know how people get to be king, right?

MACBETH

Divine right! Royal succession!

GRUOCH

People become king by killing the previous king.

MACBETH

But that's the way it's always been.

DOADA

Aye, one boy avenges his father's death, and that fatherless child must avenge *his* father's death. War just breeds more war.

SYBIL

And that's why we will abolish the monarchy.

MACBETH

But I wanna be king!

GRUOCH

So that someone can kill you so that they can be king?

(Pause.)

MACBETH

Good point. One person one vote!

(Lights out.)

Act I, Scene 4

(Night time at MACBETH's castle.)

MACBETH

Is this a dagger I see before me—the handle toward my hand?

Come let me clutch thee.

I have thee not, yet I see thee still.

Oh, this is a bad trip.

Gouts of blood, oceans of blood, blood, blood!

Is this an omen or a heat-oppressed hallucination?

How many rats died ingesting this eye of newt and toe of frog?

I see Duncan all badged with blood,

Me and my dearest chuck steeped in blood from the nave to the chaps.

Quite chapfallen are my thoughts.

I see lady Gruoch's first husband,

Bloody, bold and destitute of morals,

Abusing her and her children.

Her wee bairns taken from her like that;

No wonder she has trouble sleeping.

MACBETH (*Cont.*)

The dagger in my hand,
Scratching out his existence as he did my father's.
My first taste of this bloody business,
This usurping of breathers' rights,
Plagues my dreams and my waking state.

Sleep no more, Macbeth!
Ah, sleep, ravel'd by thick-coming nightmares
Of those wee-ans as he plunged them to their too-early graves.
Yet I could not school myself from adding his name to the list.

*(Enter BANQUO with a bottle which they will share
throughout this scene.)*

But, who is it that walks this late? Ah, 'tis my bosom friend, Banquo. How goes it, sir?

BANQUO

Not abed yet, Macbeth? Does not Gruoch warm thy linens?

MACBETH

Aye, that she does and well she does it well. That woman could suck a chicken out of a broom closet. Just breathing the night air before I take my rest. Has been a long day.

BANQUO

Aye, it has. And if Duncan continues in his present plans, methinks 'twill be even longer days and nights to come. Think you of the weird Sisters?

MACBETH

That I do, and methinks 'tis a wise man who heeds them.

BANQUO

You have shelved your ambitions of kingship then? No longer craving the crown and gowns of royal themes?

MACBETH

They and Gruoch have convinced me that the nearer the throne, the nearer death.

BANQUO

Our family trees are festooned with proof of that.

MACBETH

I worry that Duncan will put hindrance to their plans.

BANQUO

He has been dense from a wee lad. Ready to fight and eager to dominate games, but he did not fare well at games requiring reason and logic.

MACBETH

It makes him a great politician though.

BANQUO (*Laughing*)

We grow too cynical. Let's to bed, lest our Ladies decide they are better served without our presence.

(They exit arm in arm as lights fade.)

Act I, Scene 5

(Dark stage. DUNCAN sleeps. ROSS and SIWARD enter. They murder DUNCAN and make the guards seem guilty [like the original.]

Act I, Scene 6

PORTER (*Drunk—singing*)

Knock, knock, knock! Who's that knocking at my door? It's getting' dark, too dark to see. I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door.

Who's there in the name of Beelzebub? Oh, it's a prevaricator who paid his friends to rebuild a nation he had un-built by bombing it into submission. Come in, politico. Here you'll find bombs enow to play with.

Knock, knock, knock...three times on the ceiling if you want me. Twice on the pipe.... Who's there in Lucifer's name? Here's a martyr who bombed his way to paradise in hope of seventeen vestal virgins. Sorry, martyr-to-be, they all left for the coast—and turned me whiter shade of pale. Come in, terror-man. Here you'll find like company but no virgins.

I think I'd better knock, knock, knock, knock, knock on wood. Who's there in every other devil's name? Why it's a gun-maker, gunned down in the street by his own brand-name AK-47 bought at a gun trade show. Come in, Mr. Second Amendment. Here you'll find targets enow for your war games.

Ah, but methinks 'tis too cold for hell. *I'll devil-porter it no further.* I had thought to let in one of each deserving stripe, but there is no room at the inn; hell is overflowing.

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there?

MACDUFF (*Off*)

One who will cut off your willie and feed it to the dogs if you sing one more song and do not open this gate.

PORTER

Why did you not say so at once? I shall postpone my singing career for another day. Ah, Macduff, my man!

(Enter MACDUFF. They do a fancy handshake as greeting.)

MACDUFF

What kep'st thou so long from opening the bloody door? I've near frozen me yarbles off.

PORTER

Well, your dudeship, we partied until the second cock and then the third, and then up showed a fourth. Soon we were all cocksure of being cock-colded. A right cock-up it was, my lord-shit, with cocktails. We were ultimately un-viagara-ized.

MACDUFF

Give over, man. What mean'st thou by un-viagar-ized?

PORTER

We were right provoked into sleeping, urinating and painting our noses. But drink, sir, un-viagarized us. Up we got with desire; but down we roller-coasted in performance. Ready and willing, but never able. The spirit be willing but the flesh be weak. To and fro, up and down, like a carnival ride that spins and spills you until you spin and spill, you see.

MACDUFF

Is the master of the castle astir yet?

MACBETH (*Entering*)

Wake the devil with thy knocking! Oh, MacDuff. Whassup?

MACDUFF

The sky. King Duncan left a wakeup call and I am it.

MACBETH

Go you to it then, though Duncan is a bear to wake after nights of wine and women.

(MACDUFF exits to DUNCAN's bed chamber. A dumb show should attend DONALBAIN's next words. Actors wailing and beating their chests and the like, perhaps a funeral procession.)

DONALBAIN

This is the scene in Shakespeare's play where MacDuff finds Duncan slain and the guards appear to have done it. Much woe and misery.

(Pause while characters wail with little enthusiasm.)

DONALBAIN *(Cont.)*

No. *Much* woe and misery.

(More emphatic wailing and moaning.)

Then Malcolm and I have our exchange—my fifty-five words.

In Shakespeare's play, Malcolm goes off to England and I to Ireland. People assume we hired killers to dispatch dear old dad. But assuming that at nine and seven years old respectively Malcolm and I were conversant in war and politics, where would we have got the money to pay killers? Let's skip on to the next scene that *didn't* happen in Shakespeare's play, but surely must have happened.

Act I, Scene 7

(In SYBIL's bedroom.)

ROSS

Lady, I have ill news to report.

SYBIL

As is your custom, Ross?

ROSS

Madam, I do only as my king commands, yet no longer can I do so. Your husband, the king, has been murdered.

(Pause.)

SYBIL *(Sighs)*

Well, I can't say I'm much surprised. One of his mistresses, I presume?

ROSS

It is not known who has done the deed. But Madam is not surprised?

SYBIL

He was a terrible king, a bad husband and even worse father. And those who become king only grow closer to their own deaths. You know nine of the last ten kings have been killed by their successors.

ROSS

Aye, madam. But should you not show some remorse?

SYBIL

Aye, I should, but my babes need no longer fear his drunken rages. Donalbain and Maelmore especially felt his wrath once he settled on Malcolm as heir. Scotland will be much better off without such an incompetent in charge.

ROSS

Perhaps, Madam, it is as you say. The election lights will most like fall on Macbeth—though it is rumoured that he may have paid most foully for the title.

SYBIL

Macbeth as king? Sure as not. But as murderer? Wasn't he ensconced with Lady Gruoch? I heard clamorous bed-thumping throughout the night.

ROSS

She and he both say they were locked in amorous embrace in their chambers, aye, but Lady Gruoch is not exactly a reliable alibi.

SYBIL

She may somnambulate regularly, but you men do not reckon the damage of seeing your babes slaughtered. You contribute your ten seconds of glory and roll off into slumber.

ROSS

I do not wish to parry words with you, madam, but you must think of your babes now. Malcolm has been declared heir, and he needs must flee if he is to see his tenth birthday.

SYBIL

Death and destruction is at hand, and more blood will be spilled, I fear.

ROSS

It may be best to separate the boys. If our secret murderers do gain success, the others will be exempt from the same fate. Let me take Malcolm to England where he will be protected by the English king and the anonymity of English life.

SYBIL

Donalbain and his sisters I will send to my mother in Ireland, Maelmore to his Danish cousins. Perhaps they will live ignorant of their father's legacy—and mayhap they will escape this clownish, crownish ambition which has killed my husband.

ROSS

Malcolm will be well provided for by the English court.

SYBIL

Very well. I leave Malcolm in your care, Ross. However, I prefer that his education center more on the fine arts than the martial ones.

ROSS

I will see to it, madam.

(Lights down on SYBIL & ROSS.)

DONALBAIN *(Entering)*

Unpopular kings at the time had their reigns cut short—sometimes quite literally—but Macbeth was king for seventeen years. Only three of his predecessors and only three of his successors ruled longer. Let's jump ahead those seventeen years to the end of his reign.

(Lights down on DONALBAIN; End Act I.)

ACT II, Scene 1

(Seventeen years later at Macbeth's castle prior to GRUOCH's birthday party. MACBETH and GRUOCH enter arguing.)

MACBETH

Talk, talk, talk. We have heard these words before.

GRUOCH

We have heard the words, aye, but *we* do not heed them. And must you always use the royal *we*?

MACBETH

We speak for the state. When we speak, the state speaks, and—

GRUOCH

And when we fuck, the state fucks?

MACBETH

We—I see your point. But I am sick of words.

GRUOCH

Words allow us to at least pretend we are higher animals.

MACBETH

I prefer action, movement. There's less ambiguity, a more immediate goal.

GRUOCH

But you are allowed to appreciate it only if you win.

MACBETH

Aye, life or death; that is the choice.

GRUOCH

Are you not afraid to die?

MACBETH

Deathly afraid.

GRUOCH

Are the pleasures I offer not enough? Life is short, unsure and brutal as it is.

MACBETH

But words never emerge as I wish them to. Besides, they cannot describe the horror of war, the death and destruction.

GRUOCH

No. There are not enough words—never enough words.

(*Beat.*)

MACBETH

Gru, you are my dearest partner in greatness—

GRUOCH

I neither seek nor want greatness, ingrained as it is in our family tree. I crave comfort and peace, above all peace.

MACBETH

We—I have endeavoured to institute the sisters' plan. Mum ensures Macduff's compliance—and of course I have Banquo's vote. The others—Lennox, Menteith, Angus, Caithness—who knows ought about these countrymen? Ross is on my side.

GRUOCH

I do not trust that man. He reminds me of the one you killed.

MACBETH

Your first husband?

GRUOCH

Aye. Does *he* haunt thy sleep?

MACBETH

That he does, though his murder was most justified: Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it.

GRUOCH

Phantasms of him and my little ones nightly stalk my dreams. He appeared full of the milk of human kindness, but was the serpent beneath the innocent flower.

MACBETH

What man could do such to his children—to any children?

GRUOCH

It is not just that man and his witless wantonness. I fear more carnage and havoc: more widows, more orphans, more spoils of war.

MACBETH

Aye, those who survive stare at air, seeking surcease in some sweet, oblivious antidote.

GRUOCH

I conjure words to raze the scorpions from my brain, but nothing will purge this dis-ease.

MACBETH

Confusion shall be our epitaph.

(He embraces GRUOCH. Pause.)

I shall implement the sisters' plan, Gru.

(Enter DOADA, SIBYL, setting up for GRUOCH's birthday party.)

DOADA

This son of mine grows too comfortable in his power.

GRUOCH

He has finally agreed to relinquish the throne and set up your system of democratic socialism.

SYBIL

Sweet news this. He has done a creditable job these seventeen years. The harvest is good, and war has ceased for the nonce. The pilgrimage to Rome demonstrates that he's not afraid to leave his kingdom.

DOADA

But sucking up to the Pope and distributing money as he goes is ostentatious and downright tacky! Does he still insist on being cleft 'The Furious Red One'?

(They laugh.)

MACBETH

We are here, you know. You can speak directly to us.

DOADA

Since you refer to yourself in third person, I thought I would reciprocate.

SYBIL

Duncan always used the royal 'we.' Half the time I thought he had a tapeworm.

DOADA

Any news of your children, Sybil?

SIBYL

They all write regularly, except for Malcolm. Donalbain's writing poetry and drinking lots of Guinness, and Maelmore's working on his Ph.D. The girls – why can't I remember their names? – are looking for men to marry.

GRUOCH

I can't help but think what my wee-ans might have become. Artists, storytellers, or just more collateral damage for the war machines?

DOADA

I too have only one child left. Can there ever be a world in which women will not be required to sacrifice their babes for the cause of country?

SYBIL

My children live yet, but Malcolm is becoming too much his father's son. I should have known better than to trust his upbringing to the English.

(Enter BANQUO and BETHOC arm in arm.)

DOADA

Well, sister, you have decided to join us this evening after all.

BETHOC

Banquo was showing me a new trick he learned with his tongue.

DOADA

You might at least blush a little, sister.

MACBETH

Ah, Banquo, just in time to celebrate Gruoch's birthday.

BANQUO

Your birthday, madam? I did not know, but happy birthday, madam.

GRUOCH

Thank you, Banquo, and thanks also for being such a loyal friend to my husband.

MACBETH *(To BANQUO)*

Have you heard news of the English mounting an offensive against us?

BANQUO

Aye, I have. Rumours from England persist that Malcolm is of age and desirous of avenging his father's foul murder and that you were the instrument of his father's death. The English have historians already at work besmirching your name.

MACBETH

We did not like Duncan much, but we did not have a hand in his death.

BANQUO

That I know from your nephew, Maelmore. He has been ensconced in Thorfinn's castle and has made his father's murder the subject of his Ph.D. research. He has uncovered surveillance photographs from the fateful night that reveal the true murderers.

MACBETH

We never thought it was the guards. They reeked of alcohol and would have been unable to shift themselves to pass water much less wield a sword.

BANQUO

He was going to send the pictures by e-mail, but the server's down and I always have trouble opening attachments. I ride tonight to access these photos that will prove the real murderers.

MACBETH

Pray, do not tarry long. Perhaps with this evidence in hand, we can avoid a costly war.

BANQUO

I'll be back in time to cut the cake. Save me some haggis.

(BANQUO exits with the others.)

GRUOCH

My lord, I fear there will be war. There is always war and death surrounding one who would be king. Can we not just move to Portree and open a fish and chips shop?

MACBETH

School yourself a while, dearest chuck. The people love us. And have we not taken good care of you and Lulach?

GRUOCH

You have been my and Lulach's salvation, aye. I do not fear you, but I do fear that the English and Malcolm will hearken to our door ere long. Only you and Lulach remain for me. If I lose more, there will be naught left of me.

MACBETH

Do not distress yourself, Gru. We look forward to retirement at Iona—and not in our grave. Pray Banquo can produce evidence that will avert further bloodshed.

(Lights down.)

ACT II, Scene 2

(Near Macbeth's palace.)

FIRST MURDERER

So when do we get paid for this job?

SECOND MURDERER

The guy who contracted with me said he'd pay us when the deed is done.

FIRST MURDERER

I usually demand half up front for expenses and half on delivery.

SECOND MURDERER

Aye, that's my practice as well, but I'm told there will be no problem with payment – that this is an imperial task – if you catch my drift.

FIRST MURDERER

You saying Macbeth wants us to kill Banquo? I don't believe it. He's a righteous dude and Banquo's his best bud.

SECOND MURDERER

A job's a job and with the economy the way it is—well, you know.

FIRST MURDERER

Yeah, I gotta feed my family. Too bad there've been no wars since Mac's been king. Killing kings had become a growth industry, and field booty was paying the bills.

SECOND MURDERER

Hark!—who goes there?

ROSS (*Entering*)

A friend with full saddlebags for your delectation.

FIRST MURDERER

The money man. Say, money man, why should we not just kill you instead of the intended target and take all your money?

ROSS

The king would not be pleased, for one; secondly, you'd never work in this town again; and three, my weapons are bigger than yours.

FIRST MURDERER

Oh, okay. I was just wondering.

ROSS

The king craves no wondering, only action.

FIRST MURDERER

But ain't Banquo a good friend of his?

ROSS

You're meddling in politics, boy. Not a good idea for one who wants continued employment without losing his head—if you catch my drift.

SECOND MURDERER

I catch your drift—if he don't.

FIRST MURDERER

Hist! A light! A light! By the pricking of my thumbs, something crooked this way comes!

(They hide. BANQUO enters singing.)

BANQUO

Oh, it ain't gonna rain no more, no more...it ain't gonna rain no more....

FIRST MURDERER *(Emerging)*

Oh, I think it will rain knives, my lord.

SECOND MURDERER

Heavy rain with much thunder and reverberation!

(They set upon BANQUO.)

BANQUO

I am killed by this heavy rain!

(He dies.)

ROSS *(Emerges and checks BANQUO's pockets; finds a computer disk)*

Well done, my lovely, murdering fiends. You have succeeded in the king's business. Rumours will abound that Banquo was on secret service for the king and that he was waylaid by the enemy, but you must report the true cause—that the king, Macbeth, ordered and funded this covert operation.

FIRST MURDERER

But 'covert' means undercover—and if we tell people, it won't be covert.

SECOND MURDERER

Stop quibbling over semantics, get the money, and let's get the hell out of here!

FIRST MURDERER

Just wait a minute. I like to know the wherewithals and whatnots of my skullduggering. I'm trying to go into business for myself—you know, bodyguarding, murder on demand, a bit of intimidation. I'd like to know what's on that disk. Mayhap it can accrue me some future financial windfalls.

SECOND MURDERER

You're asking too many questions, and butting into business you oughtn't.

ROSS

Your friend speaks truth. I will tell you what's on this disk and even pay you for your skills, but you'll avail yourself of neither on your next journey.

(He kills the MURDERERS. Lights out.)

ACT II, Scene 3

(A banquet hall at GRUOCH's birthday party: partying, drinking, merrymaking, etc. A birthday cake and the detritus of a party.)

MACBETH

To the queen on her birthday!

ALL

To the queen!

GRUOCH

Thank you all. I hope none of you are driving as you have consumed more than is meet for a ride in the dark.

BETHOC *(Very drunk)*

That late husband of mine will have to be the designated driver—if he ever gets here. That will pay his debt of missing the party.

MACBETH

He was on an important mission but was sure he'd be here for the pudding.

(ROSS enters in bloodstained clothes.)

Here is a cousin who has arrived late as well. What has kept you so long from the feast, Ross? And could you not have bathed first?

ROSS

My lord, I was worried about Lord Banquo and sought to spy him on his journey hither.

BETHOC

Did you find the old fart?

ROSS

Aye, my lady, I did.

BETHOC

Well, where is he? Tell him to get his cute little buns in here so that we can drink a round to celebrate Lady Gruoch's birthday.

MACBETH

Come, Ross, where is Banquo? Why are you so hesitant in reportage of his whereabouts?

GRUOCH

Methinks Ross holds his tongue so as not to seem the bearer of ill news.

ROSS

Too true, my lady, too true and too nice.

BETHOC

Be a nice boy and tell us. Where is my husband?

ROSS

My lady, do not hate me for speaking so, as I bear you no ill will in telling you that your beloved Banquo will come no more except in a wooden box.

BETHOC (*Crying*)

What? How? Why? Where?

ROSS

In a ditch he bides, with twenty trenched gashes on his head.

(BETHOC breaks down wailing)

MACBETH

Did he have on his person any worthy parcels from our cousin Maelmore?

ROSS

Banquo contained no parcels. I killed his murderers who seemed suborned as I found 5000 ducats in their pockets.

(Wailing by LADY BANQUO. Others comfort her.)

MACBETH

Friend Banquo, alas! You died on an errand of friendship and fealty. Banquo, O woe, Banquo! Would you were here!

(BANQUO'S GHOST appears. Only MACBETH and ROSS see him.)

Banquo, who has done this heinous deed? We have shared wine, women, and many a song, and now we shall sing no more. Speak, man, and like the Hyrcan tiger we will seek him out and spill his blood as yours has been spilled! Speak, we charge you!

(BANQUO'S GHOST points directly at ROSS, but ROSS hides behind MACBETH, making sure the GHOST points at MACBETH.)

Banquo, is thy ghost true, or is it an unreal mockery to haunt our sleep?

(The GHOST vanishes. MACBETH collapses.)

GRUOCH (*Wringing her hands*)

War will come as surely as the night and day, the tides and moons. War. Blood. Children will die; mothers will cry; and I will sleep no more forevermore. To bed, to bed, to bed....

(All exit except MACBETH and GRUOCH.)

MACBETH

There will be war! We needs must to the Weird Sisters for battle plans. Banquo, we will avenge thee!

(Lights out.)

ACT II, Scene 4

(Lights up on DONALBAIN.)

DONALBAIN

Though Shakespeare's depiction of Macbeth as a bloodthirsty tyrant is not consistent with historical records, Macbeth was probably no nicer than any other kings of the time. The English king when Macbeth became king of Scotland in 1040 was Hardicanute, who had his predecessor (his brother) removed from his tomb, beheaded and thrown into the Thames. Nevertheless, it was 300 years after his death that Macbeth was first labeled an 'evil usurper.'

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth had the same great-great-great-grandfather, Malcolm I, and she too was 'royal' in nature.

The witches were originally described as women 'whose beauty was more august and surprising than bare women's useth to be.' But to please King James I, who wrote treatises about the evils of witchcraft, Shakespeare includes three harpy-like creatures—as if men are not capable of incredible inhumanity without supernatural influence.

This play has melded Malcolm II's three daughters, Doad, Bethoc, and their unnamed sister (here my mom Sybil), with Lady Macduff, Lady Banquo, and Lady Duncan, which means that King Duncan married his mother's sister. Some people may see that as too far-fetched, but in the 'real world,' Malcolm did marry his aunt Ingibiorg who was married to Thorfinn the Mighty. That means Malcolm married his mother's sister's son's ex-wife. I think.

(Lights out. End Act II.)

(INTERVAL)

ACT III, Scene 1

WITCHES

Double, double, broil and bubble;
Progress comes from making trouble.

SYBIL

First in play we make a plot,
Now throw it in the charmed pot;
Mix a metaphor-simile stew,
Thickening, quickening the powerful brew.
Throw in myriad multiple allusions
So to cause the maximum confusion.
Borrow plenty from the Bard;
Steal if needed, it's not too hard.

ALL

Double bubble, mumbo jumbo;
Watch your fate begin to crumble.

DOADA

Wash it clean to make a scheme
To invoke the imperial theme;
Evoke a tale of Macbeth's Sist'ry,
Blending and bending Scottish hist'ry.
Kings and queens, villains and foes;
All the corpses arrayed in rows.
Wives and daughters, sons and cousins,
Raped and slaughtered by the dozens.

ALL

Double, double, broil and bubble;
Progress comes from making trouble.

BETHOC

If we accept the lies of history
We ignore the higher mystery.
Cool it now with a patriot's blood;
And the harm is rendered good.

ALL

Murder, murder, rape and plunder,
Fires burn and children wonder.
For a charm of hideous trouble
All our lives reduced to rubble.

MACBETH (*Entering*)

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!

SYBIL

What do you want now?

MACBETH

We can't sleep, for our dreams are full of blood.

DOADA

Bloody Macbeth! If you war with Malcolm, the red in your beard will be matched only by that on your hands!

MACBETH

We have done what we could, have been a goodly king. Our loyal, trusted friend, Banquo was slaughtered for our safety. We must avenge his death or be less than a man. You and our wife know nought of that, being mere women.

DOADA

Yet you resort to mere women now? You have always had the gift, son. But because you are afraid, you tell no one of your prophetic dreams.

MACBETH

So the dreams are prophetic?

BETHOC

All dreams reveal something if you know how to look.

MACBETH

We seek only to help our country and avenge our friend's death.

DOADA

Aye, patriotism consigns more boys and girls to the scrap heap of history.

MACBETH

We did not come for lectures. We put on manly readiness and enter the fray. You can see the future. Give us a battle plan, something to push these accursed English from our door.

SYBIL

You don't have to fight simply because it's always been done. There are alternatives.

MACBETH

We know of none. Malcolm is on his way hither to kill us and take our throne.

SYBIL

Malcolm will talk; he will negotiate.

MACBETH

What has talk accomplished?

SYBIL

No one has yet died of talk.

BETHOC

I have met many who have tried to talk me to death.

MACBETH

We are a man and must act like a man!

SYBIL

Oh, what a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty... in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god—the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!

DOADA

And you insist on solving differences with the sword.

BETHOC

Trade tales of mixed-and-matched DNA.

DOADA

Re-create what it means to be a man—one who will defend but not attack. One who will see people and not glory!

MACBETH

The English will not talk. They have 10,000 soldiers to negotiate our decapitation.

BETHOC

Bombard them with condoms filled with yogurt!

SYBIL

Bargain or barter; walk away.

MACBETH

And receive a knife in the back? Nay, walking away is the coward's way. Better to die than be deemed unmanly.

SYBIL

Don't we instruct our babes threatened with conflict to walk away from their attackers?

MACBETH

Women like manly men—men who will fight to defend their land and their homes.

DOADA

Men fight to impress other men, not women. Fucking is not enough; killing is power, power to do what they can.

MACBETH

The outfits are so cool, all that shiny armour and those flashing swords.

SYBIL

Think of the boon to the economy if your war money were spent on education and health care. There is enough horror in the world without adding war to the mix.

BETHOC

Assault their ears with “In-a-gadda-da-vida!”

MACBETH

Still reading chicken entrails, eh, Crazy Auntie?

BETHOC

Why, yes, just yesterday there was this big cock of a rooster in which I saw—

MACBETH

Ugh. Spare us the details.

DOADA

You revel in the blood and gore of battle, but birth and chicken entrails disgust you.

MACBETH

We are more man than any man!

BETHOC

Testosterone poisoning!

SYBIL

Say to them: ‘You are welcome to sit at our table.’ The world is big enough. Cede Malcolm the Hebrides and move to Skye. I am tired of burying my children and my children’s children.

MACBETH

No more lectures! Show us what the future holds!

DOADA

Show!

BETHOC

Show!

SYBIL

Show!

MACBETH

(Smoke, lightning & "show." He delivers these lines as if in a trance.)

We see blood, blood, and more blood—
The seas are rendered incarnadine
With the blood of men, women and babies.

Faces burned off.
A young girl running,
Screaming, naked,
Her flesh flaking from her bones.

Words we do not understand:
Hiroshima, Nagasaki,
Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib.

A line of kings, lines in the sand, towers crumbling!

Giant birds raining fire on desert cities.
A man in leather declaring 'Mission Accomplished.'
The earth growing warmer—
The water receding from the earth.

A man named Shakespeare painting Macbeth an evil blood-thirsty killer! Arrgghh! If there is an afterlife in which we take part, this play shall be haunted!

No more, we beg you, no more! Yet more bloody deeds affront our sight. Ah, Macbeth will sleep no more until the last syllable of his recorded time lights his foolish way to death's eternal slumber. *Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player. It is a tale told by and to idiots, signifying nothing at all!*

(He wakes from the trance to find himself alone.)

Gone?! Gone?! Ah, *damn'd be they who trust these witches.*

We must prove our manliness in battle. Aye, a man's a man who stands and fights and does not cower behind womanly defenses of words! Words, words! Pah, we spit on words. Banquo, the epicures may negotiate, but *certain issues strokes must arbitrate. Towards which advance the war!*

(He exits to sounds of war. Lights down.)

ACT III, Scene 2

(MACDUFF's castle in Fife)

ROSS

You must have patience, madam.

DOADA

Macduff had none. His flight was madness. Perchance he has other women to warm his bed in England.

ROSS

You know not the reasons he flies—in fear, in lechery or in wisdom.

DOADA

Wisdom? To leave his wife, his babes, and all his goodly possessions—when he is afraid himself to tarry here? He is a fool to think me such a fool.

ROSS

School yourself, madam. Your husband knows best his rhymes and reasons.

DOADA

Fie, my lord. A soldier and afeard? Big, scary women frighten you, thou lily-livered boy? 'Tis women—scary Gorgons with ideas—that frighten you and him. Why else should he harry to seek the protection of a foreign sovereign?

ROSS

I must not tarry hither, madam. Evil deeds run rampant. I am but a harbinger of the whirlwind to come—a whirlwind you, your sisters and your base son Macbeth have sown.

DOADA

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!

ROSS

These harsh speeches doth rend me in twain, madam.

DOADA

Would that they could. I have spied thy intentions right, whey-face. Whither should I fly to be safe from your treachery? Whither is't this utopian kingdom where I can be secreted from the harm of men intent on murder? *I am in this earthly world where to do harm is laudable, to do good considered dangerous folly.*

ROSS

You have meddled where you shouldn't, have known what you shouldn't, and speak'st what you shouldn't.

DOADA

To speak at injustice is a crime in your new world order? To stay silent while the world marches ever toward destruction at the beck of men like you, your puppet Malcolm and England's 'goodly' thousands?

ROSS

Prithee cease this prattling or cold steel will silence thy wayward tongue.

DOADA

Aye, I have talked too much. I prattle on as an antidote to swordplay and death. Words may yet outlive your treachery, though the race toward Armageddon be quick apace.

ROSS

You will not live to see words out-race swords if you do not cease this obstinate, traitorous badinage!

DOADA

Words are dangerous, aye, and you must exorcise them so that your comfort be maintained. But you will have to guard your riches from others as paranoia-bitten as you. They will soon come for you too.

ROSS

That day, madam, you will never see.

(ROSS executes DOADA.)

ACT III, Scene 3

(In England.)

SIWARD

Come on, Malcolm, we've groomed you in all the kingly graces. Now it's time to act.

MALCOLM

But why would we want to be king—especially of Scotland? It's cold and wet, and we'd never get to go to the theatre district in London.

SIWARD

What about your country?

MALCOLM

We left our country when we were nine—and do I always have to speak in the royal *we*? Can't I at least wait until I'm king?

SIWARD

Get in the habit now so that you don't slip when you are king.

MALCOLM

But why would I – we – want to do that? It's too much responsibility. I—we'd never have a moment's peace.

SIWARD

Just lie back and think of England, Malcolm.

(ROSS enters, cleaning his hands.)

SIWARD *(To ROSS)*

Bloody hell, this guy's a fucking wimp. I thought you said he'd do what he was told.

ROSS

He's spoiled, but once he enters the fray, he'll be as bloodthirsty as his father.

SIWARD

That damn Duncan was a fool. Did he really think he could conquer the Danish and English at the same time?

ROSS

He was ambitious and unscrupulous – just what we need in a king – but thick-headed as well. But Malcolm didn't fall far from the family tree.

SIWARD

If Duncan had just adhered to the party line, he'd still be king and we wouldn't need Malcolm.

ROSS

Duncan was incompetent and if we hadn't stepped in, his subjects would most like have killed him.

SIWARD

Did you get the historians lined up? We want to make sure Malcolm and his heirs come out smelling of roses after this business is completed.

ROSS

We already have them working on the story. Get this, Macbeth killed Duncan because Lady Macbeth was desirous of power—and the old Ladies Banquo, Macduff and Duncan are witches.

SIWARD

Great idea.

MALCOLM

What are you two whispering about?

SIWARD

Just catching up on the news from Scotland.

MALCOLM

How goes it there?

ROSS

New widows howl, new orphans cry. Each minute teems a new grief.

MALCOLM

So why don't the people do something about Macbeth?

SIWARD

Hsst! Did I not tell you not to say that name? It is accursed and saying it lends him credibility.

MALCOLM

But it seems silly to always refer to our own uncle as 'the enemy' or 'the evil one.'

SIWARD

It's good politics. And he did kill your father.

MALCOLM

If we'd been old enough and big enough, we would have killed him ourselves.

SIWARD

Malcolm! You must never say that again! No matter how much you disliked your father, he was a good king.

MALCOLM

That is neither what we recall nor what Macduff has told us. He was a drunkard, and we can readily recount how he treated mom, my brothers and us. And we had sisters, didn't we? What were their names?

SIWARD (*To ROSS*)

That damn Macduff. Get over there and take care of him.

ROSS

He's on his way here to negotiate for Macbeth.

SIWARD

Then take care of his wife and kids and we'll blame it on Macbeth.

ROSS

The matter has been seen to already.

MALCOLM

You two are whispering again.

SIWARD

We were just wondering where Macduff is. He was due by now.

MALCOLM

You know the trains are always late in this country.

(MACDUFF enters)

Well, speak of the devil, here's my good bud, Duff. What news, Duff?

MACDUFF

Gracious King Macbeth says it is time to halt the killing. He wants to negotiate a peace.

SIWARD

Like he did for King Duncan?

MACDUFF

I do not like to speak ill of the dead, but Duncan was incompetent and unscrupulous.

ROSS

But Macbeth proves far worse. Have you not heard the latest?

MACDUFF

By your visage, I see it is not good news.

ROSS

Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes savagely slaughtered. I arrived too late to help them be anything but at peace.

MACDUFF

All my pretty ones? Did you say all? O, hell-kite! All? All my pretty chickens and their dam at one fell swoop?

MALCOLM

Dispute it like a man.

MACDUFF

Aye, but I must feel it like a man. Did heaven look on and would not take their part? I blame myself for leaving them, but I would not think he would kill his own mother. And Macbeth hath been generous in bestowing honours upon me.

ROSS

'Twas merely a ruse to get you out of the country, Duff. Our man Lennox has passed on the news that the bloody tyrant feared for his life at your hands – and so sent you away – just as he sent Banquo to his death.

MACDUFF

But 'tis said that Banquo had incriminating evidence to reveal Duncan's true murderers.

SIWARD

Aye, but the surveillance photos reveal Macbeth poisoning Duncan's guards and slitting his throat.

MALCOLM

Come, Duff, Siward and good king Edward have given us ten thousand men to avenge our family's murders. *Let grief convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.* Be manly as all hell and let's go kick some Scottish butt!

(All exit to war sounds. End ACT III.)

ACT IV, Scene 1

GRUOCH (*Sleepwalking*)

Out, damned spot! Out, I say!

What will these hands ne'er be clean?

Ah, who would have thought wee babes to have so much blood in them?

My hands, my mind will ne'er see their likeness again.

What, all my pretty ones, killed in one fell swoop?

I am to blame, aye, for bringing them into this world

This harsh, judgmental wasteland where 'tis harmful to do other than the norm.

I was a wife;

I'll take my life.

What else is't to do?

There's a wound in my soul,

A gaping chasm where I once was,

Where I once survived;

And now all that's left me is

Quotidian strife against the knife, this life,

This gaping absence,

Far greater felt than any presence.

I somnambulate through

Day after day mundanity;

All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little mind.

GROUCH (*Cont.*)

Be I as crazy as a loon?
O, that I could claim that surcease,
That alibi for my crime of being woman, wife, mother,
Of outliving my little ones.

Unnatural deeds, great perturbations of nature,
Chastise my slumbery agitation and
Infest my mind, which no sweet purgative can allay.

Hell is murky!
What—will this mind ne'er be clean?
This disease is beyond all purgation,
All restorative physic.

To bed, to bed,
Perchance to dream the eternal, ethereal dream:
An exit from my daymares;
The eternal sleep from whose bourne no traveller awakens.

To bed, to bed:
What's done cannot be undone;
The far kingdom awaits.

I've been a long time dying:
Going to be a long time dead.

(Lights down on GRUOCH.)

ACT IV, Scene 2

(MACBETH and MALCOLM deliver the following together—exhorting their troops.)

MACBETH

We are about to enter a great battle against the evil ones who seek the destruction of our way of life. We have not started this fight—

MALCOLM

—But we will end it. We fight to keep Scotland free from the tyranny of terrorists who seek to destroy all we hold sacred.

MACBETH

They cannot hide from us. We will root them out wherever they hide.

MALCOLM

We will fight to ensure that our children and our children's children are safe from this evil that harbors on our shores.

MACBETH

We will fight against the enemies of tolerance and freedom, against the enemies of pluralism, democracy....

MALCOLM

—And real economic development. If we wait for threats to materialize, it will be too late. We must strike now—

MACBETH

And confront threats before they emerge. The only path to safety is action, and we will act. In defending the peace, we face an enemy that is ruthless and resourceful....

MALCOLM

—An enemy comprised of evil, deluded men.

MACBETH

More and more civilized nations find themselves aligned against an axis of evil warmongers—

MACBETH and MALCOLM

—competing in peace by preparing for war.

MACBETH

As with any war, there will be casualties—innocent bystanders to the fray—

MALCOLM

Collateral damage. Many will die who are not active participants in this great battle. And God will reward them for the ultimate sacrifice that they will—maybe unwillingly—make.

MACBETH and MALCOLM

‘Why do we fight?’

MALCOLM

—the cowardly and idealistic ask. ‘Can we not find a better solution than killing?’ they ask. ‘After all, the human race is at least a thousand years old.’

MACBETH

And we say to these traitors and weaklings that they are abetting the Enemy with such talk, equating the evil ones with logical, rational human beings.

MALCOLM

This enemy is insidious and will not listen to logic or reason.

MACBETH

He offers no peace, no constructive plan for the future.

MALCOLM

His sole aim is our destruction, and he must be stamped out so that our children can live free of this tyranny.

MALCOLM and MACBETH

Our father was killed in this ongoing war against terror.

MALCOLM

And we must fight to preserve the freedoms—

MALCOLM and MACBETH

—that our father and our father’s father fought for.

MALCOLM

We will fight against the injustice of the world—

MACBETH

And kill men who seek to take away our lands, our women, our children, and our gods.

MALCOLM and MACBETH

May God bless our cause as it is right and just, and may God bless Scotland!

ACT IV Scene 3

(The battlefield. War sounds. MALCOLM & MACBETH turn from opposite sides, just after their speeches. DONALBAIN in the shadows.)

MALCOLM

Turn, hellhound, turn!

MACBETH

Hellhound? I see the English have improved your vocabulary, nephew.

MALCOLM

That they did and many other goodly virtues.

MACBETH

I like your attire. It looks to be good quality fabric.

MALCOLM

Aye, I got it in Galway on a recent foray there. I just love raiments, don't you?

MACBETH

Aye, a man must dress well to feel good about himself.

MALCOLM

So—what's new?

MACBETH

Just this war.

MALCOLM

Sorry about this, uncle, but the English want Scotland back, and well, I didn't have much choice. It's nothing personal, you understand.

MACBETH

Aye, that I do. But it would be a shame to ruin our clothes with pitched battle. Blood is so hard to get out of garments.

MALCOLM

That I know as well, but it gives me an excuse to shop for new clothes. The English have informed me that as king, I can just throw out the old clothes and purchase new ones. Good for the economy and all that.

MACBETH

Well, shall we fight?

MALCOLM

Let's not and say we did.

MACBETH

But the English will want one of us stretched out with gashes all over, possibly beheaded. We can't fake our deaths, can we?

MALCOLM

Well, let's have a drink and think about it.

MACBETH

Good idea.

(They freeze. DONALBAIN comes center.)

DONALBAIN

Ah, if only it were like that. They share kinship. And I remember Uncle Macbeth as being a good guy. Of course, the last time I saw him I was seven, but I have fond memories of sitting by his fire at Dunsinane Castle, while he and mum discussed stock prices. But, unfortunately, they are now used to kingship instead of kinship.

(DONALBAIN fades into the shadows. MACBETH and MALCOLM approach each other.)

MALCOLM

Turn, hellhound, turn!

MACBETH

At last we meet, you microphallic sheep shagger.

MALCOLM

Merkin sniffer!

MACBETH

Steatopygous coprophagist!

(They freeze as DONALBAIN comes forward.)

DONALBAIN

If they would just resort to name-calling, that would be preferable as well. They have yet to resort to the standard insults against their mothers, but then, their mothers are sisters.

MACBETH

Enough words bandied about! Let us settle this as real men—with swords!

(They freeze again.)

DONALBAIN

Does anyone notice how like the penis the sword is? Are there any weapons not phallic-shaped?

MALCOLM

You dare not cross this line, you fubsy frotteur!

MACBETH

We dare not? Ha, young Malcolm, bated with a rabble's curse, we will unseam you from the nave to the chaps and fill you full to the topmost with direst cruelty. Let our sword prove your undoing!

(They fight.)

MALCOLM

We are *bloody, luxurious, avaricious, false and deceitful*—

MACBETH

And we, *impetuous, malicious, smacking of every sin that has a name*—

MALCOLM

You could not fill up the cistern of our lust to sate our voluptuousness!

MACBETH

Boundless intemperance and staunchless avarice are the pernicious root of our selfness!

(They freeze again as DONALBAIN intrudes.)

DONALBAIN

They're running out of words and breath. One will kill the other soon. My money's on Macbeth biting the dust first. Besides—I've seen the script.

(They fight some more.)

MALCOLM

Thrust!

MACBETH

And parry! And thrust!

MALCOLM

And parry—and thrust him through and through!

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes