



COMMONWEALTH  
SHAKESPEARE  
COMPANY

**#STAGE2SCHOOL**



**Lesson Packet**

## **Video Three: Macbeth**

### **Banquo and Macbeth: Act I, Scene 3** **Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: Act I, Scene 7**

This lesson packet is designed to go along with Commonwealth Shakespeare Company's series of #Stage2School videos. Please note that some scenes are cuttings and were edited for time, not for content.

Teachers: Please let us know if your school would like to participate in a follow-up live workshop with the director and actors by writing to:  
[education@commshakes.org](mailto:education@commshakes.org)

## Banquo and Macbeth: Act I, Scene 3

*(To the witches)*

**MACBETH**

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

*Witches vanish*

**BANQUO**

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,  
And these are of them. Whither are they vanish'd?

**MACBETH**

Into the air; and what seem'd corporal melted  
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

**BANQUO**

Were such things here as we do speak about?  
Or have we eaten on the insane root  
That takes the reason prisoner?

**MACBETH**

Your children shall be kings.

**BANQUO**

You shall be king.

**MACBETH**

And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

**BANQUO**

To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

**MACBETH**

*[Aside]* Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!  
The greatest is behind.

To *BANQUO*

Do you not hope your children shall be kings,  
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me  
Promised no less to them?

**BANQUO**

That trusted home  
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,  
Besides the thane of Cawdor.  
But 'tis strange: And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,  
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,  
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's  
In deepest consequence.  
Ah, Cousins, a word, I pray you.

**MACBETH**

*[Aside]* Two truths are told,  
As happy prologues to the swelling act  
Of the imperial theme.--I thank you, gentlemen.

*[Aside]*

Cannot be ill, cannot be good: if ill,  
Why hath it given me earnest of success,  
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:  
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion  
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair  
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,  
Against the use of nature? Present fears  
Are less than horrible imaginings:  
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,  
Shakes so my single state of man that function  
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is  
But what is not.

**BANQUO**

Look, how our partner's rapt.

**MACBETH**

*[Aside]*

If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,  
Without my stir.

**BANQUO**

New horrors come upon him,  
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould  
But with the aid of use.

**MACBETH**

*[Aside]* Come what come may,  
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

**BANQUO**

Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

**MACBETH**

Give me your favour: my dull brain was wrought  
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains  
Are register'd where every day I turn  
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.  
Think upon what hath chanced, and, at more time,  
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak  
Our free hearts each to other.

**BANQUO**

Very gladly.

**MACBETH**

Till then, enough. Come, friends.  
*Exeunt*

## Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: Act I, Scene 7

*(\*\*We will not be doing the bracketed monologue in scene work, but students can use it in our acting and text prompt lessons at the end.)*

### **MACBETH**

[\*\*If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly: if the 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,  
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases  
We still have judgment here; that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd 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,  
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;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, 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 the other.

*Enter LADY MACBETH*

How now! what news?

### **LADY MACBETH**

He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

**MACBETH**

Hath he ask'd for me?

**LADY MACBETH**

Know you not he has?

**MACBETH**

We will proceed no further in this business:  
He hath honour'd 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  
Wherein you dress'd 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  
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' the adage?

**MACBETH**

Prithee, peace:  
I dare do all that may become a man;  
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  
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:  
I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,  
And dash'd 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,  
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep--  
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey  
Soundly invite him--his two chamberlains  
Will I with wine and wassail so convince  
That memory, the warder of the brain,  
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason  
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep  
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,  
What cannot you and I perform upon  
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon  
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 mark'd with blood those sleepy two  
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.  
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:  
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.  
*Exeunt*



## Try it out on your own:

**TEXT:** Use Macbeth's Act I, Scene 7 soliloquy—the monologue seen on p. 6 in brackets—, beat out the rhythm and meter. What do you discover about Macbeth's state of mind? How many times does Macbeth/Shakespeare break the iambic pentameter rule?

**ACTING:** In break-out rooms or small groups, take turns reading Macbeth's Act I Scene 7 soliloquy—the monologue seen on p. 6 in brackets—trying different actions or tactics: to reassure myself, to pump myself up, to talk myself out of killing Duncan, to whine about it, etc. You can also try this on your own with any other soliloquy!

**WRITING:** The actor's job is to play an ACTION. Action after action—versus playing a state of being: “being mean” or “being fearful.” (You can do this, but it leads to a flat, boring performance.) In acting, as in life, character is formed by the collection of actions that you take. So for instance, let's say you think Character A is “mean”—what did they do to make you, the audience, think they were mean? Did they pull someone's hair? Say rude things? Wear an angry face all the time? Steal your favorite sweater? What does the character DO to make you think they're mean?

In your notebook or journal choose two characters from Macbeth that you find intriguing and make a short list of 3-4 adjectives that describe that character. Then, list what things that character DOES that make you think that the character is like that. When you're done, take a look at that list! That's character. Next try the exercise thinking about your favorite friend or family member, or even your favorite TV or movie character!