

Macbeth Act 2 Scene 1 (The Dagger Soliloquy...)

Act II - Scene I

[Inverness. Court of Macbeth's castle.]

Enter Banquo, and Fleance, with a Torch 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,(5)
Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!(10)

Enter Macbeth, and a Servant with a Torch.]

Give me my sword.
Who's there?

MACBETH:

A friend.

BANQUO:

What, sir, not yet at rest? The King's a-bed.
He hath been in unusual pleasure and(15)
Sent forth great largess to your offices:
This diamond he greets your wife withal,

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By the name of most kind hostess, and shut up
In measureless content.

MACBETH:

Being unprepared,(20)
Our will became the servant to defect,
Which else should free have wrought.

BANQUO:

All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth.(25)

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.(30)

MACBETH:

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,
It shall make honor for you.

BANQUO:

So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,(35)
I shall be counsell'd.

MACBETH:

Good repose the while.

BANQUO:

Thanks, sir, the like to you.

Exeunt Banquo [and Fleance].

MACBETH:

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Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.(40)

Exit [Servant].

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but(45)
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,(50)
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:(55)
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
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd Murder,(60)
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear(65)
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives;
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives. *A bell rings.*
I go, and it is done: the bell invites me.(70)
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell.

Exit.