

MACBETH

THE ULTIMATE GRAPHIC RETELLING TO
GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE CLASSICS

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THE THREE WEIRD SISTERS³ PREPARE TO WAYLAY MACBETH AND BANQUO AS THEY RETURN FROM THEIR VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGN.



WHAT CAN THIS MEAN? BANQUO ASKS WHETHER THE SISTERS HAVE ANY MESSAGE FOR HIM. THEY ANSWER HIM WITH RIDDLES.



I know I am Thane of Glamis; but how of Cawdor? And to be king stands not within the prospect of belief.⁹



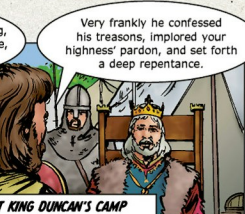
BUT INSTEAD OF ANSWERING HIM, THE WITCHES VANISH. MACBETH AND BANQUO CAN SCARCELY BELIEVE WHAT THEY HAVE HEARD.



THE THANES ROSS AND ANGUS COME RIDING TO MEET MACBETH WITH A MESSAGE FROM THE KING.



ANGUS EXPLAINS THAT CAWDOR HAS BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH, AND HIS TITLE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO MACBETH. DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE OTHER PROPHECIES MIGHT ALSO COME TRUE?



BACK AT KING DUNCAN'S CAMP

BANQUO WARNS HIM THAT THE WITCHES ARE MESSENGERS OF THE DEVIL AND CANNOT BE TRUSTED. BUT MACBETH IS NOT LISTENING. HE *COULD* BECOME KING, IF HE DARED... OR PERHAPS, IF HE IS FATED TO BE KING, IT WILL SOMEHOW JUST HAPPEN BY ITSELF?

PRINCE MALCOLM REPORTS TO HIS FATHER THAT THE TRAITOR, CAWDOR, HAS BEEN EXECUTED.



We will establish our estate upon our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter the Prince of Cumberland.⁵

He was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust.

That is a step on which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,⁷ for in my way it lies.



HE HAS DECIDED WHO SHOULD SUCCEED HIM AS KING OF SCOTS.

MACBETH IS DISMAYED: THIS MEANS THAT MALCOLM, NOT MACBETH, IS NOW THE HEIR TO THE THRONE.

TO BE KING, HE WILL HAVE TO SEIZE THE CROWN FOR HIMSELF.

1. hast thou: have you. 2. doth come: is coming. 3. weird sisters: witches. 'Weird' means 'to do with fate or destiny'.
4. Hall to thee: Greetings to you. 5. Glamis: usually pronounced 'glams'. 6. shalt: shall. 7. hereafter: afterwards.
8. Thou... none: You will have children who are kings, but you will not be one yourself. 9. stands... belief: is totally unbelievable.
10. went it not so?: Isn't that what they said? 11. hath: have. 12. thy: your. 13. bade me: told me to ('bade' is usually pronounced 'bad'). 14. thee: you. 15. behind: still to come.

1. unfix my hair: make my hair stand on end. 2. without my stir: without my doing anything. 3. became him: was worthy of him. In other words, his death was the most noble act of his whole life. 4. There's no way to judge a person's character from their appearance. 5. More is thy due: You deserve more. 6. Prince of Cumberland: the title of the heir to the Scottish throne. 7. a step... o'erleap: an obstacle that will stop me unless I can get over it.



MACBETH HAS WRITTEN TO HIS WIFE ABOUT THE WITCHES' PROPHECY AND HIS NEW APPOINTMENT AS THANE OF CAWDOR.



SHE IS THRILLED BY THE NEWS.



BUT WILL MACBETH BE RUTHLESS ENOUGH TO MAKE SURE THAT THE PROPHECY COMES TRUE?



IT WILL BE UP TO HER TO MAKE SURE THAT HE IS!



A SERVANT BRINGS THE NEWS THAT DUNCAN IS ON HIS WAY TO INVERNESS.



SO HER CHANCE HAS COME ALREADY! DUNCAN WILL BE HERE, IN HER OWN HOUSE, AT HER MERCY.



SHE MUST STEEL HERSELF, AND PUT ANY THOUGHT OF PITY OUT OF HER MIND.



AT LAST MACBETH HIMSELF ARRIVES. SHE GREETES HIM BY HIS NEW TITLE FOR THE FIRST TIME.



THEY BOTH HAVE THE SAME THOUGHT: DUNCAN MUST DIE.



THEY MUST WELCOME DUNCAN GRACIOUSLY AND BEHAVE AS THOUGH ALL IS WELL. HE WILL SUSPECT NOTHING.



1. thou art: you are. 2. Hie thee hither: Hurry here. 3. chastise... round: persuade you to ignore the doubts that keep you from seizing the crown. 4. Thou'rt mad to say it: Why is she so startled? Does she think for a moment that when the servants say 'the king' he means Macbeth? Or does she find it hard to believe that Duncan has already fallen into her hands? 5. tend on mortal thoughts: encourage thoughts of death. 6. unsex me here: make me forget that I am a woman; make me as ruthless as a man.

1. goes hence: goes away - but it can also mean 'die'. 2. purpose: intends. 3. put... into my dispatch: let me organise it. 4. look up clear: look cheerful. 5. to alter... fear: changing your expression is always a sign that you are afraid.



KING DUNCAN AND HIS LORDS APPROACH MACBETH'S CASTLE. THEY ARE CHARMED BY THE DELIGHTFUL, PEACEFUL SCENE.

LADY MACBETH COMES OUT TO WELCOME THEM. CURTSEYING GRACIOUSLY.



BUT LADY MACBETH HAS LAID HER PLANS AND WILL NOT STOP NOW. WHERE IS HIS COURAGE?



A FEAST HAS BEEN LAID OUT FOR THE ROYAL GUEST, BUT MACBETH HAS LEFT TO BE ALONE. HE IS GETTING COLD FEET.

THERE ARE GOOD REASONS WHY HE SHOULD NOT KILL DUNCAN.

IN FACT, IT IS MACBETH'S DUTY TO PROTECT HIS GUEST.

I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself.¹¹



LADY MACBETH HAS COME TO FIND HIM. HE SHOULD BE WITH HIS ROYAL VISITOR, NOT SKULKING IN THE DARK BY HIMSELF.

MACBETH HAS FINALLY MADE UP HIS MIND.



SHE WOULD NOT GIVE UP SO EASILY, SHE WOULD MURDER HER OWN BABY, IF SHE HAD TO!

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NOW SHE TRIES TO FLATTER HIM.



1. Was the hope . . . freely?: She compares him to a man who is brave when he is drunk, but not when he wakes up the next morning. 2. such . . . love: this is what I think your love for me is worth. 3. Prithree: I beg you. 4. become a man: be worthy of a man. 5. who dares . . . none: anyone who does what is unworthy of a man is not a man. 6. durst: dared. 7. screw . . . sticking-place: summon all your courage (like winding a crossbow as tight as it will go). 8. received: believed by everyone. 9. don't: do not. 10. show: trick everyone by pretending that all is well.

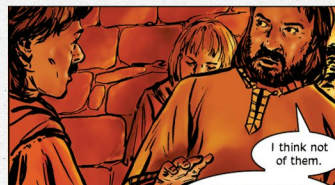


LATE THAT NIGHT, IN MACBETH'S CASTLE

BANQUO AND HIS SON, FLEANCE, ARE ON THEIR WAY TO BED WHEN THEY HEAR FOOTSTEPS IN THE DARK. ALARMED, BANQUO DRAWS HIS SWORD - BUT IT IS ONLY MACBETH.



THE KING HAS ENTRUSTED BANQUO WITH A VALUABLE GIFT FOR LADY MACBETH.



MACBETH PRETENDS HE HAS FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE PROPHECIES. THEY BOTH KNOW THIS IS NOT TRUE.

Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve;² we would spend it in some words upon that business - if you would grant the time.



MACBETH BIDS BANQUO AND FLEANCE GOODNIGHT.



MACBETH HAS ARRANGED FOR HIS WIFE TO GIVE A SECRET SIGNAL AS SOON AS THE SERVANTS ARE UNCONSCIOUS.



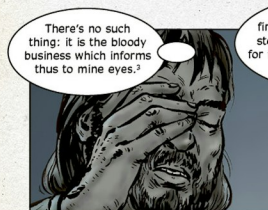
LEFT ALONE IN THE DARKENED CASTLE, MACBETH IS SUDDENLY CONFRONTED WITH A GHOSTLY APPARITION.



HE TRIES TO TAKE HOLD OF IT BUT HIS HAND GOES STRAIGHT THROUGH.



IT SEEMS TO BE LEADING HIM TOWARDS DUNCAN'S BEDCHAMBER. HE FOLLOWS, NOTICING BLOOD GLISTENING.



HE RUBS HIS EYES, AND THE DAGGER VANISHES.



HE TREADS AS QUIETLY AS HE CAN, AFRAID THAT ANY SOUND ON THE FLAGSTONES MAY GIVE HIM AWAY.



BEHIND HIM, THE BELL RINGS QUIETLY, AS PLANNED.



Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell⁷ that summons thee to heaven or to hell.

1. withal: with. 2. when we can entreat an hour to serve: when I have time to spare. Macbeth is already using the 'royal plural' - saying 'we' when he means 'I'. 3. the while: meanwhile. 4. the like: the same.

5. dudgeon: handle. 6. gouts: drops. 7. it is... eyes: the thought of murder is making me see things that are not real. 8. thy very stones: even your stones. 9. prate: tell tales. 10. I go... done: As soon as I go, it will be over and done with. 11. knell: funeral bell.