

Extracts from the Tragedy of Macbeth

William Shakespeare

Act 1 Scene 1

A desert place. Thunder and Lightning. Enter three Witches.

First Witch: When shall we three meet again.
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch: When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch: That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch: Where the place?

Second Witch: Upon the heath.

Third Witch: There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch: I come, Graymalkin.

All: Paddock calls: - anon!
Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

[Exeunt]

A Summary of Act 1 Scene 2

A battle is taking place for Scotland itself. Norway has invaded. King Duncan is informed of the heroic acts of two of his army generals, Macbeth and Banquo. At the same time he learns that the Thane of Cawdor has been captured and shown to be disloyal and a traitor. King Duncan announces that Macbeth will be given the title Thane of Cawdor instead.

An extract from: Act 1 Scene 3

A heath. Thunder. Enter the three witches.

Macbeth: So foul and fair a day I have not seen ...
... Speak, if you can: what are you?

First Witch: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

Second Witch: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

Third Witch: All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!

Act 1 Scene 3: *Extract continued*

Banquo: If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not
Speak then to me.

First Witch: Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Second Witch: Not so happy, yet much happier.

Third Witch: Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

All: So all hail Macbeth and Banquo.
Banquo and Macbeth, all hail.

The witches disappear.

Macbeth and Banquo discuss the strange event that they have just witnessed, first wondering whether they could have imagined it or whether the witches were there at all. Then they laugh about the things that were said, dismissing them as clearly crazy.

Enter Ross and Angus.

Ross: The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success.

Angus: We are sent to give thee, from our royal master, thanks.

Ross: And for an earnest of a greater honour,
He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor.

Banquo: What, can the devil speak true?

Macbeth: The Thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?

Ross and Angus explain that the Thane of Cawdor was found to be a traitor and is being executed.

Macbeth begins to think aside to himself that now the witches have made not just one correct statement, but two. They already knew in advance about him becoming Thane of Cawdor, so he starts to wonder whether their third statement about him might become true as well!