Forres. A Room in the Palace.

MACBETH.
Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

FIRST MURDERER.
It was, so please your highness.

MACBETH.
Well then, now
Have you consider’d of my speeches? Know
That it was he, in the times past, which held you
So under fortune; which you thought had been
Our innocent self: this I made good to you
In our last conference, pass’d in probation with you
How you were borne in hand, how cross’d, the instruments,
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might
To half a soul and to a notion craz’d
Say, “Thus did Banquo.”

FIRST MURDERER.
You made it known to us.

MACBETH.
I did so; and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature,
That you can let this go? Are you so gospell’d,
To pray for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bow’d you to the grave,
And beggar’d yours forever?

FIRST MURDERER.
We are men, my liege.

MACBETH.
Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are cleft
All by the name of dogs: the valu’d file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The house-keeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him clos’d; whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill

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That writes them all alike: and so of men. 
Now, if you have a station in the file, 
Not i’ the worst rank of manhood, say it; 
And I will put that business in your bosoms, 
Whose execution takes your enemy off; 
Grapples you to the heart and love of us, 
Who wear our health but sickly in his life, 
Which in his death were perfect.

SECOND MURDERER.
I am one, my liege, 
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world 
Have so incens’d that I am reckless what 
I do to spite the world.

FIRST MURDERER.
And I another, 
So weary with disasters, tugg’d with fortune, 
That I would set my life on any chance, 
To mend it or be rid on’t.

MACBETH.
Both of you 
Know Banquo was your enemy.

BOTH MURDERERS.
True, my lord.

MACBETH.
So is he mine; and in such bloody distance, 
That every minute of his being thrusts 
Against my near’st of life; and though I could 
With barefac’d power sweep him from my sight, 
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not, 
For certain friends that are both his and mine, 
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall 
Who I myself struck down: and thence it is 
That I to your assistance do make love; 
Masking the business from the common eye 
For sundry weighty reasons.

SECOND MURDERER.
We shall, my lord, 
Perform what you command us.

FIRST MURDERER.
Though our lives –
**Macbeth.**
Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most, I will advise you where to plant yourselves; Acquaint you with the perfect spy o’ the time, The moment on’t; for’t must be done to-night And something from the palace; always thought That I require a clearness; and with him, – To leave no rubs nor botches in the work, – Fleance his son, that keeps him company, Whose absence is no less material to me Than is his father’s, must embrace the fate Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart: I’l come to you anon.

**BOTH MURDERERS.**
We are resolv’d, my lord.

**MACBETH.**
I’ll call upon you straight: abide within.

**[Exeunt Murderers.]**
It is concluded:– Banquo, thy soul’s flight, If it find heaven, must find it out to-night.

**[Exit.]**

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**Act 3, Scene 2**

The same. Another Room in the Palace.

**[Enter Lady Macbeth and a Servant.]**

**LADY MACBETH.**
Is Banquo gone from court?

**SERVANT.**
Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

**LADY MACBETH.**
Say to the king, I would attend his leisure For a few words.

**SERVANT.**
Madam, I will.

**[Exit.]**
LADY MACBETH.
Naught’s had, all’s spent,
Where our desire is got without content:
’Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy.

[Enter Macbeth.]

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making;
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard: what’s done is done.

MACBETH.
We have scotch’d the snake, not kill’d it;
She’ll close, and be herself; whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint,
Both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life’s fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

LADY MACBETH.
Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o’er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial ’mong your guests to-night.

MACBETH.
So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honors in these flattering streams;
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

LADY MACBETH.
You must leave this.

LADY MACBETH.
Nothing’s got, all is lost,
If getting what we want doesn’t bring peace:
It’s safer to be the person we have killed,
Than, through killing, have to live in fear as well as joy.

[Enter Macbeth.]

How now, my lord! Why do you keep to yourself,
Worried imaginings your only companions,
Playing with those thoughts which should indeed have died
Along with those you are thinking about? Things that can’t be changed
Shouldn’t be thought about: what’s done is done.

MACBETH.
We have wounded the snake, not killed it;
She’ll recover, and be herself, while our weak malice
Is still in danger of her old bite.
If you do truly awful things then
Both heaven and earth fall apart, and
That means we have to eat in fear, and suffer Terrible dreams every night: we’d be better off
With the dead,
Who, to gain our own peace, we have sent to their ‘peace’,
Than to lie at night with tortured minds
In restless agony. Duncan is in his grave;
After life’s fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: neither steel, nor poison,
civil war, invasion, nothing,
Can touch him further.

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MACBETH.
O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know’st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

LADY MACBETH.
But in them nature’s copy’s not eterne.

MACBETH.
There’s comfort yet; they are assailable;
Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown
His cloister’d flight, ere to black Hecate’s summons,
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night’s yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

LADY MACBETH.
What’s to be done?

MACBETH.
Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day;
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale! – Light thickens; and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood:
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse;
While night’s black agents to their preys do rouse. –
Thou marvell’st at my words: but hold thee still;
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill:
So, pr’ythee, go with me.

[Exeunt.]