

# 7. Macbeth

## William Shakespeare *Macbeth* (1606)

### Macbeth does murder sleep 21

*Macbeth has just killed Duncan spurred on by his relentless wife, who is waiting for him outside Duncan's bedroom. The scene clearly outlines the two contrasting but complementary figures of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.*

#### Act 2, Scene 2

	MACBETH	I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?
	LADY MACBETH	I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry. Did not you speak?
	MACBETH	When?
5	LADY MACBETH	Now.
	MACBETH	As I descended?
	LADY MACBETH	Ay.
	[...]	
	MACBETH	Methought <sup>1</sup> I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep', the innocent sleep, Sleep that knits up the ravell'd <sup>2</sup> sleeve of care, The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath, Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course, Chief nourisher in life's feast, –
10		
	LADY MACBETH	What do you mean?
15	MACBETH	Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house: 'Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more.'
	LADY MACBETH	Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane, You do unbend <sup>3</sup> your noble strength, to think So brainsickly of things. Go get some water, And wash this filthy witness <sup>4</sup> from your hand. Why did you bring these daggers from the place? They must lie there: go carry them; and smear <sup>5</sup> The sleepy grooms with blood.
20		
	MACBETH	I'll go no more: I am afraid to think what I have done; Look on't again I dare not.
25		
	LADY MACBETH	Infirm of purpose! Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
30		

- Methought:** I think
- ravell'd:** it.  
*sfilacciata*
- unbend:** weaken
- witness:** evidence
- smear:** dirt

That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,  
I'll gild the faces of the grooms<sup>6</sup> withal<sup>7</sup>;  
For it must seem their guilt.

*Exit. Knocking within*

35 MACBETH

Whence<sup>8</sup> is that knocking?  
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?  
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes.  
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather  
40 The multitudinous<sup>9</sup> seas incarnadine<sup>10</sup>  
Making the green one red.

*Enter Lady Macbeth*

LADY MACBETH

My hands are of your colour, but I shame  
To wear a heart so white.

6. **gild the faces of the grooms:**  
cover with his (golden) blood the faces of the guards
7. **withal:**  
it. *ciononostante*
8. **Whence:**  
it. *Da dove*
9. **multitudinous:**  
vast
10. **incarnadine:**  
it. *rosso cremisi*