

Module 4: Examining Love, Friendship, and Power
Topic 4 Content: Act II From *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

Act II, Scene i: Court of Macbeth's castle.

[Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE bearing 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;
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!

[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
Sent forth great largess to your offices.
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content.

MACBETH

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

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BANQUO

All's well.

I dreamt last night of the three weyard sisters:

To you they have show'd some truth.

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.

MACBETH

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,

It shall make honour for you.

BANQUO

So I lose none

In seeking to augment¹ it, but still keep

My bosom franchised and allegiance² clear,

I shall be counsell'd.

MACBETH

Good repose the while!

BANQUO

Thanks, sir: the like to you!

[Exit BANQUO and FLEANCE.]

MACBETH

Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,

She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

[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.

¹ to enlarge or increase

² loyalty to a cause, group, or nation

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Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable³
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
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:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one halfworld
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy⁴ 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
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
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.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

[*He exits.*]

³ capable of being felt

⁴ furtive or sly

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Act II, Scene ii: The same.

[Enter LADY MACBETH.]

LADY MACBETH

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.
Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd
their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

MACBETH

[Within.] Who's there? what, ho!

LADY MACBETH

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.

[Enter MACBETH.]

My husband!

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?

LADY MACBETH

Now.

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MACBETH

As I descended?

LADY MACBETH

Ay.

MACBETH

Hark!

Who lies i' the second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

Donalbain.

MACBETH

This is a sorry sight.

[Looking on his hands.]

LADY MACBETH

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

MACBETH

There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried

'Murder!'

That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:

But they did say their prayers, and address'd them

Again to sleep.

LADY MACBETH

There are two lodged together.

MACBETH

One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other;

As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.

Listening their fear, I could not say 'Amen,'

When they did say 'God bless us!'

LADY MACBETH

Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH

But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'?

I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'

Stuck in my throat.

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LADY MACBETH

These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

MACBETH

Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep', the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd 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,—

LADY MACBETH

What do you mean?

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 your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them; and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH

I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH

Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,

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I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;
For it must seem their guilt.

[She exits. Knocking within.]

MACBETH

Whence 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
The multitudinous⁵ seas in incarnadine⁶,
Making the green one red.

[Re-enter LADY MACBETH.]

LADY MACBETH

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

[Knocking within.]

I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber;
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it, then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended.

[Knocking within.]

Hark! more knocking.
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

MACBETH

To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

[Knocking within.]

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

[They exit.]

⁵ numerous

⁶ to redden

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Act II, Scene iii: The same.

[Knocking within. Enter a PORTER.]

PORTER

Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key.

[Knocking within.]

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat for't.

[Knocking within.]

Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate⁷ to heaven: O, come in, equivocator.

[Knocking within.]

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose.

[Knocking within.]

Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in

⁷ to use ambiguous language in order to mislead

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some of all professions that go the primrose
way to the everlasting bonfire.

[*Knocking within.*]

Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter.

[*Opens the gate.*]

[*Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX.*]

MACDUFF

Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?

PORTER

'Faith sir, we were carousing till the
second cock: and drink, sir, is a great
provoker of three things.

MACDUFF

What three things does drink especially provoke?

PORTER

Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and
urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes;
it provokes the desire, but it takes
away the performance: therefore, much drink
may be said to be an equivocator with lechery:
it makes him, and it mars him; it sets
him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him,
and disheartens him; makes him stand to, and
not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him
in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.

MACDUFF

I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

PORTER

That it did, sir, i' the very throat on
me: but I requited him for his lie; and, I
think, being too strong for him, though he took
up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

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MACDUFF

Is thy master stirring?

[*Enter MACBETH.*]

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

LENNOX

Good morrow, noble sir.

MACBETH

Good morrow, both.

MACDUFF

Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

MACBETH

Not yet.

MACDUFF

He did command me to call timely on him:

I have almost slipp'd the hour.

MACBETH

I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFF

I know this is a joyful trouble to you;

But yet 'tis one.

MACBETH

The labour we delight in physics pain.

This is the door.

MACDUFF

I'll make so bold to call,

For 'tis my limited service.

[*He exits.*]

LENNOX

Goes the king hence to-day?

MACBETH

He does: he did appoint so.

LENNOX

The night has been unruly: where we lay,

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Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire⁸ combustion and confused events
New hatch'd to the woeful time: the obscure bird
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth
Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH

'Twas a rough night.

LENNOX

My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

[*Re-enter MACDUFF.*]

MACDUFF

O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

MACBETH LENNOX

What's the matter.

MACDUFF

Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious⁹ murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' the building!

MACBETH

What is 't you say? the life?

LENNOX

Mean you his majesty?

MACDUFF

Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon: do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves.

⁸ dreadful; desperate

⁹ desecrating or debasing something that is sacred

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[Exit *MACBETH* and *LENNOX*.]

Awake, awake!
Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
To countenance this horror! Ring the bell.

[*Bell rings*.]

[Enter *LADY MACBETH*.]

LADY MACBETH

What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!

MACDUFF

O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

[Enter *BANQUO*.]

O Banquo, Banquo,
Our royal master 's murder'd!

LADY MACBETH

Woe, alas!
What, in our house?

BANQUO

Too cruel any where.
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,
And say it is not so.

[*Re-enter MACBETH* and *LENNOX*, with *ROSS*.]

MACBETH

Had I but died an hour before this chance,

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I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,
There 's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

[Enter *MALCOLM* and *DONALBAIN*.]

DONALBAIN

What is amiss?

MACBETH

You are, and do not know't:
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd.

MACDUFF

Your royal father 's murder'd.

MALCOLM

O, by whom?

LENNOX

Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done 't:
Their hands and faces were an badged with blood;
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows:
They stared, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.

MACBETH

O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.

MACDUFF

Wherefore did you so?

MACBETH

Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The expedition my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,

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His silver skin laced with his golden blood;
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's love known?

LADY MACBETH

Help me hence, ho!

MACDUFF

Look to the lady.

MALCOLM

[*Aside to DONALBAIN.*] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours?

DONALBAIN

[*Aside to MALCOLM.*] What should be spoken here,
where our fate,
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?
Let 's away;
Our tears are not yet brew'd.

MALCOLM

[*Aside to DONALBAIN.*] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.

BANQUO

Look to the lady:

[*LADY MACBETH is carried out.*]

And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:
In the great hand of God I stand; and thence
Against the undivulged pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.

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MACDUFF

And so do I.

ALL

So all.

MACBETH

Let's briefly put on manly readiness,

And meet i' the hall together.

ALL

Well contented.

[Exit all but MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.]

MALCOLM

What will you do? Let's not consort with them:

To show an unfelt sorrow is an office

Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.

DONALBAIN

To Ireland, I; our separated fortune

Shall keep us both the safer: where we are,

There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,

The nearer bloody.

MALCOLM

This murderous shaft that's shot

Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way

Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;

And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,

But shift away: there's warrant in that theft

Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left.

[They exit.]

Act II, Scene iv: Outside Macbeth's castle.

[Enter ROSS and an OLD MAN.]

OLD MAN

Threescore and ten I can remember well:

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Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.

ROSS

Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock, 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

OLD MAN

'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

ROSS

And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.

OLD MAN

'Tis said they eat each other.

ROSS

They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes
That look'd upon't. Here comes the good Macduff.

[Enter *MACDUFF*.]

How goes the world, sir, now?

MACDUFF

Why, see you not?

ROSS

Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?

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MACDUFF

Those that Macbeth hath slain.

ROSS

Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

MACDUFF

They were suborn'd:

Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,

Are stol'n away and fled; which puts upon them

Suspicion of the deed.

ROSS

'Gainst nature still!

Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up

Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like

The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

MACDUFF

He is already named, and gone to Scone

To be invested.

ROSS

Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF

Carried to Colmekill,

The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,

And guardian of their bones.

ROSS

Will you to Scone?

MACDUFF

No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

ROSS

Well, I will thither.

MACDUFF

Well, may you see things well done there: adieu!

Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

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ROSS

Farewell, father.

OLD MAN

God's benison go with you; and with those

That would make good of bad, and friends of foes!

[They exit.]