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. *Exit.*

ACT 2, SCENE 2

Enter LADY.

LADY

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.

Enter MACBETH.

MACBETH Who's there? What ho?

LADY

Alack, I am afraid they have awak'd,
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

Which . . . it – *i.e. silence, not footsteps, is suitable to the situation*; threat – *threaten*
Words . . . gives – *Words freeze up and thus slow down hot action*

knell – *sound of bell rung to signal a death*

quench'd – *overcome* Metre: line is short by 1 syl.
owl – *considered a bird of bad omen* Metre: line is short by 2 syl.
fatal – *ominous*; bellman – *night watchman*; stern'st good night – *final good night*
it – (*euphemism for the murder*) -man which **gives** (anapest)
surfeited – *over-fed*, pron. **surf**-it-ed; grooms – *servants*; mock their charge – *ignore duty*
pos-sets – *hot spiced milk drinks* Metre: line is short by 2 syl.
That . . . die – *So that death and life are battling over whether the grooms will live or die*

F – *Enter Macbeth* Steevens – *Enter Macbeth (within)*
Lady Macbeth doesn't seem to hear or see Macbeth until line 14.

The at-**tempt** (anapest)

Confounds – *Ruins*; Hark – *Listen*
He – *Macbeth*; he – *Duncan*

My father as he slept, I had done't.
My husband?

MACBETH I have done the deed.
Didst thou not hear a noise?

LADY
I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

MACBETH
When?

LADY
Now.

MACBETH
As I descended?

LADY
Ay.

MACBETH
Hark, who lies i'the second chamber?

LADY
Donalbain.

MACBETH
This is a sorry sight.

LADY
A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

done't – done it

Metre: broken-backed line (see 'A Note on Metre', p. 19)
F – husband? Hunter – husband?
Ambiguous metrical connection

crickets – an insect associated with witches

Lady Macbeth addresses her husband with the the more formal 'you'
Metre: ambiguous metrical connections between short lines (18–25)

i'the – in the

Metre: iambic pentameter resumes

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 addressèd them again to sleep.

LADY
There are two lodg'd 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
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.

LADY 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 sleave 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 –

's – *in his (referring to one of the grooms)* Metre: line is short by 4 syl.

-der', that **they** (anapest)

them; but **they** (anapest)

addressèd them – *prepared themselves* Metre: headless line (see 'A Note on Metre')

Metre: line is short by 3 syl.

As – *As if*; hangman's hands – *hangmen often disembowelled their victims after hanging*

Listening – *Listening to*, pron. **List**-ning (equiv. 2 syl.)

Metre: line is short by 3 syl.

Metre: line is short by 2 syl.

wherefore – *why*

thought – *considered*

After these ways – *In this way*; so – *if we do so*

-no-cent **sleep** (anapest)

ravell'd – *frayed*; sleave – *stray thread, but also sounds like the 'sleeve' of a garment*

labour's bath – *a soothing bath for a tired worker*

second course – *main course in a meal*

-ish-er **in** (anapest)

LADY 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
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 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,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt. *Exit. Knock 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

Glamis – can pronounce with one syl. (Glahmz) or two syl. (**Glah**-mis creates an anapest)

unbend – *relax, loosen*
So brainsickly – *As if made by an ill mind*
filthy witness – *dirty evidence*
Lady Macbeth seems to just now notice the daggers in Macbeth's hand[s].
there – *i.e. where Duncan was murdered*

on't – *on it*

Infirm – *Indecisive* not./In-**firm** (anapest)
-gers. The **sleep**- (anapest)
as pictures – *i.e. unmoving* **child**-hood (equiv. 2 syl.)
eye . . . devil – *related to Prov. about creatures scaring babies* -vil. If **he** (anapest)
gild – *old gold was red in colour*; withal – *as well*
seem their guilt – *appear that they are the guilty ones*

Whence – *From where comes*
is't – *is it*; appals – *alarms, literally, makes pale*

Neptune's – *the Roman God of the seas*

The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green, one red.

Enter LADY.

LADY

My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. I hear a knocking *Knock*
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. *Knock*
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. *Knock*
Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou couldst.

Exeunt.

ACT 2, SCENE 3

Enter a PORTER. *Knocking within.*

PORTER

Here's a knocking indeed: if a man were porter of
Hell Gate, he should have old turning the key. (*Knock*)
Knock, knock, knock. Who's there, i'th' name of
Belzebub? Here's a farmer that hanged himself
on th'expectation of plenty. Come in time. Have

mul-ti-**tu**-di-nous – *vast*; in-**car**-na-**dine** – *redden, as with blood* -di-nous **seas** (anapest)

one red – *entirely red* Punct.: Johnson – green, one red F – Greene one, Red.

Lines: Pope – shame/knocking/chamber;/ F – shame/white./entry;/

so white – *pale from fear or weakness*

Your . . . unattended – *Your devotion to the deed has left you unguarded*

nightgown – *dressing-gown or bath robe*; occasion call us – *circumstances summon us*
show us to be watchers – *reveal us to be like watchmen and awake*

Metre: line is short by 4 syl.

To know . . . myself – *It would be better to lose consciousness than to face what I've done.* -ing. I **would** (anapest)

The scene begins in PROSE

porter of Hell Gate – *image from medieval biblical dramas that imagine hell as a castle*
have old – *have plenty of*
i'th – *in the*
Belzebub – *a prince of devils*, pron. **Bel**-zi-**bub**; farmer – *hoarding farmer who overcharges the poor*
Come in time – *You have good timing*