SIDE 6

Porter, Macduff, Lady Macduff, Lennox, Macbeth

15

PORTER Anon, anon. I pray you, remember the porter. [*Opens door*]

Enter MACDUFF, LADY 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 20
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

17 SD.1] *Brooke; not in* F; *Opens / Capell*

11–12 stealing out of a French hose Possibly a joke about tailors' skimping on fabric in men's garments ('hose'), but fashions changed quickly, and 'French hose' were both loose and tight at various times in the early modern period, making theft difficult or easy to detect, as the case might be (Brooke); for analogous details of changing fashions in breeches, see Dekker (and Middleton), *The Roaring Girl* 2.2.71–82. The phrase may also be sexual innuendo: 'tail' (of 'tailor') = vagina; 'hose' = codpiece = penis. Precisely what (the theft, the penis) was 'stealing out of' (escaping, becoming visible) is equivocal. Blackfriars suggests a pun, stealing/'staling' (= urinating), which would anticipate the Porter's other major interest.

12 roast your goose heat your iron (in the flames of hell). 'Goose' was a tailor's long-handled iron and also a slang word for 'prostitute', a source of venereal disease, the 'French pox' for which a sufferer roasted literally (see 5 n.) and spiritually (in hell). See also 11–12 n. above.

15–16 primrose . . . bonfire Shakespeare appears to have invented the phrase 'primrose path' as a contrast between the easy and attractive pleasures of sin and the consequences of sin, 'th'everlasting bonfire' of hell. Compare 'the primrose path of dalliance' (*Ham.* 1.3.50) and 'the flow'ry way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire' (*AWW* 4.5.54–5). Compare 'roast your goose' (12 and n.).

15 primrose 'abounding in primroses' (*OED* Primrose *sb* (*a*) 7), a pale-yellow wild and cultivated flower, 'first-born child of Ver, / Merry springtime's harbinger' (*TNK* 1.1.7–8).

16 bonfire Etymologically, the word derives from 'bone-fire', a pyre in which human or animal bones were consumed.

17 remember the porter give me a tip (for opening the gate).

17 SD.1 The Porter here performs some action fulfilling his function as gate-keeper.

20–1 The Porter's lines are apparently prose, but like other prose passages in the play they have an iambic rhythm.

20 carousing celebrating, revelling, drinking.

20 second cock second crowing of a rooster (i.e. a measurement of time before watches and clocks were common). Compare 'the second cock hath crowed, / . . . 'tis three a'clock' (*Rom.* 4.4.3–4), a comment that does not necessarily mean that 'the second cock' = 'three o'clock', and 5.1.31.

21 great provoker of three things The Shakespearean clown's typical invitation, a half-riddle that will, he hopes, catch the interest of a wealthy interlocutor. *TN* 1.5.1–9, 3.1.16–25, and *AWW* 1.3.39–50 are other instances.

22 With this question, Macduff accepts his rôle as straight man.

23 Marry A mild oath (in full: 'By the Lady Mary', 'By the Virgin Mary').

23 nose-painting i.e. the reddening of the sot's nose. Lady Macbeth angrily dismissed the painted face and its effects (2.2.57–60).

24 unprovokes calms, depresses, allays (see *OED* Un^{2} *prefix* and Provoke *v* 6); this line is *OED*'s only citation for Unprovoke *v* (Schäfer).

24–5 provokes the desire . . . performance stimulates sexual interest but inhibits sexual func-

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.

LADY MACDUFF I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

PORTER That it did, ma'am, 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.

Enter MACBETH

MACDUFF Is thy master stirring?
Our knocking has awaked him: here he comes.

[*Exit Porter*]

34 SD] F; *after* 35, *Collier* 36 SD *Exit Porter*] *Oxford; not in* F

tioning. For contemporary beliefs about witches and their power to inhibit a male's sexual performance, see Dolan, p. 216. Provoking (or tempting) and unprovoking (or warning) also describe the sisters' words to Macbeth and Banquo in 1.3 since those words provoke Macbeth to regicide but also seem to promise that he will become king 'without . . . stir' (1.3.143); those words promise much to Banquo, who is not 'provoked' to regicide.

26 equivocator Someone who uses ambiguous words; a prevaricator. *OED*'s first citation is from a text composed in 1599, Edwin Sandys's *A Relation of the State of Religion* (first printed 1605 and later reprinted as *Europae Speculum*), where the word is applied to Jesuits and their doctrine of mental reservation. That doctrine permitted one to express virtual falsehoods in a verbally true form to satisfy the speaker's conscience (Sandys, sig. K2v). See p. 5 above. Scot (XIII, 15) uses 'equivocation' to describe banal confidence games, perhaps through analogy with rhetorical 'equivoque', the pun, as in 'strange equivocation' (Webster, *White Devil* 4.2.34).

26–30 it makes . . . leaves him These lines mingle bawdy (developing 23–5) with other meanings.

26 makes . . . mars A proverbial expression (Dent M48).

27 sets . . . on . . . takes . . . off advances . . . withdraws. Besides the bawdy description of a failed erection, the verbs could describe urging dogs to attack and retreat (compare 5.7.2 and n.).

28 stand to set to work (with a pun on the erect penis).

29 equivocates him in a sleep fulfils his lechery only in a dream (Hunter).

29 giving him the lie '(1) deceives him (because he cannot perform sexually as he promised); (2) floors him (as in wrestling); (3) makes him urinate (lie = lye)' (Hunter); (4) makes him lose his erection; (5) accuses him of lying (as Lady Macbeth did Macbeth, 1.7.47–51).

31–3 I believe . . . his lie Macduff, the comic feed here, reignites the multiple jokes of 29 when he asserts that 'drink gave thee the lie last night' (31), but the Porter's reply, 'it did . . . i'the very throat on [= of] me' and 'I requited him for his lie' (32, 33), stresses the single meaning of deliberate deception, the meaning most pertinent to what the Macbeths have done and are about to do. The proverbial 'To lie in one's teeth' (Dent T268) meant 'deep, deliberate lying' (Folger).

34 took up my legs made me unable to stand (because drunk); 'dropped' me (as a wrestler does). Compare 29n.

34 shift stratagem, ruse (*OED* Shift *sb* 4).

34 cast throw to the ground; vomit (NS subst.).

34 SD Editors have moved Macbeth's entrance to follow Macduff's question, but see Textual Analysis, pp. 246–7 below.

36 SD Oxford added this SD, remarking 'He might leave later', but the Porter and his humour work best by contrast rather than coincidence.

LENNOX Good morrow, noble sir.
MACBETH Good morrow, all.
LADY MACDUFF Is the king stirring, worthy thane?
MACBETH Not yet.
MACDUFF He did command me to call timely on him;
I have almost slipped 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. *Exit*
LENNOX Goes the king hence today?
MACBETH He does – he did appoint so.
LENNOX The night has been unruly: where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i'th'air, strange screams of death
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events,

43 SD] F (*Exit Macduffe.*)

38 stirring The repetition of 35 sounds awkward unless (or until) it activates the metaphoric identity of sleep (from which Macbeth is supposedly awakened) and death (from which Duncan will never stir). Compare 70.

38 Not yet This phrase 'implies that he [Duncan] will [stir] by and by, and is a kind of guard against any suspicion' (Whately, p. 34). Macbeth might have answered 'No', and 'Not yet' also means 'No longer'; see p. 48 above.

39 timely early. For the dramatic use of Macduff here, see Textual Analysis, pp. 260–1 below.

40 slipped failed in keeping (the appointed time). See *OED* Slip *v*[1] 20c, quoting only this line and another from 1707.

41–3 Unlike F, editors often arrange these exchanges as verse; like other episodes involving short exchanges and action, this one contains stretches of iambic rhythms (e.g. 42), but even a loose iambic pentameter does not extend through the passage.

41 joyful trouble The oxymoron recalls 1.6.11–12.

42 The labour . . . pain Effort we enjoy alleviates suffering. The same idea appears in *Cym.* 3.2.34, *Temp.* 3.1.1–2, and 'What we do willingly is easy' (Dent D407).

43 limited appointed (Muir).

44 Goes . . . hence See 1.5.57 n.

45 He does . . . appoint so For the same equivocation, see 'as he purposes' (1.5.58).

45 appoint order; purpose.

48–9 Lamentings . . . screams . . . accents These sounds are not articulate speech, but inchoate, ominous sounds (like the 'obscure bird's' clamour) that people interpret ('they say') as 'prophesying' (47, 49), just as Macbeth (mis)interpreted the sisters' words in 1.3.

48 screams shrill, piercing cries. This line is the earliest citation for this meaning under *OED* Scream *sb* a (the next citation is from 1708), so the earliest audiences may have understood the sounds more specifically as the 'cries of certain birds and beasts' (*OED* Scream *sb* b, where the earliest citation is from 1513). See Textual Analysis, p. 248 below.

49 prophesying uttering strange things; announcing solemnly (White subst., citing 'And he saide unto me, Prophecie thou upon these bones, & speake unto them: Ye drye bones, heare the worde of the Lorde' (Ezek. 37.4)). The word only equivocally means 'foretelling' since the 'combustions' and 'events' are already 'hatched'.

50 dire combustion dreadful commotion; terrifying disorder.

50 events outcomes, consequences (*OED* Event 3a). Certain causes are 'New hatched' (51) and will mature into 'events' in on-rushing 'time'. The metaphor of hatching (a bird's birth) anticipates 51–2, but the birth of events-in-time recalls Macbeth's soliloquy (1.7.4–5).

New hatched to th'woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamoured 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.~~

~~*Enter* MACDUFF~~

~~MACDUFF O horror, horror, horror,~~
~~Tongue nor heart cannot conceive, nor name thee.~~
~~MACBETH *and* LENNOX What's the matter?~~
~~MACDUFF Confusion now hath made his masterpiece:~~
~~Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope~~
~~The Lord's anointed temple and stole thence~~
~~The life o'th'building.~~
~~MACBETH What is't you say, the life?~~
~~LADY MACDUFF 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.~~

~~*Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox*~~

~~Awake, awake!~~
~~Ring the alarum bell! Murder and treason!~~

51 time.] F; time: *Theobald* 67 SD *Exeunt . . . Lennox*] *Staunton (subst.); after* awake! F

51 obscure bird The owl (which is 'obscure' because rarely seen and usually heard only at night).

52 livelong very long.

53 feverous feverish, shaking with fever (a personification). The earth was not 'sure and firm-set' (2.1.56).

53 rough stormy. Macbeth is laconic.

57 The tongue names and the heart conceives, but the rhetorical figure (antimetabole) reorders the grammar: tongue–heart–conceives–names.

59 masterpiece greatest achievement (earliest citation at *OED* Masterpiece 1b).

60 sacrilegious violating sacred things (*Lexicon*); profaning. Sacrilege is specifically the crime of stealing from the church (see 61–2).

60 ope open. The archaic form is needed for the metre.

61 Lord's anointed temple house of worship; Duncan's cranium ('temple') or body (see 'building' (62 and n.)). The Christian New Testament treats all believers as the 'temple' (sanctuary, church, synagogue) of God (1 Cor. 3.16), and biblical kings, like English ones, were 'anointed' at their coronations; see e.g. David to Saul: 'I had compassion on thee, and sayd: I will not lay myne handes on my maister, for he is the Lordes annoynted' (1 Sam. 24.10). Compare Banquo's proleptic remark on the 'temple-haunting martlet' (1.6.4).

62–4 Macbeth's line (63) might be linked metrically with the one before (Cam.), or Lennox and Macbeth might speak simultaneously (Muir).

62 life o'th'building 'The ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies can be aptly described as "the life o'th'building"' (Shaheen, p. 164).

62 building body (compare: 'the bloody house of life' (*John* 4.2.210) and 'this mortal house I'll ruin' (*Ant.* 5.2.51)); house of worship (= 'temple' (61)).

66 Gorgon Mythical female being with snakes for hair and the power to turn whoever looked upon her to stone. For 'Duncan's androgyny', perhaps evoked here, see Adelman, pp. 131–3.

68 Ring the alarum bell This bell echoes the bell (or 'knell') summoning Macbeth and Duncan to heaven or to hell (2.1.63–4).