DUNCAN Is execution done on Cawdor, or not
Those in commission yet returned?

SIDE 3

MALCOLM My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confessed his treasons,
Implored your highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance. Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.

DUNCAN There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face.
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, *and* ANGUS

O worthiest cousin,

2 liege i.e. liege lord (the feudal superior to whom a vassal owes allegiance). In Shakespeare's day, the title no longer carried legal obligations and was mostly one of great respect.

3–4 A notable example of the play's insistence on mediated knowledge, on information travelling through reports and unofficial channels.

3 spoke spoken (Abbott 343).

5–7 In the early modern period, no matter how recalcitrant convicted criminals had been, they typically did confess, repent, and beg forgiveness as they prepared to face divine judgement; see L. B. Smith, 'English treason trials and confessions in the sixteenth century', *JHI* 15 (1954), 471–98, especially pp. 476–80, and J. A. Sharpe, '"Last dying speeches": religion, ideology and public execution in seventeenth-century England', *P&P* 107 (May 1985), 144–67.

8 Became Graced, befitted (*OED* Become *v* 7).

9 studied skilled, practised. There is no overtone of the modern connotation 'affected', but perhaps an acknowledgement of traditional religious practice (see Beach Langston, 'Essex and the art of dying', *HLQ* 13 (1949–50), 109–29, and Nancy Lee Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, 1970). 'To owe God a death' is proverbial (Dent G237), and versions appear elsewhere in Shakespeare (e.g. *R3* 2.2.91–5).

10 owed owned. Elizabethan spelling did not distinguish between 'owe' and 'own'; Malcolm may therefore also allude to the idea that every Christian owes God a soul. See 5.9.5 and n.

11 As As if. See Abbott 107, noting that the subjunctive 'were' implies 'if'.

11 careless uncared for (*OED* Careless 4a, quoting this line), unregarded. Cawdor threw away his soul as if it were a trifle he cared nothing about.

11–12 There's no art . . . face A proverbial truism – 'The face is no index to the heart' (Dent F1.1, citing Juvenal, *Satire* 2: 'Frontis nulla fides') – that Duncan has apparently just discovered. Foakes notes the lines' ironic applicability to Macbeth, 'who enters just after they are spoken, or, as some actors have played the part, in time to overhear them'. Immediately before his arrest and execution, the pathetically impercipient Hastings fails to read the mind in Richard of Gloucester's face: 'never a man in Christendom / Can lesser hide his love or hate than he, / For by his face straight shall you know his heart' (*R3* 3.4.51–3); Vincentio, himself in disguise, uses the truism to flatter and gain his way: 'There is written in your brow, Provost, honesty and constancy; if I read it not truly, my ancient skill beguiles me' (*MM* 4.2.153–5). Compare 'You are well-favoured and your looks foreshow / You have a gentle heart' (*Per.* 4.1.85–6). Duncan's remark might have been prompted by Holinshed's observation (*Scotland*, p. 150a) that King Duff, murdered in one 'Donwald's' castle at Forres, was uncautious because he had 'a speciall trust in Donwald, as a man whom he never suspected'. Compare 1.5.60–4.

12 construction interpretation (*Lexicon*).

The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before,
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine. Only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

MACBETH The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties, and our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should by doing everything
Safe toward your love and honour.

DUNCAN Welcome hither.
I have begun to plant thee and will labour
To make thee full of growing. Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me enfold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

BANQUO There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

DUNCAN My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,

21 More . . . pay.] F; 'More . . . pay'. *Oxford*

18–20 Would . . . mine i.e. I wish you had merited lesser rewards so that I might have been able to pay you adequately; 'proportion' (19) = an act of proportioning (*OED* Proportion *sb* 6, citing this line): this act Duncan cannot satisfactorily perform because Macbeth's merit outstrips the available 'thanks and payment'.

20–1 Only . . . pay Shakespearean nobles often humble themselves in this way; compare 'outward courtesies would fain proclaim / Favours that keep within' (*MM* 5.1.15–16).

21 all i.e. all my 'thanks and payment' (19).

22–7 'Macbeth has nothing but the commonplaces of loyalty, in which he hides himself in the "our"' (Coleridge, p. 108).

23 pays itself i.e. service and loyalty (22) are their own rewards. See 'Virtue is its own reward' (Dent V81, first recorded in 1596).

27 Safe toward With sure regard to your love and honour (Clarendon). 'An expression undoubtedly strained and obscure on purpose' (*Lexicon* Safe *adj* and *adv* 4).

28–9 I have begun . . . growing Shaheen compares 'Thou hast planted them . . . they growe, and bring forth fruit' (Jer. 12.2 (Geneva)).

30–1 nor . . . / No less i.e. and must be no less known. F's phrase is a double negative.

31 enfold embrace (an implicit direction to the actor).

32–3 There . . . own Banquo continues Duncan's metaphor of growth-into-reward and may allude to the legal principle that the land's owner possesses the crops thereon no matter who sowed and tended them (see Clarkson and Warren, pp. 165–6 and 166 n. 11); for the related principle in animal husbandry see *John* 1.1.123–4.

34 Wanton Luxuriant, profuse (*OED* Wanton *a* 7a).

35 drops of sorrow Duncan weeps for joy.

35–43 Sons . . . you The political import of this speech is repeated at 5.9.27–40. Duncan's proposal of his successor (37) might hint that Macbeth or Banquo, not Malcolm, as it happens, is to be nominated.

And you whose places are the nearest, know:
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland, which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness like stars shall shine
On all deservers. [*To Macbeth*] From hence to Inverness
And bind us further to you.

MACBETH The rest is labour which is not used for you;
I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach.
So humbly take my leave.

DUNCAN My worthy Cawdor.

~~MACBETH [*Aside*] The Prince of Cumberland: that is a step~~
~~On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,~~
~~For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires,~~
~~Let not light see my black and deep desires,~~
~~The eye wink at the hand. Yet let that be,~~
~~Which the eye fears when it is done to see.~~ *Exit*

45 harbinger] F (Herbenger)

36 nearest most closely, or intimately, associated (with Duncan).

37 establish settle.

39 Prince of Cumberland Title of the Scottish heir apparent; compare 'Prince of Wales' in England.

40 Not unaccompanied Not alone. Making Malcolm Prince of Cumberland requires that Duncan also honour others, as Malcolm does at the play's end and James I did upon his accession.

40 invest clothe, adorn (*OED* Invest *v* 1b). This meaning shades into more figurative ones, e.g. 'endue with attributes' (*OED* Invest *v* 3a), but the word links the abstract conferring of honour with the imagery of clothing (see 2.4.32 and n.).

41 signs of nobleness tokens of merit (i.e. titles of honour).

42 SD Keightley is apparently the first editor to have realised that 'you' (43) stipulated a change of those addressed.

42 Inverness Town at the head of the Moray Firth, 155 miles north-west of Edinburgh (Sugden) and supposed location of Macbeth's castle. See the map, p. 94 above.

44 rest . . . you Macbeth uses courtly and hyperbolic antithesis: (1) anything ('the rest') not done for you is work ('labour'); (2) resting ('the rest') is fatiguing unless done on your behalf; (3) rest is labour when I refrain from serving you. This involuted language conveys polite deference rather than any easily paraphrasable sense: Macbeth stresses that 'you' (Duncan, his importance and his favour to Macbeth) give meaning to whatever 'we' (Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and presumably their retainers) do, however others may judge our actions.

45 harbinger An officer of the royal household, who preceded the king on his journeys and procured lodgings (NS). Compare 1.6.23 n.

45–6 make . . . hearing i.e. make (Lady Macbeth) rejoice at hearing.

50 Stars . . . fires Duncan has just said that 'signs of nobleness [= honours] like stars' shall shine on all deserving people (41–2); recently honoured, Macbeth now seeks to escape starlight and betray his desert. The words are entirely metaphorical: 'There is nothing to indicate this scene took place at night' (Clarendon).

52 wink at disregard, overlook; connive at (*OED* Wink v^1 6a–b). The implication of connivance is slight and made more doubtful by the next line.

52–3 Yet let that be . . . to see See Johnson's comment on a similiar moment of anxious self-deception in *John* 4.2.231–6: 'bad men use all the arts of fallacy upon themselves . . . and hide themselves from their own detection', and Jones, *Scenic*, pp. 204 and 212, where affinities between the 'conspiracy stage' in *JC* and *Mac.* are identified.