SIDE 7A/B

3M, 1 F
OLD MAN/PORTER, ROSS, MACDUFF, LADY MACDUFF

A

2.4 *Enter* ROSS, *with an* OLD MAN

OLD MAN Threescore and ten I can remember well;

127 SD] *Hanmer (subst.); Exeunt.* F 133–4 nea'er . . . nearer] F (neere . . . neerer) **Act 2, Scene 4** 2.4] F (*Scena Quarta.*); Scene II. *Rowe*

or customary garments. Macbeth draws attention to his pretended unpreparedness (see 2.2.73–4). The phrase suggests that the observers have been unmanned, weakened, by Duncan's death and recalls the chamberlains' daggers 'Unmannerly breeched with gore' (109).

128 'Malcolm and Donaldbain suspect everyone' (Foakes).

128 consort keep company, associate. The verb is a late-sixteenth-century development from the noun, one of whose prominent meanings was 'spouse'; hence there may be an underlying link to marriage, procreation, and the sons, not his, who will succeed Macbeth.

129–30 The sentiment fits Macbeth (see 101–11) and, perhaps, Duncan's sons themselves.

130 easy easily. See Abbott 467, arguing that metre explains the substitution.

133–4 The more closely one is related to Duncan, the more likely one is to be killed. Compare 90–2.

134–5 This . . . lighted The murderous design that killed Duncan is not yet finished.

135 lighted landed.

137 dainty particular, scrupulous about (*OED* Dainty *a* 5b).

138–9 A weak couplet, sapped further by the quibble on 'steals'; NS compares the same wordplay on 'theft'/'steal' at *AWW* 2.1.33–4.

138 shift get away unobserved, evade (*OED* Shift *v* 22a). Compare 34 n.

138 warrant sanction, authorisation (*OED* Warrant *sb*[1] 7a). The word is a further pun: a warrant was also a legal document authorising the arrest of a wrong-doer (e.g. Malcolm and Donaldbain as 'thieves' of themselves); see *OED* Warrant *sb*[1] 10.

139 steals A pun: takes unlawfully; sneaks.

Act 2, Scene 4

This scene occurs some time after 2.3 and is choric commentary (like the gardeners' scene, *R2* 3.4) as well as exposition (Duncan to be buried, Macbeth to be crowned); the Old Man – not further identified – has a powerful allegorical and at the same time commonplace effect, like his namesake in Marlowe's *Faustus* 5.1, lines 1707–38. The scene's location is uncertain; it may be outside a building, or within a public area of Macbeth's castle where Macduff might pass as he departs for Fife (36). Many productions cut this scene; when they do not, it is often combined with a pantomime of Duncan's catafalque or other action indicating burial ceremonies.

1 Threescore and ten Seventy (three times a 'score', twenty, plus ten), the biblical limit of human life (Ps. 90.10).

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

ROSS Ha, good father -

OLD MAN Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threatens his bloody stage. By th'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?

ROSS 'Tis unnatural -

OLD MAN Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon tow'ring in her pride of place
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

ROSS And Duncan's horses -

OLD MAN - a thing most strange and certain,
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience as they would
Make war with mankind. 'Tis said, they eat each other.

4 trifled] F; stifled *Q1673* 7 travelling] F (trauailing) 12 tow'ring] F (towring)

3 sore severe, harsh (*OED* Sore *a*[1] 5b).

4 trifled made trivial (the sole example at *OED* Trifle *v*[1] 6).

4 father Honorific title for an elderly man.

5–10 Ross speaks a cautious allegory, testing the Old Man's political sympathies; the imagery of light and dark (good and evil, justice and murder) recalls 1.4.50–3, 1.5.48–52, and 2.1.49–51, and anticipates images to come.

5 act deed; principal division of a play. Compare 'stage' (6).

6 Threatens Singular verb in *-s* with plural subject (Abbott 333).

7 travelling lamp journeying light (a periphrasis for 'sun'). See pp. 38–9 above.

8 predominance superior influence (probably with an astrological connotation). Compare 'we make guilty of our disasters the . . . stars, as if we were . . . knaves, thieves, and treachers [traitors] by spherical predominance' (*Lear* 1.2.120–4); *OED* quotes 'starres predominance' from 1615.

8 shame i.e. embarrassment at 'man's act' (5), the murder of Duncan.

10–20 For Holinshed's version of these 'unnatural' events, see p. 14 above.

11 deed that's done Duncan's murder. Duncan's name is echoed in 'done'.

12 tow'ring soaring. Syncopation preserves the metre.

12 pride of place 'proud place, place in which he [the falcon] visibly prides himself' (Capell, *Notes*, p. 14).

12 place height (or 'pitch') from which the falcon attacks; perhaps 'the air' (Capell, *Notes*, p. 14).

13 mousing owl owl that preys on mice (hence it ordinarily swoops to the earth rather than fighting another bird in the air). This line is the earliest citation at *OED* Mousing *ppl a* (Schäfer).

13 hawked at attacked on the wing (earliest citation for *OED* Hawk *v*[1] 3).

15 minions darlings, most prized specimens. See 1.2.19n.

15–18 Beauteous . . . mankind The underlying assumption here is that horses are naturally subordinate to 'mankind', and the possibility that horses might abandon 'obedience', their training by humans, images a breakdown in nature's order. This collapse extends even to the horses' own natural order: they attack and eat each other. Compare 28–9n. and the parallel between an unruly horse and disordered human passions at *TNK* 5.4.65–91. For horse and owl (13), see p. 14 above.

17 as as if (Abbott 107; see 1.4.11 n.).

18 eat ate. F's 'eat' is pronounced 'et'.

OLD MAN They did so, to th'amazement of mine eyes
That looked upon't.

Enter MACDUFF *and* LADY MACDUFF

ROSS Here come the good Macduffs. **B**
How goes the world, then, now?
LADY MACDUFF Why, see you not?
ROSS Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?
MACDUFF Those that Macbeth hath slain.
ROSS Alas the day,
What good could they pretend?
MACDUFF They were suborned.
Malcolm and Donaldbain, 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 will 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.

21 Why,] *Pope;* Why F 28 ravin] F (rauen) 29 life's] F (liues)

19–20 They . . . upon't Like a traveller confirming strange tales, Ross assures the Old Man he has personally witnessed the bizarre episodes of 14–18.

20 SD For the placing of this SD, see Textual Analysis, pp. 246–7 below. The actor was probably costumed in a way that indicated his intention to travel (see 3.1.0 SDn.).

20 good Macduff The first time Macduff receives a positive moral designation.

21 How goes the world What is the state of affairs. A proverbial phrase (Dent W884.1).

21 Why . . . not? Pope's persuasive repunctuation makes Macduff's question no reply – a cautious man tests his questioner (see 5–10n.) – but F's line represents an angry speaker unable to control his dangerous honesty.

24 pretend allege as a reason (*OED* Pretend *v* 6). See 2.3.124n.

24 suborned bribed; instigated to betray a trust.

26 puts upon See 1.7.70n.

27 'Gainst nature still i.e. like the self-devouring horses and other unnatural events he has just listed.

28–9 Thriftless . . . means Ambition, the desire to acquire, is paradoxically spendthrift and self-consuming when it leads sons to kill their father, source of their own lives (a subtle analogy with the self-devouring horses that betray mankind's gift of training – similar to a father's bringing-up of his sons – and revert to savagery). The education of sons and the training of horses are made parallel at *AYLI* 1.1.5–16.

28 Thriftless Prodigal.

28 ravin up consume, eat greedily.

29 means resources.

29–30 Then . . . Macbeth The common assumption is that Macbeth will be king if Duncan's sons are not available.

29 like likely.

31 named chosen.

31 Scone Ancient, now ruinous, city north of Perth and traditional site of Scottish coronations, though James VI was crowned at Stirling. See the map, p. 94 above, and 5.9.42, where Malcolm repeats Macbeth's action.

32 invested installed ceremonially (as king); clothed with royal insignia (see *OED* Invest *v* 4–5). See 1.4.40 and n., and 3.1, headnote.

ROSS Where is Duncan's body?
MACDUFF Carried to Colmkill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors
And guardian of their bones.
ROSS Will you to Scone?
LADY MACDUFF No, cousin, we'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.
ROSS Farewell, farewell.
OLD MAN God's benison go with you, and with those
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes.
Exeunt

3.1 ~~*Enter*~~ BANQUO ~~[*dressed for riding*]~~

BANQUO ~~Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,~~
~~As the weïrd women promised, and I fear~~
~~Thou played'st most foully for't; yet it was said~~

33 Colmkill] F (*Colmekill*) 37 Well] F; Well, *Theobald* 41 SD] F (*Exeunt omnes*) **Act 3, Scene 1** 3.1] F (*Actus Tertius. Scena Prima.*) 0 SD *dressed for riding*] *This edn; not in* F 2 weïrd] *Theobald;* weyard F

33 Colmkill The island of Iona, one of the western Hebrides (Sugden). Here the ancient graves of many Scottish kings may still be seen. See the map, p. 94 above.

36 Fife Ancestral land of Macduff, Thane of Fife; see the map, p. 94 above, and 1.2.48n.

36 I will thither I will go there.

37 Well . . . well Ironical repetition of Ross's 'well' (Muir). Theobald's punctuation makes the line social commonplace rather than ominous foreboding.

37–8 Adieu . . . new Farewell (we must part), for fear that ('lest') the future ('new' robes of rank or office) will be less comfortable than the past ('our old robes'). These lines elaborate and recall 1.3.106–7 and 143–5; they anticipate 5.2.21–2. Compare the new King Henry V's remark: 'This new and gorgeous garment, majesty, / Sits not so easy on me as you think' (*2H4* 5.2.44–5).

40–1 Compare 'Make your enemy your friend' (Dent E140.1).

40 benison blessing.

Act 3, Scene 1

The setting is a formal chamber of Macbeth's castle, where Banquo awaits permission to leave. This space allows a royal entry as well as the conspiratorial conversations of Macbeth and the murderers, who are ordered to some yet more private waiting-area (139). Many productions (e.g. Stratford, 1974) add a dumbshow of Macbeth's coronation here.

0 SD dressed for riding Macbeth later infers (19) Banquo's plans, apparently from his garb. Boots, spurs, or whips ('riding-rods') were common props indicating that a character had recently ridden or would soon ride a horse; see Dessen, p. 39. In many productions from Kemble's in the eighteenth century at least until Byam Shaw's (Stratford, 1955), Fleance also entered here, for various actorly and sentimental effects; see p. 70 above.

1–10 This ambiguous speech may mean that Banquo, seeing Macbeth's success and the fulfilment of the sisters' prophecies, passively colludes in Duncan's murder and now considers some criminal action. According to *Scotland*, p. 171a, Banquo was 'the chiefest' among Macbeth's 'trustie friends' who aided him in Duncan's murder; critics have found Banquo guilty here (see p. 7 above, n. 2).

2–3 fear . . . foully A punning antithesis between 'fair' and 'foully'; see 1.3.49–50n.

3 played'st Compare 1.5.19n.