



Macbeth Act 1 Scene 7

Shakespeare's version

LADY MACBETH

I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

MACBETH

Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,
That they have done't?

LADY MACBETH

Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

MACBETH

I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

Modern version

LADY MACBETH

I have fed a baby, and know
How moving it is to love the baby that sucks from me:
Even so, I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dashed his brains out, if I had sworn to do that
Just as you swore to kill the king.

MACBETH

What if we fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail!
If you would just be brave and stop hesitating,
We won't fail. When King Duncan is asleep –
the hard journey he has had today will
lure him into sound sleep – his two servants
I will so confuse with wine and song
That their memory, the guardian of the brain,
Will be a haze, their minds like a test-tube on a
Bunsen burner. When they are sleeping like pigs,
So drunk they might as well be dead,
Then, what can't you and I do to
The unguarded Duncan? What can we not frame
His drink-sodden men with, who shall appear to be
guilty
Of our great act?

MACBETH

Give birth to boys only;
For your unswerving bravery should give birth to
Nothing but males. Will it not be assumed,
When we have smeared with blood those sleeping two
men
In Duncan's own room and used their very own
daggers,
That they have done it?

LADY MACBETH

Who dares think anything else,
Especially as we will scream and cry with grief
Upon his death?

MACBETH

You've convinced me, and I am getting my whole
Body ready for this terrible act.
Go, and put on an innocent face:
False face must hide what the false heart knows.