ACT 1, SCENE 7

Hautboys. Torches. Enter a senator, and divers servants with dishes and service, [and pass] over the stage. Then enter Macbeth.

MACBETH:
If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence,* and catch
With his surcease* success — that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all — here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment* here, that 'tis but teach
Bloody instructions,* which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor. This evenhanded justice
Commends' th' ingredient* of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;*  
And Pity, like a naked new-born babe
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, horse
Upon the sightless couriers* of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th' other —

Enter Lady [Macbeth].

How now, what news?

---

3. trammel ... consequence: entangle as in a net and prevent the consequences that follow any action. 4. his surcease success: (of the assassination and of Duncan's life.) success: what succeeds, follows. (If only the assassination itself were the end of the matter.) success: so that only. 5. here: in this world. 7. jump: risk. (But the physical act is characteristic of Macbeth; compare this with line 27.) 8. still have judgment: are invariably punished: that in that. 9. instructions: lessons. 10. Commends: presents, ingredient: contents of a mixture. 17. faculties: powers of office. 18. clear: free of guilt. 19. taking-off: murder. 22. Striding: bestriding. blast: tempest (of compassionate horror). 23. sightless couriers: invisible steeds or runners, i.e., the winds. 25. shall drown the wind: i.e., will be as heavy as a downpour of rain and thereby still the wind. 26. other: other side. (The image is of a horseman vaulting into his saddle and ignominiously falling on the opposite side.)