

Though they knew it would be taken as proof of their guilt, Duncan's sons fled for their lives. Donalbain sailed for Ireland,



and Malcolm rode across the border into England, to put himself under the protection of the English King.



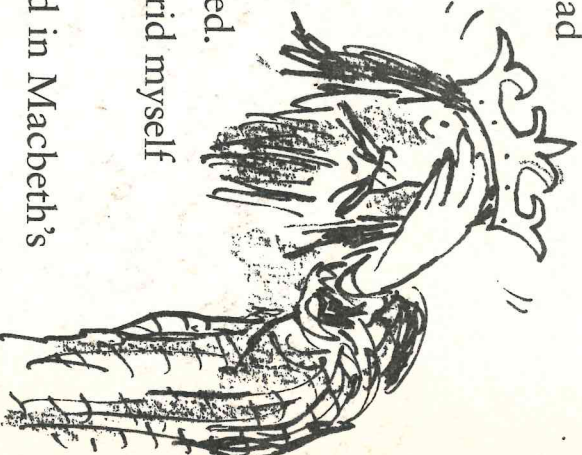
Now nothing stood between Macbeth and the throne.

He was crowned, but the crown did not bring him the pleasure he had imagined. His secret dream had come true, but he was disturbed by other dreams – dreams of what the witches had foretold for Banquo's descendants.

'Have I lied and murdered to set Banquo's spawn on the throne?' he brooded.

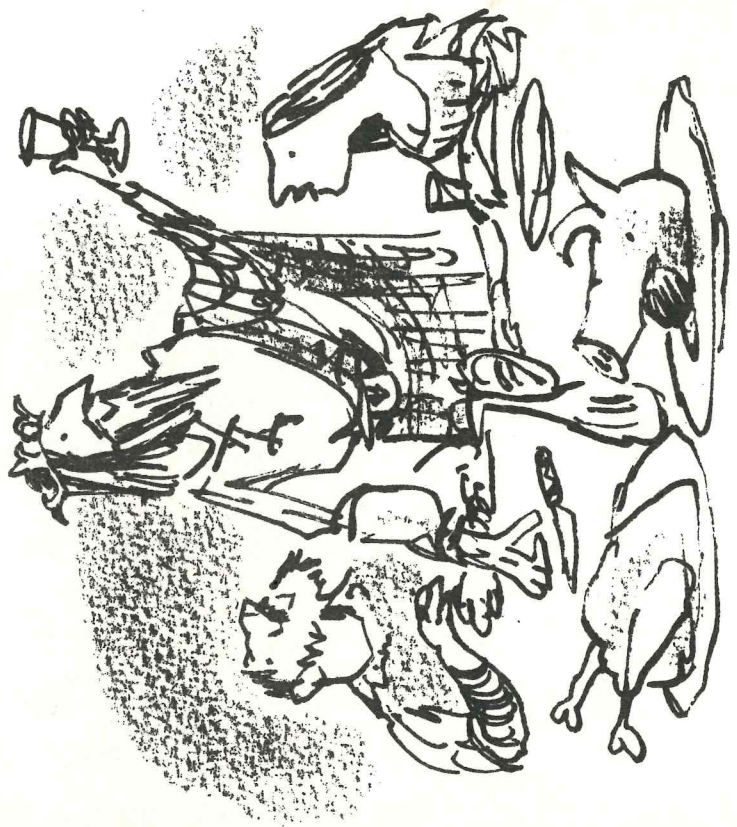
'I must find a way to rid myself of him, and his son.'

A dark plan formed in Macbeth's mind, and he kept it a secret – even from Lady Macbeth. Without either of them realising, the strange force that had compelled them to kill Duncan was slowly driving them apart.



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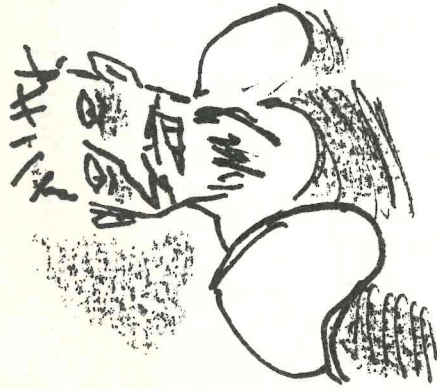
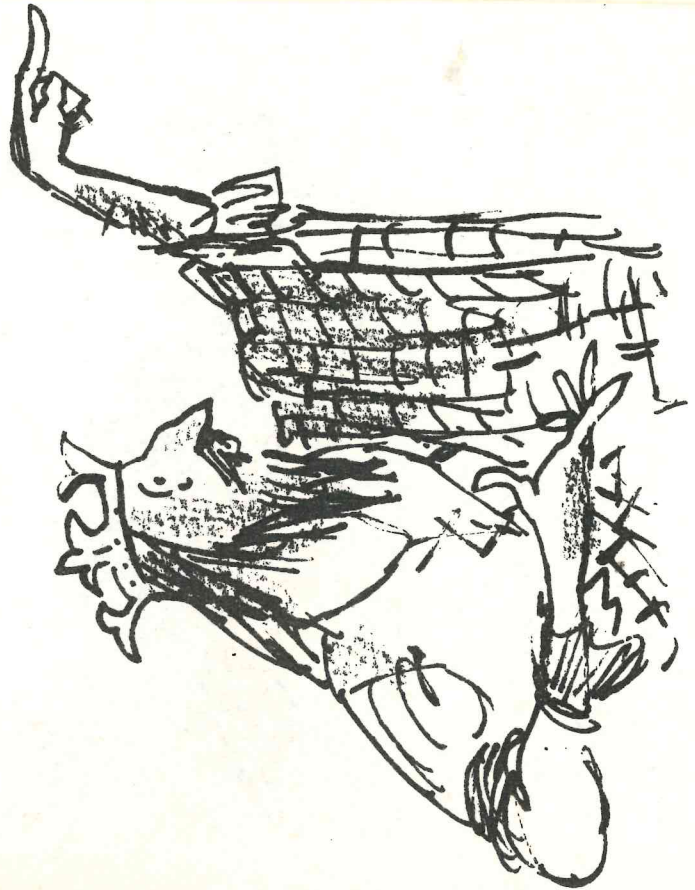
Macbeth held a coronation feast in the royal castle at Dunsinane. Many of the nobles who attended remarked that Macbeth's old friend, Banquo, was not present, but Macbeth laughed when they mentioned it.



“Lord Banquo and his son must have been delayed on their way,” he said lightly. Only he knew what had delayed them, for he had hired two murderers to ambush them on the road.

At the height of the feast, a servant brought Macbeth a message that two men wished to see him on urgent business. Macbeth hurried to his private chambers, and found the murderers waiting there.

"Have you done what I paid you to do?" Macbeth demanded.



"Banquo is dead, my lord," one of the murderers said.

"We cut his throat and threw the body into a ditch."

Macbeth sighed with relief – perhaps now he would sleep peacefully. But then he sensed something wrong: neither of the murderers would look at him, and they kept anxiously shuffling their feet.

"And his son?" said Macbeth.

The reply was shattering. "He escaped, my lord. Banquo's son still lives."

