

TRASH MACBETH

Excerpt: 'The Bungled Dinner Party'

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SCENE 16: THE BUNGLED DINNER PARTY

A banquet prepared. Enter Emily Post, who rings the dinner bell, and Lady Macbeth, who makes herself a cocktail.

EMILY POST

One thing is certain, no novice should ever begin her social career by attempting a formal dinner, any more than a pupil swimmer, upon being able to take three strokes alone, should attempt to swim three miles out to sea. The former will as surely drown as the latter. How A Dinner Can Be Bungled:

MACBETH

(entering)

You know your own degrees, sit down: at first And last, the hearty welcome.

LADY MACBETH

Thanks to your Majesty.

MACBETH

Ourselves will mingle with society,
And play the humble host.
It's French style onion soup by Crosse & Blackwell.
Our hostess keeps her state; but, in best time,
We will require her welcome.
Quickest way to get him home is to buy a can or two.

LADY MACBETH

Pronounce it for me, Sir, to all our friends;
For my heart speaks, they are welcome.

She sits in her throne, at the
foot of the table.

MACBETH

See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even: here I'll sit i'th'midst.
Be large in mirth; anon, we'll drink a measure
The table round.
Some day all beer cans will open this easy.

Macbeth chugs a dinner guest's
goblet.

EMILY POST

When your house is "in order", the impulse suddenly comes to you to give a dinner!

MACBETH

(reading the message on one
of the wall)

"Banquo's throat is cut."

EMILY POST

Your husband thinks it is a splendid idea.

MACBETH

(reporting his success to
Lady Macbeth)

Banquo's throat is cut.

EMILY POST

You pick out your best tablecloth, but you find rather to your amazement that when the waitress asks you about setting the table, you have never noticed in detail how the places are laid.

MACBETH

(reading the message on the
other wall)

"Fleance is 'scaped."

EMILY POST

Knives and spoons go on the right of the plate, of course, and forks on the left, but which goes next to the plate, or whether the wine glasses should stand nearer or beyond the goblet you can only guess.

MACBETH

(reporting his defeat to his
wife)

Fleance is 'scaped.

EMILY POST

Then you notice there are a great many forks on the table!

MACBETH

Then comes my fit again:
I had else been perfect;
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,

As broad and general as the casing air:
 But now, I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in
 To saucy doubts and fears.--
 A skinny man hasn't a chance.
 There the grown serpent lies; the worm, that's fled,
 Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
 No teeth for th'present;
 The speedy cleanser that hasn't scratched yet.

LADY MACBETH

My royal Lord, except for stubborn stains
 You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold,
 That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,
 'Tis given with welcome: to feed were best at home;
 From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony;
 Meeting were bare without it.

MACBETH

Sweet remembrancer!--
 Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
 And health on both!

LADY MACBETH

May it please your Highness sit.

The ghost of Banquo enters, walks
 to Macbeth's throne, and sits in
 it.

MACBETH

Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
 Were the grac'd person of our Banquo present;
 Who may I rather challenge for unkindness,
 Than pity for mischance!

LADY MACBETH

His absence, Sir,
 Lays blame upon his promise.

EMILY POST

Then, suddenly, the fire smokes...

LADY MACBETH

Please't your Highness
 To grace us with your royal company.

MACBETH

The table's full.

LADY MACBETH

(gesturing to his throne,
where the ghost if Banquo is
now seated)

Here is a place reserved, Sir.

MACBETH

Where?

LADY MACBETH

(moving towards his throne)

Here, my good Lord.

EMILY POST

And in the midst of the smoke your other guests arrive.

LADY MACBETH

What is't that moves your Highness?

MACBETH

Which of you have done this?

LADY MACBETH

What, my good Lord?

MACBETH

Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

EMILY POST

/ Although everyone has arrived, there is no sign of dinner.

LADY MACBETH

(to herself, overlapping
with Emily Post)

Self-polishing Simoniz also lasts longer.

(to the guests)

Sit, worthy friends. My Lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;
The fit is momentary; upon a thought
He will again be well. If much you note him,
You shall offend him, and extend his passion:
Feed, and regard him not. --Are you a man?

MACBETH

Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appall the Devil.

LADY MACBETH

O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger, which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O! these flaws and starts--
Impostors to true fear--would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authoris'd by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

MACBETH

Pr'ythee, see there!
Behold! look! lo! how say you?
The red menace is real!
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel-houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury, back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites.

Ghost of Banquo vanishes. The
help begins quickly clearing the
table.

LADY MACBETH

What! quite unmann'd / in folly?

EMILY POST

Gradually you are becoming nervous.
/ What can have happened?

MACBETH

If I stand here, / I saw him.

LADY MACBETH

Fie! for shame!

EMILY POST

The dining-room door might be that of a tomb for all the
evidence of life behind it.

MACBETH

Blood hath been shed ere now, i'the olden time,
 Ere humane statute purg'd the gentle weal;
 Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
 Too terrible for the ear: the time has been,
 That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
 And there an end; but now, they rise again,
 With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
 And push us from our stools. This is more strange
 Than such a / murder is.

LADY MACBETH

My worthy Lord,
 Your noble friends do lack / you.

MACBETH

I do forget.--

EMILY POST

Then comes the soup.

MACBETH

Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends,
 I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
 To those that know me.
 Come, love and health to all; Then I'll sit down.

EMILY POST

You don't have to taste it to see that it is wrong.

MACBETH

Give me some wine: / fill full:

EMILY POST

You taste it, fearing the worst, and the worst is / realized.

MACBETH

I drink to the general joy o'the whole table,
 And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
 Would he were here! To all, and him, we thirst,
 And all to all.

LADY MACBETH

Our duties, and / the pledge.

The ghost of Banquo reappears suddenly, at the foot of the dining table, standing on top of it. He walks down the table towards Macbeth, who sits at the head.

EMILY POST

You don't know what to do next; you know there is no use in apologizing, there is no way of dropping through the floor, or waking yourself up.

MACBETH

Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes,
Which thou dost glare with!

LADY MACBETH

(to the guests)

Think of this, good Peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

(to Macbeth)

You're softening my hands in dish-washing liquid!

MACBETH

What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or, be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl.
Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mock'ry, hence!

EMILY POST

You have collected the smartest and the most critical people around your table to put them to torture such as they will never forget.

The ghost of Banquo vanishes.

MACBETH

Why, so;--being gone, I am a man again.
/ Pray you, sit still.

LADY MACBETH

You have displac'd the mirth, broke the good meeting
/ With most admir'd disorder.

EMILY POST

Whatever possessed you to ask these people to your horrible /
house?

MACBETH

(climbing onto the dining
room table)

Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear;
/ Let the King have his fling in Textron Menswear.

LADY MACBETH

I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
/ Question enrages him. At once, good night:--

EMILY POST

You know that it will be years (if ever) before any of them /
will be willing to risk an evening in your house again.

LADY MACBETH

(also climbing onto the
dining room table)

Stand not upon the order of your going,
/ But go at once. A kind good night to all!

EMILY POST

You also know that without malice, but in truth and
frankness, they will tell everyone:

(the band is suddenly
silent; everyone freezes)

"Whatever you do, don't dine with the Macbeth's unless you eat your dinner before you go, and wear black glasses so no sight can offend you."

Music comes back in loudly. Emily Post and the help move the guests into 'the drawing room' (away from the table).

MACBETH

It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
Augures, and understood relations, have
By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. --What is the night?

LADY MACBETH

Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

The Macduff family portrait comes alive.

MACBETH

How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person,
At our great bidding?

LADY MACBETH

Did you send to him, Sir?

MACBETH

I heard it by the way; but I will send.
There's not a one of them, but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow--
And betimes I will -- to the Weird Sisters:
More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good,
All causes shall give way: I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand,
Which must be acted, ere they may be scann'd.

LADY MACBETH

You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

MACBETH

Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear, that wants hard use:
We are yet but young in deed;
/ That bright, fresh, ketchup flavor has my mouth watering
already.

LADY MACBETH

Lucky me with porcelain on steel Enameledware; it stays
beautiful for years.

Exeunt Macbeth and Lady Macbeth
in different directions. The
Macduff family portrait fades
away.