

Enriching the Humanities Through Opera

Title: Exploring Story Adaptation

Grade Level: 9-12th

Length: 45 minutes

Literary Work: *Macbeth* (William Shakespeare)

Opera: *Macbeth* (Giuseppe Verdi, composer; Francesco Maria Piave, librettist)

Inquiry Question: What is story adaptation? How is it relevant to opera?

Lesson Focus: Students will use critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration while exploring the concept of story adaptation and how it relates to opera stories.

Prior Knowledge: Students have read *Macbeth* (Shakespeare), have analyzed characters and can name the Who, What, When, Where, Story Arc (Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution Ripple effects).

Materials: Copies of *Macbeth* (Shakespeare), presentation slides (includes *Macbeth* short opera synopsis with photography and video examples), libretto excerpts of key scenes, opera synopsis handout, opera adaptation pitch worksheet, student laptops/tablets, interactive board, paper, and pens/pencils.

Key Vocabulary: Opera, composer, librettist, libretto, adaptation, key scene, and pitch.

Definitions

- **Opera:** A dramatic work set to music, with singers performing entire roles accompanied by an orchestra. It typically includes arias, duets, and ensembles, and is known for its elaborate costumes, sets, and vocal prowess.
- **Composer:** The person who writes the music for an opera, symphony, movie score, etc.
- **Librettist:** The person who writes the text of an opera.
- **Libretto:** The words or text of an opera.
- **Adaptation:** A creative work, such as a film, television show, play, or book, that is based on an existing story, such as a novel, short story, or historical event, and has been modified or reimagined to fit a different medium or audience. Adaptations often involve changes to the characters, setting, or other elements of the original story to make it more suitable for the new format.
- **Key Scene:** A pivotal moment in a story, play, or film that significantly impacts the narrative and characters. It is often a turning point that advances the plot, reveals important information, or changes the direction of the story.
- **Pitch:** A compelling summary of a proposed story idea that typically includes an overview of the plot, characters, setting, and themes of the story, as well as any unique or marketable aspects that make it stand out. The goal of a story pitch is to persuade the recipient to greenlight the project or take further action.

Objective(s): At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Analyze an opera synopsis based on a literary work.
- Compare a literary work with the opera adaptation synopsis.
- Identify elements of adaptation across multiple versions of the same key scene present in the literary source and opera.
- Collaboratively brainstorm a pitch for an opera adaptation of the literary work.

Assessment: Groups present their opera pitches following the guidelines for adaptation.

Adaptation Guidelines:

- Who: character/character identity
Note: character identity can be adapted, but students may not eliminate or add characters.
- What: key scene, action in the story - what is happening?
- When: time period, time of day, year, etc.
- Where: location and setting

Assessment Rubric

4: Presentation is thorough and comprehensive, providing detailed and specific information on the Who, What, When, and Where. Pitch is highly detailed, insightful, and well-supported, demonstrating a deep understanding of the literary work and creative approach to the adaptation guidelines.

3: Presentation includes detailed information on the Who, What, When, and Where. Pitch is clear and well-developed, showing a strong understanding of the adaptation guidelines.

2: Presentation provides some detail on the Who, What, When, and Where. Pitch is somewhat clear but lacks depth and specificity. Basic knowledge of the literary work is present.

1: Presentation lacks specific and clear information on the Who, What, When, and Where. Pitch provided is vague, lacking depth, and knowledge of the literary work.

Learning Standards:

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3: Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

National Core Arts Standards

TH:Cr2.I.a. Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2-II.b. Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.I.c. Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2-I.a. Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2-II.b. Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re7.1.I.a. Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.

TH:Re7.1.II.a. Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of a drama/theatre work.

Procedure:

Introduction/Hook (5 minutes):

- Begin with a word association exercise to spark students' interest and creativity.
 - Words: “opera,” “Macbeth,” and “adaptation.”
 - Ask students to write down the first word that comes to mind.
 - Students share their answers while the instructor writes down their responses on the board. Keep in mind any repeated words.
 - OR
 - Create a live Word Cloud with [Mentimeter](#).
 - Students can add their responses via their phones/computers/tablets (repeated words will increase in size.)
- Discuss findings.
- Define opera.
- Introduce the concept of adaptation and discuss its relevance in literature.

Main Narrative/Sequence (20 minutes):

- Review story arc of literary work (Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution).
 - Exposition: The three witches prophesize that Macbeth will become king.
 - Rising Action: Macbeth murders King Duncan to take the throne.
 - Climax: Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost at the banquet, symbolizing his guilt and paranoia.
 - Falling Action: Lady Macbeth's descent into madness and subsequent death.
 - Resolution: Macbeth is killed by Macduff, and Malcolm ascends the throne, restoring order.
- Read through the full synopsis (see below) of the opera *Macbeth* as a class and discuss the fundamental elements of the story.
 - Conduct a "Turn and Talk" activity. (Students chat in pairs, or small groups.)
 - Students compare the story structure of the opera with the original literary work.
 - Compare setting/time, historical context, point of view, narrative structure, etc.
- The instructor chooses one of three provided key scenes in the opera, sharing photo and video examples to enhance understanding.

Scene Selections (see below for summaries, libretto excerpts, and viewing options):

- Key Scene #1: Act II, Scene 6 & 7: Tu di sangue hai brutto il volto (You have blood on your face)
 - Key Scene #2: Act III, Scene 2: Finché appelli, silenti m'attendete (Wait for me in silence until I call)
 - Key Scene #3: Act IV, Scene 6-10: E' morta la Regina! (The Queen is dead!)
- Ask and discuss questions such as, "why do we adapt stories?" "How does storytelling add relevance for an audience?"
 - Discuss the adaptation process for the chosen key scene, outlining guidelines for adaptation and pivotal considerations. Discuss the ripple effects of making these changes.
 - Guidelines for adaptation:
 - Consider the Who, What, When, and Where.
 - Who: character/character identity
 - *Note: character identity can be adapted, but students may not eliminate or add characters.*
 - What: key scene, action in the story - what is happening?
 - When: time period, time of day, year, etc.
 - Where: location and setting
 - Students may use their prior knowledge of literary work and opera synopsis/libretto excerpts as resources.

- Together as a class, guide students through the adaptation process for the chosen key scene.

Activity/Practice (10 minutes):

- Students will work together to decide how they are going to adapt the opera, and brainstorm ideas for those changes based on the provided guidelines for adaptation: Who, What, When and Where. Each group will fill out an opera adaptation pitch worksheet.
 - Have students break out into groups and either adapt the same key scene viewed as a class or choose another key scene from the opera to brainstorm for an adaptation pitch.

Present/Share (8 minutes):

- Each group will present their pitch for an opera adaptation to the class, explaining their creative decisions and rationale.
- Encourage feedback and discussion from peers.

Reflection (2 minutes):

- Conclude the lesson with a recap of learnings about adaptation.
- Invite students to reflect on their collaborative work and share their thoughts on the adaptation process. Ask and discuss:
 - “How did your understanding of the story change as you adapted it?”
 - “Have any new insights or perspectives emerged?”

Extension/Follow-up/Next steps:

- Ask and discuss:
 - “Can this literary work and storyline be set in the present? Is it still relevant today? Why or why not?”
 - “Can adaptation work for historical events and figures? Why or why not?”
- Critical analysis of film adaptations compared with literary work and opera.

***Macbeth* (1847)**

Giuseppe Verdi, composer; Francesco Maria Piave, librettist

Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Macbeth*, inspired by William Shakespeare's play of the same name, was first performed in 1847. It marked one of Verdi's early ventures into the realm of opera based on literary sources, showcasing his growing interest in dramatic storytelling. The opera features a libretto written by Francesco Maria Piave, who adapted Shakespeare's dark themes of ambition, power, and guilt into a lyrical format that suited the operatic style. Verdi's composition captures the psychological depth and intensity of the characters, particularly the tormented Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, making it a pivotal work in his oeuvre and a significant contribution to the opera repertoire.

Short Synopsis

The opera *Macbeth*, based on Shakespeare's play, tells the story of a Scottish nobleman who rises to power through a series of murders to maintain his hold on the throne. After encountering witches who predict his future, Macbeth becomes consumed by ambition and, with the encouragement of his wife, Lady Macbeth, murders King Duncan and seizes the throne. However, his reign is plagued by paranoia, violence, and corruption, leading to his and Lady Macbeth's downfall as they become increasingly tyrannical and consumed by guilt.

MACBETH OPERA SYNOPSIS

Giuseppe Verdi, composer; Francesco Maria Piave, librettist

ACT I *Scotland.*

Macbeth and Banquo, leaders of the Scottish army, meet a group of witches who foretell the future. They address Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland and tell Banquo that he will be the father of kings. The two men try to learn more, but the witches vanish. Messengers arrive with news that Duncan, the current king of Scotland, has made Macbeth Thane of Cawdor. The first part of the witches' prediction has come true.

In Macbeth's castle, Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband telling her of the events that have just transpired. She resolves to follow her ambitions. A servant announces that Duncan will soon arrive at the castle, and when Macbeth enters, she tells him that they must kill the king. Duncan arrives. Macbeth has a vision of a dagger, then leaves to commit the murder. On his return, he tells his wife how the act has frightened him, and she tells him that he needs more courage. They both leave as Banquo enters with Macduff, a nobleman, who discovers the murder. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth pretend to be horrified and join the others in condemning the murder.

ACT II

Macbeth has become king. Duncan's son, Malcolm, is suspected of having killed his father and has fled to England. Worried about the prophecy that Banquo's children will rule, Macbeth and his wife now plan to kill him and his son, Fleance, as well. As Macbeth leaves to prepare the double murder, Lady Macbeth hopes that it will finally make the throne secure.

Outside the castle, assassins wait for Banquo, who appears with his son, warning him of strange forebodings. Banquo is killed, but Fleance escapes.

Lady Macbeth welcomes the court to the banquet hall and sings a drinking song, while Macbeth receives news that Banquo is dead, and his son has escaped. About to take Banquo's seat at the table, Macbeth has a terrifying vision of the dead man accusing him. His wife is unable to calm her unsettled husband, and the courtiers wonder about the king's strange behavior. Macduff vows to leave the country, which is now ruled by criminals.

ACT III

The witches gather again, and Macbeth visits them, demanding more prophecies. Apparitions warn him to beware of Macduff and assure him that "no man of woman born" can harm him, and that he will be invincible until Birnam Wood marches on his castle. In another vision, he sees a procession of future kings, followed by Banquo.

Horrified, Macbeth collapses. The witches disappear and his wife finds him. They resolve to kill Macduff and his family.

ACT IV

On the Scottish border, Macduff has joined the refugees. His wife and children have been killed. Malcolm appears with British troops and leads them to invade Scotland.

Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking, haunted by the horrors of what she and her husband have done.

Macbeth awaits the arrival of his enemies and realizes that he will never live to a peaceful old age. Messengers bring news that Lady Macbeth has died, and that Birnam Wood appears to be moving. English soldiers appear, camouflaged with its branches. Macduff confronts Macbeth and tells him that he was not born naturally but had a Caesarean birth. He kills Macbeth and proclaims Malcolm king of Scotland.

Synopsis courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera.

Key Scenes in Verdi's *Macbeth*

Video excerpts and timestamps are pulled from the Metropolitan Opera on Demand and PBS LearningMedia™. Performance Date: Oct. 11, 2014

KEY SCENE #1: Act II, Scene 6 & 7: Tu di sangue hai brutto il volto (You have blood on your face)

[Met Opera on Demand](#): Track #21. ACT II: Si colmi il calice
02:00 – 04:46

OR

[PBS LearningMedia™](#): Macbeth | Act II | The Metropolitan Opera
19:20 – 24:09

After Lady Macbeth entertains her courtiers with a drinking song at the banquet, Macbeth receives news of Banquo's death from his assassin. As Macbeth is about to take Banquo's seat at the table, he is suddenly overcome by a chilling apparition of the dead Banquo, who confronts him. Lady Macbeth attempts to soothe him in vain, and the king's erratic behavior begins to raise eyebrows among the courtiers, who exchange uneasy glances at the strange display.

Libretto Excerpt

MACBETH
(sottovoce)
Tu di sangue hai brutto il volto.

MACBETH
(in a quiet voice)
You have blood on your face.

SICARIO
È di Banco.

ASSASSIN
It is Banquo's.

MACBETH
Il vero ascolto?

MACBETH
Is this the truth?

SICARIO
Sì.

ASSASSIN
Yes.

MACBETH
Ma il figlio?

MACBETH
What about his son?

SICARIO
Ne sfuggì

ASSASSIN
He fled!

MACBETH
Cielo! e Banco?

MACBETH
Heavens! But Banquo?

SICARIO
Egli morì
(Macbeth fa cenno al Sicario, che parte)

ASSASSIN
He is dead.
(Macbeth dismisses the assassin, who leaves)

LADY MACBETH
(avvicinandosi a Macbeth)
Che ti scosta, o re mio sposo,
Dalla gioia del banchetto?

LADY MACBETH
(drawing closer to Macbeth)
My royal husband, what has drawn you
away from the delights of the banquet?

MACBETH
Banco falla! il valoroso
Chiuderebbe io serto eletto
A quant'avvi di piú degno
Nell'intero nostro regno.

MACBETH
Banquo is not here. That courageous man
who would complete the chosen circle of
the most worthy in all our kingdom.

LADY MACBETH
Venir disse, e ci mancò.

LADY MACBETH
He said he would be here but he has failed
us.

MACBETH
In sua vece io sederò.
*(Macbeth va per sedere.
Lo spettro di Banco, veduto solo da lui, ne
occupa il posto)*
Di voi chi ciò fece?

MACBETH
I shall sit in his place.
*(Macbeth goes to sit down, but Banquo's
ghost, which only he can see, is in his
place)*
Which of you has done this?

TUTTI
Che parli?

ALL
What?

MACBETH
(allo spettro)
Non dirmi, non dirmi ch'io fossi!
Le ciocche cruenta non scuotermi incontro.

MACBETH
(to the ghost)
Do not say that it was I!
Do not shake your bloody locks at me!

TUTTI
(sorgono)
Macbetto è soffrente!
Partiamo.

ALL
(getting up)
Macbeth is ill.
Let us go.

LADY MACBETH
Restate! Gli è morbo fugace.
(piano a Macbeth)
E un uomo voi siete?

LADY MACBETH
Stay! His sickness is passing.
(softly, to Macbeth)
Are you a man?

MACBETH
Lo sono, ed audace

MACBETH
I am, and a bold man if I can

S'io guardo tal cosa che
al dimone istesso
Porrebbe spavento ... là... là nol ravvisi?
(allo spettro)
Oh, poi che le chiome scollar t'è concesso,
Favella! il sepolcro può render gli uccisi?
(L'ombra sparisce.)

LADY MACBETH
(piano a Macbeth)
Voi siete demente!

MACBETH
Quest'occhi l'han visto.

LADY MACBETH
(forte.)
Sedete, o mio sposo!
Ogni ospite è tristo.
Svegliate la gioia!

MACBETH
Ciascun mi perdoni:
Il brindisi lieto di nuovo risuoni,
Né Banco obliate,
che lungi è tuttor.

LADY MACBETH
Si colmi il calice
Di vino eletto;
Nasca il diletto,
Muoia il dolor.
Da noi s'involino
Gli odi e gli sdegni,
Folleggi e regni
Qui solo amor.
Giustiamo il balsamo
D'ogni ferita,
Che nova vita
Ridona al cor.
Vuotiam per l'inclito
Banco i bicchieri!
Fior de' guerrieri,
Di Scozia onor.

look at such a thing which might frighten
the devil himself.
There ... there ... can't you see it?
(to the ghost)
Since you can nod your head, tell me, can
the dead come back from the grave?
(The ghost vanishes.)

LADY MACBETH
(softly, to Macbeth)
You are mad!

MACBETH
I saw him with my own eyes.

LADY MACBETH
(strongly.)
Sit down, my husband!
All our guests are unhappy.
Re-awaken enjoyment!

MACBETH
Forgive me, everyone.
Let the cheering toast be sung again,
and let us not forget Banquo
who is not with us.

LADY MACBETH
Fill the cup
with choicest wine.
Give life to pleasure
and death to sorrow.
Let hate and scorn
fly from us
and let love alone
reign here.
Let us savor the balm
for every wound,
which gives new life
to the heart.
Let us empty our glasses
to illustrious Banquo!
The flower of warriors,
The pride of Scotland.

KEY SCENE #2: Act III, Scene 2: Finché appelli, silenti m'attendete (Wait for me in silence until I call)

Met Opera on Demand: Track #25. ACT III: Che fate voi, misteriose donne? & #26. ACT III: Fuggi, regal fantasima!
#25. 01:22 – 07:16 into #26. 00:00 – 00:30

OR

PBS LearningMedia™: Macbeth | Act III | The Metropolitan Opera
06:10 – 12:35

Macbeth visits the witches and demands more prophecies. The witches reveal three apparitions to him.

Libretto Excerpt

STREGHE

Dalle basse e dall'alte regioni,
Spirti erranti, salite, scendete!

(Scoppia un fulmine e sorge da terra un capo coperto d'elmo.)

MACBETH

Dimmi, o spirito...

STREGHE

T'ha letto nel cuore;
Taci, e n'odi le voci segrete.

APPARIZIONE

O Macbetto! Macbetto! Macbetto!
Da Macduff ti guarda prudente!

MACBETH

Tu m'afforzi l'ascolto sospetto!
Solo un motto...
(L'apparizione sparisce.)

WITCHES

Wandering spirits, arise from the depths,
descend from the heights.

(There is a flash of lightning and a head wearing a helmet appears from out of the ground.)

MACBETH

Tell me, spirit...

WITCHES

He has read what is in your heart
Stay quiet and hear his secret words.

APPARITION

O Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!
Beware Macduff!

MACBETH

You confirm my suspicions at what I have
heard! Just one word...
(The apparition vanishes.)

STREGHE

Richieste non vuole.
Ecco un altro di lui più possente.
(*Tuono: apparisce un fanciullo
insanguinato.*)
Taci, e n'odi le occulte parole.

APPARIZIONE

O Macbetto! Macbetto! Macbetto!
Esser puoi sanguinario, feroce:
Nessun nato di donna ti nuoce.
(*Sparisce*)

MACBETH

O Macduffo, tua vita perdono
(*feroce.*)
No! morrai! sul regale mio petto
Doppio usbergo sarà la tua morte!
(*Tuoni e lampi: sorge un fanciullo
coronato che porta un arboscello.*)
Ma che avvisa quel lampo, quel tuono?

Un fanciullo col serto dei Re!

STREGHE

Taci, ed odi.

APPARIZIONE

Sta' d'animo forte:
Glorioso, invincibil sarai
Fin che il bosco di Birna vedrai
Ravviarsi, e venir con te.
(*Sparisce*)

MACBETH

Lieto augurio! Per magica possa
Selva alcuna giammai non fu mossa.
(*alle Streghe*)
Or mi dite: salire al mio soglio
La progenie di Banco dovrà?

STREGHE

Non cercarlo!

MACBETH

Lo voglio! lo voglio,
o su di voi la mia spada cadrà!

WITCHES

He will not hear questions.
Here is another, more powerful.
(*Lightning: a bloodstained child appears.*)

Stay quiet and hear his mysterious words.

APPARITION

O Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!
You may be bloody and fierce:
no man born of woman will harm you.
(*It disappears.*)

MACBETH

O Macduff, I forgive you your life.
(*fiercely.*)
No, you will die. Your death
will be a double shield on my royal breast!
(*Thunder and lightning. A child appears
wearing a crown and carrying a sapling.*)
But what does this thunder and lightning
mean?
A child with a king's crown!

WITCHES

Be quiet and listen.

APPARITION

Be strong:
you will be glorious and invincible
until you see Birnam wood
come marching towards you.
(*It disappears*)

MACBETH

Oh, what a cheering prophecy! No wood
was ever moved by magic power.
(*To the witches*)
Now tell me: will the descendants
of Banquo ever mount the throne?

WITCHES

Do not ask!

MACBETH

I must know!
Or else my sword will fall on you!

(La caldaia cala sotterra)
La caldaia è sparita! perché
(suono sotterraneo di cornamusa)
Qual concerto! Parlate! Che v'è

STREGHE
I. Apparite!
II. Apparite!
III. Apparite!

TUTTE
Poi qual nebbia di nuovo sparite.

(Otto Re passano l'uno dopo l'altro. Da ultimo viene Banco con uno specchio in mano.)

(The cauldron sinks into the ground)
The cauldron has disappeared! Why?
(underground sound of bagpipes)
What is this music? Speak! What is it?

WITCHES
I. Appear!
II. Appear!
III. Appear!

ALL
Then like mist vanish again.

(Eight kings pass by, one after the other. Lastly comes Banquo, carrying a mirror in his hand.)

KEY SCENE #3: Act IV, Scene 6-10: E' morta la Regina! (The Queen is dead!)

[Met Opera on Demand](#): Track #36. ACT IV: Ella è morta!
00:00 – 03:57

OR

[PBS LearningMedia™](#): Macbeth | Act IV | The Metropolitan Opera
34:16 – 38:13

As news arrives that Lady Macbeth has died, Macbeth is given word that Birnam Wood is moving, and English soldiers emerge. Macduff confronts Macbeth and reveals that he was not born naturally but had a Caesarean birth. This vulnerability makes him immune to Macbeth's invincibility prophecy. Macbeth meets his tragic demise and with the end to his reign, paves the way for Malcolm's ascension to the throne.

Libretto Excerpt

GRIDA INTERNE
Ella è morta!

MACBETH
Qual gemito?

DAMA
È morta la Regina!

DISTANT VOICES
She is dead!

MACBETH
What is that crying?

GENTLEWOMAN
The Queen is dead!

MACBETH

La vita... che importa?...
È il racconto d'un povero idiota;
Vento e suono che nulla dinota!

CORO

(Coro di guerrieri e Macbeth.)

Sire! Ah, Sire!

MACBETH

Che fu?...quali nuove?

CORO

La foresta di Birna si muove!

MACBETH

M'hai deluso, presago infernale!...
Qui l'usbergo, la spada, il pugnale!
Prodi, all'armi! La morte o la gloria.

CORO

Dunque all'armi! Sì morte o vittoria.

MACDUFF

Via le fronde, e mano all'armi!
Mi seguite!

TUTTI

All'armi! all'armi!

MACDUFF

Carnefice de' figli miei, t'ho giunto.

MACBETH

Fuggi! Nato di donna
Uccidermi non può.

MACDUFF

Nato non son; strappato
Fui dal seno materno.

MACBETH

Cielo!
*(Brandiscono le spade e disperatamente
battendosi, escono di scena.)*

MACBETH

Life...what does it matter?...
It is the tale of a poor fool:
wind and sound signifying nothing.

CHORUS

(Soldiers enter.)

Sire! Ah, Sire!

MACBETH

What is it? What news?

CHORUS

Birnam Wood is moving!

MACBETH

You have deceived me, hellish prophecy!...
Bring my shield, my sword, my dagger!
My valiant men, to arms! Death or victory!

CHORUS

To arms then! Death or victory!

MACDUFF

Throw away the branches and take up your
arms! Follow me!

ALL

To arms!

MACDUFF

I have you, butcher of my children!

MACBETH

Away! No man born of woman
can kill me.

MACDUFF

I was not born. I was plucked
from my mother's womb.

MACBETH

Oh God!
*(They brandish their swords and exit,
battling desperately.)*

CORO

(entrando in scena)

Infausto giorno!

Pregiam per figli nostri!

Cessa il fragor!

VOCI INTERNE

Vittoria!

DONNE

Vittoria

CHORUS

(entering)

Unhappy day!

Let us pray for our sons!

The clash of arms has stopped.

DISTANT CHORUS

Victory!

WOMEN'S CHORUS

Victory!

Libretto excerpts courtesy of [Opera Folio](#).