

It was towards evening. There was thunder in the air and little lightnings, like bright adders, wriggled across the sky. Here and there on the open heath naked trees seemed to hold up their hands in fear and dismay; and the three old women crouched and waited, still as stones. Presently there came a rolling and a rattling, as if a small thunder had lost its way and was wandering in the dark. The three old women nodded.

The lady of the castle had a letter in her hand. Over and over again she read it as she paced back and forth across her tall chamber where the light came through a narrow window like a knife. Each time she crossed the beam, her red hair blazed, as if there was a furnace in her head. The letter was from her husband, Macbeth. It told of his meeting with the weird sisters, of their strange prophecies, and of how the first had already been fulfilled. She put the letter aside.