



Unsex me here

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc. or its Licensors. Please see [copyright information](#) at the end of this document.

Lady Macbeth:

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe topful
Of direst cruelty!

[Macbeth Act 1, scene 5, 38–43](#)

Lady Macbeth, upon receiving word that King Duncan of Scotland will be arriving that night, begins sharpening her talons. She isn't sure there's enough manhood to go around between herself and her husband, so she calls upon scheming spirits to "unsex me here." This is her vivid way of asking to be stripped of feminine weakness and invested with masculine resolve. She imagines herself as a vessel which may be emptied out and refilled "from the crown to the toe." One thing nobody, spirit or otherwise, has ever poured into her is "the milk of human kindness" [*see* p. 81].

The prefix *un-* is abnormally frequent in [Macbeth](#). The protagonists constantly try to undo what is done, take back what is given, and cancel reality by appending negatives. All the powers of language, however, cannot cancel their unconscious conflicts, which manifest themselves in hallucinations and bad dreams.

Copyright Notice

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems without the written permission of the publisher.

For complete copyright information, please see the online version of this work:
<http://www.enotes.com/shakespeare-quotes>