

MACBETH
By William Shakespeare
Adapted by Dale Ahlquist

Cast of Characters

19 Males; 6 Females; 4 Either

FIRST WITCH / FIRST SPIRIT:

SECOND WITCH / SECOND SPIRIT:

THIRD WITCH / THIRD SPIRIT:

DUNCAN: The king, father of Malcolm and Donalbain.

MALCOLM: The elder son of Duncan, and the heir.

DONALBAIN: Younger son of Duncan.

LENNOX: A young Thane attending on Duncan.

SERGEANT: A sergeant in the battle against Macdonald.

ROSS: Scottish nobleman, Lady Madduff's cousin.

MACBETH: A Scottish general who tries to become king.

BANQUO: Thane of Lochaber, Macbeth's best friend.

LADY MACBETH: Macbeth's wife.

FLEANCE: Banquo's son.

PORTER: Gate-keeper of Macbeth's castle.

MACDUFF: Thane of Fife.

OLD WOMAN*: An old woman.

FIRST MURDERER: A hired murderer.

SECOND MURDERER: A hired murderer.

LADY MACDUFF: Macduff's wife.

MACDUFF'S SON: Macduff and Lady Macduff's young son.

LADY MACDUFF'S MESSENGER*: A messenger of Lady Macduff.

GENTLEWOMAN: Lady Macbeth's waiting-gentlewoman.

<u>DOCTOR:</u>	A doctor who examines Lady Macbeth.
<u>SEYTON:</u>	Macbeth's servant.
<u>SIWARD:</u>	A soldier of the English king, Malcolm's uncle.
<u>YOUNG SIWARD:</u>	Siward's son, a soldier.
<u>FIRST MESSENGER*:</u>	Macbeth's messenger.
<u>SECOND MESSENGER*:</u>	Macbeth's messenger.
<u>SERVANT*:</u>	Macbeth's servant.

* denotes character that may be played by either male or female – minor editing is permitted for this purpose only

Scene Breakdown

ACT I

- Scene 1 — A Desert Place
- Scene 2 — A Camp near Forres
- Scene 3 — A Heath near Forres
- Scene 4 — Forres. The Palace
- Scene 5 — Inverness. Macbeth's Castle
- Scene 6 — Before Macbeth's Castle
- Scene 7 — Macbeth's Castle

ACT II

- Scene 1 — Court of Macbeth's Castle
- Scene 2 — The Same
- Scene 3 — The Same
- Scene 4 — Outside Macbeth's Castle

ACT III

- Scene 1 — Forres. The Palace
- Scene 2 — The Palace
- Scene 3 — A Park near the Palace
- Scene 4 — Hall in the Palace

ACT IV

- Scene 1 — A Cavern. In the Middle, a Boiling Cauldron
- Scene 2 — Fife. Macduff's Castle
- Scene 3 — England. Before the King's Palace

ACT V

- Scene 1 — Dunsinane Castle. Ante-room in the Castle.
- Scene 2 — The Country near Dunsinane
- Scene 3 — Dunsinane. A Room in the Castle
- Scene 4 — Country near Birnam Wood
- Scene 5 — Dunsinane. Within the Castle
- Scene 6 — Dunsinane. Before the Castle
- Scene 7 — Castle Courtyard

Approximate Length

90 Minutes

Time

Late Dark Ages or Early Medieval Ages

Place

Scotland

ACT I
Scene 1

Setting: A Desert Place.

At Rise: Thunder and Lightning. Enter three WITCHES.

FIRST WITCH

When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH

When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH

That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH

I come, Graymalkin!

SECOND WITCH

Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH

Anon.

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

(They exit)

Scene 2

Setting: A Camp near Forres.

At Rise: Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, with ATTENDANTS, meeting a bleeding SERGEANT.

DUNCAN

What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.

MALCOLM

This is the sergeant
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil
As thou didst leave it.

SERGEANT

Doubtful it stood;
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him--from the western isles
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valor's minion carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin, worthy gentleman!

SERGEANT

As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:

No sooner justice had with valor arm'd
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norway lord surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men
Began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN

Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

SERGEANT

Yes, as sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks,
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell—
But I am faint. my gashes cry for help.

DUNCAN

So well thy words become thee as thy wounds:
They smack of honor both.—Go get him surgeons.
(The SERGEANT is led off by ATTENDANTS)

Who comes here?

(Enter ROSS)

MALCOLM

The worthy thane of Ross.

LENNOX

What a haste looks through his eyes!
So should he look that seems to speak things strange.

ROSS

God save the King.

DUNCAN

Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

ROSS

From Fife, great king,
Where the Norway banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold.

Norway himself, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict,
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm.
Curbing his lavish spirit. And to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

DUNCAN

Great happiness!
No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS

I'll see it done.

DUNCAN

What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

(They exit)

Scene 3

Setting: A Heath near Forres.

At Rise: Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES.

FIRST WITCH

Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND WITCH

Killing swine.

THIRD WITCH

Sister, where thou?

FIRST WITCH

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd.
"Give me," quoth I.
"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed runnion cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' *Tiger*:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

SECOND WITCH

I'll give thee a wind.

FIRST WITCH

Th' art kind.

THIRD WITCH

And I another.

FIRST WITCH

I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow;
All the quarters that they know
I' th' shipman's card.
I will drain him dry as hay.
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid;
He shall live a man forbid:
Weary sev'nnights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.

Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.
Look what I have.

SECOND WITCH

Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH

Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wracked as homeward he did come.

(Drum within)

THIRD WITCH

A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

ALL

(Dancing in a circle)

The Weïrd Sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about,
Thrice to thine and thrice to mine
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace, the charm's wound up.

(Enter MACBETH and BANQUO)

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO

How far i s't called to Forres?—What are these
So withered, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' Earth,
And yet are on 't?—Live you? Or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH

Speak if you can. What are you?

FIRST WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO

Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair?—I' th' name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly you show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH

Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

THIRD WITCH

Hail!

FIRST WITCH

Lesser than Macbeth and greater.

SECOND WITCH

Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH

Stay, you imperfect speakers. Tell me more.

By Sinel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis.
But how of Cawdor? the Thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman, and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you.

(WITCHES vanish)

BANQUO

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them. Whither are they vanished?

MACBETH

Into the air, and what seemed corporal melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stayed!

BANQUO

Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?

MACBETH

Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO

You shall be king.

MACBETH

And Thane of Cawdor too. Went it not so?

BANQUO

To th' selfsame tune and words.—Who's here?

(Enter ROSS)

ROSS

The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success, and, when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his. As thick as tale
Came post with post, and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense,

And poured them down before him. We are sent
To give thee from our royal master thanks,
And, for an earnest of a greater honor,
He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor,
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane,
For it is thine.

BANQUO

What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH

The Thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me
In borrowed robes?

ROSS

Who *was* the Thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labored in his country's wrack, I know not;
But treasons capital, confessed and proved,
Have overthrown him.

MACBETH

(Aside)

Glamis and Thane of Cawdor!
The greatest is behind.

(To ROSS)

Thanks for your pains.

(Aside to BANQUO)

Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

BANQUO

That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange.
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
In deepest consequence.—
Cousins, a word, I pray you.

MACBETH

(They step aside)

Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.

(Aside)

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smothered in surmise,
And nothing is but what is not.

BANQUO

Look how our partner's rapt.

MACBETH

(Aside)

If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me
Without my stir.

BANQUO

New horrors come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mold
But with the aid of use.

MACBETH

(Aside)

Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

BANQUO

Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

MACBETH

Give me your favor. My dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are registered where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the King.

Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time,
The interim having weighed it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO

Very gladly.

MACBETH

Till then, enough.—Come, friends.

(They exit)

Scene 4

Setting: Forres. The Palace.

At Rise: Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, and ATTENDANTS.

DUNCAN

Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet returned?

MALCOLM

My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confessed his treasons,
Implored your Highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance. Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He died
As one that had been studied in his death
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.

DUNCAN

There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face.
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

(Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, and ROSS)

O worthiest cousin,
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine! Only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

MACBETH

The service and the loyalty I owe
In doing it pays itself.

DUNCAN

Welcome hither.
I have begun to plant thee, and will labor
To make thee full of growing.—Noble Banquo,

That hast no less deserved nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me enfold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

BANQUO

There, if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

DUNCAN

My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow.—Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland; which honor must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers.—From hence to Inverness
And bind us further to you.

MACBETH

The rest is labor, which is not used for you.
I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach.
So humbly take my leave.

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor.

MACBETH

(Aside)

The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires.
The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

(He exits)

DUNCAN

True, worthy Banquo. He is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed:
It is a banquet to me.—Let's after him,

Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome.
It is a peerless kinsman.

(Flourish. They exit.)

Scene 5

Setting: Inverness. Macbeth's Castle.

At Rise: Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter.

LADY MACBETH

“They met me in the day of success, and I have learned by the perfect'st report they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it came missives from the King, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these Weird Sisters saluted me and referred me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be.' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou might'st not lose the dues of rejoicing by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.”

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promise. Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'd'st have, great Glamis,
That which cries “Thus thou must do,” if thou have it,
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valor of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

(Enter MESSENGER)

What is your tidings?

MESSENGER

The King comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Thou 'rt mad to say it.
Is not thy master with him, who, were't so,
Would have informed for preparation?

MESSENGER

So please you, it is true. Our thane is coming.
One of my fellows had the speed of him,
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more

Than would make up his message.

LADY MACBETH

Give him tending.
He brings great news.

(Exit MESSENGER)

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 top-full
Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood.
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry "Hold, hold!"

(Enter MACBETH)

Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor,
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

MACBETH

My dearest love,
Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

And when goes hence?

MACBETH

Tomorrow, as he purposes.

LADY MACBETH

O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,

Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent flower,
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for; and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch,
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

MACBETH

We will speak further.

LADY MACBETH

Only look up clear.
To alter favor ever is to fear.
Leave all the rest to me.

(They exit)