

BBC



Macbeth

adapted by Neil Richards



CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

NARRATOR

3 WITCHES - 'The Weird Sisters'

BANQUO - A nobleman; friend to Macbeth

MACBETH - First Thane of Glamis, then Thane of Cawdor, then King of Scotland

LENNOX - A nobleman

ROSS - A nobleman

ANGUS - A nobleman

DUNCAN - King of Scotland

MALCOLM - Duncan's eldest son and named his heir

DONALBAIN - Duncan's younger son; brother to Malcolm

LADY MACBETH

MACDUFF - A nobleman

LADY MACDUFF

DOCTOR

SIWARD - a young nobleman

SOLDIERS

SERVANTS

OTHER LORDS, LADIES, SOLDIERS, ATTENDANTS, SERVANTS

DOWNLOADING THE SUPPORTING ONLINE RESOURCES:

All the music, backing tracks for the songs and special effects indicated in the script can be downloaded here:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/macbeth/music/sfx_macbeth_playscript.zip

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ACT 1

Scene 1: The Heath

Lights down. Quiet for a moment, then a thunderclap and a flash of the lights.

AUDIO CUE 1 OPENING MUSIC AND SFX - THE HEATH

NARRATOR: This is a story of ambition, power and murder. It is the story of a man who would stop at nothing to become king. It is a dark and bloody story ... that starts on a wild Scottish heathland where three witches plot and spin their spells...

Three voices echo from different parts of the theatre.

SISTER 1: When shall we three meet again?

SISTER 2: In thunder, lightning or in rain?

SISTER 3: When the hurlyburly's done! When the battle's lost and won!

SISTER 1: That will be 'ere the set of sun.

SISTER 2: Where the place?

SISTER 3: Upon ... the heath.

ALL SISTERS: There to meet ... Macbeth!

Scene 2: The Battlefield

NARRATOR: Macbeth. A Scottish lord. Here he is - not far from those witches - leading the Scottish army against a combined force of invading Norwegians and Scottish rebels...

Stage lights up on the Chorus with music, one half rebels, the others King Duncan's troops. They wage a 'sonic battle', each group in turn banging in time with music. Note: the chorus use bin lids and wooden swords to make the musical din.

AUDIO CUE 2 SONG - SONIC BATTLE (Backing track)



The two forces engage in battle: one side holding aloft Duncan's banner, the other the Norwegian standard. Then, fighting to the front of the King's troops, appear Macbeth and Banquo. Back to back, armed with swords, they face a group of rebels. They fight, the music growing in volume, mixed with war-cries.

ALL: For Duncan and Scotland! Kill the rebels! Smash the invaders! Chase them back to Norway! Scotland! Scotland! Norway! Norway!

Until, finally, the entire rebel chorus back away, their standard dragging. Duncan's men jeer them off. After a moment, with the loyal soldiers congratulating each other round Duncan's banner, they also leave centre stage.

BANQUO: Macbeth! The Norwegians and the rebels run!

MACBETH: The battle is over - and won!

BANQUO: The day is yours and Scotland's.

Macbeth sheaths his sword.

MACBETH: We must find King Duncan and bring him the good news!
They exit.

Scene 3: Another part of the Heath

AUDIO CUE 3 **SFX - THE WITCHES' CAULDRON AND HEATH**

The fog is heavy, the light on the heath strange. An eerie wind whistles. The Witches now crouch around a sackcloth bag. Behind them the Chorus clutch weird objects they've collected for the recipe. As they sing, they hand the objects round and drop them in the bag.

AUDIO CUE 4 **SONG - WITCHES' BREW. RAP ONLY (Backing track)**

A beating drum is heard approaching...

SISTER 2: A drum! A drum! Macbeth doth come!

The Chorus slip away while the Witches tie up the bag and pass it round.

SISTER 3: Quick, we must finish the spell!

SISTER 1: Thrice to thine...

SISTER 2: And thrice to mine...

SISTER 3: Thrice again makes up nine!

ALL SISTERS: The spell is done!

Enter Macbeth and Banquo, shields and bedrolls strapped to their backs.

MACBETH: Banquo! I have never seen such a day ... so foul ... and so fair.

BANQUO: Aye, it's strange all right. How far is it now to the King?

Banquo turns, freezes and looks at the Witches. He taps Macbeth's arm. They draw swords.

BANQUO: What are you? *(To Macbeth)* They don't look human! *(To Witches)* Are you spirits?

Macbeth takes a step closer, threatening them.

MACBETH: Speak! If you can!

The Witches slowly emerge into full view.

SISTER 3: All hail, Macbeth! Thane of Glamis.

Macbeth leans into Banquo.

MACBETH: How do these weird creatures know my name?

SISTER 2: All hail, Macbeth! Thane of Cawdor!

Macbeth takes a step back.

MACBETH: But I am not Thane of Cawdor.

BANQUO: *(To Witches)* Can you see the future? What else do you see?

Sister 3 comes closer.

SISTER 3: All hail, Macbeth! One day ... you will be king.

Macbeth falls back, shocked.

MACBETH: No! That cannot be! Get away from me!

BANQUO: Macbeth, what are you scared of? Why be afraid of good news?



Banquo takes a step closer to them.

SISTER 1: And what about me - if you really can see into the future?
Hail, Banquo!

SISTER 2: Lesser than Macbeth ... and greater.

SISTER 3: Not so happy ... yet much happier!

SISTER 1: Your children will be kings.

SISTER 2: But you will never be.

ALL SISTERS: So hail Macbeth and Banquo!

They turn to go.

MACBETH: Wait! How can I be Thane of Cawdor? He's still alive! And king, that's just unbelievable...

BANQUO: Impossible!

MACBETH: *(To Witches)* Tell me ... how?

But the Witches raise their sack ... and vanish.

BANQUO: They're gone.

MACBETH: Into the thin air.

The Chorus can return and support Macbeth as he sings 'Destiny'.

AUDIO CUE 5 **SONG - DESTINY (Backing track)**

Scene 4: The King's camp

Banners and flags fly. Soldiers move around the stage, some tending to the wounded.

Standing central Ross, Angus and Lennox.

NARRATOR: Macbeth and Banquo finally arrive at King Duncan's camp. Standing outside the King's tent are three of his noblemen: Angus, Ross and Lennox.

Enter Macbeth and Banquo.

LENNOX: Aha! The good generals Macbeth and Banquo!

MACBETH: Greetings, Lennox! We come straight from the battle and have news for the King.

ROSS: The King has already heard of the battle, Macbeth.

ANGUS: And how bravely you fought!

ROSS: And he has told us to to call you ... Thane of Cawdor!

MACBETH: Cawdor? That's not possible. Cawdor lives. How can I be Thane of Cawdor?

ANGUS: Cawdor joined the rebels and is now under sentence of death!

MACBETH: *(To Banquo)* The witches. What they said has come true! Could the next step be the throne itself? Could I become ... King?

BANQUO: Be careful. Sometimes the devil tempts us with small truths, to make us believe the bigger lie to come!

Macbeth turns away and goes downstage.

MACBETH: They said ... I could be king! But can that crown come without any help from me?

AUDIO CUE 6 **SFX - FANFARE**

King Duncan, Malcolm and Donalbain arrive. Duncan wears a special king's robe – richer than the rest.

LENNOX: Look! Here comes King Duncan and the princes!

ALL: The King! The King! The King!

DUNCAN: My generals, Macbeth and Banquo!

MACBETH/BANQUO: Your Majesty!

DUNCAN: It is true, the battle is won. The rebels and the Norwegians have fled!

The nobles raise their arms in a victory salute.

ALL: Victory! The King!

DUNCAN: So, my cousin, Macbeth! How can I pay the debt I owe you after today?

Macbeth bows.

MACBETH: Serving you is its own reward, Your Highness!



DUNCAN: And noble Banquo too!
Banquo also bows.

BANQUO: I am your servant, King Duncan.

DUNCAN: Today's joy overwhelms me!
He puts a hand on Malcolm's shoulder.

But I have one last announcement. I have chosen my eldest son, Malcolm, as my successor! He is now to be known as Prince of Cumberland.

ALL: Malcolm! Prince of Cumberland!

Macbeth joins the celebration, then turns, darkly, to the audience.

MACBETH: Malcolm now Duncan's heir! Prince Malcolm? If I am going to be king - this could cause problems.

DUNCAN: We shall go now to your castle, Macbeth, to celebrate our friendship!

MACBETH: Your Majesty, I shall go ahead to Dunsinane. *(Going)* My Lady Macbeth will be delighted at the good news of your coming.
Macbeth exits.

DUNCAN: *(Calling)* We shall follow! *(To all)* Macbeth is valiant and worthy. We are lucky to have him as our kinsman. Now, let us prepare for the journey to Dunsinane!
They exit to a trumpet fanfare.

AUDIO CUE 7 **SFX - FANFARE**

Scene 5: Lady Macbeth's chamber at Dunsinane

Dunsinane Castle. Lady Macbeth in her dressing room, attended by female servants. She holds a letter and as they dress her she reads...

NARRATOR: At Dunsinane, Macbeth's castle, his wife Lady Macbeth is waiting for him to return from the battle. In her hands she holds a letter from him...

LADY MACBETH: *(Reading)* 'My beloved wife, I believe these weird sisters really must have special powers. They told me I'd be Thane of Cawdor - and it came true! They even said I would be king!' *(She looks up)* King! *(Then returns to the letter)* 'Keep this secret, my partner of greatness ... I will be with you soon.' *(She puts the letter down)* Macbeth, you want greatness. But are you ruthless enough to get it?

The servants go on with their business.

You're ambitious. But I think you'll be too scared to do what's needed. So come home soon ... so I can inspire you to take the crown. Without me, you will never do it.

Macbeth arrives. She turns, all smiles.

Great Thane of Glamis ... and Cawdor! Your future starts now.

MACBETH: King Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH: When does he leave?

MACBETH: Tomorrow.

LADY MACBETH: That must not happen. He must not live to see the morning sun.

MACBETH: What are you saying?

LADY MACBETH: You must welcome King Duncan when he arrives. Smile with him. Look after him. But our guest must be taken care of tonight!

MACBETH: Taken care of..?



LADY MACBETH: Yes. Oh, Macbeth - your face is so easy to read. But at the banquet tonight - you must hide your feelings. Be friendly to our king ... and leave the plan to me.

MACBETH: But -

LADY MACBETH: Come now. Let us prepare the feast.

They exit.

Scene 6: The great hall at Dunsinane

Benches in place around a long table. King Duncan and nobles (Banquo, Lennox, Angus, Ross, Malcolm, Donalbain, Macduff) arrive and stand nearby. Lady Macbeth enters with Macbeth, they bow to Duncan. Servants in attendance.

NARRATOR: In the great hall of Dunsinane, King Duncan and all the lords and ladies stand to celebrate their victory.

SERVANT: Pray quiet for the King!

DUNCAN: A toast! To our hosts - Lord and Lady Macbeth!

ALL: Lord and Lady Macbeth!

King Duncan turns to Lady Macbeth at his side.

DUNCAN: Your castle is beautiful, my lady. The air here is so sweet!

LADY MACBETH: Your Majesty! You honour us with your visit.

DUNCAN: I hope we haven't troubled you...

MACBETH: We are at your service, my lord. Now, please, let's feast!

While King Duncan and all the lords and ladies take their seats Macbeth and Lady Macbeth move away together and speak privately.

If I'm going to do this ... then I'd better do it fast.

Macbeth looks at Duncan.

But Duncan trusts me. I should be protecting him - not killing him. There's only one reason to do it. My own ambition. And that could bring me down.

He shakes his head.

LADY MACBETH: When he finishes supper and goes to sleep ... that's when you do it.

Macbeth shakes his head.

MACBETH: No. We'll go no further with this plan. He has honoured me - as Thane of Cawdor! Can we not just enjoy that?

LADY MACBETH: What are you saying? 'I'd like to wear the crown but I don't dare take it?' You're like the cat that wants the fish - but is scared of getting his paws wet!

MACBETH: And if we should fail?

LADY MACBETH: Have courage - and we'll not fail. Do it when Duncan is asleep and, after tonight, he'll sleep forever. Is it settled then.

MACBETH: Yes. It is ... settled.

AUDIO CUE 8 **SONG - TEMPTATION (Backing track)**

They exit as do all the lords and ladies.

Scene 7: The battlements of Dunsinane

NARRATOR: The feast is over. Banquo and his son Fleance are taking a walk on the castle walls.

Banquo enters with his son, Fleance.

BANQUO: *(Looking at the sky)* What time is it, Fleance?

FLEANCE: After midnight, father. *(Fleance grabs Banquo's arm.)* Someone's coming! *(Calling out)* Who's there?

Enter Macbeth.

MACBETH: A friend.

BANQUO: You're still up too? The King at least is asleep ... he's gone to bed in good spirits, thanks to your hospitality.

MACBETH: We did what we could.

BANQUO: A real feast. *(Pause.)* I dreamt of the witches last night. There was truth in what they said ... Thane of Cawdor.



MACBETH: I haven't really thought about it. But maybe you're right. We should talk, Banquo.

BANQUO: Whenever you like.

MACBETH: Stay with me, Banquo, and we could all share in the future.

BANQUO: My loyalty's to the King - and ever will be. Now, I must go to bed.

Macbeth slaps Banquo on the back. Banquo nods.

MACBETH: Sleep well!

Banquo and Fleance begin to leave.

BANQUO: And the same to you, my friend.

Banquo and Fleance leave. Macbeth watches ... then walks to centre downstage.

AUDIO CUE 9 **EERIE NIGHT UNDERSCORE**

MACBETH: Soon everyone will be asleep ... but me. And then...

Macbeth stops. He raises a hand towards the audience.

What's this? A dagger in the air, its handle turned towards my hand.

He reaches some more, almost off the stage.

Come, let me...

He grabs for it.

...hold, you! I can't touch it but I can still see it. A dagger of the mind. I'm seeing things.

He looks up again.

There it is again! And now there's blood on the blade and handle.

Another snatch, again nothing.

It is time to do the deed.

Macbeth leaves.

Scene 8: Lady Macbeth's chamber

The night underscore music can continue into the scene. Lady Macbeth enters, pacing back and forth.

NARRATOR: Lady Macbeth cannot sleep. She walks back and forth thinking about her terrible plan.

LADY MACBETH: What is he doing? I left the daggers for him. He can't have missed them...

Macbeth stumbles in, red on his hands and cheeks. He holds a dagger.

My husband. Have you..?

Macbeth nods.

MACBETH: The deed is done. *(Looking at his hands)* Look at my hands.

LADY MACBETH: It will wash off!

Macbeth goes to her.

MACBETH: Just after it was done I heard a voice crying. 'Sleep no more!' it said. And then ... 'Macbeth has murdered sleep!'

LADY MACBETH: You're imagining things. Go! Wash your hands! And why did you bring the daggers? Put them back in the room!

MACBETH: I can't go back there.

LADY MACBETH: Give them to me. I'll wipe the faces of the sleeping servants with blood. *(Going)* It will look as though they killed the King.

She takes the knives and leaves while Macbeth stands, traumatised.

NARRATOR: Lady Macbeth goes to the King's bedroom to leave the daggers there ... while Macbeth waits for her return.

Lady Macbeth returns, also with red hands.

LADY MACBETH: Done. It will look as if the servants committed the crime. And see, my hands are the same colour as yours.

A distant knocking is heard on a large wooden door.

LADY MACBETH: Someone's at the South Gate.



MACBETH: I wish the knocking would wake Duncan...

LADY MACBETH: The dead king sleeps forever.

Scene 9: The hallway of Dunsinane

The castle hallways. Macduff, Banquo and Lennox enter from opposite sides of the stage, running.

NARRATOR: The King's body is quickly discovered. The lords - Macduff, Banquo, Ross and Lennox - jump from their beds and run from room to room to raise the alarm.

MACDUFF: Banquo! We must find the King's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain!

BANQUO: Tell them the King is dead! Lennox - have you seen them?

LENNOX: They're coming now!

Enter Malcolm and Donalbain. Macduff stops them.

**MALCOLM/
DONALBAIN:** What's happening? What's going on?

BANQUO: Your father has been murdered.

MALCOLM: No!

Donalbain draws his sword.

DONALBAIN: Tell us the name of the assassins!

MACDUFF: From the look of it his own servants did the deed. Their hands and faces are covered in blood and the daggers are nearby!

Malcolm pushes past Macduff, his sword out.

MALCOLM: I will face these lowly assassins now!

They start offstage but Macbeth comes.

MACBETH: Stay - the assassins are dead. I have killed them already.

DONALBAIN: What?

Lady Macbeth also enters.

LADY MACBETH: What has happened?

MACDUFF: The King, my lady, is dead.

LADY MACBETH: No...

MACBETH: Malcolm, Donalbain, listen to me. Your father lay dead, his murderers so close. Who could hold back?

LADY MACBETH: Help ... please ... I feel...

BANQUO: Lady Macbeth - she faints!

Macbeth and Lennox rush to her as she falls.

MACBETH: I must look after my lady. Lennox - help me carry her to her room.

Macbeth and Lennox exit supporting Lady Macbeth, leaving Donalbain and Malcolm, Ross, Banquo and Macduff.

MALCOLM: *(To his brother)* Donalbain - we must be silent for now...

DONALBAIN: You're right, this place isn't safe.

MACDUFF: Something's not right here, Banquo.

BANQUO: If there's a plot - or treason - I'll fight it.

MACDUFF: So will I.

ROSS: So will we all.

MACDUFF: We'll dress and meet in the great hall.

MALCOLM: My brother and I will join you shortly.

Exit Macduff, Banquo and Ross, leaving Malcolm and Donalbain.

MALCOLM: Donalbain, I don't trust anyone here. We must leave - separately. I'll go to England.

DONALBAIN: Ireland for me then, dear brother.

MALCOLM: Let's go, while we can.

DONALBAIN: There'll be no mercy here, only more murder. To horse!



They leave.

Scene 10: The great hall at Dunsinane

Two thrones now stand centre stage. New royal banners (Macbeth's) hang on the walls. Lennox, Ross, Banquo, other earls, soldiers crowd the stage.

AUDIO CUE 10 SFX - FANFARE

Enter Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as King and Queen, with attendants. Macbeth has the special king's jacket. All kneel as they sit in the thrones. The nobles queue to kiss the rings of the King and Queen. Banquo steps forward to address the audience.

- BANQUO:** Thane of Cawdor. And now crowned as King. It has all come true. But did the witches make it happen or was it Macbeth himself?
- MACBETH:** (Calling) Banquo!
- Banquo, turns from the audience, goes to Macbeth, kneels, kisses his ring.*
- BANQUO:** Your Highness. My lady. Welcome back to Dunsinane.
- LADY MACBETH:** Our loyal friend!
- MACBETH:** What news, Banquo?
- BANQUO:** Malcolm and Donalbain have fled the country. But they're telling everyone who'll listen that they didn't kill their father.
- LADY MACBETH:** Well they would say that, wouldn't they?
- MACBETH:** It's not important. Well deal with it tomorrow. In the meantime...
- LADY MACBETH:** ...our feast...
- MACBETH:** ...tonight - to celebrate! You'll join us, I know.
- BANQUO:** I am at your command, sir.

Banquo turns to go.

- MACBETH:** Are you ... hunting today?
- BANQUO:** Yes, Your Highness.
- MACBETH:** Will you be ... long?
- BANQUO:** All afternoon, Your Highness.
- MACBETH:** Are you taking Fleance with you?
- BANQUO:** Of course, my Lord.
- MACBETH:** Good, good. Enjoy yourselves and don't be late!
- Banquo exits. Macbeth turns to his court.*
- Now, please, your King has work to do. Until the feast, tonight!
- Exit all except Macbeth and his attendants. Macbeth turns to them.*
- Those men we spoke of. Are they here?
- SERVANT:** Yes, my Lord. I let them through the back gates as you asked.
- MACBETH:** Get them.
- The servants leave and Macbeth moves to the front of the stage.*
- I am the King. But the witches told Banquo that *his* children would be kings. Not mine. Being king isn't enough - I've got to be safe. And I can't be safe while Banquo lives.
- Music up: a Servant re-enters.*
- SERVANT:** They are here, my Lord.
- Enter the Assassins, singing. The Chorus can support them as they sing.*
- AUDIO CUE 11 SONG - ASSASSINS (Backing track)
- As the Assassins finish their song they end up seated. Macbeth waves them up.*
- MACBETH:** Don't bother sitting. This won't take long.
- ASSASSIN 1:** Suits me.



ASSASSIN 2: Me too.

MACBETH: Good. Now, Banquo.

ASSASSIN 1: Banquo?

ASSASSIN 2: Banquo?

MACBETH: Banquo. I want you to kill him.

ASSASSIN 2: Kill Banquo?

ASSASSIN 1: Kill him?

MACBETH: Today. While he's out hunting. All right?
The Assassins ponder, then agree.

ASSASSINS: All right.

MACBETH: His son, Fleance, must die too.

ASSASSIN 1: Tell you what. We'll do you a deal.

ASSASSIN 2: Special offer.

ASSASSIN 1: Two for the price of one.

MACBETH: Nobody, but nobody, must ever connect this to me.

ASSASSIN 1: Don't worry, Your Majesty. Our lips are sealed.

ASSASSIN 2: As quiet as the grave.

ASSASSIN 1: Snick-snack.
Assassin 1 slices the air with his knife like Zorro.

ASSASSIN 2: Clickety-clack.
Assassin 2 makes a throttling/neck-breaking gesture.

MACBETH: Good, let's make the arrangements.

AUDIO CUE 12 **CLOSING MUSIC**
Music up and the Assassins exit followed by Macbeth. The lights go down.

ACT 2

Scene 1: Lady Macbeth's chamber

AUDIO CUE 13 **OPENING MUSIC**

Enter Lady Macbeth and her servants as the music fades. She sits at a mirror, preparing for the feast.

NARRATOR: Macbeth has been crowned King of Scotland and the day of his coronation is to end with a great banquet to celebrate. In her bedroom, Lady Macbeth waits for her husband. She's having second thoughts...

LADY MACBETH: All I ever wanted was for him to be king. Now that he is, I wish it had never happened. Not this way.

Enter Macbeth.

MACBETH: Are you ready, my queen? We should go down.

LADY MACBETH: What are you up to? Tell me.

MACBETH: Don't worry. I've got things sorted. Just wait...

LADY MACBETH: I can't go on like this.

MACBETH: You won't have to. Soon it'll be night and in the night, anything is possible.

LADY MACBETH: What do you mean?

MACBETH: Best you don't know. Trust me.

He takes her arm, and leads her off.



Scene 2: The Heath

Banquo and Fleance enter, carrying bows over their shoulders.

- NARRATOR:** Out on the heath, night is falling. Banquo and his son Fleance have been hunting and are on their way back to Dunsinane...
- FLEANCE:** Are we nearly home, Father?
- BANQUO:** Not far now. I can see the lights of the castle.
Enter the Assassins carrying lamps.
- ASSASSIN 1:** My lord Banquo, is it not?
- BANQUO:** It is. Do you come from Dunsinane?
- ASSASSIN 1:** We do!
- BANQUO:** Looks like rain tonight.
- ASSASSIN 2:** Worse than rain, for you!
The Assassins jump at Banquo, knocking him to the ground.
- BANQUO:** Run, Fleance! It's a trap!
Fleance runs, exits. The Assassins use their swords to kill Banquo.
- BANQUO:** Argh...
- ASSASSIN 1:** He's finished. Quick. Get the boy.
- ASSASSIN 2:** No use. He's too fast. Gone. We'll never catch him.
- ASSASSIN 1:** Hmm. That's not good. There's a feast for the King tonight. We'll have to tell him there.
- ASSASSIN 2:** That'll spoil his party.
- ASSASSIN 1:** I hope it doesn't spoil ours too. *(Going)* Come on...
The Assassins trudge back up the path.

Scene 3: The great hall at Dunsinane

A banquet has been prepared. Seated are Ross, Lennox and various noblemen and ladies. Groups of other guests stand chatting. Various servants, soldiers, etc.

- NARRATOR:** Dunsinane Castle ... and the feast to celebrate Macbeth's coronation...
- SERVANT:** All rise for the King and Queen!
Enter Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, regally. The guests all stand and clap them in rhythmically.
- ALL:** Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!
Macbeth leads Lady Macbeth to a seat, then motions the clapping to stop. He leans against an empty seat between Lady Macbeth and Lennox.
- MACBETH:** My lords and ladies, welcome! Tonight we will forget the sad past and think only of the future. So eat, drink and enjoy!
As the lords and ladies take their seats at the table a servant comes to Macbeth and whispers in his ear.
- SERVANT:** My lord...
- MACBETH:** Yes, what is it?
- SERVANT:** The two ... gentlemen ... they have returned.
- MACBETH:** What!
- SERVANT:** They wish to speak with you. Over there, by the door.
- MACBETH:** *(To the servant)* Ah, yes. *(To all)* Some urgent business I must deal with. I shall return.
Macbeth walks over to the far side of the hall where the Assassins wait in the shadows.
- MACBETH:** Idiots! There's blood on your face.
The Assassins take out hankies and wipe each other's faces.
- ASSASSIN 1:** Not mine.
- ASSASSIN 2:** Or mine.



ASSASSIN 1: It's Banquo's.

MACBETH: Good. Better on you than in him. Is he dead?

ASSASSIN 1: Snick snack.

ASSASSIN 2: Clickety-clack.

MACBETH: Excellent! What about the boy, Fleance?

ASSASSIN 1: Ah.

ASSASSIN 2: Well.

ASSASSIN 1: Bit of a problem there...

ASSASSIN 2: It was very dark...

ASSASSIN 1: And the light went out...

ASSASSIN 2: And unfortunately...

ASSASSIN 1: ...the boy escaped.

MACBETH: What? You let him go? Fools! Idiots!

While this is happening Banquo can slip into a vacant place at the table next to Lennox, his back to the audience.

Never mind, at least Banquo's dead. And we can sort the boy out tomorrow. Now get out of here!

ASSASSINS: *(Going)* Your Majesty.

The Assassins leave.

LADY MACBETH: My royal lord! What are you doing in the shadows there? Come, join us. We need our host!

MACBETH: Of course, my lady. *(He pauses)* But the table's full...

LENNOX: Here's a place, sir.

MACBETH: Where, Lennox?

LENNOX: Here, my good lord.

Lennox gestures to the seat next to him (now occupied by Banquo). Banquo turns, his face smeared with blood. Macbeth staggers back.

MACBETH: Which one of you has done this?

LORDS: My lord, what's the matter?

Banquo steps forward.

MACBETH: Get away from me! I didn't do it! It wasn't me!

ROSS: Gentlemen, rise - the King is not well.

Lady Macbeth rises and goes to Macbeth's side.

LADY MACBETH: Please, everyone, stay. This is just ... an illness. The King has suffered from it since he was a boy. Don't worry, it will go away. *(Whispering to Macbeth)* What's wrong with you? Are you a man or what?

MACBETH: Can't you see it? The devil himself would be scared.

LADY MACBETH: Oh, yes! Like the dagger in the air you told me about. Look, it's just a stool! You're seeing things.

The ghost disappears.

MACBETH: What? It's gone!

LADY MACBETH: It was never there!

MACBETH: No? Right. *(To all)* Please, everybody, forgive me. I am not myself this evening. We shall have a toast!

All rise, obscuring the table.

ALL: A toast! A toast!

MACBETH: To absent friends.

LENNOX: To Banquo!

MACBETH: Yes, why not? To Banquo!

ALL: To Banquo!

They drain their glasses and return to their seats (revealing Banquo again). He turns to Macbeth and raises his glass.

MACBETH: Argh! It's here again! Get back to your grave, you fiend!



Macbeth draws his sword and swats the air. The other lords rise again, some try and comfort him as he backs away. Banquo uses the cover again to disappear. Macbeth leans against the wall, shaking, staring...

LADY MACBETH: My lords, ladies. I'm sorry, the King is not well. Please, leave us now. Good night.

The guests exit, confused and concerned.

ALL: Goodnight.

Macbeth sits, weary. Lady Macbeth joins him.

LADY MACBETH: You need sleep, my Lord.

MACBETH: Macduff wasn't here tonight. Did you notice?

LADY MACBETH: Macduff? What are you talking about?

MACBETH: He's plotting I'm sure. Tomorrow, I'll go to the Weird Sisters again, find out what else is in store. This isn't over. I've stepped in so much blood it's easier now to spill more than to go back.

LADY MACBETH: Come. Let's get some sleep.

They exit.

Scene 4: The walls of Dunsinane

Enter Ross and Lennox. They look about to make sure no one could be spying on them, then come forward conspiratorially.

AUDIO CUE 14 EERIE NIGHT UNDERSCORE

NARRATOR: On the walls of Dunsinane Castle, the two noblemen Ross and Lennox have found a quiet place where they cannot be overheard...

ROSS: These are strange times, Lennox, strange times.

LENNOX: Aye. First Duncan is killed. And his sons run away.

ROSS: Because they were the murderers - so says Macbeth.

LENNOX: Then Banquo is killed. And his son Fleance runs away.

ROSS: Because Fleance killed him - so says Macbeth.

LENNOX: So says Macbeth.

A distant door is heard slamming.

ROSS: Shh! Is that someone coming?

Ross and Lennox carefully check out the stage to make sure no one's eavesdropping. Then they come together again, whispering.

LENNOX: Even up here we're not safe.

ROSS: And now Macduff has disappeared.

LENNOX: Not disappeared, gone to England.

ROSS: Why?

LENNOX: He's gone to join Malcolm. They're going to raise an army to come up here and save us from Macbeth.

ROSS: Does Macbeth know?

LENNOX: Yes. And planning his revenge on Macduff.

ROSS: God help Macduff.

LENNOX: God help us all.

They exit.

Scene 5: The Heath

Thunder and lightning. The Witches and their chorus of witches now stand around a great pot, which they stir. Into the pot, one by one, go the ingredients from Act 1.

AUDIO CUE 15 SFX - THUNDER AND SONG - THE WITCHES' BREW (Backing track)

AUDIO RESOURCE 16 SFX - THE WITCHES' CAULDRON AND THE HEATH

SISTER 1: By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes.

SISTER 2: Open locks, whoever knocks!



Enter Macbeth.

MACBETH: What devil's work are you up to now, you midnight hags?

SISTER 3: A recipe without a name!

MACBETH: I want to know more of the future. Will you tell me? I need answers.

SISTER 1: Speak.

SISTER 2: Demand.

SISTER 3: We'll answer.

The Witches go into a trance.

MACBETH: First question. Tell me...

ALL SISTERS: No need to ask the questions. We know your thoughts.

SISTER 1: Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff!

MACBETH: I knew it. Macduff is dangerous...

SISTER 2: Be bloody, bold and resolute! No man who has ever been born to a woman can harm you!

MACBETH: Which means I'm safe! No human can ever harm me!

SISTER 3: And last ... you will never be beaten in battle till Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane!

MACBETH: How can a wood get up and move somewhere else? Never! I'm safe! One more question...

SISTER 1: Banquo's children. Shall they be kings?

LENNOX: *(Offstage)* Your Highness!

Macbeth turns and crosses towards the noise. As he does the Witches all slip away. Enter Lennox.

MACBETH: Don't be afraid, Lennox. Do you see them?

LENNOX: Who, my Lord?

MACBETH: The Weird Sisters of course.

He turns - but they've gone.

LENNOX: They've gone! They didn't answer... Are you not well, my Lord?

MACBETH: More than well, Lennox! Now, what news?

LENNOX: Messengers. They say Macduff is trying to raise an army in England, my Lord.

MACBETH: Traitor! He'll pay for this. I'll take his castle, kill his wife, his children, his family. Come!

He exits with Lennox.

Scene 6: Macduff's Castle

Four children sit at a table. Lady Macduff stands before them. Outside a storm rages.

AUDIO CUE 17 **SFX - THUNDERSTORM**

NARRATOR: Macduff's castle. Lady Macduff and her children await news of him from England.

Enter Ross, wet from the storm.

LADY MACDUFF: Ross! You are welcome! Dry out. Spend some time with us.

ROSS: My Lady Macduff. I wish I could stay...

LADY MACDUFF: Do you bring news of my husband?

ROSS: I travel to England to join him. Can I give him a message?

LADY MACDUFF: Tell him not to take long!

ROSS: He is doing what he must, my lady. Goodbye, now.

LADY MACDUFF: Goodbye!

Exit Ross. The Assassins enter from the other side. As they do, they draw their swords. Lady Macduff and the four children back up against the wall as the killers advance.

ASSASSIN 1: Where's your husband?



LADY MACDUFF: Nowhere you'll find him.

ASSASSIN 2: He's a traitor.

ASSASSIN 1: So are you.

ASSASSIN 2: And you know what happens to traitors...

ASSASSIN 1: Snick-snack.

ASSASSIN 2: Clickety clack.

They raise their swords - lights out.

Scene 7: A room in Dunsinane Castle

AUDIO CUE 18 EERIE NIGHT UNDERSCORE

Two of Lady Macbeth's servants enter, leading the Doctor.

NARRATOR: Dunsinane Castle: nighttime. Lady Macbeth's servants are worried and have summoned a doctor to the queen's rooms...

SERVANT 1: This is where she walks, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Every night?

SERVANT 2: Without fail.

DOCTOR: And you think she's asleep each time?

SERVANT 1: I'm sure of it. She says things ... but look, here she comes!

Enter Lady Macbeth, now in a white shift, her face grey, holding a candle.

SERVANT 2: Watch her ... and stay out of sight.

DOCTOR: Her eyes are open!

SERVANT 2: But they do not see.

DOCTOR: What's she doing now?

SERVANT 1: Washing her hands. But there's no water.

SERVANT 2: Listen!

LADY MACBETH: Out damned spot! Out I say! Who would have thought an old man could have so much blood in him?

DOCTOR: We're hearing things we shouldn't.

LADY MACBETH: Will these hands never be clean?

SERVANT 2: Heaven knows what she really knows.

LADY MACBETH: The smell of blood is still there.

DOCTOR: This isn't an illness I can cure.

LADY MACBETH: I tell you: Banquo's dead and buried. He can't come out of his grave.

DOCTOR: So that's it? Banquo?

SERVANT 1: We've heard too much already.

Lady Macbeth exits.

DOCTOR: There's nothing I can do for her. She needs a priest not a doctor.

SERVANT 2: God forgive us all.

DOCTOR: Goodnight. And you'd better forget what we just heard - or we're all dead.

They exit.

Scene 8: The Heath near Dunsinane

Drums beat, flags fly. Enter Lennox, Angus and soldiers.

AUDIO CUE 19 SFX - MARCHING SOLDIERS AND DRUMS

NARRATOR: In England Malcolm and Macduff raise a great army. It marches north to Dunsinane and prepares to do battle with Macbeth. Angus and Lennox meet on the heath. They too have raised an army and are ready to fight.



LENNOX: What news, Angus?

ANGUS: The English army is near, led by Malcolm and Macduff. They have come for revenge.

LENNOX: And we shall join them. Poor Macduff - he knows?

ANGUS: Oh yes. He's vowed to kill Macbeth.

LENNOX: You think Macbeth ordered the killing?

ANGUS: I know it. Macbeth is mad. His murders stick to his hands.

LENNOX: Onward to Birnam Wood! We'll meet our allies there!
They exit.

Scene 9: A room in Dunsinane Castle

Enter Macbeth, Doctor and Soldiers. Macbeth tears up a paper and throws it away.

MACBETH: No more reports! I don't need them. Birnam Wood can't come to Dunsinane. Malcolm was born of a woman. Nothing can touch me.
Enter a Servant.

SERVANT: Sir, the English army comes near!

MACBETH: All right then! Put on my armour!

DOCTOR: My lord, your wife...

MACBETH: Who are you?

DOCTOR: The doctor, my lord. Your wife, sir, is sick...

MACBETH: What's the matter with her?

DOCTOR: She is ... troubled.

MACBETH: She'll be fine. Come on! Give me my sword! And let us go!

DOCTOR: My lord...

MACBETH: I'm not scared of death ... till Birnam comes to Dunsinane.

nane.

Macbeth and Servant exit right with soldiers.

DOCTOR: I'm off. And no amount of money's going to bring me back to this place.

The Doctor exits left.

Scene 10: The Heath near Dunsinane

From left and right the two armies (the English and the Scottish nobles) join forces, embracing. Ross, Angus, Lennox, Siward, Malcolm, Macduff and soldiers.

NARRATOR: The moment has come. The army of Malcolm and Macduff unites with that of Lennox and Angus.

LENNOX: Malcolm! Ross! My friends! Macduff!

MACDUFF: It is time for my wife and children to be avenged!

MALCOLM: And my father too!

LENNOX: Macbeth and his men are in Dunsinane. We'll lay siege to the castle.

MACDUFF: We have all the nobles with us. You there - what is your name?

SIWARD: Siward, my lord.

MALCOLM: Are you ready for the fight?

SIWARD: The tyrant must die, my lord Malcolm.

MALCOLM: Good man! Now what is this wood in front of us.

SIWARD: It is called Birnam Wood, my lord.

MALCOLM: Lennox! Tell the troops to cut down the trees and hold the branches in front of them - the enemy won't know how strong we are!

LENNOX: Come!

MALCOLM: Let us prepare for battle!
They exit.



Scene 11: A room in Dunsinane Castle

Enter Macbeth, Servants and soldiers.

MACBETH: Tell my lady I am about to leave for battle.

SERVANT: *(Going)* Yes, my lord.

MACBETH: Are the flags flying on all the walls?

SERVANT: Yes, my lord.

MACBETH: They can't beat us.

There's a cry from the next room.

What's that noise? Go and see.

The Servant goes. Macbeth carries on buckling up his armour. Servant returns.

SERVANT: The Queen, my Lord, is dead.

MACBETH: What?

Macbeth goes upstage, parts a curtain where lies the body of Lady Macbeth, her three servants by her side. He kneels down.

MACBETH: What? Dead? She should have lived until the battle ends.

He kneels.

AUDIO CUE 20 **SONG - DUNSINANE (Backing track)**

When the song is over, Macbeth steps back. The servants draw the curtain, obscuring the body.

MACBETH: My sword!

Another servant hands Macbeth his sword, which he sheaths. A soldier enters.

SOLDIER 1: My lord...

MACBETH: Come on! Spit it out!

SOLDIER 1: I don't know how to tell you...

MACBETH: Just say it!

SOLDIER 1: As I stood watch, I looked towards Birnam ... and the wood was moving.

MACBETH: Liar!

SOLDIER 1: It is true, sir. See - through the window there.

Macbeth goes to the window.

MACBETH: So, Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. Just like the Weird Sisters said. There's no running away. The prophecy comes true...

Scene 12: The Heath outside Dunsinane

Drums and flags. Malcolm, Macduff and Siward and Soldiers appear in the aisles, all carrying boughs.

AUDIO CUE 21 **BATTLE UNDERSCORE**

MALCOLM: Now, throw away your branches!

MACDUFF: Bring on the trumpets!

MALCOLM: Let's to war!

The armies beat their shields and march through the audience to the stage.

AUDIO CUE 22 **SONG - KILLING GROUND (Backing track)**

The rebel army join battle with Macbeth's troops, who emerge across the stage.

Scene 13: Another part of the field

Macbeth enters, fighting a soldier. Their weapons clash, but Macbeth easily disarms him and kills him with a simple thrust.

AUDIO CUE 23 **BATTLE UNDERSCORE**

MACBETH: I will fight for ever!

Enter Siward.



SIWARD: What's your name?

MACBETH: Macbeth! The King!

SIWARD: The tyrant! Worse than the devil!
They fight. Swords swing and cut till Siward falls dead.

MACBETH: Fool. You were born of woman. I cannot die.
Enter Macduff, behind him.

MACDUFF: Turn, hell-hound, turn!

MACBETH: Get back. I don't want to fight you, Macduff.

MACDUFF: Murderer!
They fight.

MACBETH: You're wasting your time. There is a spell on me. You can't kill me - you were born of a woman.

MACDUFF: No, I wasn't, Macbeth. I was cut from my mother's womb before her time...

MACBETH: Curses on you for telling me that!

MACDUFF: Surrender then.

MACBETH: Never! Lay on, Macduff! And damned be him that first cries 'Hold, enough!'
They exit, still fighting. The soundtrack fades.

Scene 14: The great hall at Dunsinane

Enter Malcolm, Ross, Angus, Lennox, Nobles, Soldiers, Servants

NARRATOR: As the battle draws to a close, Malcolm waits for news in the hall of Dunsinane Castle...

MALCOLM: Is it over?

ROSS: The day is yours, my lord.

LENNOX: We have taken the castle.

MALCOLM: What news of Macduff - and the tyrant?

Enter Macduff with Macbeth's head on a pole.

MACDUFF: Hail, King! Here is the tyrant - what's left of him!

ROSS: We are free again!

MACDUFF: Everyone! Join with me! Hail Malcolm - rightful King of Scotland!

ALL: Hail Malcolm, King of Scotland! God save the king! God save the king!
The nobles wrap the King's jacket around Malcolm's shoulders and kneel to kiss his hand. Music comes up under the cheering. All turn to the audience to sing the Finale.

AUDIO CUE 24 **SONG - FINALE (Backing track)**

NARRATOR: *(Speaking over the closing instrumental verse of the song:)*

So everything the Witches said came true. But did they make events happen? Or was Macbeth master of his own fate? And what of Lady Macbeth? Was she as guilty as her husband? Whatever you believe - Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are both dead now ... and Scotland ...is free again.

THE END

