

MAC BETH

ADAPTED BY

ERICA SCHMIDT

FROM *MACBETH* BY

**WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE**



MAC BETH
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The world premiere of *MAC BEETH* was produced by Seattle Repertory Theatre (Braden Abraham, Artistic Director; Jeffrey Herrmann, Managing Director) in May 2018. It was directed by Erica Schmidt, the scenic design was by Catherine Cornell, the costume design was by Jessica Pabst, the lighting design was by Robert J. Aguilar, the sound design was by Erin Bednarz, the movement coordinator was Lorenzo Pisoni, and the production stage manager was Stina Lotti. The cast was as follows:

MACBETH Charlotte Schweiger
 BANQUO Tamsen Glaser
 LADY MACBETH Izabel Mar
 MACDUFF Klarissa Marie Robles
 WITCH 1 Sophie Kelly-Hedrick
 WITCH 2 Laakan McHardy
 WITCH 3 Analiese Emerson Guettinger

The New York premiere of *MAC BEETH* was produced by Red Bull Theater (Jesse Berger, Founder and Artistic Director; Jim Bredeson, Managing Director) at the Lucille Lortel Theatre in New York City in May 2019. It was directed by Erica Schmidt, the scenic design was by Catherine Cornell, the costume design was by Jessica Pabst, the lighting design was by Jeff Croiter, the sound design was by Erin Bednarz, the movement coordinator was Lorenzo Pisoni, and the production stage manager was Jane Pole. The cast was as follows:

MACBETH Isabelle Fuhrman
 BANQUO Ayana Workman
 LADY MACBETH Ismenia Mendes
 MACDUFF Lily Santiago
 WITCH 1 Izabel Mar, Annasophia Robb
 WITCH 2 Sophie Kelly-Hedrick
 WITCH 3 Sharlene Cruz

Dramatis Personae

7 SCHOOLGIRLS:

MACBETH

BANQUO

also

SEYTON

LADY MACBETH

MACDUFF

WITCH 1

also

ROSS, DONALBAIN, PORTER, MURDERER 1, DOCTOR

WITCH 2

also

ANGUS, MALCOLM, OLD MAN, MURDERER 2

WITCH 3

also

DUNCAN, FLEANCE, LENOX, GENTLEWOMAN

The witches also play servants and messengers and attendants throughout.

Stage directions that appear within “ ” are from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and included to indicate intended place.

Notes

These girls have a *Macbeth* club. They agree to meet in an abandoned field after school to “do” the play. Each has learned her part. The playing style is modern, quick, unaffected—the girls never pretend to be boys—they are, however, fully committed and present in the stakes of the characters they inhabit. They believe so fully in character that they are capable of losing themselves.

Each wears her school uniform that has a cape with hood, a blazer, skirt, blouse, tie, and individually chosen socks and shoes. The tartan print is a nod to Scotland, but we are in America—where school violence is so common as to be horrifyingly banal.

Every prop in the show comes from the backpacks and purses the girls carry on with them.

The fighting is intense and full-on. No stage blood or weapons are used, but the girls hurl themselves at each other and revel/excel in committing pretend murder.

Once a girl enters, she never exits the stage—though she may exit the scene, she is always present, watching.

MAC BETH

The present. Fall. By the side of a road, just outside a city: an urban wasteland. A couch turned on its back, garbage, an old abandoned bathtub collecting rainwater, weeds, dirt. A tire sits in the dirt. A large puddle of muddy water reflects the sky. Sticks and metal pipes lie discarded on the ground. It's a gray day, late afternoon. The sound of traffic in the distance, the sound of dogs barking.

Witch 3 enters, texting as she walks; she carries a camping cook pot. She sets it down and sits on an old tire. Witch 1 enters; her cell phone rings. She silences it. Witch 2 enters sucking on a Ring Pop.

(Act 1.)

WITCH 1. Where hast thou been, Sister?

WITCH 2. Killing swine.

All three laugh hard.

WITCH 3. Sister, where thou?

WITCH 1. An old man had a play in his lap.

“Give me,” quoth I:—

I’ll do, I’ll do, and I’ll do.

They laugh.

WITCH 2. I’ll give thee a hand.

WITCH 1. Th’art kind.

WITCH 3. And I another.

WITCH 1. I myself have all the other.

WITCH 2. Where the place?

WITCH 1. Here. Upon this “heath.”

WITCH 3. Here to meet with Macbeth.

ALL WITCHES. Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

The witches drum the ground, they scream and yell and wail.

WITCH 3. A drum! A drum! Macbeth doth come.

The howling reaches a peak as:

WITCH 2. Peace! The charm's wound up.

Macbeth and Banquo, two more schoolgirls in uniform, carrying backpacks, enter. Banquo also carries a color guard flag.

MACBETH. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO. 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 should be women?

MACBETH. Speak, if you can: what are you?

WITCH 1. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

WITCH 2. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

WITCH 3. 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 ye 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 favours nor your hate.

WITCH 1. Hail!

WITCH 2. Hail!

WITCH 3. Hail!

WITCH 1. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

WITCH 2. Not so happy, yet much happier.

WITCH 3. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

WITCH 1. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

The witches begin to run about wildly.

MACBETH. Stay you imperfect speakers, tell me more.

By Father'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.

The "witches vanish"—they hide behind the couch and the tub—breathless.

BANQUO. The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them.—Whither are they vanish'd?

MACBETH. Into the air; and what seemed corporal,
Melted as breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

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 (Witch 1) and Angus (Witch 2).

MACBETH. Gentle Ross and our good cousin Angus!

BANQUO. Gentle Angus and our good cousin Ross!

ROSS. The King hath happily receiv'd, Macbeth,
The news of thy success; silenc'd with that,
Strange images of death. As thick as hail
Came post with post; and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence
And pour'd them down before him.

ANGUS. We are sent
To give thee from our royal master thanks;

Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

ROSS. And, for an earnest of a greater honour,
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 borrow'd robes?

ANGUS. Who was the Thane, lives yet;
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combin'd
With the enemy, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labour'd in his country's wrack, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and prov'd,
Have overthrown him.

MACBETH. (*Aside.*)

Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor:

The greatest is behind.

(*To Ross and Angus.*)

Thanks for your pains.—

(*To Banquo.*)

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

BANQUO. That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And often times, 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. (*Aside.*)

Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.—
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 smother'd 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 honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould,
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 favour; my dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them.—Let us toward the King—

(*To Banquo.*)

Think upon what hath chanc'd; and at more time,

MAC BETH

ADAPTED BY ERICA SCHMIDT

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7 women

After school, seven teenage girls convene in an abandoned lot to perform a play. They drop their backpacks, transform their uniforms, and dive into a retelling of *Macbeth*. As the girls conjure kings, warriors, and witches, Shakespeare's bloody tale becomes their reality. *Mac Beth* recontextualizes a classic text to expose the ferocity of adolescence and the intoxicating power of collective fantasy.

"Erica Schmidt's...exuberant [MAC BETH] finds common cause between rebellious teenagers and bloody-minded Shakespeare. ...an adaptation of the Shakespeare play that with its all-female cast becomes a raucous, sometimes impish, very dark-edged revel."
—*The New York Times*

"...Schmidt has done a rare and wonderful thing—she has [adapted] a well known play—perhaps the best known play ever—in a way that illuminates rather than exploits. ...[MAC BETH] is a daring lens through which to revisit Shakespeare's dark tale of choice and consequence. Schmidt handles the material beautifully."
—*FrontRowCenter.com*

"...[Schmidt's] adaptation is based on a real murder and attempted murder perpetrated by two 12-year-old girls that left a third with 19 stab wounds. ...Transposing Macbeth into MAC BETH comments on both. It shocks, chills, jolts."
—*TheaterPizzazz.com*

Also by Erica Schmidt
DEBBIE DOES DALLAS (Sherman
and Schwartz)

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