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## **Family Plays**

# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH

Drama adapted into a one-act play by

I.E. CLARK



*“Macbeth won first place at district meet. We are very happy.”*

(Memorial H. S., Houston, Texas)

# MACBETH

“My hearty compliments and congratulations on the excellent cutting of *Macbeth*.” (Schoharie, N.Y.)

**Drama. Adapted by I.E. Clark. Based on the play by William Shakespeare.** *Cast: 6m., 4w., extras.* In this one-act version of Shakespeare’s masterpiece, your auditorium becomes the Globe Theatre in 1605, and Shakespeare himself appears on stage to introduce the play. A lone figure is sitting in a dimly lit corner making notes on a sheet of foolscap. It is Shakespeare. Richard Burbage, the actor, enters and discovers that the manuscript is the outline of a new play to be called *Macbeth*. As Shakespeare relates the plot, scenes from the play appear. This smooth-flowing adaptation contains favorite scenes and lines: witches on a heath prophesying that Macbeth will be king; Lady Macbeth reading about the prophecy in her husband’s letter; their plot to kill the king; Macbeth’s struggle with his conscience—“Is this a dagger which I see before me?”; Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking scene ... all the great scenes and quotable lines which have made *Macbeth* Shakespeare’s masterpiece. This version of *Macbeth* is an excellent introduction to the play for situations in which the full five-act original won’t work. Some appropriate situations include contests, festivals, lab scenes and classroom demonstrations. Stage directions in this acting script have been kept to a minimum because actors are more likely to create their own business if they are forced to use their imagination. However, full stage directions are given in the director’s script which also contains drawings of costumes and set, full discussion of characterization and other aspects of staging, a discussion of the play and its background, and other information helpful to the experienced and inexperienced director alike. *Bare stage. Costumes: need not be elaborate. Approximate running time: 35 minutes. A set of 14 35-mm slides, showing set and costumes, is available. Code: ML1.*

## Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308  
Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170  
Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

[www.FamilyPlays.com](http://www.FamilyPlays.com)

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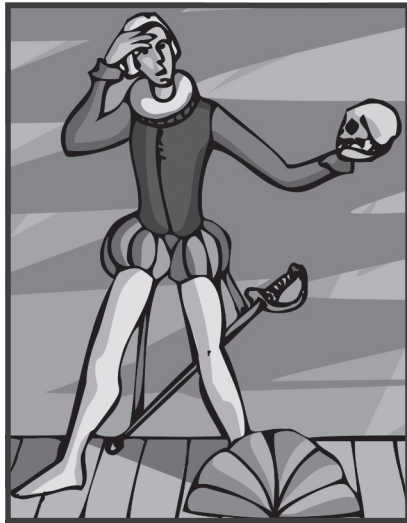
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Macbeth

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(MACBETH)

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## MACBETH

The one-act version of **MACBETH** presented in the following pages is based on the production script developed by I. E. Clark in adapting and directing the play for the 1963 Schulenburg Fine Arts Night. The original Schulenburg cast was as follows:

**SHAKESPEARE and BANQUO** ..... Michael Wagner  
**RICHARD BURBAGE and MACBETH** .... Leonard Schulze  
**\*1st WITCH** ..... Patricia Cox  
**\*2nd WITCH** ..... Jean Stavinoha  
**\*3rd WITCH** ..... Dolores Schenk  
**ROSS and MACDUFF** ..... James Korenek  
**ANGUS and SEYTON** ..... Johnny Coleman  
**LADY MACBETH** ..... Janet Henderson  
**\*SERVANT** ..... Irvin Lippman  
**DUNCAN** ..... Fred Nix

Scene: The stage of the Globe Theatre, 1605

**\*The starred roles may be played by men or women. A larger cast may be used by eliminating the double-casting of ROSS, MACDUFF, ANGUS, and SEYTON, and by adding attendants and soldiers.**

## NOTES ON THE PLAY

Most of the world's great plays are long plays of one to three hours or more. Since there are a myriad of occasions when a play must occupy no more than 30 or 40 minutes, we have adapted some of the greatest classics into one-act form. These miniaturized versions are not meant to replace the full classics but simply to serve where the full play will not work. Ambitious actors and actresses will almost always search out and read the full-length version after beginning work on the one-act adaptation; they should certainly be encouraged to do so.

In this version of Shakespeare's masterpiece, your auditorium becomes the Globe Theatre, and Shakespeare himself appears on stage to introduce the play.

### **A Director's Production Script is available for this play**

Stage directions in this acting script have been kept to a minimum because actors are more likely to create their own business if they are forced to use their imagination. However, full stage directions are given in the Director's Production Script available for this play.

In addition, the Director's Production Script (prompt book) contains drawings of costumes and set, full discussion of characterization and other aspects of staging, a discussion of the play and its background, and other information helpful to the experienced and inexperienced director alike. The Director's Production Script may be obtained from:

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SHAKESPEARE'S

# Macbeth

Adapted by I. E. Clark

*[The scene is the bare stage of the Globe Theatre, which is dimly lighted except for a corner where a spotlight illuminates WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE seated on a prop bench writing at a small table. RICHARD BURBAGE enters.]*

BURBAGE. Good morrow, Master Shakespeare. Ah—making a new play, methinks, to fill the pit of this noble Globe!

WILL. Aye. And *[with a flourish of his quill]* —there is the *finis*. *[Assembling several sheets of foolscap]* Wouldst care to hear it now, friend Richard, or shall we wait for the morrow's general reading with our fellow players?

BURBAGE. Now, forsooth. The prancing words of my sweet Bard can never trot too soon into mine ears. Is it a comedy?

WILL. No, though 'tis meant to please our new king and may yet be comedy for him and tragedy for us if it please him not. Many centuries ago, in Scotland, according to the wise Holinshed, our kind King James found the beginning of his line in a thane called Banquo....

BURBAGE. Aha, another chronicle play!

WILL. Patience, Master Burbage. Although Banquo appeareth in this play, along with a vision of the incumbent royal Stuart, the chief character is one called Macbeth.

BURBAGE. Macbeth? Methinks the history book I once perused mentioned no Macbeth.



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WILL. Dost wish to hear the play or argue history?

BURBAGE. My apologies, Master Will.

WILL. Good friends need not apologize, gentle Richard. Let us leave our play of words for the time when the galleries are filled, our flag fans the clouds, and the impatience of our pit proclaims another performance about to proceed at the Globe on the Bankside.

BURBAGE. My ears are bursting the sheepskin of their drums to hear the opus in your hands turned from script to sound.

WILL. Then let us proceed. To please the pit and set the tempo of the scene, the play begins with thunder and lightning and witches on a heath....

*[Lightning and thunder. Three WITCHES appear.]*

FIRST WITCH. When shall we three meet again, in thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH. When the hurly-burly'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. *[CAT meows offstage.]*

FIRST WITCH. I come, Graymalkin! *[OWL hoots.]*

SECOND WITCH. Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH. Anon.

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

*[WITCHES crouch, laugh shrilly as they cover themselves with their cloaks so they look like bundles of rags.]*

BURBAGE. Like a young puppy, I'm all ears already!

WILL. *[Continues to explain background of play, holding the script in one hand and gesturing with the quill pen in the other]* Duncan, the king of Scotland, fretfully waits for news from his troops, who are pitched in battle with invad-

ing Norwegians. The tidings brought to him are welcome: the brave Thane of Glamis, namely our hero, Macbeth, hath almost single-handedly put down the attack. And good King Duncan dispatches a messenger to reward Macbeth with the title of Thane of Cawdor.

BURBAGE. Forsooth, it is small enough reward for saving a king his throne.

WILL. Too little...and too much, as thou shalt see. Before the king's messenger reaches Macbeth, that noble captain and his friend Banquo discover the witches upon the heath. [*Handing BURBAGE the script*] Wilt read the part of Macbeth? while I be Banquo. Now hark ye well to the witches' cries, for therein, friend, our story lies.

[*BURBAGE, who now becomes MACBETH, reads the first line or two from script and then continues to hold it in his hand. He and WILL—who now becomes BANQUO—take a step or two, as though they have just walked into the scene. WITCHES rise.*]

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 the inhabitants o' the earth, and yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught that man may question?

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! [*MACBETH is astonished.*]

THIRD WITCH. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter! [*MACBETH*

BANQUO. [*To MACBETH, seen him react to WITCHES' pronouncements*] Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear things that do sound so fair? [*To Witches*] In the 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

## Macbeth

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! [*WITCHES begin to exit.*]

MACBETH. 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. Speak, I charge you! [*WITCHES are gone.*]

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

MACBETH. Would they had stayed!

BANQUO. Were such things here as we do speak about?

MACBETH. [*Studying BANQUO's face*] Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO. You shall be king.

MACBETH. And thane of Cawdor too; went it not so?

BANQUO. To the selfsame tune and words. [*Sees ROSS and ANGUS entering*] Who's here?

ROSS. The king hath happily received, Macbeth, the news of thy success in the rebels' fight; and every one did bear thy praises in his kingdom's great defense, and poured them down before him.

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

ROSS. And, for an earnest of a greater honor, he bade me, from him, call thee...Thane of Cawdor!

BANQUO. [*Aside*] What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH. The Thane of Cawdor lives; why do you dress me in borrowed robes?

ANGUS. Who *was* the thane lives yet; but under heavy judgment bears that life which he deserves to lose. Treasons capital, confessed and proved, have overthrown him.

MACBETH. [*Aside*] Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor! The greatest is behind. [*To ROSS and ANGUS*] Thanks for your pains. [*To BANQUO, in a low voice*] 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. 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 us in deepest consequence. [*His voice trails off as LIGHTS dim out; to ROSS and ANGUS:*] Cousins, a word I pray you....

[*BLACKOUT. ROSS and ANGUS exit during blackout. If lighting is not used, BANQUO can guide ROSS and ANGUS out and then turn to BURBAGE.*]

WILL. How seemest it thus far?

BURBAGE. My breath dares not breathe for fear mine ears shall miss a line!

WILL. To further honor his courageous captain, Duncan vows a visit to Inverness, Macbeth's castle. But ere the sturdy thane or his royal lord reach the site, a letter arrives for Lady Macbeth.

[*LADY MACBETH enters, reading a letter*]

LADY MACBETH. "They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest 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

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shalt be!’ This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell!’ [*She crushes letter to her breast*] Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be what thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature; it is too full o’ the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great; art not without ambition, but without the illness should attend it. [*Calling to the absent MACBETH*] 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 a 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?

MESSENGER. So please you, it is true; our thane is coming.

LADY MACBETH. Thou bring’st great news. [*Dismisses him with a gesture*] 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 the access and passage to remorse, that no compunctious visitings of nature shake my fell purpose. 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!”

MACBETH. [*Enters*] My dearest love.

LADY 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. Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH. And when goes hence?