4: ALL HAIL, MACBETH! KING OF SCOTLAND!

Adapted by Neil Richards

SCENE 9: THE HALLWAYS OF DUNSINANE

FX Alarms through the castle. Macduff, Banquo, Ross and Lennox enter running.

NARRATOR King Duncan’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.

BANQUO Malcolm, Donalbain - your father has been murdered!

MALCOLM No!

FX They draw swords.

DONALBAIN Tell us the name of the assassin and we shall avenge our father!

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

MALCOLM I will face these lowly assassins now!

MACBETH Stop, Malcolm.

MALCOLM Macbeth, let me through -

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

MALCOLM What?

LADY MACBETH What has happened?

MACDUFF The King is dead, my lady.

LADY MACBETH No!

MACBETH Malcolm. Donalbain. Listen to me. Your father lay dead, his murderers so close...who could hold back?

NARRATOR Macbeth needs help with his lies. And Lady Macbeth knows just what to do. She staggers...

LADY MACBETH Help...please...
NARRATOR …and falls…

LADY MACBETH …I feel…

FX Lady Macbeth falls.

BANQUO Lady Macbeth! She faints…

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

LENNOX Yes.

MALCOLM Donalbain, dearest brother, we must be silent for now…

DONALBAIN You’re right, Malcolm. This place isn’t safe.

MACDUFF Something’s not right here, Banquo.

BANQUO If there’s a plot, Macduff, 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. 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!

SCENE 10: THE GREAT HALL AT DUNSIANE

FX Trumpet fanfare. A great crowd.

NARRATOR At Dunsinane castle, a week later, Macbeth’s loyal followers cheer him and his queen as they return from their coronation…

ALL All hail! Hail King Macbeth! Hail the Queen!

NARRATOR Banquo watches alone from a dark corner of the great hall…
BANQUO  It has all come true, just as the witches said. But did they make it happen - or was it Macbeth himself?
MACBETH  Banquo!
BANQUO  Here, your majesty! And my lady. Welcome back to Dunsinane.
LADY MACBETH  Our loyal friend!
MACBETH  Banquo, what news?
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. We’ll deal with it tomorrow. In the meantime -
LADY MACBETH  - our feast -
MACBETH  - tonight - to celebrate! You’ll join us, I know.
BANQUO  I’m at your command, sir.
MACBETH  Are you...hunting today?
BANQUO  Yes, your majesty.
MACBETH  Are you taking Fleance with you?
BANQUO  Of course, my lord.
MACBETH  Good, good. Enjoy yourselves - and don’t be late! (TO EVERYONE) Now please, my loyal subjects! Your king has work to do. Until the feast tonight you may leave us!

FX  The guests exit.

NARRATOR  Macbeth waits until everyone has gone. Just one servant stays back - because Macbeth needs him...
MACBETH  Those men we spoke of. Are they here?
ATTENDANT 1  Aye, my lord. I let them in through the back gates, as you asked.
MACBETH  Get them.
ATTENDANT 1  Your majesty…

NARRATOR  The servant goes. And Macbeth thinks through his plan again.
MACBETH I am the king. But the witches told Banquo that his children would be kings. Not mine. Being king isn’t enough - I have to be safe. And I can’t be safe as long as Banquo lives.

ATTENDANT 1 Here are the two men, my lord.

MACBETH Good. Now leave us. (TO THE ASSASSINS) Don’t bother sitting. This won’t take long.

ASSASSIN 1 Suits me.

ASSASSIN 2 Me too.


ASSASSINS Banquo?

MACBETH Yes. Banquo. I want you to kill him.

ASSASSINS Kill Banquo?

MACBETH Today. While he’s out hunting. All right?

ASSASSINS All right.

MACBETH His son, Fleance, must die too.

ASSASSIN 1 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 And our daggers are sharp.

FX Two daggers drawn.

ASSASSIN 2 And cold as death.

ASSASSIN 1 Snick-snack.

ASSASSIN 2 Clickety-clack.