

# THE ONE-WORD MACBETH

By Dwayne Yancey

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# THE ONE-WORD MACBETH

*A One Act Comedic Parody*

**By Dwayne Yancey**

**SYNOPSIS:** This fast-moving script delivers Shakespeare's Macbeth in a very different way – with each character speaking lines that consist of only one word. This puts an emphasis on inflection and action, since the actors have only one word to convey the meaning of what otherwise would be an entire line. Trying to make Shakespeare accessible to a general audience? This has all the things you love about Macbeth – the witches, the sword fights, the drama – but is presented in a way that will entertain even the most die-hard skeptic of Shakespeare.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(5-14 either; gender flexible, doubling possible)*

WITCH ONE (f) .....	One of the weird sisters. (48 lines)
WITCH TWO (f) .....	One of the weird sisters. (49 lines)
WITCH THREE (f).....	One of the weird sisters. (47 lines)
MACBETH (m) .....	A Scottish thane. (307 lines)
BANQUO (m).....	Macbeth's friend and ally. (85 lines)
DUNCAN (m).....	The King of Scotland. (26 lines)
GUARD ONE (m/f).....	King's guard. (6 lines)
GUARD TWO (m/f) .....	King's guard. (7 lines)
LADY MACBETH (f).....	The ambitious wife of Macbeth. (130 lines)
MACDUFF (m) .....	A Scottish thane who opposes Macbeth. (83 lines)
MURDERER ONE (m/f).....	(15 lines)
MURDERER TWO (m/f).....	(10 lines)
MESSENGER FOR MACDUFF (m/f).....	(22 lines)
MESSENGER FOR MACBETH (m/f).....	(20 lines)

**CAST NOTE:** The script envisions a cast of fourteen with specific character genders. It's possible to perform the work using cross-gender casting. By utilizing cross-gender casting and doubling you are able to produce the show with as little as five characters. For a cast of five the doubling works best as follows:

ACTOR ONE: Witch One, Lady Macbeth, Messenger for MacDuff

ACTOR TWO: Witch Two, Guard One, Macduff, Murderer One

ACTOR THREE: Witch Three, Duncan, Murderer Two, Messenger for Macbeth

ACTOR FOUR: Macbeth

ACTOR FIVE: Banquo, Guard Two

**DURATION:** 45 minutes.

### PROPS

- Multiple Swords
- Two Daggers
- Multiple Knives
- Drinking cups
- Wine bottles
- A tray
- A Cauldron
- A Crown
- Medal or Token
- Candle
- Stage Blood
- Mirror
- Watch
- Bell

### SOUND EFFECTS

- A knock at the door.

### AUTHORS NOTE

You can produce it very simply (the original production dressed everyone in black, with only a single item to distinguish between characters) such as a sash for one, a robe for the king, witches hats for the weird sisters, and so forth. Or you can or you can dress it up as elaborately as you wish. There are no set pieces that are required. You may want some generic background, or none at all. The main thing to keep in mind is that the script is set up to move quickly.

### PREMIERE PRODUCTION

*THE ONE-WORD MACBETH* was first produced for the public in July-October 2015 by Pop Culture Theatre, Melbourne, Australia, directed by John Jennings, with the following cast:

Witch one, Lady Macbeth,  
Messenger for MacDuff – Chelsea Hyde  
Witch two, Guard one, Macduff, Murderer one – Josie Hardie  
Witch three, Duncan, Murderer two, Messenger for Macbeth – Alicia Henry  
Macbeth – Madeline Hardie  
Banquo, Guard two – Laura Marmion

That production took first place in the Foster One-Act Play Festival and runner-up in the Kyneton One-Act Play Festival.

The original director, John Jennings, notes: “*You work inspired the girls to learn Macbeth, to ask questions about Shakespeare and to suddenly bring the words of the Bard to life to them because it wasn’t just sitting in class and reading. It was a fantastic tool to teach them the importance of words and inflection, a very important lesson that they will now carry with them through their performing lives.*”

**AT RISE:** *All three WITCHES are conspiring.*

**WITCH ONE:** Thunder!

**WITCH TWO:** Lightning!

**WITCH THREE:** Rain!

**WITCH ONE:** Meeting!

**WITCH TWO:** Who?

**WITCH THREE:** Us!

**WITCH TWO:** Time?

**WITCH ONE:** Sunset!

**WITCH TWO:** Battle?

**WITCH THREE:** Finished!

**WITCH TWO:** Location?

**WITCH ONE:** Heath!

**WITCH TWO:** Subject?

**WITCH THREE:** Macbeth!

**WITCH TWO:** Ah!

**WITCH ONE:** Fair!

**WITCH TWO:** Foul!

**WITCH THREE:** Foul!

**WITCH ONE:** Fair!

*All three WITCHES laugh an evil laugh and exit. MACBETH and BANQUO enter. They're re-enacting the battle they have just fought, with BANQUO playing out how heads were hewn off. MACBETH might join him in these re-enactments.*

**MACBETH:** Spectacular!

**BANQUO:** Awesome!

**MACBETH:** Incredible!

**BANQUO:** Fantastic!

**MACBETH:** Victorious!

**BANQUO:** *(Pointing to MACBETH.)* Hero!

**MACBETH:** *(Humbly.)* Hardly.

**BANQUO:** *(Reassuring MACBETH.)* Certainly!

**MACBETH:** *(Hugging BANQUO.)* Teamwork!

**BANQUO:** Leadership!

**MACBETH:** *(Warming to the idea.)* Maybe!

**BANQUO:** Historic!

**MACBETH:** Perhaps.

**BANQUO:** Legendary!

**MACBETH:** Really?

**BANQUO:** Sure!

**MACBETH:** Well!

**BANQUO:** Re-enactment!

**MACBETH:** Now?

**BANQUO:** Now!

**MACBETH:** Well —

**BANQUO:** Please!

**MACBETH:** OK!

**BANQUO:** Oh!

**MACBETH:** *(Starting to re-live the battle.)* Invasion!

**BANQUO:** Norwegians!

**MACBETH:** Hordes!

**BANQUO:** Overwhelmed!

**MACBETH:** Undaunted!

**BANQUO:** Swinging!

**MACBETH:** Chop!

**BANQUO:** Reinforcements!

**MACBETH:** Chop!

**BANQUO:** Stragglers!

**MACBETH:** Chop!

**BANQUO:** Chop!

**MACBETH:** Chop!

**BANQUO:** Chop!

**MACBETH:** Chop!

**BANQUO:** Chop!

**MACBETH:** Chop!

*MACBETH and BANQUO laugh.*

**BANQUO:** *(Meaning MACBETH.)* Hero!

**MACBETH:** *(Hugging BANQUO.)* Sidekick!

*All three WITCHES enter.*

**BANQUO:** Whoa!

**MACBETH:** Problem?

**BANQUO:** Yes!

**MACBETH:** (*Thinking BANQUO is objecting to the label 'sidekick'.*)  
Partner?

**BANQUO:** No!

**MACBETH:** What?

**BANQUO:** That!

**MACBETH:** Whoa!

**BANQUO:** Them!

**MACBETH:** Who?

**BANQUO:** What!

**MACBETH:** (*Whispering to BANQUO.*) Strange!

**BANQUO:** (*Whispering to MACBETH.*) Definitely.

**MACBETH:** (*Whispering to BANQUO.*) Unusual!

**BANQUO:** (*Whispering to MACBETH.*) Assuredly.

**MACBETH:** (*Whispering to BANQUO.*) Weird.

**BANQUO:** (*Whispering to MACBETH.*) Positively.

**MACBETH:** (*Whispering to BANQUO.*) Sisters?

**BANQUO:** (*Whispering to MACBETH.*) Possibly.

**WITCH ONE:** Hail!

**MACBETH:** (*Thinking she means the meteorological hail.*) Storm?

*BANQUO nudges MACBETH.*

**BANQUO:** No!

**WITCH ONE:** Hail!

**MACBETH:** Oh!

**WITCH ONE:** Macbeth!

**MACBETH:** Me!

**WITCH ONE:** Thane!

**MACBETH:** (*Puffing up.*) Thane!

**WITCH ONE:** Glamis!

**MACBETH:** Yup!

**WITCH TWO:** Hail!

**MACBETH:** Hail!

**WITCH TWO:** Thane!

**MACBETH:** Hail!

**WITCH TWO:** Cawdor!

**MACBETH:** What?

**BANQUO:** (*Whispering.*) Cawdor!

**MACBETH:** No!

**BANQUO:** Ssssh!

**MACBETH:** Cawdor — (*Tries to indicate CAWDOR is somewhere else, someone else.*)

**WITCH TWO:** Cawdor!

**MACBETH:** Cawdor?

**BANQUO:** Strange!

**MACBETH:** Weird!

**BANQUO:** (*Agreeing now.*) Sisters!

**WITCH THREE:** Hail!

**MACBETH:** Hail!

**WITCH THREE:** Macbeth!

**MACBETH:** Me!

**WITCH THREE:** King!

**MACBETH:** King?

**WITCH THREE:** King!

**MACBETH:** (*To BANQUO.*) King?

**BANQUO:** (*To MACBETH.*) King!

**MACBETH:** Uh —

**WITCH ONE:** Sssssh!

**MACBETH:** Excuse —

**WITCH TWO:** Hussssh!

**MACBETH:** But!

**WITCH THREE:** Mmmmm!

**BANQUO:** Uh —

**WITCH ONE:** Yes?

**BANQUO:** Well —

**WITCH TWO:** Question?

**BANQUO:** I —

**WITCH THREE:** Wondered?

**BANQUO:** Yes!

*All three WITCHES look at one another.*

**WITCH ONE:** Thoughts?



**WITCH THREE:** Let's!

**WITCH TWO:** Begin!

**WITCH ONE:** Hail!

**WITCH TWO:** Hail!

**WITCH THREE:** Hail!

**WITCH ONE:** Lesser!

**BANQUO:** Lesser?

**WITCH ONE:** Greater!

**BANQUO:** Greater?

**WITCH ONE:** Someday.

**BANQUO:** When?

**WITCH TWO:** Unhappy.

**BANQUO:** Unhappy?

**WITCH TWO:** Happier!

**BANQUO:** Confused.

**WITCH TWO:** Confused!

*All Three WITCHES laugh.*

**WITCH THREE:** Father!

**BANQUO:** Dad!

**WITCH THREE:** Sire!

**BANQUO:** Sire?

**MACBETH:** King?

**WITCH THREE:** Never!

**MACBETH:** (*Indicating himself.*) King!

**BANQUO:** Sire?

**WITCH THREE:** Verb!

**BANQUO:** Oh!

**MACBETH:** Verb?

*BANQUO may need to make some gesture here to indicate he will father children.*

**BANQUO:** Sire!

**MACBETH:** Oh.

**BANQUO:** Confused.

**WITCH ONE:** Hail!

**WITCH TWO:** Hail!

**WITCH THREE:** Hail!

*All three WITCHES exit.*

**MACBETH:** Bizarre.

**BANQUO:** Certainly.

**MACBETH:** Creepy!

**BANQUO:** Definitely.

**MACBETH:** Weird!

**BANQUO:** Sisters!

*MACBETH repeats what the Witches told him, trying to understand it.*

**MACBETH:** Review!

**BANQUO:** Thane.

**MACBETH:** *(Indicating himself.)* Glamis.

**BANQUO:** Thane.

**MACBETH:** Cawdor?

**BANQUO:** And!

**MACBETH:** King?

**BANQUO:** But —

**MACBETH:** But?

**BANQUO:** Kids!

**MACBETH:** *(Remembering, darkly.)* Right.

**BANQUO:** Kings!

**MACBETH:** Confused.

**BANQUO:** Hark!

**MACBETH:** What?

**BANQUO:** King!

**MACBETH:** Me!

**BANQUO:** No!

**MACBETH:** Who?

**BANQUO:** Him!

*DUNCAN enters, accompanied by GUARD ONE and GUARD TWO.*

**DUNCAN:** Greetings!

**MACBETH:** Duncan!

**DUNCAN:** Macbeth!

**MACBETH:** (*Kneeling.*) King!

**DUNCAN:** Thane!

**MACBETH:** Glamis.

**DUNCAN:** Cawdor!

**MACBETH:** Cawdor?

**DUNCAN:** Cawdor!

*DUNCAN presents MACBETH with a medal or some token to indicate a promotion.*

**MACBETH:** Me?

**DUNCAN:** Promotion!

**MACBETH:** Cawdor?

**DUNCAN:** Deserved!

**BANQUO:** Indeed!

**MACBETH:** (*Savoring.*) Cawdor!

**DUNCAN:** Banquo!

**BANQUO:** (*Expecting his own reward.*) Yes?

*DUNCAN begins shaking BANQUO'S hand.*

**DUNCAN:** Congratulations!

*BANQUO is clearly disappointed.*

**MACBETH:** (*Still savoring.*) Cawdor.

**DUNCAN:** (*Realizing the time.*) Time!

**BANQUO:** Oh!

**MACBETH:** Uh—

**DUNCAN:** Yes?

**MACBETH:** Dinner?

**DUNCAN:** Celebration?

**MACBETH:** Naturally!

**DUNCAN:** Delighted!

**MACBETH:** Tonight?

**DUNCAN:** Sure!

**MACBETH:** Castle!

**DUNCAN:** Excellent!

**MACBETH:** Hail!

**DUNCAN:** Hail!

*DUNCAN, GUARD ONE and GUARD TWO exit.*

**BANQUO:** *(Weakly.)* Hail!

**MACBETH:** *(Mutters.)* Cawdor!

**BANQUO:** Well?

**MACBETH:** *(Mutters.)* King!

**BANQUO:** Congrats.

**MACBETH:** *(Distracted.)* What?

**BANQUO:** Congrats!

**MACBETH:** On?

**BANQUO:** Cawdor!

**MACBETH:** Right!

**BANQUO:** *(Trying to mask his own disappointment.)* Impressive!

**MACBETH:** *(Checking his watch, and realizing the hour.)* Time!

**BANQUO:** Late?

**MACBETH:** Wife!

**BANQUO:** *(Disappointed.)* Oh!

**MACBETH:** Hail!

*MACBETH exits.*

**BANQUO:** *(Weakly.)* Hail!

*BANQUO exits. LADY MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Hurry!

*MACBETH enters.*

**MACBETH:** Coming!

**LADY MACBETH:** *(Looking for someone.)* Guests?

**MACBETH:** Soon!

**LADY MACBETH:** *(Pointing to her watch.)* Due!

**MACBETH:** Delayed!

**LADY MACBETH:** (*Turning sultry.*) Repeat.

**MACBETH:** Delayed!

**LADY MACBETH:** (*Annoyed.*) Story!

**MACBETH:** Oh!

**LADY MACBETH:** Fascinated.

**MACBETH:** (*Starts to re-enact the battle.*) Norwegians!

**LADY MACBETH:** (*Annoyed again, he's not telling the right story.*)

Later!

**MACBETH:** Chop!

**LADY MACBETH:** Later!

**MACBETH:** (*Confused.*) Chop?

**LADY MACBETH:** Witches!

**MACBETH:** Oh!

**LADY MACBETH:** Repeat!

**MACBETH:** Please!

**LADY MACBETH:** (*Insisting.*) Repeat!

**MACBETH:** (*Weakly.*) Glamis.

**LADY MACBETH:** Other!

**MACBETH:** Cawdor!

**LADY MACBETH:** More!

**MACBETH:** (*Dismissing the idea.*) Speculation.

**LADY MACBETH:** Prophecy.

**MACBETH:** Possibility.

**LADY MACBETH:** Certainty.

**MACBETH:** Temptation.

**LADY MACBETH:** Requirement.

**MACBETH:** (*Begging off.*) Please!

**LADY MACBETH:** Repeat!

**MACBETH:** (*Pointing to his watch.*) Time!

**LADY MACBETH:** Hurry!

**MACBETH:** (*Repeating what the Witches said.*) King!

**LADY MACBETH:** King!

**MACBETH:** (*Trying to lower her expectations.*) Unlikely!

**LADY MACBETH:** (*Imagining herself Queen.*) Queen!

**MACBETH:** Improbable!

**LADY MACBETH:** Inevitable.

**MACBETH:** Still —

*SFX: A knock on the door.*

**LADY MACBETH:** King!

**MACBETH:** King!

**LADY MACBETH:** Hurry!

**MACBETH:** Right!

*MACBETH walks to the door, while LADY MACBETH looks at herself in the mirror.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Mirror!

*MACBETH opens the door. DUNCAN enters, with GUARD ONE and GUARD TWO. BANQUO is with him, as well, but remains at the threshold.*

**MACBETH:** Hail!

**DUNCAN:** Hail!

**MACBETH:** King!

**DUNCAN:** Cawdor!

**LADY MACBETH:** Welcome!

**MACBETH:** *(Making introductions.)* Lady!

**DUNCAN:** Lady!

**LADY MACBETH:** Honored.

**DUNCAN:** Delighted.

**MACBETH:** *(Looking at DUNCAN and LADY MACBETH.)* So!

**BANQUO:** *(Being ignored.)* Hey!

**MACBETH:** *(Weakly.)* Hey!

*LADY MACBETH offers the DUNCAN an hors d'oeuvre.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Hungry?

**DUNCAN:** Pass.

**LADY MACBETH:** Haggis!

**DUNCAN:** Indigestion.

**LADY MACBETH:** Sorry.

*LADY MACBETH offers the tray to GUARD ONE and GUARD TWO.*

**GUARD ONE:** Thanks.

**GUARD TWO:** Umm.

**GUARD ONE:** Interesting.

**GUARD TWO:** Spicy!

*LADY MACBETH offers some wine.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Thirsty?

**GUARD ONE and GUARD TWO:** Very!

*GUARD ONE and GUARD TWO grab the wine and drink deeply.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Seconds?

**GUARD ONE:** *(Unsure.)* Uh —

*GUARD TWO is finding out how spicy the haggis really is.*

**GUARD TWO:** Whoa!

*LADY MACBETH hands each guard a bottle of wine.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Here!

**GUARD ONE:** Thanks.

*GUARD TWO is still dealing with the fiery haggis.*

**GUARD TWO:** Whoa!

*GUARD ONE gathers up some seconds of the haggis.*

**GUARD ONE:** Tasty.

*GUARD TWO asks for another bottle.*

**GUARD TWO:** Another?

*LADY MACBETH loads him down with bottles.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Sure.

**GUARD TWO:** Thanks!

**LADY MACBETH:** Cheers!

*DUNCAN yawns.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Tired?

**DUNCAN:** Very.

**LADY MACBETH:** Sleepy?

**DUNCAN:** Bedroom?

**LADY MACBETH:** *(Indicating the bedroom is upstairs.)* Upstairs!

**DUNCAN:** Thanks!

**MACBETH:** Later!

**DUNCAN:** Later!

*DUNCAN, GUARD ONE and GUARD TWO exit.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Well —

*LADY MACBETH and MACBETH look at BANQUO.*

**BANQUO:** Right.

*BANQUO exits.*

**LADY MACBETH:** Well?

**MACBETH:** What?

*LADY MACBETH hands MACBETH a dagger.*

**LADY MACBETH:** This!

**MACBETH:** Oh!

**LADY MACBETH:** And --

*LADY MACBETH hands MACBETH a second dagger.*



**MACBETH:** Oh!

**LADY MACBETH:** Yes!

**MACBETH:** Two?

**LADY MACBETH:** Definitely.

**MACBETH:** Really?

**LADY MACBETH:** Really!

**MACBETH:** Now?

**LADY MACBETH:** Now!

*MACBETH feels the blade.*

**MACBETH:** Sharp!

**LADY MACBETH:** Precisely!

**MACBETH:** But —

**LADY MACBETH:** Hurry!

**MACBETH:** Guards?

**LADY MACBETH:** Drunk!

**MACBETH:** Oh.

**LADY MACBETH:** Bold!

**MACBETH:** Right.

*MACBETH exits; LADY MACBETH paces.*

**LADY MACBETH:** (*Muttering.*) Queen!

*MACBETH enters, holding two bloody daggers.*

**MACBETH:** Done!

**LADY MACBETH:** Already?

*MACBETH holds up the daggers.*

**MACBETH:** See!

**LADY MACBETH:** Fool!

**MACBETH:** What?

**LADY MACBETH:** Evidence!

**MACBETH:** Oh!

**LADY MACBETH:** Guards!

**MACBETH:** Trashed!

**LADY MACBETH:** Exactly!

**MACBETH:** Confused.

**LADY MACBETH:** Blame!

**MACBETH:** Oh!

**LADY MACBETH:** Alibi!

**MACBETH:** Right.

**LADY MACBETH:** Go!

**MACBETH:** (*Refusing.*) Scared!

**LADY MACBETH:** Scared?

**MACBETH:** Yes!

**LADY MACBETH:** Chicken!

**MACBETH:** Regrets!

**LADY MACBETH:** Spineless!

**MACBETH:** Worried!

**LADY MACBETH:** (*Annoyed, demanding the daggers.*) Give!

*MACBETH gives LADY MACBETH the daggers.*

**MACBETH:** Here.

**LADY MACBETH:** Watch!

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