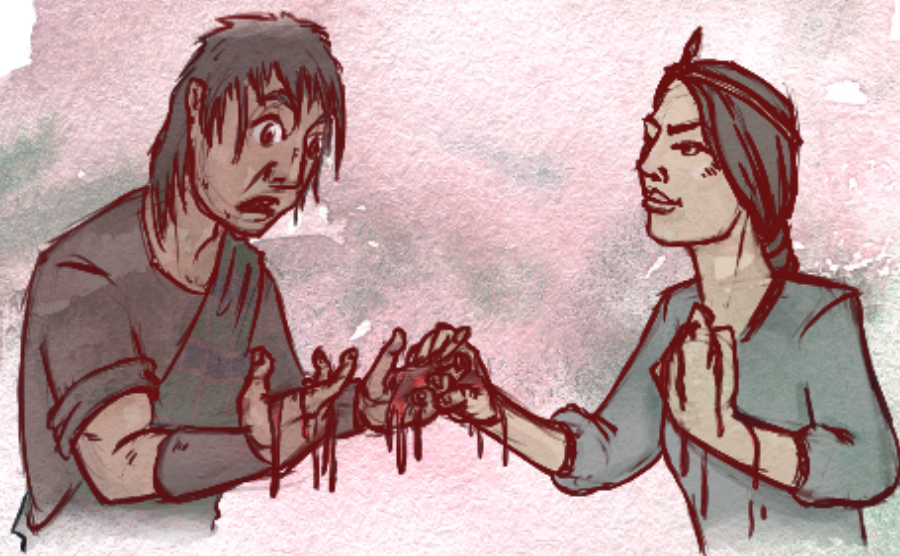
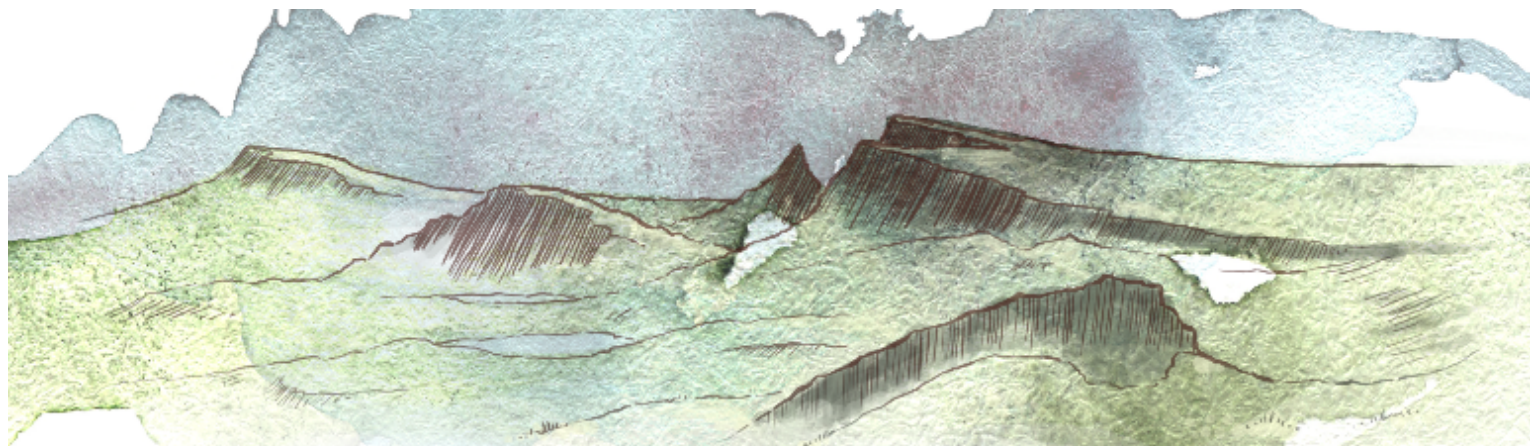


Cadw Creators



Macbeth

Written by: William Shakespeare
Adapted by: Jany's Chambers
Art Director: Nick Price
Produced by: Turnip Starfish Limited



This fantastic story is set hundreds of years ago in Scotland - at the time, a wild and savage place. The King of Scotland is called Duncan, and he has two sons, Prince Malcolm and Prince Donalbain.

Scotland is at war with Norway. Macbeth - who is a cousin of the King's and the Lord of Glamis (pronounced 'Glarms') - is a great soldier and the main General of the Scottish Army. He and his best friend Banquo, also a General, have just won a huge battle, a great victory over their enemy...



and are now on foot making their way back from the battle in celebratory mood, to meet the King who is camped up ahead.

As Macbeth and Banquo cross a wild and lonely moor, they discuss how odd the weather is - with violent storms erupting in the middle of brilliant sunshine - when suddenly, out of nowhere, out of the very earth in front of them, there appears three Witches, who look like half-women, half-men.

"What are these, so wild and withered in their attire?" cries Banquo.



The Witches greet Macbeth as "Lord of Glamis" - (which he is); then as "Lord of Cawdor" - (which he isn't, as Cawdor Castle belongs to someone else); and then as "King of Scotland" - which he most definitely isn't. The Witches tell Banquo he will never be a King like Macbeth, but that one day his sons will be Kings. Then - they vanish, as suddenly as they appeared.

"Whither are (where have) they vanished?" asks Banquo.

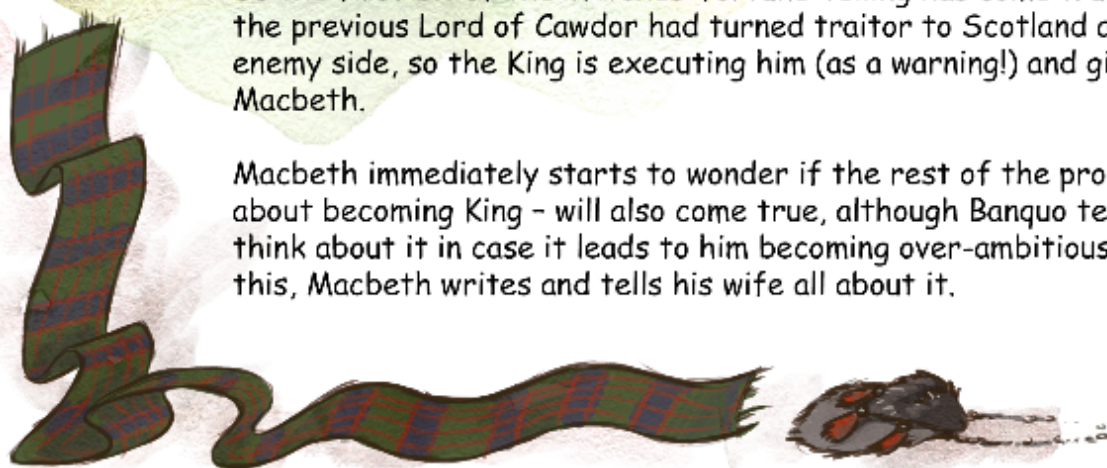
"Into the air!" replies Macbeth.

Almost immediately a Messenger arrives and tells Macbeth that the King is so pleased with him for winning the battle, he is making him the Lord of Cawdor.



So the first bit of the Witches' fortune-telling has come true. It seems that the previous Lord of Cawdor had turned traitor to Scotland and fought on the enemy side, so the King is executing him (as a warning!) and giving his title to Macbeth.

Macbeth immediately starts to wonder if the rest of the prophecy - the bit about becoming King - will also come true, although Banquo tells him not to think about it in case it leads to him becoming over-ambitious. In spite of this, Macbeth writes and tells his wife all about it.



Then he and Banquo travel on to join King Duncan at his Camp. The King, on greeting Macbeth, praises him, and tells him that as a further reward for his success in the war - as well as making him Lord of Cawdor - he is going visit Macbeth's Castle tonight, along with the Princes and all the Court.

Macbeth sends a messenger galloping ahead to warn his wife and asks the King if he can also ride ahead, to help his wife prepare for the great honour of the royal visit. The King, of course, says yes.

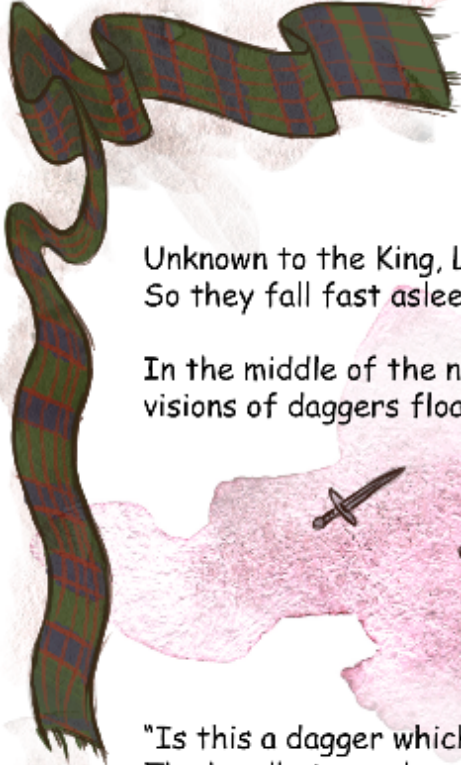


We cut to Macbeth's Castle where Lady Macbeth is reading the letter from her husband about the Witches' prophecy. She decides immediately to help make it come true - by murdering the King!



Lady Macbeth even prays to evil spirits to help her find the strength to carry the murder through. She's worried by the kindness in her husband's nature - which she sees as weakness. She thinks it might get in the way.


When Macbeth arrives, she tells him her plan. He's not at all sure. He knows how highly people think of him, and is scared by the whole idea of the murder, but he's excited and greedy and wants to be King. So, finally, he agrees.



Lady Macbeth greets the King warmly when he arrives and throws a great feast in his and the Court's honour. Afterwards, feeling welcome and safe, the King goes off to bed, with his usual Guards outside the door of his bedchamber and his two sons in the bedrooms close by.


Unknown to the King, Lady Macbeth has drugged the Guards' wine during the Feast. So they fall fast asleep.

In the middle of the night, alone in the Castle Courtyard, Macbeth panics, seeing visions of daggers floating in front of his eyes:



"Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand?"

However, eventually, when a bell rings - a signal from his wife that the coast is clear - he heads for the King's bedchamber, real daggers in hand, to sneak past the sleeping Guards and stab the King to death.

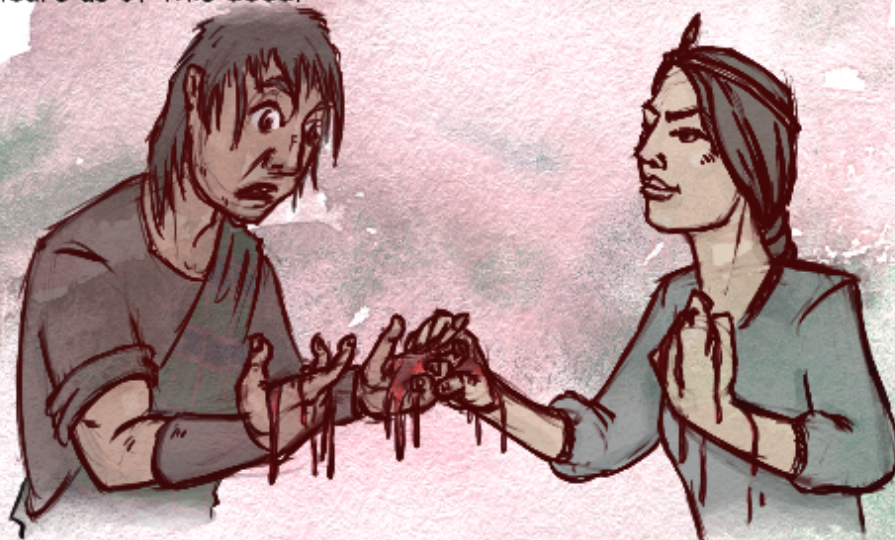


In the Courtyard, Lady Macbeth waits for Macbeth to come back and say he's committed the murder - she had tried to do it herself, creeping past the drugged Guards into Duncan's room, but couldn't because of how much the sleeping King had looked like her father.

Macbeth finally appears, murder done, daggers still in his hands, now all covered in blood.

A furious Lady Macbeth tells him he should have left the daggers with the Guards, to make them look guilty. She hurries off to place them there. When she comes back, she finds her husband shaking, obsessed by the blood on his hands. She tells him hers now look the same and they only have to wash them to get them clean:

"A little water clears us of this deed."



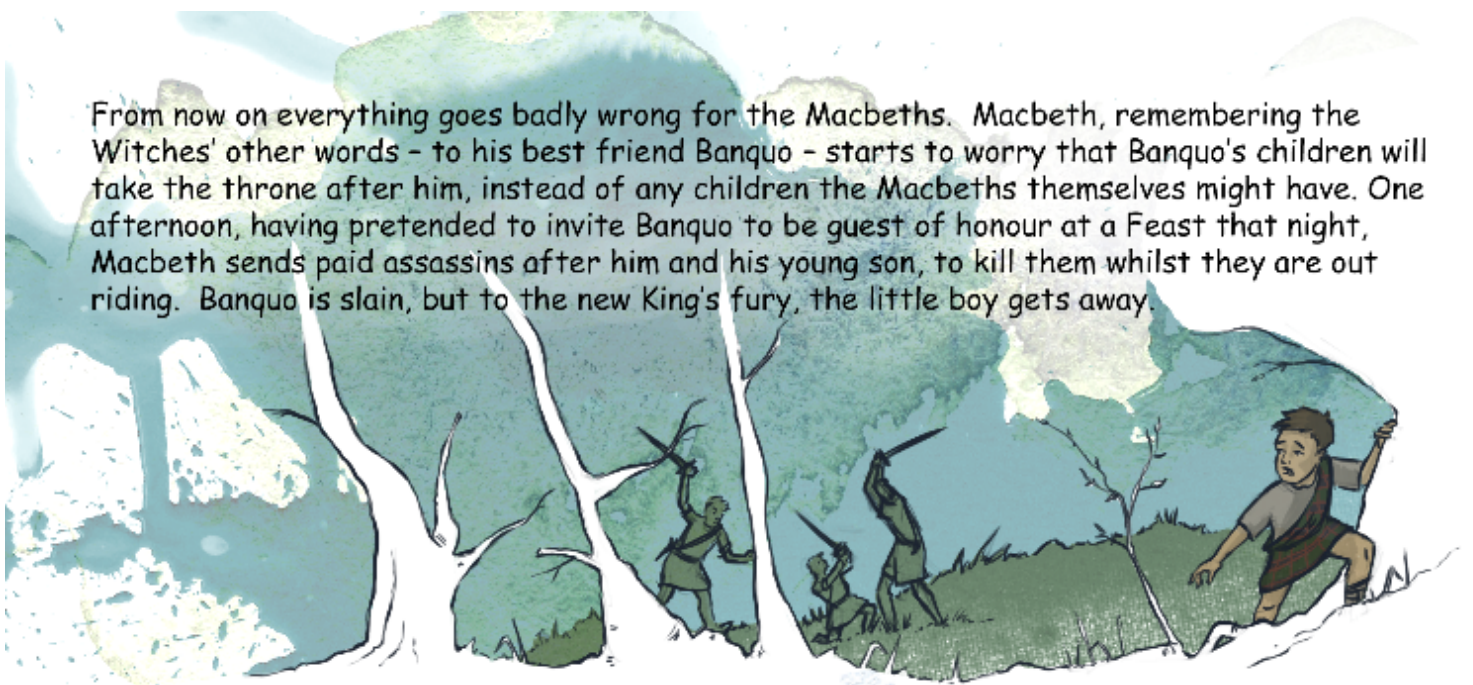
A knocking at the Castle gate sends the Macbeths rushing off to change into their night-clothes and pretend they've been in bed the whole time, as a hungover Gate-keeper - "Knock, knock. Who's there?" - lets in another Lord, Macduff, who's come to waken the King and accompany him on the next part of his journey.



Macduff finds the dead King and rouses the whole Court. Macbeth, in pretended grief and rage, rushes into the King's room and kills the Guards, saying he couldn't help himself when he saw the poor dead King. This makes everyone very suspicious. Lady Macbeth has to pretend to faint to stop everyone from staring at her husband. In the middle of the chaos, the two orphaned Princes, now afraid for their own lives, slip away, Malcolm to England, Donalbain to Ireland.

Macbeth now cleverly says because the Princes have 'run away', it proves that they - and not the Guards after all - committed their own father's murder. With no-one else in line, he has himself crowned King, and Lady Macbeth, Queen. The Witches' words about Macbeth have all come true.

From now on everything goes badly wrong for the Macbeths. Macbeth, remembering the Witches' other words - to his best friend Banquo - starts to worry that Banquo's children will take the throne after him, instead of any children the Macbeths themselves might have. One afternoon, having pretended to invite Banquo to be guest of honour at a Feast that night, Macbeth sends paid assassins after him and his young son, to kill them whilst they are out riding. Banquo is slain, but to the new King's fury, the little boy gets away.



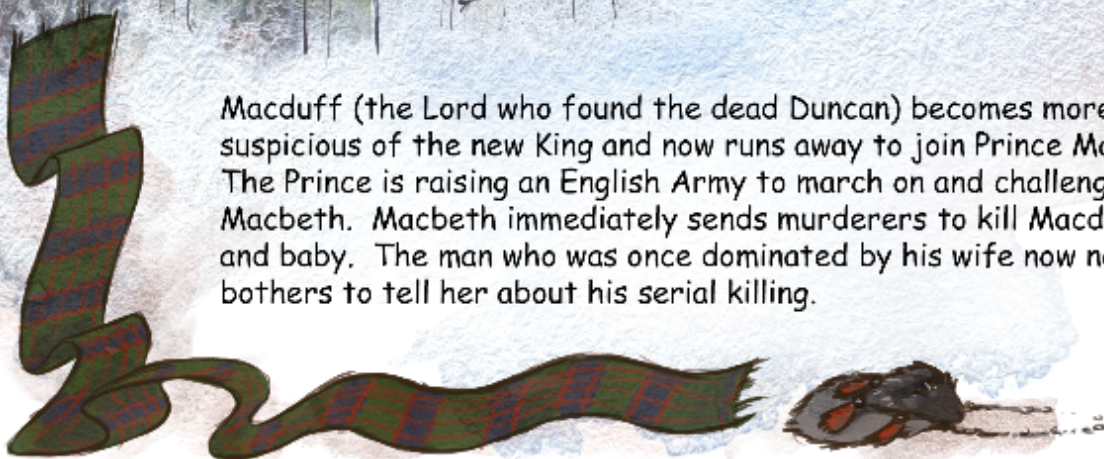
That night, at his Feast, Macbeth pretends to miss Banquo:

"I drink to the general joy of the whole table;
And to Banquo, whom we miss"

- but every time Macbeth says something like this, the ghost of Banquo appears before him, covered in stab wounds and blood, to sit in Macbeth's place at the table. Macbeth displays his terror in front of everyone. No-one else can see the ghost, and the gossip at Court grows.



Macduff (the Lord who found the dead Duncan) becomes more and more suspicious of the new King and now runs away to join Prince Malcolm in London. The Prince is raising an English Army to march on and challenge the false King Macbeth. Macbeth immediately sends murderers to kill Macduff's wife, son and baby. The man who was once dominated by his wife now no longer even bothers to tell her about his serial killing.



She in her turn is now sleep-walking at night, secretly watched by a horrified servant and doctor in hiding, as she tries to wash her hands clean of blood.

"Will these hands never be clean?" she cries.

Of course there is no blood there. She is being haunted in her sleep by the murder she has committed.



Afraid of the coming Army, Macbeth tracks the Witches down to their lair in a Cave and asks them to tell him, once again, his future. Using their cauldron, they make a spell:

"Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble..."

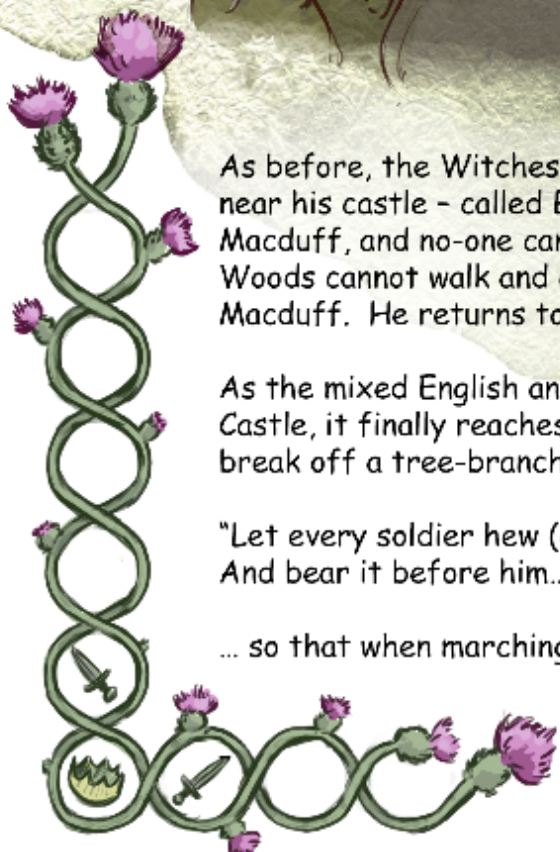


As before, the Witches answer in riddles. Macbeth will be safe until the wood near his castle - called Birnam Wood - 'walks'. He only needs to fear the Lord Macduff, and no-one can kill him who is 'born from a woman'. Macbeth takes heart. Woods cannot walk and everyone is born from a woman. And he can deal with Macduff. He returns to his Castle.

As the mixed English and Scottish Army makes the long march towards Macbeth's Castle, it finally reaches Birnam Wood, and Prince Malcolm orders his soldiers to break off a tree-branch:

"Let every soldier hew (cut) him down a bough
And bear it before him..."

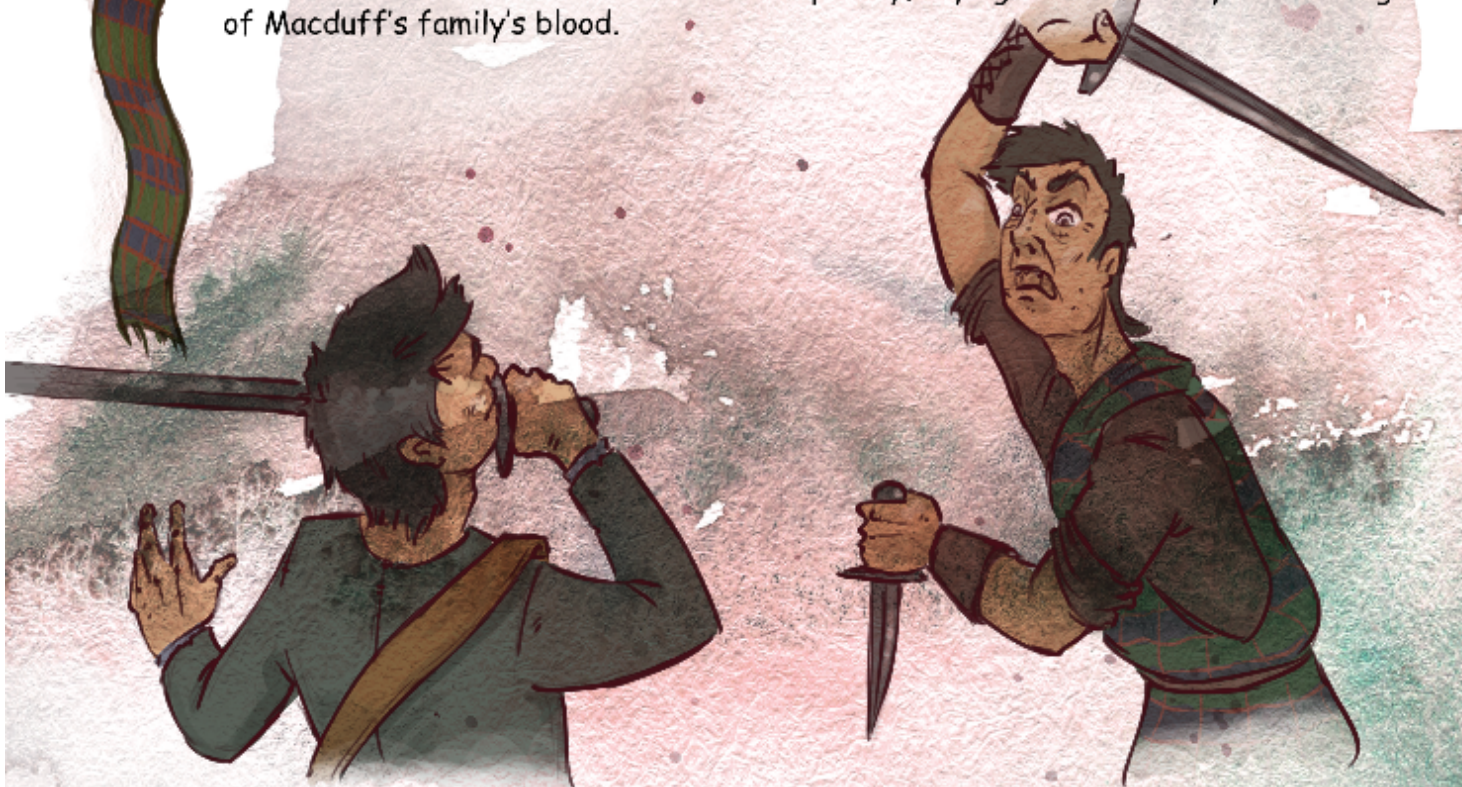
... so that when marching forwards, if they hold their branches in front of themselves, their numbers cannot be judged. To an amazed sentry, reporting to an enraged King Macbeth it looks like the wood is walking:



"As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I looked toward Birnam, and... methought,
The wood began to move."

At this point a servant runs in to tell Macbeth that the Queen is dead - presumably she has committed suicide. Strapping on his armour, he does not even bother to ask how she died.

The advancing Army smashes into the Castle. Macbeth fights brilliantly. When he comes face to face with Macduff - who wants to avenge the death of his wife and children - Macbeth tells Macduff to keep away, saying he has already shed enough of Macduff's family's blood.



But Macduff is bent on revenge. As they fight, Macbeth shouts that it is no use. Macduff can never beat him:

"I bear a charmed life, which must not yield (cannot give way)
To one of woman born."

Macduff replies that he was not 'born' to a woman in the proper meaning of the word. He explains he was "from his mother's womb untimely (early) ripped." In other words, he born by caesarean section - lifted out of his mother's womb. Macbeth is not broken by this, as you would expect, but fights bravely on - until at last, Macduff finally kills him, by cutting off his head.

And so Prince Malcom is crowned. The rightful King of Scotland sits on the throne once again, to be succeeded later by Banquo's descendants. The Witches' prophecy has been fulfilled.

