

**SCENE ELEVEN:      *At the Banquet that Night***

*MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX and OTHER GUESTS are seated around a table.*

**ROSS:**    *(To MACBETH)* Was Macduff not invited?

**MACBETH:**    He was, but is unable to attend. I feel that his loyalty to me is waning.

**ROSS:**    Oh, surely not.

*Suddenly, one of the MURDERERS appears at MACBETH's side. He has blood all over his face.*

**MURDERER:**    *(Quietly)* I need to speak with you.

**MACBETH:**    *(Horried)* What are you doing here! Are you mad?!

**MURDERER:**    I need to speak with you urgently.

**MACBETH:**    Outside! Away from here!

*MACBETH stands and leads the MURDERER outside. They stand alone together.*

*The GUESTS continue to mime being at the banquet.*

**MACBETH:**    *(Irritated)* Now, what is it you need to tell me?

**MURDERER:**    We tried to follow your instructions.

**MACBETH:**    Tried?

**MURDERER:**    The older man...

**MACBETH:**    ...Banquo...

**MURDERER:**    ...whoever. Anyway, he is dead. We surprised him and the attack was undefended.

**MACBETH:**    But his son, Fleance?

**MURDERER:**    Escaped. It became too dark to see properly, the torch fell and, in the blackness, he fled.

**MACBETH:** This is not good news! This is the worst outcome!

**MURDERER:** We will continue trying to find him for you.

**MACBETH:** Leave it! Just go.

*The MURDERER hesitates, not quite sure what to do.*

**MACBETH:** *(Shouting)* Go!

*The MURDERER exits. MACBETH returns to the banquet.*

*As he goes towards his chair he sees the ghost of BANQUO sitting there.*

*BANQUO'S ghost is invisible to everyone else around the table.*

*MACBETH stands rigidly staring at the ghost.*

**LENNOX:** Please be seated, your Highness.

**MACBETH:** Who has done this?

**ROSS:** Done what, Sire?

**MACBETH:** Is this some sort of joke? Who has done this to me?!

**ROSS:** *(To LENNOX)* What is affecting him? *(To MACBETH)* We don't understand what you mean.

**MACBETH:** *(Talking to the ghost of BANQUO)* Do not look at me in that way! I cannot fear you, you have no voice to speak against me! *(Shouting)* Banquo, stop looking at me I tell you! Vanish! Be gone!

*The OTHER GUESTS are concerned by this behaviour.*

**ROSS:** *(Rising)* We should leave, his Highness is obviously unwell.

**LADY MACBETH:** No, stay, gentlemen and enjoy yourselves. It is an illness which occasionally strikes your king and has done since his youth. Do not be concerned, I will help him. *(To MACBETH, gently leading him away)* Come with me.

*MACBETH and LADY MACBETH stand aside together. The other guests mime their reactions to each other.*

**MACBETH:** He is there!

**LADY MACBETH:** Who?

**MACBETH:** Banquo! He sits there like the devil's messenger.

**LADY MACBETH:** Banquo is not with us, he has not yet returned from his ride.

**MACBETH:** Nor will he! He is dead, killed at my command. That, in there, is his ghost come to haunt me!

**LADY MACBETH:** Stop this! It is just your imagination playing tricks. Calm yourself or your behaviour will be the downfall of both of us. Our guests cannot understand your actions and I cannot possibly explain this to them. Leave the room and I will ask them to go. The evening cannot continue.

*MACBETH exits.*

*LADY MACBETH returns to the party and mimes asking everyone to leave. They do so as the lights fade to blackout.*