

“Wherefore Art Thou, Lady MacBeth” by Margot McCleary

Audition extracts (these need not be learned for the auditions!):-

EXTRACT 1:

Juliet: “Bloody Norah! These flippin' shoes! Evenin' Mrs W.” *(She takes them off, standing on one leg at a time, massaging her toes. She pours herself a large drink in a mug, then downs it. Refills, half downs the second. Wanders to the other dressing table).* “I'll kill that bloody dresser - I told 'er size 6...An' if someone doesn't fix the sound before the next Act...Oh, hello, *(seeing Lady Macbeth)* I haven't seen you before. You on next door? Not at the Main Theatre?!” *(Juliet is impressed).*

Lady Macbeth: “That's right, we're running late tonight. Got technical problems - same as you. 'Macbeth', actually.” *(Lady Macbeth seizes the dagger, and 'acting' now for Juliet's benefit)*

“Why did you bring these daggers from the place? They must lie there. Go carry them, and smear the sleepy grooms with blood”.

Juliet: “Yuck! Ge' roff! Not a comedy then, this 'Macbeth'?... Is it Agatha Christie?”

Lady Macbeth: *(giving up; a little witheringly)*

“Not exac'ly. What's on your side, at the Studio? *(looking Juliet's costume up and down).* Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs?”

Juliet: *(indignantly)* 'Romeo and Juliet'... actually *(now 'acting')*.

“Deny thy father, and refuse thy name; Or if thou wilt not, be but my sworn love, and Juliet will no longer be a Capulet.”

(They have moved about, crossing and re-crossing, each 'acting' with the other. They drain their drinks.)

Lady Macbeth: “All good stuff if you like that sort of thing. Don't go much for Shakespeare me'self as a general rule - it pays the electric I s'pose.”

Juliet: “I only know 'Romeo and Juliet' if I'm honest. I think we did another one at school - one where this geezer was talkin' to a skull. There was gravediggers in it, an' a ghost, an' a girl what went mad. An' by the end of it everyone was dead... Depressing, I thought .. 'Nother drink?”

Lady Macbeth: “Yeah, all right ... 'Hamlet'.”

Juliet: *(doing the drinks)* “No thanks. I only smoke menthol.”

(Lady Macbeth casts Juliet a look. Juliet tops them both up and they drink).

Lady Macbeth: “How long is this interval anyway? I'm on in the next scene.”

Juliet: “Me too. It'll be a good half-hour while they sort out the technical. We'll hear the bell.”

Lady Macbeth: *(scrabbling through her make-up tin)* “Here, have you got a dark red lipstick in that tray? This side's all sickly pink an' an horrible orange colour.... An' the cold cream's disgusting... .” *(Lady Macbeth crosses to Juliet)*

Juliet: “Help yourself.”

EXTRACT 2

(Cleaner enters R, still with mop and bucket, clearly intending simply to cross R to L at the back, nods, smiles. Juliet and Lady Macbeth look at each other, make the only possible choice.)

Lady Macbeth: *(slowly and distinctly)* "Mrs. Walinowski, I'm just wondering, could you possibly help us? Yer see, we've done something rather daft, an' gone and mixed ourselves up, an' now we don't know which side is 'Macbeth' an' which is ... 'The Sound of Music'."

Juliet: "Romeo an' Juliet!!"

Lady Macbeth: "So we were hoping you might be able to go out front an' find out for us...."

(Cleaner nods and smiles completely without comprehension.)

Juliet: "Look, it's no good. Let me try. Mrs. W, you know 'Romeo and Juliet'?" *(Cleaner nods vigorously)* The Montagues against the Capulets? A plague on both your houses? *(Cleaner shakes her head, smiling happily, all attention, but mystified)* A pair of star-crossed lovers? Look, I'll show you *(Juliet stands or kneels on a chair as a makeshift balcony, and acts out the next lines....)* "Romeo... Romeo... Wherefore art thou Romeo?... That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet".

(Cleaner, striving to understand, has a flash of inspiration at the word 'rose'.)

Cleaner: "Ah!" *(Hands mop and bucket to Lady Macbeth, scurries over to dressing table, picks out one of the plastic daffodils and hands it hopefully to Juliet).*

Juliet: "Oh!" *(Frustrated and panicky, she flings the daffodil to the floor and stamps on it. Cleaner looks crestfallen.)*

Lady Macbeth: "Look, it's all right Mrs. W.... *(she hands mop and bucket to Juliet, retrieves the crushed daffodil and tucks it in to Cleaners waistband or lapel, sits her down. Cleaner is slightly mollified.)* What my friend meant to say ... I mean, what we need you to go an' ask is... I mean, can you find out for us whether 'Macbeth' is that way *(pointing)* or that way? *(Clearly, Cleaner does not follow.)* Look, you know 'Macbeth', don't you? *(Cleaner is blank)* Blasted heath, Banquo's ghost, When shall we three meet again? *(Cleaner still blank)* Oh for Heaven's sake!"

(Lady Macbeth scrabbles through the props at the back, producing a witch's hat, which she puts on the Cleaner. She makes Juliet hold up the bucket, then takes up the mop, using the handle to stir the makeshift cauldron.)

"Round about the cauldron go, in the poisoned entrails throw... Double, double, toil and trouble, fire bum and cauldron bubble!"

Cleaner: *(leaps up, terrific inspiration)* "Ah!" *(Grabs mop and bucket and exits L still wearing hat)*

Lady Macbeth: *(after a somewhat astonished pause)* "At bloody last!"

Juliet: "Well that seemed to do the trick."

Lady Macbeth: "Let's hope so."

Juliet: "Let's hope she gets a move on an' all ... else we really are up the creek without a paddle..."

(Cleaner, still wearing hat but without mop and bucket enters L beaming triumphantly and carrying two yellow pots of pot noodles, steaming fragrantly with a spoon stuck in each - clearly her own interpretation of Lady Macbeth's mime. Grinning broadly, she bestows one pot on each of the speechless actresses.)

Cleaner: "Hubble bubble, yes? *(exits R in triumph)*