

FOUL IS FAIR

*Curtain up on a plain,
simplistic wall, stretching
from stage left through to
stage right. In the centre of
the wall is an archway, behind
which is a strong light
shining downstage.*

*In front of the arch, on
either side, are two figures,
RICHARD and HARRY, castle
guards, standing perfectly
still, like statues,
silhouetted by the backlight.*

*Smoke creeps across the stage
creating a light, winter haze.*

*Suddenly, there is the sound (SFX)
of a door slamming, and hurried
footsteps across a stone floor. Two
figures enter from either side,
meeting in the centre of the
archway. They are also silhouetted,
and their outlines are strong.*

They are MACBETH and LADY MACBETH.

LADY MACBETH

When Duncan is asleep, his two chamberlains will I with wine
and wassail so convince that memory, the warder of the
brain, shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason a limbeck
only: when in swinish sleep their drenched natures lie as in
a death, what cannot you and I perform upon the unguarded
Duncan? What not put upon his spongy officers, who shall
bear the guilt of our great quell?

MACBETH

Will it not be received, when we have marked with blood
those sleepy two of his own chamber and used their very
daggers, that they have done 't?

LADY MACBETH

Who dares receive it other, as we shall make our griefs and
clamor roar upon his death?

MACBETH

I am settled, and bend up each corporal agent to this
terrible feat. Away, and mock the time with fairest show.

LADY MACBETH exits.

MACBETH

False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

MACBETH exits.

There is a silence as the back light starts to dim, and the the lights in front of the wall rise, complimented by flickering candlelight.

We can now see RICHARD and HARRY clearly.

Everything is still.

Until...

All of a sudden a massive, and almost painful sounding fart roars out (SFX), echoing through the castle corridors.

(Dialogue is improvised along these lines)

RICHARD

Oh do you have to? Come on mate, that's disgusting. What are you doing? Come on. Can you not do that here please? That's really, worryingly nasty. Sort yourself out.

HARRY

I'm sorry, I'm really sorry. I just needed to. It just came out. I'm nearly done I promise. There's not much left. There's a bit of follow through, it hurts a bit.

The fart slowly dies down and fades.

There is a silence once again, until another short burst of fart follows.

RICHARD

Right, seriously stop now.

HARRY

I'm done now, I promise. I'm done.

RICHARD

It's not healthy, doing that all the time.

HARRY

It's fine, I don't do it *all* the time.

(MORE)

HARRY (cont'd)
(He pauses)

Just a lot.

There is a pause.

RICHARD
That was pretty intense.

HARRY
Yeah I know, it still burns a bit.

RICHARD
Not you, idiot, not everything's about you-.

HARRY
Most things though.

RICHARD
I mean what they were talking about.

*As RICHARD talks, HARRY subtly puts
his fingers down the back of his
trousers before sniffing them.*

RICHARD
They were talking about killing the king, Harry. The king!
That's treason. We have to do something, we have to say
something to someone, they can't do this!

HARRY
Rich?

RICHARD
What?

HARRY
They've definitely gone haven't they?

RICHARD
(Realising and
lowering his volume)
Oh sh-. I didn't think to check. Go find out.

HARRY
Erm...no. You find out, why do I have to do it?

RICHARD
Because you want to know.

HARRY
I honestly don't care. I hate every second I'm here.

RICHARD
Fine, I'll do it, but I'm doing it for you.

HARRY
Yeah, sure you are mate(!)

*RICHARD walks towards the arch a
few paces but doesn't turn around.*

RICHARD
(Shouting)
Sir?
(Beat)
Sir?
(Beat)
Macbeth?
(Beat)
Macbeth your thaneship?

HARRY
(Laughs)
When has anyone ever said the word 'thanship'?

RICHARD
Shut up Harry. What am I supposed to say? What do you call a
thane?

HARRY
Definitely not that.

RICHARD
(Shouting again)
Mr Macbeth?
(Beat)
Macbeth sir?
(Talking normally)
Yeah no he's definitely gone.

HARRY
(Also talking
normally)
What *is* a thane anyway? Like a lord?

RICHARD
Like an earl I guess?

HARRY
What's an earl?

RICHARD
Like a...like a sir?

HARRY gets out a snack and starts to eat it whilst he talks.

HARRY

Oh, right. Can't stand them fancy folk. Walking around like they own the place.

RICHARD

Well, he *does*. It's literally his house.

HARRY

And why've they got to talk like that? All that "thee" and "thou art" and "doth thy wipeth thy arse with thy fifty pound note?". Tossers.

RICHARD

Just how rich people talk I think. It's a private schooling thing.

(Beat)

They said they were going to kill the king didn't they? You did hear that? That is what they said?

HARRY does a mini-act out under his breath, relaying the previous events.

HARRY

Er, yeah. Yeah they did.

RICHARD

Well that's...that's ridiculous. Isn't it? They won't really do that. I always knew they were a bit weird but never 'murdering people' weird, that's too weird.

HARRY

No, yeah, they're both mental. Everyone knows it. Macbeth once chopped a guys head off for calling him 'Big Mac', which is a shame cause it was quite funny.

RICHARD

Not King Duncan though! Everyone loves Duncan. He gave us all Christmas presents. He's a dead nice bloke.

HARRY

(Laughing to himself)

Definitely a dead bloke.

(Beat)

Too soon?

(Beat)

Too soon.

RICHARD isn't laughing.

There is a pause. They stand in silence.

RICHARD

That was a grave mistake.

HARRY looks excited that RICHARD's joining in and RICHARD starts to smirk, playing along.

HARRY

Nice! Nice, yeah, "grave", like the thing you're buried in, yeah, yeah. You *killed* that one.

RICHARD

(Smiling)

My delivery was a bit *lifeless*.

HARRY

Yes! Okay...erm...I'll try and take a *stab* at another one.

They both laugh like schoolboys who have just heard a fart, but eventually it starts to die down until it's quiet again.

RICHARD

Yeah, no it is sad though.

HARRY

Yeah.

RICHARD

(Beat, then he starts to leave)

Okay, I'll go tell someone, if you stay here you can-.

HARRY

Woah, woah, woah, what? We don't tell anyone. Ever.

RICHARD

(He stops)

What do you mean "we don't tell anyone", don't be stupid?

HARRY

Hey.

RICHARD

We have to-.

HARRY

Hey.

RICHARD

What?

HARRY

Don't call me stupid. It's very rude. It's very disrespectful.

RICHARD

I didn't say you're stupid I said don't-.

HARRY

Say sorry.

RICHARD

What?

HARRY

Say sorry.

RICHARD

Harry, I'm not gonna say sorry for-.

HARRY

Say...sorry.

RICHARD

Alright, I'm sorry.

HARRY

Apology accepted, please continue.

RICHARD

We have to tell *someone* Harry. They can't just-.

HARRY

No we don't. We just let nature take its course. Never interfere. It's the circle of life. You just have to let things happen.

RICHARD

He's going to kill the King! The King!

HARRY

Exactly, he *is* going to kill the king! Not a stable boy. Not a cleaner. He's not going round kicking sheep, he's going straight to punching a lion. That takes balls that. You think he's gonna have any problem kebab-ing us in our sleep? Don't think so.

RICHARD

But that's treason. He needs to be hanged, it's treachery.

HARRY

Look, Richard. Mr Richard-Man. Mr Look-at-me-I-have-morals-and-good-bone-strcuture, here's the thing right: Duncan's only got two sons, okay, who aren't old enough to tie their own shoelaces, so he's gonna stab them up and all, and when he does, who's gonna be next in line to the throne?

RICHARD

Macbeth I guess?

HARRY

Exactly, and are you, a nobody guard from Surrey, going to go round *Scotland* accusing the future King of *Scotland* of treason to the country of *Scotland*?

RICHARD

If I had to.

HARRY

No you wouldn't. Did you hear his Mrs? He might be a bloke who made a few mistakes but she's a straight up banana case.

(He taps the side of
his head)

She's a few pages short of a novel mate.

RICHARD

We could do it anonymously.

HARRY

What?

RICHARD

We could do it anonymously. He'd never have to know it was us, we just tell a few people and leave it to them to deal with.

HARRY

Can you even arrest a King for treason?

RICHARD

What do you mean?

HARRY

What would you say treason is? If I looked up 'treason' in the dictionary, what would it say?

RICHARD

Well, it's like being disloyal to the King isn't it? Doing stuff to hurt him or overthrow him or anything like that.

HARRY

Yeah, so, I was just thinking, can a King do that? If he becomes the King, can a King be arrested for being disloyal

(MORE)

HARRY (cont'd)
to the previous King if that King is therefore the current King?

(Beat)
Can a King be arrested at all? If the King makes the laws and does the arresting.

RICHARD
But he did plot to kill the current King. Objectively. That's a fact, it did happen, and, more than that, he will have actually done it. So that is treason.

HARRY
It *sounds* right, but it doesn't *feel* right.

RICHARD
What was it Lady M said?

HARRY
When?

RICHARD
Something about "his spongy officers" something something "bear the guilt of our great quell".

HARRY
I think it means she's going to make it look like his servants did it? So that nobody finds out it was them?

RICHARD
So they get away with it? Completely scot free?

HARRY
Errrrrrrm...yeah, yeah it sounds like that.

RICHARD
Well that sucks.

HARRY
I keep telling you! She's mental!

RICHARD
So we just sit here and let it happen? Knowing that it's all going on in there? And we do nothing?

HARRY
Well I don't know about you but I finish my shift in
(He licks his finger
and holds it up to
the wind)
3 hours, so after that it's not really my problem.

RICHARD

You're a bad person. You are. I don't know how you can be so casual, this a toxic workplace environment. Why don't we go back to England, get better jobs?

HARRY

Better than working in a royal household? I don't know, that seems pretty up there.

RICHARD

Not *better* necessarily. Just safer. Bit more job security.

HARRY

Is that something we want?

RICHARD

It's something *I* want. I love feeling safe. I thought you hated this job anyway?

HARRY

I do. But I can't be bothered to actually do anything about it. I was just gonna complain about stuff until I retired at 30 and then died at 42, as is average.

RICHARD

Why?

=HARRY

(Shrugs)

Easy.

RICHARD

Okay, listen. Let's leave a note or something. "M and Lady M plotting to kill King", and then we'll leave. Somebody will find it and we'll be long gone, back in England, working as...shoemakers, and we won't need to be involved. What do you think of that?

HARRY

Shoemakers? I'm not an elf.

RICHARD

Not that part, that part doesn't matter. What do you think of the plan.

HARRY

Doesn't work though does it?

RICHARD

Why?

HARRY

Well: A) Nobody is going to take that as proof. There's no witnesses, no evidence. They don't even know who's written it and 2) literally nobody who matters knows we exist. Nobody'll notice whether we're here or not.

RICHARD

Look Harry, listen, Duncan is the greatest King that Scotland has ever had. A figurehead of order and civility.

(He gazes into the
distance)

His language is formal. It flows elegantly, and his speeches are full of grace and graciousness. He represents change and growth.

There is a silence.

HARRY

Oh my God.

RICHARD

What?

HARRY

You fancy him.

RICHARD

Oh shut up, no I don't.

HARRY

Yes you do. You fancy Duncan.

RICHARD

I do not fancy Duncan. I just-.

HARRY

Yes you do.

RICHARD

No I don't.

HARRY

You do.

RICHARD

I don't.

HARRY

"He represents change and growth".

RICHARD

He does!

HARRY

There's only one place I'm seeing any growth.

He nods at RICHARD's trousers.

RICHARD

Grow up.

HARRY

It's fine if you love him, it's a free country. I'm sure you'll make a wonderful Queen one day.

RICHARD

I do not love him.

HARRY

Oh I see, just a casual thing is it? No emotional attachment?

(He winks)

Say no more.

RICHARD

All I'm saying is I'm not going to sit here and do nothing whilst he's murdered in his bed. Macbeth is clearly a mentally troubled man amongst other things. If he becomes King, God knows what'll happen. He'll kill everyone. I'm trying to help.

HARRY

Maybe he's not *that* bad.

RICHARD

How can he *not* be that bad?

HARRY

I don't know. He said hi to me the other day which was nice.

RICHARD

No he didn't.

HARRY

He did.

RICHARD

He didn't.

HARRY

He did! Like this

(He does a nod and imitates Macbeth)

"Alright?"

RICHARD
What was that?

HARRY
One of these.
(He nods and imitates again)
"Alright?"
(Normal)
Like that you know.

RICHARD
That's not saying hello.

HARRY
Course it is.

RICHARD
It isn't. This?
(He nods and imitates)
"Alright?"

HARRY
No, this.
(He repeats)
"Alright?"

RICHARD
Like this?
(He repeats)
"Alright?"

HARRY
No, like this.
(He repeats)
"Alright?"

RICHARD
Like this?
(He repeats)
"Alright?"

HARRY
No, like this.
(He repeats)
"Alright?"
(Normal)
You know. Cool. Like a cool guy. Not like how you're doing it, you're ruining it.

RICHARD
Why does that mean anything?

HARRY

Look, I've worked here for four years right? And no one pays me any attention. I might as well be a chair. Or a shelf. I haven't been offered a promotion or anything, it's just nice to get a little bit of recognition from someone that's all.

RICHARD

You might get promoted for *this*. We would be saving the King's life. What's better than that? You'd definitely get moved up to supervisor.

HARRY

Nobody would know it was us. Somebody else would take credit for it. Probably Brandon. Dick.

RICHARD

We sign the note then. We let people know it was us.

HARRY

Then if the Macbeth's find it we're dead, aren't we?

RICHARD

Maybe we use code names.

HARRY

This is an awful idea, all of your ideas end up with us being dead.

RICHARD

No look, okay.

(He gets out a paper
and pen)

"Dear sir or madam".

HARRY

(To himself)

Oh God no, please don't let him do this.

RICHARD

(He writes)

"We have reason to believe that Thane Macbeth, and his wife, are plotting to kill King Duncan. Hope this helps you, Richard and Harry, guards on East Tower 3."

HARRY

You are joking right?

RICHARD

What's wrong with that?

HARRY

What isn't wrong with that? It doesn't say when they're going to do it or where or how or how we know about it or anything. It's completely useless to literally everybody.

RICHARD

Okay, okay, "P.S, in the bedroom with a knife."

HARRY

It's not cluedo!

RICHARD

Fine you do it!

*He hands the paper and pen to
HARRY.*

HARRY

Okay let me think. Okay.
(He pretends to
write.)
How do you spell "waste of time"?

RICHARD

(Beat)

Erm 'W', 'A'--.

HARRY

I don't care Richard! I don't care! It's not going to work!

RICHARD

Why? Why aren't you taking this seriously?

HARRY

Because none of it matters. Eventually there's going to be a new King whatever happens, regardless, okay? And I'd like to get off on a good foot with whoever it happens to be, psycho or no psycho. I don't care if the next King is a dog with three legs. If I'm getting paid, I'm getting paid. So the way I see it, the less we stick our noses into things, the better.

RICHARD

That's ridiculous. We have the chance to stop a murder, we can--.

HARRY

No we don't! There's nothing we can do!

RICHARD

Fine! If that's how you feel then fine. I've had enough of this. You stay here and do nothing. I'll go and fix
(MORE)

RICHARD (cont'd)
everything and you can stay here, being lazy and moody, as usual.

HARRY
Okay.

RICHARD
Fine.

HARRY
Alright.

RICHARD
Cool.

HARRY
Sorted then.

RICHARD
Great.

HARRY
Good.

RICHARD
Good.

*There is an awkward silence and
they don't talk to each other.*

HARRY
I thought you were going.

RICHARD
I am.

HARRY
Doesn't look like you are though.

RICHARD
I am.

HARRY
You're not.

RICHARD
I'll go when I want to go.

HARRY
I thought you wanted to go now?

RICHARD
I'm busy!

HARRY
Are you? Doing what?

RICHARD
Thinking.

HARRY
Really? That doesn't sound like you.

RICHARD
Ha ha, funny(!)

HARRY
I'm just messing, what you thinking about?

RICHARD
It doesn't matter.

HARRY
What are you thinking about?

RICHARD
Nothing.

HARRY
Go on.

*RICHARD considers whether to say
anything or not for a few moments.*

He sits down before talking.

RICHARD
I just feel like I should be doing something. I don't feel right knowing that that's going to happen and I'm ignoring it.

HARRY
Well no, 'course you don't, cause you're a good bloke.

RICHARD
Clearly not or I'd be doing something about it already. I'd be stopping to.

HARRY
It doesn't change who you are though does it? It doesn't automatically make you a horrible person. It's just one thing, one time.

RICHARD
But how many "just one thing"s does it take? How many chances do I get to mess up, or ignore things before I'm not a good person anymore?

HARRY

I think you'll always be a good person mate, that's not really a problem. As long as you don't get as low as me you're fine. That's when you know you're screwed.

RICHARD

You're a good person.

HARRY

Yeah, sure(!)

RICHARD

No you are. You do good things...sometimes.

HARRY

Doing good things doesn't make you a good person necessarily.

RICHARD

Doing *bad* things doesn't make you a *bad* person necessarily.

HARRY

Fair point.

There is a pause and a quiet.

HARRY

You think I'm a good person?

RICHARD

Yeah.

HARRY

Really?

RICHARD

Yeah, or at very least you have the *potential* to be. You're not a *bad* person definitely.

There is another pause.

HARRY

You know what?

RICHARD

What?

HARRY

Maybe it's worth a try.

RICHARD

What is?

HARRY

Stopping this murder business.

RICHARD

I thought you said it was a waste of time?

HARRY

Well it is, and I'll probably get stabbed in the face for it but, you're right, it's the right thing to do.

RICHARD

Seriously though, what if you do get killed for it? Is it worth that?

HARRY

Yeah, it's a good story too. I'll be up in heaven like this.

*He acts out having a sword in his
face and waving to people, smiling.
This makes RICHARD laugh and cheers
him up a bit.*

HARRY

Look, it'll probably turn out that nothing happens and we're stuck in the same situation. No worse off than we are now. No better off, but no worse off.

RICHARD

It *is* the right thing to do isn't it?

HARRY

Don't ask me mate. What I think isn't worth a horse's bollocks, do you think it's the right thing to do?

RICHARD

(He thinks)

Yeah

They smile at each other.

HARRY

Right, let's go tell someone then.

They both stand up.

HARRY

Maybe there's still time.

RICHARD

Harry.

HARRY

Uh huh?

RICHARD

We stick to this yeah? All the way? No matter what?

HARRY

If that's what you think is right mate.

RICHARD

Thanks for this, it means a lot.

HARRY

No, thank you.

Suddenly a bell rings in the distance (SFX), and then another, and then another.

A voice comes from offstage.

VOICE (O.S)

The King is dead! The King has been killed!

HARRY and RICHARD look at each other, pause, and then shake hands.

HARRY

Well it's been nice knowing you.

RICHARD

Yeah you too mate, have a good life.

HARRY

Enjoy yourself.

They both separate, exiting the stage in opposite directions.

CURTAIN DOWN