

**THE ACCIDENTAL ADJUDICATOR**

**by**

**Tony Breeze**

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## THE ACCIDENTAL ADJUDICATOR

Performances or readings of this play may not legally take place before an audience without a licence obtainable on application to:

Ventus Books,  
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A fee will be charged for this licence which must be paid prior to the first performance otherwise the licence is automatically cancelled and the performance becomes illegal.

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### CAST

- Director of play .....May be male or female
- Front of House .....Older person with hearing difficulties
- Stagehands .....As many as normally available (may double)
- Adjudicator .....Alistair McTavish, alcoholic ex-drama lecturer who arrives and is mistakenly locked in a wine store throughout the play
- Taxi Driver.....Working class man who's never been to a play performance in his life and is very blunt but is mistakenly believed to be the adjudicator
- Makeup person .....Non-speaking but can ad lib & double
- Costume person .....As above (may double as below)

### MACBETH CAST

- 1<sup>st</sup> Witch.....
- 2nd Witch .....
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Witch .....
- Duncan .....
- Malcolm .....
- Macbeth .....
- Lady Macbeth .....
- Banquo (& his ghost) .....
- Porter .....
- Macduff .....
- Sergeant .....
- Lennox .....
- Ross .....

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Angus .....

(We see last minute preparations in a village hall for the very amateur local drama group's opening night of "Macbeth." There is a hubbub of activity and a cacophony of ad libbing on and around the stage as everyone prepares for the arrival of the adjudicator who is to judge the group's entry for "play of the year competition." People are busy everywhere, speeches are being rehearsed and there is shouting between the stagehands who are fixing the scenery; actors are practising fighting with wooden swords; make-up women chase them round trying to put last minute finishes to their makeup; sound men are testing the loudspeakers, costume women chase other actors doing last minute stitching of hems whilst the actors are still rehearsing their moves; the front of house people are arranging the seating and a woman with a tea trolley walks about in front of the stage asking repeatedly if anyone would like a cup of tea.)

(At one side of the stage is a store cupboard with an open door and a sign saying, "Drama Store - Keep Out!")

(In front of the stage there is a small table and chair with a few seats either side for the audience member members. The table has a lamp on it for the convenience of the adjudicator)

Director (Comes on) Can I have your attention!

(He is ignored by everyone who carries on with what they were doing)

Director Everyone ... Can you just stop what you're doing!

(Again he is ignored)

Please?

Director (reaches for a whistle in his pocket and blows it ferociously at which signal they eventually stop to turn and listen)

Director Thank you ... I want you all to gather round for a minute (he stands where he can see them all) ... everyone ... you as well ... do I have your attention? (Some are still gossiping) ... that means you as well ... thank you

Now as you know tonight is a very special night for us ... we've entered this evening's performance into the "County Play of the Year Competition" and it's the first time that we've ever done Shakespeare.

Actress I hate "Mac" –

Actress Don't say it!

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Actress I hate “The Scottish Play” – why couldn’t we have done a comedy?

Actor It is a comedy the way you do it.

Actress (Thumping them) Cheek!

Director I need to remind you about a few things ... the adjudicator will be here very shortly and I needn’t tell you that what he says will determine how we do against the other groups.

Actor Is it the nasty woman that came last year?

Director No its not her ... this time it’s a man called Alistair McTavish ... he’s a retired drama teacher and there’s one or two things you need to know about him ... I’ve heard on the grapevine that he’s supposed to be a little odd in his mannerisms and can sometimes appear a little blunt. They say he calls a spade a spade - but he’s very experienced in his field and I don’t have to remind you that we have to do as much as we can to make him feel at home ... what he says in his report decides whether we win or lose and whether we’re amongst the awards at the end of year dinner so I don’t want anybody to say or do anything that might upset him ... whatever he says is gospel and we don’t disagree with him ... is that understood?

FOH (Confused) Where do want me to put his table?

Director How many times do I have to tell you ... in the middle ... have you got the light for him?

FOH I think so

Director You think so? Is it working?

FOH Sort of

Director What do you mean, “sort of?”

FOH We couldn’t find the little bulbs so it’s a bit on the bright side

Director To late to worry about details ... it’ll have to do

Stagehand (Two come in carrying crates of alcohol) What do you want us to do with this?

Director What is it?

Stagehand The booze for the Christmas party

Director Put it into the store

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- Stagehand All of it?
- Director All of it ... and make sure the door is locked ...  
(They carry in the booze but forget to lock the door after them)
- Director Which reminds me there is one other thing I need to tell you about the adjudicator ... the rumour is that after the recent breakdown of his marriage he's supposed to have a bit of a drink problem and might actually be a recovering alcoholic so whatever you do, don't give him any booze until after the show or we might have a problem
- Actor What are we doing about feedback?
- Director We've asked for verbal feedback after the performance as well as a written report so at the end of the play don't all go running off to the pub like you normally do - I want you to come back on the stage for the adjudication ... is that clear?  
(They all reluctantly agree)
- Actress Did you sort out the problem with the jobs?
- Director Good point ... most of you know that we've had problems with youths messing about outside causing a nuisance ... I've had a word with the local constabulary so hopefully we won't have a repeat of the trouble that we had last time.  
  
If there are any disturbances just try and ignore them, keep your minds on what you're doing and just keep going - leave us to sort out the nuisances.
- Actress Are you going to tell the adjudicator about the job problem?
- Director I'll have a word with him ... we have to try and humour him so remember that whatever happens, "The adjudicator is always right" ... what is he?
- All "The adjudicator is always right"
- Director (Cupping his ear) I can't hear you
- All (Louder) "The adjudicator is always right"
- Director In a few minutes we'll let the audience in, so let's make this a night to remember and as they say in the trade "break a leg!"  
  
(The commotion recommences)  
  
Can we have these curtains closed!

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(The curtains close and open then close again)

(The director goes off)

(After a while the adjudicator arrives, takes a look around and approaches the most dodderly of the front of house team)

Adjudicator Excuse me ... (proffers a hand) Alistair McTavish

FOH (Who's deaf) Who?

Adjudicator McTavish ... I believe you're expecting me

FOH Are we? I don't know, nobody tells me anything ... you'd better wait in here for a minute ... I'll try and find the Director

(Shows him into the drama store and leaves the door open while she goes off in one direction)

(The director comes on from the other direction doing his last-minute checking and sees that the Drama Store door has been left open so he slams it shut)

Director For God's sake! Have I got to do everything myself?

(Looks around to see if all is ready)

(Towards the front of house woman) Right then, Sheila, let them in!

(One or two audience members come and take their seats near the adjudicator's table then a rough looking man in donkey jacket and cap comes in clutching a clipboard in one hand and carrying a plastic shopping bag in the other This is the taxi driver who brought the adjudicator to the theatre. He looks lost. He's never been to a play performance in his life, knows nothing about theatre and approaches the deaf FOH)

Taxi Excuse me ... (proffering the clipboard) ... that chap left this in my motor

FOH Eh?

Taxi The adjudicator chap

FOH Adjudicator? (Fawning and shaking his hand) You're him, are you? Very nice to meet you ... come this way

(She takes him to the central table with the light)

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- FOH (Indicating table and chair) This is for you ... make yourself at home
- Taxi Eh?
- FOH We've got everything ready for you ... the light and everything ... there's some water in the jug if you want it so you just sit yourself down there and make yourself comfortable - I'll go and get you a cup of tea
- Taxi No, love, you don't understand
- FOH I understand perfectly ... you just sit yourself down there and if there's anything you need, anything at all, just left me know
- Taxi Er thanks... I could do with a break
- (Acknowledges people at his side) Evening ... turned out nice again.  
(To couple near him) What's going off?
- Audience member The play of course
- Taxi A play is it? What kind of play? A comedy? I like a good comedy
- Audience member Very droll ... it's the Scottish play
- Taxi (Not understanding) Scottish? Right ... funny accents the Scots ... I 'ave trouble understanding them ... the traffic was terrible coming here ... you wouldn't credit it
- (Enter Director, the director, to begin his creeping. He looks a little worried when he sees the appearance of the taxi driver but carries on regardless)
- Director (Hand extended) Good evening - I'm so pleased you made it ... allow me to introduce myself - Gavin Forester - I'm the director of tonight's piece ....are they looking after you?
- Taxi Aye ... grand ...
- Director Good, good ... I decided to tell the cast you were coming this evening so they might be a little nervous
- Taxi You didn't have to bother for me
- Director This is our first attempt at a Shakespeare ... normally the group does farces or comedies and such like but when I took over I thought, "Lets try and stretch them a little bit" ... it's something of theatrical backwater here ... you know what I mean, I'm sure You found us all right?



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Taxi            Oh aye – I've got the satnav