

The Throne Will Cost You Everything in San Juan Hills' "Macbeth"  
written by Baran Ansari, a sophomore at University High School

How far will someone go when a crown is not traded for castles, but for coal? In this reimagined Macbeth, ambition rises amid the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, where striking West Virginian miners confront a corporate force as ruthless as any medieval throne. San Juan Hills' production transforms Shakespeare's tragedy into a haunting struggle shaped by mine wars, industrial greed, and the steep cost paid deep underground.

With a cool, persuasive intensity, Shylan Fernandez shapes Lady Macbeth's ambition into a simmering force beneath every measured glance. Her red skirt and accessories, modelled flawlessly by the costume team, effectively symbolize spreading corruption, visually echoing the blood she can never quite wash away, a chilling omen of the violence to come. Fernandez's poised manipulation turns intimate, before fracturing into torment, revealing the devastating cost of power.

With brooding steadiness, Liam Herd's Macbeth mirrors Lady Macbeth's ambition, moving in tense unison as the couple first plots their ascent. His measured voice and composed stillness suggest a man bound to her will, their partnership tightening like a shared secret. As guilt intrudes, Herd's stance hardens and his delivery turns edged, revealing the growing fracture between them. Later, isolation eclipses connection, his ambition left to burn alone.

Madeline Lai's Hecate scolds the witches for meddling with Macbeth, setting their malevolent influence in motion. The coven emerges from shadow, moving with contorted physicality: hunched and bent, their presence unsettling. Crafted by the hair and makeup team, their nightmarish decay is accentuated by cyan and and gray stippling, liquid latex burns, and cracks, enhancing their eerie, wraith-ly haunting look.

The lighting design team uses harshly angled lights to intensify the actors' actions, creating a dynamic look on stage. Purple hues represent the internal struggles of the characters, while cyan casts a mystical glow, highlighting the witches' magic. With over 200 cues, the team expertly manipulates various lighting instruments to create dark, shadowed effects.

The audio design team focuses on atmosphere, blending uncanny yet natural soundscapes to enhance the play's cryptic theme. Subtle, integrated sounds and ambient effects create a sense of realism, drawing the audience into the unsettling world of the characters.

A brutal exploration of ambition's toll, San Juan Hill's Macbeth lingers long after the curtain falls, leaving a trail of blood and broken dreams.