

Review: Denzel Washington gives a haunting performance in 'The Tragedy of Macbeth'



CHENNAI: “The Tragedy of Macbeth” — directed by Joel Coen, who after 18 films has gone solo without his brother Ethan — takes us to the old world cinematic charm of monochrome frames in 1.19:1 aspect ratio, which was popular the end of the silent era with its nearly perfect square frames.

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One of the most distressing tragedies that Shakespeare penned, Coen's version of Macbeth is the latest in a long line of adaptations. But the latest one on Apple TV+ sticks to Shakespearean original, though Coen, who also wrote the screenplay, has

trimmed it to a comfortable 103 minutes that has every chance of appealing to even those who may not be among the Bard's most ardent admirers.



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The brilliant conceptualization — with starkly powerful photography by Bruno Delbonnel and scintillating performances by its leads, Denzel Washington as Macbeth and Frances McDormand as Lady Macbeth — takes the film visually and narratively to an exhilarating high. Mostly shot indoors, the sparse frames are richly engrossing and tell us a classic story that many of us will be familiar with. The imaginative camera placements create an overall experience that is as appealing as it is disturbing and destructive.



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Unfolding sometimes against white foggy landscapes with the frightening cawing of black birds, we see the movie open with Macbeth returning victorious from war with Ireland and Norway and meeting a witch who prophesies that he will become the Thane of Cawdor and later the King of Scotland, thus planting a foreboding thought in his head. But when King Duncan (Brendan Gleeson) proclaims that his son, Malcolm (Harry Melling), will succeed him on the throne, we see a faint but unmistakable trace of disappointment, pain and anger in Macbeth, portrayed with haunting intensity. Lady Macbeth nudges him to murder the king, and as he walks along a never-ending corridor with a sword beckoning him, we know that a tragedy will eventually be their undoing.

McDormand, while arresting as a woman who drives her husband toward doom and death, was, I felt, not as intense as she was in "Fargo" or "Three Billboards Outside

Ebbing, Missouri.”
