

Macbeth by Jo Nesbo

3 stars

Nesbo-esque re-working of Shakespeare's classic

In June 2016, Hogarth Press published the first of their sponsored re-workings of Shakespeare's classics – 'The Gap of Time' by Jeanette Winterson, based on 'A Winter's Tale'. Margaret Atwood then produced 'Hag-Seed' based on 'The Tempest'. This is Jo Nesbo's contribution to this project.

All the usual suspects are present, but with a difference! Macbeth is in charge of the SWAT team and has ideas above his station, egged on by his girlfriend, former hooker now running the local casino, Lady! Unfortunately, Macbeth is hooked on drugs and these are readily supplied by the evil Hecate and his cronies (the witches). In his drug-fuelled state and with Lady bolstering his ego, he embarks upon a bloodbath which is the staple diet of the plot of 'Macbeth'.

I must confess that I had a hard time placing the action in Scotland. Indeed, with the book opening with a strike against the local biker gang The Norse Riders, it felt as though it was set in Norway.

This is Nesbo's typical hard-hitting writing, not for the squeamish! But I am not sure that the concept truly works. Perhaps Shakespeare is just not re-writable.

Sméagol

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book