



Shakespeare's Vocabulary

Exercise 1

In your notebook, write the word from the WORD BANK below that best completes each sentence:

- Many vaccines destroy _____ diseases.
- Only reckless hockey players would _____ their helmets during a game.
- After six long, depressing weeks in the hospital, it felt good to shake off my _____ and go back to school with my friends.
- The most _____ medical treatment may often prove to be the best.
- No matter how much padding we place under the harness, it still _____ the horse when the sledge is overloaded.

chafes doff dolour pernicious potent

Exercise 2

Match the word in the left-hand column to the definition in the right-hand column that is closest in meaning. Write the answers in your notebook.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. homely | a. practice; claim to be |
| 2. avaricious | b. renounce |
| 3. conjure | c. unending |
| 4. profess | d. honesty |
| 5. staunchless | e. plain |
| 6. detraction | f. summon |
| 7. abjure | g. covetous |
| 8. verity | h. restraint |
| 9. bounty | i. slander |
| 10. temperance | j. generosity |



Shakespeare's Vocabulary

Exercise 1

1. pernicious 2. doff 3. dolour 4. potent 5. chafes

Exercise 2

1. e 2. g 3. f 4. a 5. c 6. i 7. b 8. d 9. j 10. h

Act v, Scene 1

Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle.

[Enter a DOCTOR OF PHYSIC and a WAITING-GENTLEWOMAN*]

DOCTOR: I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

GENTLEWOMAN: Since his majesty went into the field,* I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-gown* upon her, unlock her closet,* take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

5

DOCTOR: A great perturbation* in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching!*

In this slumbry agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances,* what, at any time, have you heard her say?

10

GENTLEWOMAN: That, sir, which I will not report after her.

DOCTOR: You may to me: and 'tis most meet* you should.

GENTLEWOMAN: Neither to you nor any one; having no witness to confirm my speech.

15

[Enter LADY MACBETH, with a taper*]

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise*;
and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.*

DOCTOR: How came she by that light?

GENTLEWOMAN: Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

20

DOCTOR: You see, her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN: Ay, but their sense* is shut.

helpful definitions

waiting-gentlewoman — a woman of high birth, a lady-in-waiting who serves the queen.

field — here, battlefield.

night-gown — here, a dressing gown; a robe.

closet — here, a chest.

perturbation — disturbance.

effects of watching — actions performed when one is awake.

actual performances — deeds; actions.

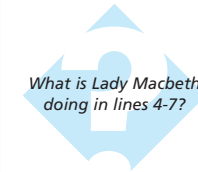
meet — appropriate.

taper — a candle.

guise — custom.

close — hidden.

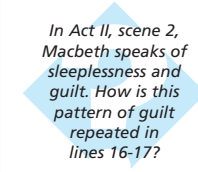
sense — the ability to see.



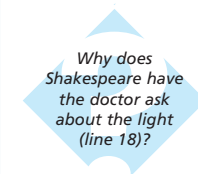
What is Lady Macbeth doing in lines 4-7?



What is the gentlewoman reluctant to report? Why?



In Act II, scene 2, Macbeth speaks of sleeplessness and guilt. How is this pattern of guilt repeated in lines 16-17?



Why does Shakespeare have the doctor ask about the light (line 18)?

CHECKQUIZ

- What gesture does Lady Macbeth make in her sleep? **A.** She rubs her hands together, as if washing them.
- How does Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane? **A.** The soldiers hew down boughs of the trees and carry them as camouflage.
- What happens to Macbeth's soldiers? **A.** They desert him.
- Who was not technically "born of woman"? **A.** Macduff.
- How does Macbeth die? **A.** He is killed offstage by Macduff, who cuts off his head and brings it onstage to show Malcolm.
- Who becomes king after Macbeth's death? **A.** Malcolm becomes king of Scotland.



What is Lady Macbeth doing in lines 4-7?

A. She is sleepwalking.



What is the gentlewoman reluctant to report? Why?

A. She is unwilling to report what Lady Macbeth says during her sleepwalking episodes because she has no witnesses to what she has heard. We can assume that Lady Macbeth speaks of the crimes to which she has been a party.



In Act II, scene 2, Macbeth speaks of sleeplessness and guilt. How is this pattern of guilt repeated in lines 16-17?

A. Macbeth says that he has murdered sleep after his murder of Duncan, implying that from now on, sleeplessness will be his lot due to his guilt. Here, Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking is a clear indication of a very guilty conscience.



Why does Shakespeare have the doctor ask about the light (line 18)?

A. To enable the audience to recognize the severity of Lady Macbeth's emotional disturbance. As a result of her guilty conscience, she is no longer able to remain in the dark, even while sleeping.

Scene Summary: Scene 1

Observed by a Gentlewoman and a Doctor, Lady Macbeth walks and talks in her sleep. Based on her actions and her speech, the onlookers suspect her guilt, but they will not admit to their suspicions.

Why is it ironic that Lady Macbeth is spied upon while she is revealing her innermost thoughts?

A. It was Lady Macbeth who had taught Macbeth how to hide his feelings and “look like the innocent flower” (1.5.64), a feat she is incapable of performing in her sleep!

What does Lady Macbeth seem to be counting?

A. She seems to be counting the tolling of the bells that was the prearranged signal for Duncan’s murder.

What is paradoxical about Lady Macbeth’s comments in lines 32-35?

A. Her first comments indicate her original aggressive approach to Macbeth; the second comment is completely unexpected. In a sudden reversal of character, she is horrified by the bloodiness of the crime and by its visible manifestations.

Who is the wife of the thane of Fife (line 36)?

A. Lady Macduff.

To what might Lady Macbeth be referring when she says, “you mar all with this starting” (line 38)?

A. She is probably referring to Act 3, Scene 4, when Macbeth “sees” the ghost of Banquo.

What does Lady Macbeth think is on her hands?

A. The blood of all those she and Macbeth murdered. The list includes Duncan, Banquo, the two guards, and the wife and children of the thane of Fife.

What does the Gentlewoman hope for?

A. She hopes that all will be well, reflecting a pun, since this is not what the doctor means.

Why is it ironic that Lady Macbeth is spied upon while she is revealing her innermost thoughts?

What does Lady Macbeth seem to be counting?

What is paradoxical about Lady Macbeth’s comments in lines 32-35?

Who is the wife of the thane of Fife (line 36)?

To what might Lady Macbeth be referring when she says, “you mar all with this starting” (line 38)?

What does Lady Macbeth think is on her hands?

What does the Gentlewoman hope for?

DOCTOR: What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.
GENTLEWOMAN: It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour. 25
LADY MACBETH: Yet here’s a spot.
DOCTOR: Hark! she speaks: I will set down* what comes from her, to satisfy* my remembrance the more strongly.
LADY MACBETH: Out, damned* spot! out, I say! — 30
One: two: why, then, ‘tis time to do’t. — ... Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and afeard? °What need we fear Who knows it, when none can call our power to account? — Yet who would have thought the old man to have Had so much blood in him.
DOCTOR: Do you mark that? 35
LADY MACBETH: The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now? — What, will these hands ne’er be clean? — No more o’ that, my lord, no more o’ that: you mar all with this starting.*
DOCTOR: Go to, go to;* you have known what you should not.
GENTLEWOMAN: She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known. 40
LADY MACBETH: Here’s the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!
DOCTOR: What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.*
GENTLEWOMAN: °I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body. 45
DOCTOR: Well, well, well, —
GENTLEWOMAN: Pray God it be, sir.
DOCTOR: This disease is beyond my practise*: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds. 50

In Other Words *What ... account?* (lines 32-33) — *Why do we worry if someone knows what we have done, since no one would dare accuse us?*
I would not have ... the whole body (lines 45-46) — *I would not want such a tortured heart in my body, even if it meant I would hold royal rank.*

helpful definitions
set down — write down.
satisfy — here, strengthen.
damned — here, accursed.
starting — impulsive outburst.
go to, go to — (reprimand) hush.
sorely charged — painfully burdened.
practise — professional expertise.

LADY MACBETH: Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale.— I tell you yet again, Banquo’s buried; he cannot come out on’s* grave. 55
DOCTOR: Even so?
LADY MACBETH: To bed, to bed! there’s knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What’s done cannot be undone. — To bed, to bed, to bed!

[Exit]

DOCTOR: Will she go now to bed?
GENTLEWOMAN: Directly. 60
DOCTOR: Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets: More needs she the divine* than the physician. God, God forgive us all! Look after her; 65
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,* And still* keep eyes upon her. So, good night: My mind she has mated,* and amazed my sight. I think, but dare not speak.
GENTLEWOMAN: Good night, good doctor. 70

[Exeunt]

A CLOSER LOOK

Centuries before modern medicine diagnosed the sleepwalking disorder called **somnambulism**, Shakespeare pinpoints its origins. Though science has determined some of the physiological causes of sleepwalking, such as fever, sleep deprivation, alcohol consumption, and certain medications, the highest incidence of somnambulism is connected to psychological and emotional stress. The activities of sleepwalkers can include walking around, dressing, washing clothes, cooking, eating, and even talking on the telephone! Usually unaware of their bizarre behavior even after awakening, sleepwalkers pose no threat to themselves or to others, though it is advisable to remove items that might cause injury.

helpful definitions
on’s — of his.
divine — here, a religious counselor.
annoyance — injury.
still — constantly.
mated — confused.

To whom is Lady Macbeth speaking?

To whom is Lady Macbeth speaking?
A. She imagines that she is speaking to Macbeth.

Once again, the crime of regicide is described as “unnatural” for its role in disrupting the Great Chain of Being.

Why does the doctor say, “Remove from her the means of all annoyance” (line 66)?

Why does the doctor say, “Remove from her the means of all annoyance” (line 66)?
A. He is afraid she will harm herself.

1 After students have finished reading the play, you may wish to point out that Lady Macbeth’s suicide is foreshadowed here.