

**'WAKE DUNCAN  
WITH THY  
KNOCKING...'**



**CLARIFYING VOCABULARY**

**reverberate** – Repeated several times as an echo

**auditory** – Related to the sense of hearing

**repercussions** – An unwelcome and unintended consequence of an event or action

**envisage** – to foresee something; seeing something as a possibility

**intrusive** – Something unwelcome and uninvited

**manifested** – Become apparent

**foil** – A person or thing that contrasts with and so emphasises and enhances the qualities of another

**devoid** – Entirely lacking or free from something

1. Why are Macbeth and Lady Macbeth initially wary of the knocking?

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2. Why might Shakespeare have wanted to create an 'auditory representation of Macbeth's fear of fate'? What is the significance of sound in the text?

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Macbeth and Lady Macbeth exit with the sounds of knocking continuing to **reverberate** through the castle. Knocking, in itself, is a motif which is noteworthy, an **auditory** representation of Macbeth's fear of his fate. In Act I, Scene iii, when Macbeth first has thoughts of harming Duncan to win the crown, he says the thought makes his 'seated heart knock at [his] ribs.' Macbeth fears the **repercussions** of this 'horrid image'; it frightens him that he could even **envisage** such a thing and now that it has happened, this knocking, this **intrusive** action, is revisited. Instead of an internal, private knocking, the noise can be heard by all, a sign that Macbeth's private thoughts have physically **manifested** themselves in the real world. Macbeth's fate is knocking for him not just metaphorically but literally. Macduff, Macbeth's nemesis and **foil** and the man who will eventually kill him, waits to be let in. If Macbeth is sin, Macduff is morality and it invades the castle which, thus far, has been **devoid** of honesty and truth.

3. What are the repercussions Macbeth might fear?

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4. What is Shakespeare saying about secrets in the play?

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6. What is the significance of Macduff entering Macbeth's castle?

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5. If Macduff is Macbeth's foil, what qualities will he possess?

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