AQA

# GCSE
# ENGLISH LITERATURE

## Paper 2 Shakespeare and unseen poetry

Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes

**Materials**

For this paper you must have:
- an AQA 16-page Answer Book.

**Instructions**
- Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Do **not** use pencil.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 8702/2. Answer **one** question from **Section A** and **both** questions in **Section B**.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

**Information**
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 70.
- AO4 will be assessed in **Section A** and **Section B**. AO4 assesses the following skills: use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- There are 30 marks for **Section A** with 4 additional marks available for AO4
- There are 24 marks for **Section B** question 07.1 with 4 additional marks available for AO4
- There are 8 marks for **Section B** question 07.2

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**SECTION A**


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**Turn over for Section A**



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## Section A: Shakespeare

Answer **one** question from this section on your chosen text.

**Either**

**0 1** ***Macbeth***

Read the following extract from Act 2 Scene 2 of *Macbeth* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth has murdered Duncan and has returned to Lady Macbeth.

**MACBETH** Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more:
Macbeth does murder sleep', the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast.
**LADY MACBETH** What do you mean?
**MACBETH** Still it cried, 'Sleep no more' to all the house;
'Glamis hath murdered sleep', and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more.
**LADY MACBETH** Who was it, that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength to think
So brain-sickly of things. Go get some water
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there. Go carry them and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.
**MACBETH** I'll go no more.
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again, I dare not.
**LADY MACBETH** Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.


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**0 1** Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents their relationship in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in the play as a whole.

**[30 marks]**
**AO4 [4 marks]**

**Turn over for the next question**



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**or**

**0 2** ***Romeo and Juliet***

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, the Nurse has told Juliet that Romeo has killed Tybalt and has been banished from Verona.

**JULIET** O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!
Dove-feathered raven, wolvish-ravening lamb!
Despisèd substance of divinest show!
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
A damnèd saint, an honourable villain!
O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
Was ever book containing such vile matter
So fairly bound? O that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace!
**NURSE** There's no trust,
No faith, no honesty in men, all perjured,
All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.
Ah, where's my man? Give me some aqua-vitae;
These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
Shame come to Romeo!
**JULIET** Blistered be thy tongue
For such a wish! he was not born to shame:
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crowned
Sole monarch of the universal earth.
O what a beast was I to chide at him!

**0 2** Starting with this conversation, explore how far Shakespeare presents Juliet as a female character with strong emotions.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Juliet in this extract
- how far Shakespeare presents Juliet as a female character with strong emotions in the play as a whole.

**[30 marks]**
**AO4 [4 marks]**


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**or**

**0 3** ***The Tempest***

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 2 of *The Tempest* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play Prospero and Miranda go to see Caliban.

**MIRANDA** 'Tis a villain, sir,
I do not love to look on.
**PROSPERO** But as 'tis
We cannot miss him. He does make our fire,
Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices
That profit us. What ho! Slave! Caliban!
Thou earth, thou! Speak!
**CALIBAN** (*Within*) There's wood enough within.
**PROSPERO** Come forth, I say; there's other business for thee.
Come, thou tortoise, when?
*Enter* ARIEL *like a water-nymph*
Fine apparition! My quaint Ariel,
Hark in thine ear.
[*Whispers to Ariel*]
**ARIEL** My lord, it shall be done. *Exit*
**PROSPERO** Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself
Upon thy wicked dam, come forth.
*Enter* CALIBAN
**CALIBAN** As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed
With raven's feather from unwholesome fen
Drop on you both! A south-west blow on ye,
And blister you all o'er!
**PROSPERO** For this, be sure, tonight thou shalt have cramps,
Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins
Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,
All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinched
As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging
Than bees that made 'em.

**0 3** Starting with this moment in the play, explore how Shakespeare presents the difficult relationship between Prospero and Caliban.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents their relationship in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents the difficult relationship between Prospero and Caliban in the play as a whole.

**[30 marks]**
**AO4 [4 marks]**

**Turn over ►**


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**or**

**0 4** ***The Merchant of Venice***

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 2 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Bassanio is about to make his choice from the three caskets. His choice will decide whether or not he can marry Portia.

**PORTIA** I could teach you
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn.
So will I never be. So may you miss me;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes!
They have o'erlooked me and divided me:
One half of me is yours, the other half yours –
Mine own, I would say: but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours. O these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
And so though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let Fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long, but 'tis to peize the time,
To eche it, and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.
**BASSANIO** Let me choose,
For as I am, I live upon the rack.
**PORTIA** Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.
**BASSANIO** None but that ugly treason of mistrust
Which makes me fear th'enjoying of my love.
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.
**PORTIA** Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack
Where men enforcèd do speak anything.
**BASSANIO** Promise me life and I'll confess the truth.
**PORTIA** Well then, confess and live.

**0 4** Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents the relationship between Portia and Bassanio.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents their relationship in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents the relationship between Portia and Bassanio in the play as a whole.

**[30 marks]**
**AO4 [4 marks]**


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**or**

**0 5** ***Much Ado About Nothing***

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 1 of *Much Ado About Nothing* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Hero and Ursula prepare to trick Beatrice into believing that Benedick loves her.

**HERO** Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick:
When I do name him, let it be thy part,
To praise him more than ever man did merit:
My talk to thee must be how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice: of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay: now begin,
*Enter* BEATRICE
For look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.
**URSULA** The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:
So angle we for Beatrice, who even now,
Is couchèd in the woodbine coverture:
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.
**HERO** Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it:
No truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful,
I know her spirits are as coy and wild,
As haggards of the rock.
**URSULA** But are you sure,
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?
**HERO** So says the prince, and my new trothèd lord.

**0 5** Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents characters plotting to affect romantic relationships in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Hero and Ursula plotting in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents characters plotting to affect romantic relationships in the play as a whole.

**[30 marks]**
**AO4 [4 marks]**

**Turn over ►**


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**or**

**0 6** ***Julius Caesar***

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 2 of *Julius Caesar* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Cassius and Brutus are discussing Caesar as a leader. Cassius remembers when Caesar dared him to swim to a distant point.

**CASSIUS** The torrent roared, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts of controversy.
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
Caesar cried, 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'
Ay, as Aeneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
Did I the tired Caesar. And this man
Is now become a god, and Cassius is
A wretched creature and must bend his body
If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.
He had a fever when he was in Spain,
And when the fit was on him I did mark
How he did shake. 'Tis true, this god did shake,
His coward lips did from their colour fly,
And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world
Did lose his lustre. I did hear him groan,
Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans
Mark him and write his speeches in their books,
'Alas', it cried, 'give me some drink, Titinius',
As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world
And bear the palm alone.

**0 6** Starting with this speech, explore how far Shakespeare presents Caesar as a weak leader.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Caesar in this extract
- how far Shakespeare presents Caesar as a weak leader in the play as a whole.

**[30 marks]**
**AO4 [4 marks]**


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**Turn over for Section B**



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## Section B: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

**A London Thoroughfare*. 2 A.M.**

They have watered the street,
It shines in the glare of lamps,
Cold, white lamps,
And lies
Like a slow-moving river,
Barred with silver and black.
Cabs go down it,
One,
And then another.
Between them I hear the shuffling of feet.
Tramps doze on the window-ledges,
Night-walkers pass along the sidewalks.
The city is squalid and sinister,
With the silver-barred street in the midst,
Slow-moving,
A river leading nowhere.

Opposite my window,
The moon cuts,
Clear and round,
Through the plum-coloured night.
She cannot light the city;
It is too bright.
It has white lamps,
And glitters coldly.

I stand in the window and watch the moon.
She is thin and lustreless,
But I love her.
I know the moon,
And this is an alien city.

*Thoroughfare: street

Amy Lowell

**0 7 . 1** In 'A London Thoroughfare. 2 A.M.' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about the city at night?

**[24 marks]**
**AO4 [4 marks]**


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**November Night, Edinburgh**

The night tinkles like ice in glasses.
Leaves are glued to the pavement with frost.
The brown air fumes at the shop windows,
Tries the doors, and sidles past.

I gulp down winter raw. The heady
Darkness swirls with tenements*.
In a brown fuzz of cottonwool
Lamps fade up crags, die into pits.

Frost in my lungs is harsh as leaves
Scraped up on paths. – I look up, there,
A high roof sails, at the mast-head
Fluttering a grey and ragged star.

The world's a bear shrugged in his den.
It's snug and close in the snoring night.
And outside like chrysanthemums*
The fog unfolds its bitter scent.

*tenements: blocks of flats
*chrysanthemums: a type of flower

Norman MacCaig

**0 7 . 2** In both 'November Night, Edinburgh' and 'A London Thoroughfare. 2 A.M.' the speakers describe attitudes towards the city at night.

What are the similarities **and/or** differences between the methods the poets use to present these attitudes?

**[8 marks]**

**END OF QUESTIONS**


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| Surname | StemUp Model Solution |
|---|---|
| Answer booklet | Write the question number in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer. |

Question number

01

Shakespeare presents the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as an intense partnership that is built on shared ambition but cannot survive the guilt their crime creates. In this conversation, moments after Duncan's murder, the couple are physically together yet already speaking different languages: Macbeth is consumed by conscience while Lady Macbeth thinks only of practical concealment. Across the play Shakespeare traces how this gap widens until the "dearest partner of greatness" becomes a stranger, suggesting to a Jacobean audience that a marriage founded on sin destroys itself.

The extract is dominated by Macbeth's obsession with sleep. The repetition of "sleep" and the cumulative list of metaphors, "sore labour's bath, / Balm of hurt minds", present sleep as a healing, almost holy gift that he has forfeited. His shift from "Glamis" to "Cawdor" to "Macbeth" shows him splintering into his different titles, as if the murder has broken his identity. Lady Macbeth's response, "What do you mean?", is short and bewildered, and Shakespeare uses the shared line to show that she cannot enter his imaginative world. Where he hears voices, she hears nonsense.

Lady Macbeth instead takes control through a rapid series of imperatives: "Go get some water", "Go carry them", "Give me the daggers". These commands reverse the expected roles of a husband and wife in the seventeenth century, and she manages Macbeth like a child. Her insult "Infirm of purpose!" attacks his resolve, while her claim that "'tis the eye of childhood / That fears a painted devil" belittles his terror as immature. Yet there is perhaps a tenderness in "worthy thane" and "noble strength", which suggests she is trying to restore his confidence

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as well as shame him. Her pun on "gild" and "guilt" is chilling: she reduces Duncan's blood to decoration, showing a detachment that the audience will later learn is only a mask. Meanwhile Macbeth's broken half lines, "I'll go no more", and his admission "I am afraid to think what I have done" show his will collapsing. At this moment the balance of power rests entirely with her.

This control is prepared earlier in the play. On reading Macbeth's letter, Lady Macbeth fears his nature is "too full o'th'milk of human kindness", and she calls on spirits to "unsex me here", rejecting femininity because she believes ruthlessness is masculine. In Act 1 Scene 7, when Macbeth announces "We will proceed no further in this business", she persuades him by questioning his manhood: "When you durst do it, then you were a man". Her horrifying image of dashing out the brains of the baby she has nursed proves her commitment and shames him into agreement. Shakespeare shows that their relationship works through manipulation as much as love, though Macbeth's question "If we should fail?" and her reply "We fail?" also show how closely their fates are bound together.

After the murder, however, the partnership begins to reverse. In Act 3 Scene 2 Macbeth keeps the murder of Banquo and Fleance secret, telling her "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, / Till thou applaud the deed". The affectionate "dearest chuck" seems loving, yet it is also patronising, and the secrecy reveals that he no longer needs her. Perhaps he is shielding her, but he is also excluding her from power. Her line "Nought's had, all's spent" shows that she already senses their victory is hollow. At the banquet she still tries to rescue him, asking "Are you a man?", but the same tactic now fails, and her authority over him fades.

By Act 5 the couple are completely separated. Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking, with

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"Out, damned spot", shows that the guilt she dismissed in Act 2 Scene 2 with "A little water clears us of this deed" has returned to destroy her mind. Shakespeare structures this as an ironic reversal of the extract: now she cannot sleep, and Macbeth's prophecy that sleep has been murdered comes true for her. Macbeth's response to her death, "She should have died hereafter", is ambiguous. It may express weary grief, or it may suggest he is too numb to feel anything. Either way, the woman who once directed him is now barely mentioned.

Ultimately, Shakespeare presents a relationship that begins as a passionate alliance and ends in isolation. Their marriage reflects the disorder of their crime: by murdering a divinely appointed king, they break the natural order, and their bond breaks with it. For an audience that believed in the Great Chain of Being, the collapse of this marriage would serve as a warning that ambition pursued without conscience poisons even the closest human love.

02

Shakespeare presents Juliet as a girl whose emotions are unusually powerful for a young woman of her rank, and these feelings drive her from obedience to defiance. However, he also shows that her passion is balanced by intelligence, caution and self-control, so she is not simply ruled by her heart. In this extract her emotions swing violently, yet by the end she reasons her way back to loyalty, suggesting that Shakespeare wants his audience to admire both the strength of her love and the strength of her mind.

The extract opens with an outburst of shock and rage. Juliet's string of oxymorons, "Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!" and "Dove-feathered raven", shows feelings at war with each other: she still sees Romeo's beauty yet now suspects his evil. The exclamations and rhetorical questions such as "Did ever dragon keep so fair a

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cave?" create a breathless pace that mirrors her confusion. Many of her images, the "serpent heart" and the "book containing such vile matter / So fairly bound", are about appearance hiding reality, which suggests her deepest fear is that her love has been built on deceit. The religious language of "damnèd saint" and "mortal paradise" raises the stakes further, because for an Elizabethan audience this is a question of heaven and hell.

The turning point comes when the Nurse joins in with "Shame come to Romeo!". Juliet's reaction is immediate and fierce: "Blistered be thy tongue / For such a wish!". The violent curse shows that her loyalty to Romeo is stronger than her anger, and that she will defend him even against the woman who raised her. Her image of Romeo's brow as a "throne where honour may be crowned / Sole monarch of the universal earth" swings to the opposite extreme of praise. The final line, "O what a beast was I to chide at him!", shows self-reproach. Her emotions are strong, but Shakespeare also shows her thinking through them, moving from passion to judgement within a single speech.

Earlier in the play Juliet seems far from emotional. In Act I Scene 3 she replies to her mother's talk of marriage with the calm, dutiful "It is an honour that I dream not of", and her promise "I'll look to like, if looking liking move" sounds carefully obedient. Nearly fourteen and the only daughter of a noble family, she is expected to accept the match her father chooses. Her first meeting with Romeo, however, releases intense feeling: "My only love sprung from my only hate". The balanced repetition of "only" shows how quickly love and loss are fused in her mind.

Yet even in the balcony scene Shakespeare shows her rationality alongside her passion. She worries that their contract is "too rash, too unadvised, too sudden, / Too like the lightning", and the tricolon followed by the simile shows a mind that

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recognises danger. It is Juliet, not Romeo, who turns romance into practical action: "If that thy bent of love be honourable, / Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow". Arguably she is more mature than Romeo, whose emotions are more impulsive.

Juliet's emotions become most powerful when she defies her family. When she refuses to marry Paris, Capulet calls her "disobedient wretch" and threatens to let her "hang, beg, starve, die in the streets". In a patriarchal society a daughter's refusal was shocking, and her courage is remarkable. When the Nurse advises her to marry Paris, Juliet's private curse "Ancient damnation!" shows her fury at the betrayal. However, she now hides her feelings: she deceives her mother with double meanings and later returns to her father apparently penitent, so that he calls her "my headstrong" with fond relief. Her strength lies as much in emotional control as in emotional release.

The ending confirms the depth of her feelings. In the potion scene she overcomes terrifying visions of the tomb before drinking to Romeo, choosing love over terror. Finally, waking beside his body, she chooses death with "O happy dagger". Her death is quick and decisive, perhaps the clearest proof of how strong her love is. Shakespeare could be suggesting that fate, signalled by the "star-crossed lovers" of the Prologue, has trapped her, but her final act is still her own choice.

To a large extent, then, Shakespeare presents Juliet as a female character with overwhelming emotions which challenge the expectations of Elizabethan girlhood. Yet he does not reduce her to a stereotype of the hysterical woman. Her passion is matched by courage, cunning and clear sight, and this combination makes her the true tragic heroine of the play.

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03

Shakespeare presents the relationship between Prospero and Caliban as a bitter struggle between master and servant in which both sides feel betrayed. Prospero sees himself as a civilising ruler wronged by an ungrateful savage, while Caliban sees himself as the rightful owner of an island that has been stolen. By letting both perspectives be heard, Shakespeare invites his audience to question who is truly monstrous, and the play becomes an early exploration of the ethics of power and colonisation.

From the very start of the extract Caliban is defined by his usefulness. Miranda calls him "a villain", but Prospero replies that "We cannot miss him", explaining that he does "make our fire, / Fetch in our wood". The relationship is purely economic: Caliban matters only because he "serves in offices / That profit us". Prospero's string of commands and insults, "What ho! Slave! Caliban! / Thou earth, thou! Speak!", is broken into short exclamations that bark orders like a slave-driver. Calling him "earth" and "tortoise" reduces him to something low, heavy and less than human, which reflects the hierarchy of the Great Chain of Being in which Caliban is placed near the beasts.

Shakespeare then contrasts this harshness with Prospero's treatment of Ariel, who enters "like a water-nymph". Prospero's affectionate "Fine apparition! My quaint Ariel" and the intimate whisper create a tone of warmth that throws his contempt for Caliban into sharp relief. Ariel is airy, obedient and graceful; Caliban is earthy and resistant. Shakespeare seems to suggest that Prospero values servants according to their submission.

The hostility is mutual. Prospero's insult "Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself / Upon thy wicked dam" attacks Caliban's birth, implying that his evil is inherited and fixed. Caliban answers with a curse full of disease and decay: "As

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wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed / With raven's feather from unwholesome fen". The dark, swampy imagery links him to his mother Sycorax's witchcraft, yet his poetry is vivid and rhythmic, showing that he has a real voice. Prospero's reply, however, proves who holds power. His threat of "cramps" and pinches "As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging / Than bees" uses magic as punishment. The simile is almost sadistic in its precision, and the audience may begin to feel sympathy for Caliban.

Later in the scene Shakespeare reveals the history behind this hatred. Caliban claims "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother, / Which thou tak'st from me", and he remembers that when Prospero first arrived, he was stroked and "made much of". The relationship began with kindness: Caliban showed Prospero the island's resources in return for being taught language. Prospero, however, justifies his cruelty by Caliban's attempt to "violate / The honour of my child". Caliban's unrepentant "O ho, O ho! would't had been done!" makes it difficult for the audience to defend him. Shakespeare therefore makes the relationship genuinely difficult, with neither character wholly innocent.

Language itself becomes a symbol of the conflict. Caliban's famous retort "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse" turns Prospero's gift against him. Education, which Prospero sees as civilisation, has only given Caliban the tools to resist. In the early 1600s, when English settlers were reaching the Americas and reports of the Bermuda shipwreck of 1609 were circulating, a Jacobean audience would have recognised the European claim to bring "civilisation" to native peoples. Modern postcolonial readings, perhaps more sympathetic, see Caliban as a colonised native whose land has been seized.

Shakespeare also complicates any simple view of Caliban as a beast. In Act 3 his

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speech "Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises" is among the most beautiful in the play, revealing a sensitivity that Prospero never acknowledges. In contrast, Prospero dismisses him in Act 4 as "A devil, a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick", insisting that education cannot change him. This reflects the debate about nature and nurture that fascinated Renaissance thinkers such as Montaigne.

The ending is ambiguous. Prospero admits "this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine", which may be a confession of responsibility, or merely a claim of ownership. Caliban promises to "be wise hereafter, / And seek for grace", which could show true repentance or simple fear. Shakespeare leaves the relationship unresolved, perhaps suggesting that the power of a master over a servant always produces resentment, and that Prospero's forgiveness of his noble enemies is not fully extended to the man he enslaved.

04 Shakespeare presents the relationship between Portia and Bassanio as a romantic love that is tangled up with money, duty and power. Bassanio first approaches Portia partly as a solution to his debts, yet in this conversation their love seems genuine and mutual. Across the play Shakespeare gradually shifts the balance between them: Portia appears to surrender herself to her husband, but she ends the play as the more powerful partner, which challenges Elizabethan expectations of an obedient wife.

In the extract Portia is torn between love and duty. Her opening admission "I could teach you / How to choose right, but then I am forsworn" shows that she longs to help Bassanio but is bound by her dead father's will. This reflects her lack of freedom as a wealthy heiress, whose marriage is decided by a lottery of caskets.

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Her speech then becomes delightfully confused. The repetition of "yours" in "One half of me is yours, the other half yours" shows that love has already divided her identity, and her correction "Mine own, I would say" is a slip that reveals her true feelings. Shakespeare uses the tangled syntax to show a usually articulate woman losing control of her words, which suggests the strength of her love.

Portia also tries to delay the choice: "I speak too long, but 'tis to peize the time, / To eche it, and to draw it out in length". The three verbs of stretching show her fear of losing him. Bassanio's reply, "Let me choose, / For as I am, I live upon the rack", introduces an extended metaphor of torture. Portia playfully picks up the image, asking him to "confess / What treason there is mingled with your love", and the dialogue becomes witty and flirtatious. Their quick exchanges of shared imagery suggest that they are well matched intellectually. Yet the metaphor is also uneasy: love is linked with pain, interrogation and "mistrust", hinting that their relationship will be tested later.

The extract gains power when contrasted with Bassanio's first description of Portia in Act I Scene I. He tells Antonio "In Belmont is a lady richly left", and the first thing he mentions is her money, not her beauty or virtue. He compares her "sunny locks" to "a golden fleece" and her suitors to Jasons, so she is presented as a treasure to be won. Because he begins by admitting that he owes Antonio "the most in money and in love", the audience may doubt his motives. Shakespeare reflects an Elizabethan reality in which marriage among the wealthy was often a financial transaction.

However, the casket test complicates this. Bassanio rejects gold and silver, reasoning that the world is deceived by "ornament", and chooses lead, whose motto demands that the chooser "give and hazard all he hath". This choice suggests that

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his love has become sincere, and it proves him worthy in the eyes of her father's test. Portia's response is overwhelming: she wishes she could be "trebled twenty times myself" for his sake. Yet she also describes herself as "an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised", humbly handing over "This house, these servants, and this same myself". Her language of submission matches what was expected of a wife, though the audience knows she is anything but unschooled.

The ring becomes the key symbol of their bond. Portia gives it with a warning: "Which when you part from, lose, or give away, / Let it presage the ruin of your love". Shakespeare uses this dramatic device to test whether Bassanio's love can be trusted. In the trial scene Portia, disguised as the lawyer Balthazar, saves Antonio through her intelligence while Bassanio stands helpless. When he declares that "life itself, my wife, and all the world" are not worth more than Antonio's life, Portia's dry aside, "Your wife would give you little thanks for that", creates dramatic irony and comedy. It also shows her quietly measuring his loyalty.

In Act 5 Portia uses the ring trick to assert control. By demanding the ring as payment and then accusing Bassanio of giving it to another woman, she makes him plead for forgiveness. The playful teasing restores harmony, but it also establishes that she holds the power in the marriage. Perhaps Shakespeare is suggesting that the ideal relationship is one in which the wife's wisdom guides the husband.

Overall, Shakespeare presents a relationship that begins in financial need and develops into real love, but which is always shaped by questions of control. Portia's apparent surrender in the extract is undercut by her later cleverness, and the final scenes leave the audience with a relationship that is loving, unequal and, in Portia's favour, surprisingly modern.

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05 In Much Ado About Nothing, Shakespeare presents plotting as the engine of romance in Messina: almost every relationship is shaped by characters who deceive others for their own ends. Some plots, like Hero and Ursula's trick in this extract, are playful and kind, and bring lovers together. Others, like Don John's, are malicious and nearly destroy love altogether. By setting these schemes side by side, Shakespeare suggests that love in this society depends on "noting", or overhearing, and that the same tool of deception can create either comedy or near tragedy.

In the extract Hero takes on the role of director. Her instructions, "Our talk must only be of Benedick" and "let it be thy part, / To praise him more than ever man did merit", use theatrical language of parts and dialogue, so the gulling is presented as a play within the play. The audience enjoys dramatic irony because we know Beatrice is listening. Hero's image of "little Cupid's crafty arrow" that "only wounds by hearsay" reveals the central idea of the plot: love can be created by words alone. The adjective "crafty" hints at cunning, yet the diminutive "little" keeps the tone light and affectionate.

Shakespeare fills the extract with gentle images of nature. Beatrice "like a lapwing runs / Close by the ground", a simile which makes her seem like a nervous bird trying to stay hidden. Ursula's extended fishing metaphor, in which the fish will "greedily devour the treacherous bait", presents Beatrice as prey, but the "golden oars" and "silver stream" make the trap beautiful rather than cruel. Even the "false sweet bait" combines deceit with sweetness, suggesting that this lie is meant to do good. Hero's comment that Beatrice is "too disdainful" and as wild "As haggards of the rock" uses falconry, an Elizabethan pastime: a haggard was an untamed

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hawk. The women plan to tame Beatrice's pride, and it works. Soon after, Beatrice cries "Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adieu!", showing how quickly the plot transforms her.

This mirrors the earlier trick on Benedick in Act 2 Scene 3, where Don Pedro, Claudio and Leonato stage a conversation about Beatrice's secret love. Don Pedro presents the scheme as a game, calling it one of "Hercules' labours", and boasts that if it succeeds "we are the only love-gods". The plotters see themselves almost as gods, controlling other people's hearts. Shakespeare creates comedy through Benedick's sudden change of mind; having mocked marriage, he now decides that "The world must be peopled". The parallel structure of the two gulling scenes shows that both lovers are equally proud, and the plotting simply reveals feelings that were already there beneath their "merry war".

Not all plotting in the play is so innocent. Don John describes himself as "a plain-dealing villain", and when he hears of Claudio's engagement he declares that "any impediment will be medicinable to me". The medical metaphor suggests his spite is a kind of sickness that only others' misery can cure. His plan, devised with Borachio, uses a similar method to Hero's: a staged scene, overheard and misunderstood. Claudio watches Margaret at Hero's window and believes Hero unfaithful. Shakespeare deliberately echoes the earlier trick, showing that the same technique can be used to destroy love as easily as to create it. The consequence is the public humiliation of Hero at the altar, where Claudio calls her a "rotten orange", an image of something that looks perfect on the outside but is corrupt within.

Even Claudio's courtship is based on plotting, since Don Pedro woos Hero on his behalf at the masked ball. The ease with which Claudio believes he has been

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betrayed suggests that love built on others' schemes is fragile. In a patriarchal society where a woman's value depended on her chastity, a simple deception could ruin Hero completely, and Shakespeare exposes how dangerously men rely on appearances.

Finally, plotting is used to repair the damage. The Friar devises a scheme in which Hero pretends to be dead so that Claudio will regret his accusation, and the play ends with her unveiling and double marriage. Fittingly, Beatrice and Benedick are brought together at the end by more "noting": their own love sonnets are produced as evidence. Benedick's "Peace! I will stop your mouth" with a kiss closes their battle of wits.

Shakespeare therefore presents plotting as central to romantic relationships in Messina. Kindly plotting, as in this extract, is presented through light, natural imagery and comedy, while malicious plotting is linked to sickness and decay. Yet both rely on the same flaw: lovers trust what they overhear. Perhaps Shakespeare is suggesting that love is as much about perception as reality, which is exactly why a play about "nothing" can come so close to tragedy.

06 Shakespeare presents Caesar as a leader whose public image of godlike strength is undermined by private physical weakness and dangerous arrogance. However, Caesar's weakness is largely shown through the eyes of his enemies, and the play as a whole suggests that his true flaw is not cowardice but pride. Shakespeare therefore invites his audience to judge how far Caesar is weak, and whether Rome is stronger or weaker without him.

In this speech Cassius deliberately destroys the myth of Caesar. His story of the

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swimming contest begins with heroic energy, as the two men "buffet" the torrent "With lusty sinews", but it climaxes with Caesar's desperate cry, "Help me, Cassius, or I sink!". By quoting Caesar's words directly, Cassius makes his weakness vivid and undeniable. He then compares himself to Aeneas carrying "The old Anchises" from burning Troy. The allusion is clever: Aeneas was the legendary founder of Rome, so Cassius casts himself as Rome's true hero, while Caesar is reduced to a feeble old man who must be carried. The bitter juxtaposition of "this man / Is now become a god" with "Cassius is / A wretched creature" exposes the resentment at the heart of his argument.

Cassius's second story, about Caesar's fever in Spain, continues the attack. The repetition of "shake" in "this god did shake" uses mockery to puncture Caesar's divine status. The image of "coward lips" fleeing "from their colour" turns a symptom of illness into a sign of cowardice, and the simile "As a sick girl" is designed to humiliate him by suggesting he is effeminate. In a Roman culture that prized masculine strength, this is the most damaging insult possible. Cassius ends with amazement that "A man of such a feeble temper should / So get the start of the majestic world / And bear the palm alone". The palm, a symbol of victory, emphasises Caesar's solitary power, and "alone" hints at the danger of one man ruling without equals.

However, the audience must question how reliable this portrait is. Cassius is manipulating Brutus, and his envy is clear. Shakespeare structures the scene so that the offstage shouts of the crowd interrupt the conversation, reminding us that the people adore Caesar. Casca later reports that Caesar refused the crown three times and then fell down in a fit, which may show both physical frailty and political cunning. Caesar himself, later in the same scene, admits "this ear is deaf", so Shakespeare does give him real bodily weaknesses.

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Caesar's greatest weakness, though, seems to be arrogance. He dismisses the Soothsayer's warning to "Beware the ides of March" with "He is a dreamer; let us leave him". He perceptively notices that Cassius has "a lean and hungry look", yet instantly adds "always I am Caesar", refusing to act on his own insight. Before going to the Capitol, he ignores Calpurnia's terrifying dream and the ominous signs of the storm. Although he first agrees to stay at home, Decius easily persuades him by appealing to his vanity and his desire for the crown. The famous line "Cowards die many times before their deaths" shows his courage, but it also reveals a fatal overconfidence. Just before his death he calls himself "constant as the northern star", an image of fixed, unchangeable authority. This hubris makes him seem less like a weak leader than a proud one, ready to become a tyrant.

His death complicates the picture further. "Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Caesar" shows his shock and grief at personal betrayal, which humanises him. After the assassination, Mark Antony's rhetoric restores his reputation. In his funeral speech he reminds the crowd that "When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept", and his ironic repetition that Brutus is "an honourable man" turns the people against the conspirators. Antony presents Caesar as a generous ruler who left money to every citizen in his will, suggesting he was a strong leader who cared for Rome.

In the second half of the play Caesar's spirit is more powerful than he ever was in life. His ghost appears to Brutus, and Rome falls into civil war. Shakespeare's audience in 1599, anxious about the succession of the ageing, childless Elizabeth I, would have understood that removing a ruler, however flawed, could bring chaos.

To some extent, then, Shakespeare presents Caesar as a weak man, deaf, ill and

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vulnerable, as Cassius claims. Yet as a leader he is powerful, popular and feared. His real weakness is his pride, which blinds him to danger. Ultimately the play suggests that Caesar's power lies not in his body but in his name, which is why it survives his death and destroys those who killed him.

07.1 In "A London Thoroughfare. 2 A.M." the poet presents a speaker who watches the city at night with a mixture of fascination and alienation. The city glitters, yet it is cold, threatening and purposeless, and the speaker finds comfort only in the moon, a familiar part of nature that the city overpowers.

The opening lines give the street a strange, cold beauty. The watered street "shines in the glare of lamps", but "glare" suggests something harsh rather than warm, and the short line "Cold, white lamps" isolates the chill. The simile "Like a slow-moving river, / Barred with silver and black" makes the road seem natural, yet "Barred" hints at a prison, as if the speaker feels trapped. The enjambment across "And lies / Like a slow-moving river" slows the pace, imitating the sluggish flow.

Life in the street is sparse. In "Cabs go down it, / One, / And then another", the single word "One" stands alone, creating pauses that mirror the gaps between the cabs and emphasise the emptiness at this hour. The people are anonymous: "Tramps doze on the window-ledges" while "Night-walkers" drift past. These figures on the edges of society suggest that the city at night belongs to the lost and lonely, and the speaker never interacts with them.

The judgement becomes explicit in "The city is squalid and sinister". The sibilant alliteration creates a hissing, menacing sound, combining dirt with danger. The

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river image returns as "A river leading nowhere", isolated on its own line. A river usually suggests a journey, so city life is presented as directionless and futile.

The speaker then turns to the moon. The verb "cuts" gives it sharpness and strength, and "plum-coloured night" is the warmest image in the poem, suggesting that nature offers something the city lacks. Yet the city overpowers it: "She cannot light the city; / It is too bright." Personifying the moon as "She" makes her a companion, but she is defeated by an artificial light that "glitters coldly". "Glitters" suggests surface glamour, while "coldly" shows that this brightness has no feeling. Perhaps the poet suggests that the manmade city has pushed nature aside.

The ending is the most personal. "I stand in the window and watch the moon" positions the speaker apart, looking out rather than taking part. The moon is "thin and lustreless", but the short, direct "But I love her" shows a loyalty that survives its weakness. The final lines, "I know the moon, / And this is an alien city", contrast the familiar with the strange. "Alien" suggests that the speaker feels foreign and unwelcome, perhaps far from home, and ending on this word leaves a lasting sense of isolation.

The free verse, with its irregular line lengths, reflects the speaker's wandering thoughts and the uneven rhythm of the night. Overall, the poet presents feelings of detachment and unease: the city is striking but cold and sinister, and the speaker's only real connection is with the moon, a reminder of a natural, familiar world.

07.2 Both poets use imagery of the natural world to present the city at night, but they

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create very different attitudes. Lowell's speaker is detached and alienated, while MacCaig's speaker seems exhilarated, immersed in the harsh winter city.

The perspectives differ. Lowell's speaker stands "in the window", watching from a distance, whereas MacCaig's speaker is outside, physically consuming the night: "I gulp down winter raw." The verb "gulp" suggests eager, almost greedy enjoyment, while Lowell's "watch" suggests passive separation.

Both poets present light, but in opposite ways. In Lowell's poem the city's "Cold, white lamps" are so bright that the moon "cannot light the city", so artificial light overpowers nature. In MacCaig's poem the lamps are weak: they "fade up crags, die into pits", and the verbs "fade" and "die" make the city dark and swallowed by fog. The moon in Lowell's poem is "Clear and round" and loved, but MacCaig's star is "grey and ragged", less idealised yet still noticed with affection.

MacCaig uses personification and metaphor to make the city alive. The air "fumes" and "sidles past", and "The world's a bear shrugged in his den", a cosy image of hibernation that contrasts with Lowell's "squalid and sinister" city. Even so, both poets end on uneasy notes: Lowell's "alien city" and MacCaig's fog with its "bitter scent" suggest that the night city is never fully welcoming.