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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/31**

Paper 3 Drama (Open Text) **May/June 2024**

45 minutes

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You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

Candidates may take their set texts into the exam room, but these must NOT contain personal annotations, highlighting or underlining.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- You may take your set text into the exam room, but this must **not** contain personal annotations, highlighting or underlining.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 25.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

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LYNN NOTTAGE: *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 1(a)

Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Ernestine [*Reading*]: Blessed. Peace Angel, you are one of the blessed. Your positive visu ... visu ... visual-i-zation has materialized into a response to your letter. Your honesty touched me. STRENGTH! You speak of being a poor man, being a colored man, being a man without prospects.

[*Godfrey nods emphatically*.]

You speak of Jim Crow. COURAGE!

Godfrey: COURAGE!

Ernestine [*Reading*]: We know that there are no differences between the races in this Kingdom, and that segregation is the creation of the ignorant to punish those who are in touch with God –

Godfrey: What's that?

[ERMINA *rips open her letter*.]

Ernestine [*Reading*]: ... segregation is the creation of the ignorant to punish those who are in touch with God. That God who is a living vital force moving through you.

Godfrey: Oh yes. Go on. Go on.

Ernestine [*Reading*]: ATONE! You, who have escaped the hold of passion and other temptations that corrupt the purity of the spirit. Remember celibacy, peace and Godliness are all that I ask of you! ABSTAIN! [*A moment*] ALERT! I have considered your request and decided to bestow upon one of my devoted disciples beautiful names for your family. Names that God will immediately recognize and open up to a direct line of communication. All that said and done, I give you the names Godfrey Goodness –

Godfrey [*Tries it on*]: Godfrey Goodness!

Ernestine [*Reading*]: For your eldest, Darling Angel. And your baby, Devout Mary.

[GODFREY *smiles at* ERMINA; *horrified, she mouths the name*.]

JOIN US AT THE HOLY COMMUNION BANQUET! The Kingdom awaits you. REMEMBER! HEED! VIRTUE! Life is a feast, but unfortunately, food still costs money and I know you won't let us starve. Peace and Blessings, Father Divine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America.

Godfrey: Ain't that beautiful? THERE! He speaks the truth! From God's mouth to our ears.

Ermina: Not me, Miss Devout Mary. [*Sucks her teeth*] What's wrong with Ermina Crump? No way I's gonna be called Miss Devout Mary. What kinda first name is Devout? What sorta boy is gonna wanna ask out a gal named Devout Mary?

Godfrey: Well, you know where Father stands on that.

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Ernestine [*To audience*]: Is he speaking for himself or Father Divine? Ain't always clear. I like being a Crump, was just getting used to being a Crump.

Godfrey [*Flabbergasted*]: We're now part of his flock, we're capable of entering the Kingdom. [*In a heavenly daze, he reaches into his wallet and counts out his money*.] This is just about the best news I've heard. [*A moment. In a broad, theatrical gesture*] My Angels, this calls for a celebration. What are you waiting for, go on and get dressed up, we're going out ... to the movies!

Ernestine [*To audience*]: At least I wish he had said that, but he sat and counted his money until it was time to go to work.

[*from* Act 1, Scene 1]

In what ways does Nottage make this moment in the play both entertaining and serious?

Or 1(b)

How does Nottage's portrayal of Ermina contribute to the dramatic impact of the play?

Do **not** use the passage printed in **Question 1(a)** in answering this question.

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WOLE SOYINKA: *Death and the King's Horseman*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 2(a)

Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Elesin: There was fear in the forest too.

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Shall I yield them cause to foul the rafters?

[*from* Scene 1]

How does Soyinka memorably portray Elesin at this moment in the play?

Or 2(b)

To what extent does Soyinka make you dislike the British characters in the play?

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 3(a)

Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Blanche: Stella, oh, Stella, Stella!

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Blanche: I was so exhausted by all I'd been through my – nerves broke.

[*from* Scene 1]

How does Williams make this early moment in the play so revealing?

Or 3(b)

Blanche calls Stanley 'an animal'.

To what extent does Williams persuade you to agree?

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 4(a)

Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Quince: Answer, as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bottom: Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quince: You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bottom: What is Pyramus? A lover, or a tyrant?

Quince: A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

Bottom: That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms; I will condole in some measure. To the rest – yet my chief humour is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

'The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.'

This was lofty. Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein: a lover is more condoling.

Quince: Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flute: Here, Peter Quince.

Quince: Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

Flute: What is Thisby? A wand'ring knight?

Quince: It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flute: Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quince: That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bottom: An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: 'Thisne, Thisne!' [*Then speaking small*] 'Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! Thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

Quince: No, no, you must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bottom: Well; proceed.

Quince: Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star: Here, Peter Quince.

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Quince: Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout; the tinker.

Snout: Here, Peter Quince.

Quince: You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father; Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part. And I hope here is a play fitted.

Snug: Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it to me, for I am slow of study.

Quince: You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bottom: Let me play the lion too. I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar that I will make the Duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again'.

Quince: An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All: That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bottom: I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quince: You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-fac'd man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man; therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

[*from* Act 1, Scene 2]

How does Shakespeare make this such an entertaining introduction to Bottom?

Or 4(b)

In what ways does Shakespeare's portrayal of Puck contribute to the dramatic impact of the play?

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 5(a)

Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Iago: But I pray, sir,
Are you fast married? For be assur'd of this,
That the magnifico is much beloved,
And hath in his effect a voice potential
As double as the Duke's. He will divorce you,
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
That law, with all his might to enforce it on,
Will give him cable.

Othello: Let him do his spite.
My services which I have done the signiory
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know –
Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
I shall promulgate – I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege; and my demerits
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune
As this that I have reach'd. For know, Iago,
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
I would not my unhoused free condition
Put into circumscription and confine
For the seas' worth.

[*Enter* CASSIO *and* Officers *with torches*.]

But look what lights come yonder.

Iago: Those are the raised father and his friends.
You were best go in.

Othello: Not I; I must be found.
My parts, my title, and my perfect soul
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago: By Janus, I think no.

Othello: The servants of the Duke and my lieutenant –
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!
What is the news?

Cassio: The Duke does greet you, General;
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance
Even on the instant.

Othello: What is the matter, think you?

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Cassio: Something from Cyprus, as I may divine.
It is a business of some heat: the galleys
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
This very night at one another's heels;
And many of the consuls, rais'd and met,
Are at the Duke's already. You have been hotly call'd for;
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The Senate hath sent about three several quests
To search you out.

Othello: 'Tis well I am found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you. [*Exit*.]

Cassio: Ancient, what makes he here?

Iago: Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carrack.
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

Cassio: I do not understand.

Iago: He's married

Cassio: To who?

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Iago: Marry, to – Come, Captain, will you go?

Othello: Have with you.

[*Enter* BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, *and Officers with torches and weapons*.]

Cassio: Here comes another troop to seek for you.

Iago: It is Brabantio. General, be advis'd;
He comes to bad intent.

Othello: Holla! stand there.

Roderigo: Signior, it is the Moor.

Brabantio: Down with him, thief.

[*They draw on both sides*.]

Iago: You, Roderigo; come, sir, I am for you.

Othello: Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons.

[*from* Act 1, Scene 2]

What striking first impressions of Othello does Shakespeare create for you at this moment in the play?

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Or 5(b)

What does Shakespeare's portrayal of Iago make you feel about him?

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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

1a

Nottage makes this moment both entertaining and serious by letting comedy and pain sit side by side. On the surface it is a funny scene of a father swept away by a letter full of capital letters, a daughter appalled by her new name and a narrator who winks at the audience. Underneath, it shows a grieving, poor black man so desperate for dignity and belonging that he hands over his family's identity, and his money, to a distant preacher.

Much of the entertainment comes from the letter itself. Godfrey's stumbling over "visu ... visu ... visual-i-zation" is comic, as he struggles with the grand vocabulary of Father Divine, yet it also suggests a man reaching for words and ideas slightly beyond him because he wants so badly to believe. The letter is punctuated by shouted single words, "STRENGTH!", "COURAGE!", "ATONE!", "ABSTAIN!", which sound absurd when read aloud in a small kitchen, and Godfrey's emphatic nodding makes him look like a congregation of one. I find this funny, but also touching, because the capitals offer him a strength he cannot find in his own life.

The serious heart of the letter is its description of Godfrey as "a poor man, being a colored man, being a man without prospects." The repetition of "being" piles up the burdens he carries, and the words echo what he must have written himself. When the letter claims that "segregation is the creation of the ignorant", Godfrey makes his daughters wait while he repeats it, savouring it: "Oh yes. Go on. Go on." Nottage shows how hungry he is for someone to tell him that Jim Crow is wrong. The moment is entertaining in its theatricality, yet it exposes real humiliation.

The renaming is the comic climax. Godfrey "tries on" his new name, "Godfrey

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Goodness!", like a new suit, and the alliteration makes it sound faintly ridiculous. The stage direction that Ermina is "horrified" and "mouths the name" is a lovely visual joke, and her outburst, "No way I's gonna be called Miss Devout Mary", is full of teenage indignation. Her worry about what "sorta boy" will ask out a girl called Devout makes us laugh, but it also reveals something serious: Ermina wants an ordinary life and is attached to her own identity. Ernestine's line, "I like being a Crump, was just getting used to being a Crump", is quieter and sadder. Her mother has died and the family has moved north, so even her name, the last thing tying her to her past, is being taken away.

Nottage's satire on Father Divine is sharp. After all the talk of spirit and purity the letter turns to money: "Life is a feast, but unfortunately, food still costs money". The bathos is very funny, and the audience sees what Godfrey cannot, that the letter is an appeal for cash. His daze as he "counts out his money" therefore becomes serious, because this family has little to spare.

The ending uses Ernestine's narration brilliantly. Godfrey suddenly seems transformed, proposing a celebration and a trip "to the movies!", and for a moment the audience shares the girls' joy. Then Ernestine tells us, "At least I wish he had said that", and reveals that he simply sat counting his money until work. This undercutting is both funny and heartbreaking. The movies represent Ernestine's dreams of glamour and escape, and the gap between her wish and the reality shows how the father's faith shuts out ordinary pleasure. Her direct address also reminds us that this is a memory, shaped by an older Ernestine who now sees clearly what she could not then.

The moment is entertaining because of its comic dialogue, stage business and narrative trickery, but Nottage uses that humour to draw us into something

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serious: a family's loss of identity, a man's search for dignity in a racist society and the cost of faith placed in the wrong hands. The laughter makes the sadness land harder.

2b

Soyinka certainly makes the British characters difficult to like, but not because they are monsters. What makes them disturbing is their casual arrogance: they are confident that they understand a world they have never tried to understand, and they treat the deepest beliefs of the people they rule as either a nuisance or a party game. I dislike Simon Pilkings most strongly, but Soyinka is subtle enough to give him moments of awkward goodwill, and Jane is presented with more sympathy, so my dislike is real but not total.

Our first sight of the Pilkingses is deliberately shocking. At the start of Scene 2 they are dancing a tango on their verandah dressed in egungun costumes, the sacred garments of the ancestral dead, which they intend to wear to the Residency ball. Soyinka places this scene directly after the rich ceremony of the marketplace, so the contrast is stark: one world treats the costume as a link with the ancestors, the other as fancy dress. Amusa's horrified response, refusing even to speak to his superior while he wears the costume, shows the audience how offensive this is. Pilkings's mockery of Amusa's fear makes him seem not only ignorant but bullying, because he sneers at a belief that his own sergeant takes seriously.

Pilkings's attitude to Joseph, his servant, reinforces this. He treats Christianity, the religion he has brought with him, as faintly ridiculous whenever it gets in the way of his convenience, and he dismisses the drumming that Joseph tries to explain. Soyinka makes his language quick, impatient and dismissive. When he learns that

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Elesin is to die, he does not ask what the death means; he sees only a savage custom to be stopped and a problem for his career on the night of the Prince's visit. His decision to arrest Elesin is presented as a kind of meddling arrogance, and the tragedy of the play follows directly from it.

The Resident and the ball add a satirical edge. Soyinka makes the colonial world look pompous and slightly absurd: the fuss over the Prince, the formal music and the anxious etiquette seem trivial beside the cosmic event taking place in the town. I find this the most effective way the playwright guides our response, because he does not need to make the British cruel; he makes them small.

Jane Pilkings complicates any simple dislike. She is kinder to Olunde than her husband is to anyone, and she does try to talk to him, yet Soyinka shows how her sympathy is limited. When she dismisses the custom and seems to assume Olunde must agree because he has studied medicine in England, he answers with crushing calm: "You forget that I have now spent four years among your people. I discovered that you have no respect for what you do not understand." This line shapes my whole response. Olunde has learned the British world thoroughly; the British have not bothered to learn his. Their conversation about the ship's captain who blew himself up to save others is especially pointed, since Olunde sees that self-sacrifice the British admire in themselves, while condemning it in Elesin.

Yet Soyinka also undercuts any straightforward hatred by showing Elesin's own failure. It is Elesin's weakness, his lingering attachment to the world and his new bride, as much as Pilkings's interference, that prevents the ritual. The British are a catalyst rather than the sole cause of the tragedy, and Pilkings himself seems genuinely bewildered at the end, trying and failing to grasp what has happened. Iyaloja's contempt for him in the final scene is withering, and I share it, because

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even then he cannot see the damage he has done; but there is something almost pitiable in his blindness.

So I am made to dislike the British characters a great deal, especially Simon Pilkings, whose arrogance and disrespect drive the catastrophe. However, Soyinka's purpose is wider than simple condemnation. By making them shallow rather than evil, and by placing the real tragic weight on Elesin, he shows that the British are dangerous precisely because they do not understand how much they do not understand.

3a

Williams makes this early reunion so revealing because almost everything Blanche says and does exposes what she is trying to hide. On the surface it is a joyful meeting of sisters, but beneath her excited chatter the audience glimpses her drinking, her horror of being looked at, her snobbery and her desperate need for Stella. The scene works like an overture, announcing the fears that will destroy her.

The sheer energy of the opening is revealing in itself. Blanche's cry, "Stella, oh, Stella, Stella!", and her pet name "Stella for Star!" are rapturous, and Williams fills her speech with exclamations and rapid shifts of subject. This breathless rush suggests nervous excitement, but also a woman who cannot stop talking in case silence lets the truth in. She barely allows Stella to answer, which already shows her habit of controlling a conversation through performance.

Her reaction to light is the most revealing detail of all. She does not want Stella to look at her until she has bathed and rested, and she demands that the light be turned off, saying that she will not be looked at "in this merciless glare". The

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adjective "merciless" is striking: light, for Blanche, is cruel because it exposes age and truth. Williams establishes here a motif that runs through the play, from the paper lantern she places over the bulb to Mitch tearing it off. At this early stage the audience may simply think she is vain, but the intensity of her words hints at something more frightened.

The alcohol is equally telling. Before Stella arrived, Blanche had found the whisky and helped herself, rinsing the glass to hide it. Now she asks for a drink as though it were a fresh idea and protests that one is her limit. The dramatic irony is sharp, because the audience has watched her drink in secret. Williams shows us at once that Blanche lies easily and that she needs drink to steady herself, so we learn to read her words against her actions.

Her snobbery and fantasy also emerge. She is horrified by the cramped flat and the neighbourhood, and she turns to literature to express it: "Only Poe! Only Mr Edgar Allan Poe" could do justice to the place, she says, picturing the "ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir". Stella's flat reply that those are only the railway tracks punctures the fantasy with comic bathos. This exchange reveals the gulf between the sisters: Blanche transforms reality into Gothic romance, while Stella accepts it as it is. It also hints at her contempt for the world Stella has chosen, and so prepares for her clash with Stanley.

At the same time, Williams makes Blanche's vulnerability clear. She asks Stella anxiously about her appearance and about her figure, fishing for reassurance, and Stella's compliments seem to calm her only for a moment. Her plea that Stella is all she has in the world reveals deep loneliness. She is a woman who has lost her home and family and is clinging to her sister as a last refuge.

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The ending of the extract is perhaps the most revealing moment. When Stella wonders why Blanche has left school in the middle of term, Blanche's answer comes out in a broken, faltering sentence: "I was so exhausted by all I'd been through my". The syntax collapses at the very point where she tries to explain herself, and the confession that her nerves broke is the first open admission of crisis. The audience senses that this story is only partly true, and that there is something she cannot say.

This moment is so revealing because Williams lets Blanche betray herself through her fear of light, her secret drinking, her escapist imagination and her fractured speech, while Stella's plain, affectionate replies show how far apart the sisters' worlds have grown. Even in the first scene we are made to fear for Blanche, and to suspect that her refuge will not hold.

3b

Williams persuades me to agree with Blanche to a large extent: by the end of the play Stanley's brutality towards both sisters seems to justify her description of him as "an animal". However, Williams does not let the label settle comfortably. Stanley is also loyal, sharp-witted and, in his own way, honest, while Blanche's judgement is coloured by snobbery and fear. The word tells us as much about Blanche as about Stanley, and that is what makes the play so unsettling.

From his first entrance Williams encourages an animal reading. Stanley arrives carrying a red-stained package from the butcher's, and hurls the meat at Stella. The stage directions describe "animal joy" in all his movements and call him the "gaudy seed-bearer", like a proud male bird. His appetite, his physical confidence and his way of sizing women up sexually all suggest a creature driven by instinct. Even before Blanche names him, Williams has primed the audience to see him in

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these terms.

The poker night in Scene 3 strengthens the case. Stanley, drunk and losing, hurls the radio out of the window and hits Stella, who is pregnant. Afterwards he stands in the courtyard bellowing "Stell-lahhhhh!", a cry that sounds less like speech than an animal howl. When Blanche, the next morning, delivers her great speech, she says he "acts like an animal" and describes him as something "not quite to the stage of humanity yet", left behind while "thousands and thousands of years" passed. Stanley overhears this, and the audience has just seen evidence that seems to support it. At this point I find it very hard to disagree.

Yet Williams immediately complicates our response. The same Scene 3 ends with Stella going back down to Stanley, and the stage directions describe them coming together "with low, animal moans", but also with a tenderness that is clearly mutual. Stella tells Blanche that there are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark that make everything else seem unimportant. Williams suggests that the animal quality Blanche despises is also the source of a passion that Stella freely chooses. Blanche's disgust may reveal her own repressed desires as much as Stanley's crudeness.

Stanley also has a case of his own. His suspicion about Belle Reve is not entirely unreasonable, and when he investigates Blanche's past he uncovers truths she has hidden. His furious protest that he is not a "Polack" but "one hundred percent American" shows how he resents her contempt, and many audiences feel some sympathy when her snobbery is aimed at his background. His declaration that "every man is a king" and he is "the king around here" sounds aggressive, but it is also a response to a woman who treats him as an inferior in his own home. Williams invites us to see a clash between two ways of life, with neither side

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wholly innocent.

However, the later scenes push me firmly back towards Blanche's view. Stanley's cruelty becomes calculated rather than instinctive: he destroys her hopes with Mitch, and on her birthday he gives her a bus ticket back to Laurel, an act of deliberate humiliation. In Scene 10, while Stella is in hospital having their baby, he corners Blanche, and his line "We've had this date with each other from the beginning!" suggests that the rape is the culmination of a long, predatory hostility. Calling her "Tiger" as she tries to defend herself, he turns the animal imagery upon her, as though reducing her to prey. This is the moment where "animal" seems almost too kind, because an animal does not plan.

The final scene seals my judgement. As Blanche is led away to the asylum, Stanley kneels beside the sobbing Stella and his fingers move to the opening of her blouse. Desire continues as though nothing has happened, and the poker game resumes. Williams gives Stanley the victory, but it is a bleak one.

So Williams largely persuades me to agree. Stanley is animal in his physicality, his violence and his appetites, and his treatment of Blanche is unforgivable. Yet the playwright makes the word more complex than an insult: it describes the vitality that draws Stella to him and exposes Blanche's own fear of desire. In the end I think Stanley is worse than an animal, precisely because his cruelty is so very human.

4a

Shakespeare makes this an entertaining introduction to Bottom by letting him take over a scene that is supposed to belong to Quince. Bottom's boundless self-confidence, his love of performance and his comic misjudgements make him

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impossible to ignore, yet there is also something warm and likeable in his enthusiasm, so the audience laughs at him and with him at the same time.

From the moment Quince calls his name, Bottom tries to direct the director. His reply, "Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed", is brisk and commanding, as if he were the one in charge. His question "A lover, or a tyrant?" is funny because he seems to think there are only two kinds of part, and both are grand. When he hears that Pyramus is a lover who kills himself "most gallant for love", he immediately imagines his own triumph: the audience must "look to their eyes", and he "will move storms". The hyperbole is comic because these are amateur craftsmen preparing a modest play, and Bottom is already picturing a weeping audience.

Shakespeare then lets Bottom perform without being asked. He admits that his "chief humour is for a tyrant" and bursts into a sample of "Ercles" vein. The verse is deliberately terrible: short, thumping lines, the heavy rhymes of "rocks" and "shocks" and "locks", and the mispronounced "Phibbus' car" for Phoebus. Its clattering rhythm parodies old-fashioned ranting drama, and Bottom's verdict, "This was lofty", is hilarious because he is so plainly pleased with himself. The fact that he is described as a weaver adds to the joke, since this ordinary working man casts himself as Hercules.

His greed for parts is the running gag of the scene. When Flute is given Thisby, Bottom offers to play her too, promising to speak "in a monstrous little voice". The oxymoron sums him up: he cannot imagine doing anything small, even being small. He immediately demonstrates, squeaking "Thisne, Thisne!", so the audience gets to watch him play a woman. Quince's flat reply, "No, no, you must play Pyramus", shows the patience of a man used to managing him.

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The lion's part produces the funniest exchange. When Snug worries that he is "slow of study", Bottom cuts in once more: "Let me play the lion too." His boast that he will make the Duke say "Let him roar again, let him roar again" shows his fantasy of royal applause. When Quince warns that he might frighten the ladies and that would "hang us all", the whole company repeats the fear, "every mother's son". Bottom's solution is wonderfully absurd: he will "roar you as gently as any sucking dove", as if "any nightingale". The comic contradiction of a gentle roar, and his misuse of "aggravate" when he means the opposite, show that his confidence in language is far greater than his command of it.

Quince's final speech shows how Bottom must be handled. He flatters him that Pyramus is "a sweet-fac'd man", "a most lovely gentleman-like man", and the piling-up of compliments works perfectly: "therefore you must needs play Pyramus." Quince manages Bottom's vanity rather than confronting it, and the audience enjoys seeing the ego that cannot be stopped finally steered.

The scene is entertaining as an introduction because it sets up everything to come. Bottom's wish to play every part and his belief in his own charm prepare us for the moment when he is given an ass's head and adored by the Fairy Queen, and his worry about frightening the ladies anticipates the anxious, comic performance before Theseus. Shakespeare presents Bottom as foolish, vain and ridiculous, but also as generous, energetic and endlessly game, and that combination makes him the comic heart of the play from his very first scene.

4b

Puck contributes enormously to the dramatic impact of A Midsummer Night's Dream because he is the engine of its chaos and the voice of its mischief. He

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drives the plot, through his errors with the love-juice and his transformation of Bottom, and he also shapes the audience's attitude to everything we watch, inviting us to laugh at the lovers' suffering. Finally, in his epilogue, he steps outside the play altogether, so that the spirit who caused the confusion is the one who closes the dream.

Shakespeare introduces Puck in Act 2 Scene 1 through a Fairy who recognises him as "that shrewd and knavish sprite / Call'd Robin Goodfellow". Puck happily confirms his reputation, describing himself as "that merry wanderer of the night". His speech is full of comic detail: he jests to Oberon, he takes the shape of a crab apple in an old woman's drink so that the ale spills down her chin, and he pulls a stool from under a wise aunt telling a sad tale. These domestic pranks establish him as a figure of harmless, earthy fun, and they make the audience expect trouble wherever he goes.

His speed and energy add to the play's magical atmosphere. When Oberon sends him for the flower, he promises to "put a girdle round about the earth / In forty minutes". The hyperbole conveys his supernatural swiftness, and the lively rhythm of his speech contrasts with the formal verse of the Athenian court. Puck brings a sense of freedom and movement to the wood, which is part of why the forest feels so unlike the rigid world of Theseus and Egeus.

Dramatically, Puck matters most because of his mistake. Oberon tells him to anoint the eyes of a man in "Athenian garments", and Puck applies the juice to Lysander instead of Demetrius. This error turns the plot upside down: Lysander abandons Hermia for Helena, and when Puck tries to fix things by anointing Demetrius, both men pursue Helena while Hermia is left bewildered and furious. The quarrel scene in Act 3 Scene 2, with its insults and near-violence, is one of

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the funniest in the play, and it exists because of Puck. Shakespeare uses him to show how fragile and irrational love is, since the lovers' passionate vows can be reversed by a drop of juice.

Puck's attitude to this chaos is crucial. Rather than feeling guilty, he is delighted, telling Oberon that the confusion pleases him. His famous line "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" gives the audience a superior viewpoint. We watch the lovers from Puck's perspective, as entertainment, which keeps the potentially painful situation comic. Without Puck's laughter, Helena's misery and Hermia's rage might feel too real.

He is equally important in the mechanicals' plot. Watching their rehearsal, he calls them "hempen home-spuns" and decides to make mischief, giving Bottom an ass's head. This transformation creates one of the play's richest dramatic images: Titania, the Fairy Queen, doting on a weaver with donkey ears. Puck's gleeful report to Oberon, that "Titania waked and straightway lov'd an ass", shows his pleasure in the absurdity. Here Puck links the fairy and human worlds, bringing the lowest characters into contact with the highest.

Puck also restores order. Under Oberon's instruction he leads Lysander and Demetrius apart by imitating their voices, so that they cannot fight, and then puts the antidote on Lysander's eyes. His rhyming charm that "Jack shall have Jill" and "all shall be well" sounds like a nursery rhyme, reducing the lovers' passions to a simple comic resolution. He is therefore both the cause and the cure of the confusion.

His final contribution is the epilogue. Alone on stage, he asks the audience to think, if the actors have offended, that they have "but slumber'd here" while these

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visions appeared. This blurs the line between the play and the dream, and turns the whole comedy into something gentle and forgivable. By asking for applause, he invites the audience to join the reconciliation.

Puck therefore contributes to the dramatic impact by creating confusion, entertaining us with his wit and energy, connecting the worlds of the play and finally addressing us directly. He embodies the playful, irrational spirit of the dream, and without him the comedy would lose both its chaos and its charm.

Sa

Shakespeare creates a striking first impression of Othello in this scene by presenting him as calm, dignified and self-assured, in sharp contrast to the crude, racist picture Iago and Roderigo have painted of him in the opening scene. Faced with Iago's warnings and then with drawn swords, Othello never loses his composure. Yet there are also hints, in his pride and his trust, of qualities that Iago will later exploit.

The extract begins with Iago trying to alarm him. Iago's warning that Brabantio "is much beloved" and has a voice "As double as the Duke's" is designed to frighten Othello into anxiety, and the threat that Brabantio will "divorce" him suggests that his marriage is fragile. Othello's response is wonderfully brief: "Let him do his spite." The short, dismissive sentence shows his confidence, and it immediately reverses the impression of a man who must hide.

His following speech reveals the basis of that confidence. He trusts that his "services" to the "signiory" will "out-tongue his complaints". The personification is striking: his deeds will speak louder than Brabantio's words, and the audience senses a man who values action over talk. He then reveals that he comes from

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"men of royal siege", which gives him a nobility the earlier scene denied him. Yet he will only make this public "when I know that boasting is an honour", showing modesty and restraint. There is perhaps a trace of pride here too, but it is controlled and dignified.

The most moving lines concern Desdemona. Othello says that, if he did not love "the gentle Desdemona", he would not give up his "unhoused free condition" for "the seas' worth". The image of the sea suits a soldier and traveller, and his willingness to surrender his freedom shows that his love is serious and generous. The adjective "gentle" is tender. My first impression is of a man whose love is deep and sincere, which makes it all the more painful to know that Iago is standing beside him plotting.

When lights appear, Iago urges him to "go in" and hide. Othello's refusal, "Not I; I must be found", is one of the most powerful moments in the extract. The firm monosyllables suggest integrity, and his belief that "My parts, my title, and my perfect soul / Shall manifest me rightly" shows his faith that his true self will be seen. The phrase "perfect soul" is perhaps a little too confident; with hindsight it creates dramatic irony, since this self-belief will be shaken. Iago's oath, "By Janus", is a sly touch, as Janus is the two-faced god, and the audience notices what Othello does not.

Othello's authority is confirmed when Cassio arrives with the Duke's summons. The Duke requires his "haste-post-haste appearance", and the Senate has sent "three several quests" to search for him. This urgency shows how much the state depends on him in the crisis with Cyprus. The man called a "thief" moments later is in fact the most valued general in Venice, and Shakespeare lets this contrast speak for itself.

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The climax comes when Brabantio arrives with weapons and cries "Down with him, thief." Swords are drawn and violence seems certain. Othello's response is calm and almost gently witty: "Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them." The line is poised and controlled, defusing danger with an image of nature rather than a threat. His courtesy to Brabantio, "Good signior", and his remark that the old man will "more command with years / Than with your weapons", show respect and self-control. A lesser man would fight; Othello commands with words.

This scene gives a striking first impression of Othello as noble, eloquent, loving and calm under pressure, a complete answer to the slurs of Act 1 Scene 1. Yet Shakespeare also lets us glimpse his pride and his trusting nature, especially towards Iago, whose two-faced oath he never questions. The dignity we admire here makes his later collapse all the more tragic.

Sb

Shakespeare's portrayal of Iago makes me feel a deeply uncomfortable mixture of revulsion and reluctant fascination. He is the most chilling character in the play, yet because Shakespeare gives him so many soliloquies and asides, I find myself drawn into his confidence and almost admiring his skill. It is this disturbing closeness, being made his only true confidant while everyone on stage calls him "honest", that makes him so frightening.

From the very first scene, Shakespeare makes me distrust Iago by letting him announce his own falseness. He tells Roderigo that he follows Othello only "to serve my turn upon him", and ends with the riddling "I am not what I am". This reversal of God's words of self-definition feels almost blasphemous, and it warns me that every public word he speaks will be a mask. Almost immediately he shows

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how vile his imagination is, shouting to Brabantio in the darkness that "an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe". The animal imagery is crude and degrading, and I feel disgusted that he can reduce love to something bestial while hiding safely out of sight.

What makes me feel most uneasy, however, is the way Shakespeare uses soliloquy to make me his accomplice. At the end of Act 1 Iago admits "I hate the Moor", and then offers the flimsy rumour that Othello has "done my office" between his sheets, adding that he will act on mere suspicion. His motives keep shifting, and I am left feeling that the reasons hardly matter to him: hatred comes first and the excuses follow. His contempt is unsettling too: he sneers that Othello, being "of a free and open nature", will be "led by th' nose / As asses are". The rhyming couplet that closes the act, "Hell and night / Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light", sounds like a spell, and the image of a "monstrous birth" makes me feel that something evil is being born in front of me which I am powerless to stop.

In Act 2, Shakespeare deepens this horror by giving Iago a playful, almost comic voice. He asks the audience, "And what's he then that says I play the villain?", teasing us as though we might argue with him. The question is witty, and I confess I am briefly amused, which makes me feel complicit. Yet he follows it with "Divinity of hell!" and plans to "turn her virtue into pitch", making a "net / That shall enmesh them all". The contrast between whiteness and black "pitch" shows his desire to stain the purest character, Desdemona, and the image of the net makes him seem like a spider, patient and predatory. I feel helpless because I know the plan while the victims do not.

The temptation scene in Act 3 is where I find Iago most terrifying, because

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Shakespeare shows his genius for suggestion. He begins with the tiny, apparently casual "Ha! I like not that", and his hesitations and half-sentences do more damage than any accusation. Most cruelly, he warns Othello against jealousy, the "green-eyed monster which doth mock / The meat it feeds on", while deliberately feeding it. The dramatic irony is almost unbearable: he hypocritically declares that "Men should be what they seem", and Othello's repeated trust in "honest Iago" becomes painful to hear. When Iago kneels and says "I am your own for ever", the vow sounds like a parody of marriage, and I feel sick that he has replaced Desdemona in Othello's heart.

By the end, my feelings turn to anger and frustration. Iago kills Roderigo and his own wife Emilia when they threaten to expose him, showing that he values no one. When finally caught, he refuses any explanation: "Demand me nothing: what you know, you know". Shakespeare denies me the satisfaction of understanding him, and his silence makes him even more sinister, as if evil simply exists without a cause. Overall, Shakespeare makes me feel both repelled by Iago and uncomfortably seduced by his intelligence, and this tension is exactly what makes his portrayal so powerful: he forces me to recognise how easily charm and wit can disguise destructive malice.