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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/32**

Paper 3 Drama (Open Text) **February/March 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.

This document has **12** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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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 carefully, and then answer the question that follows it:

Ernestine [*To audience*]: My essay was entitled "The Colored Worker in the United States"; the mistake was using the word "worker" too liberally. The principal called in Daddy Goodness and told him to stop mingling with the Jews at his job and everything would be all right. Daddy didn't bother to tell him that his coworkers were all colored. And the Jews on our block won't speak to us. Well, except the Levys, who if they didn't talk to us they'd have to sit in the darkness on Friday night.

[*Lights rise on* GODFREY *shining his shoes in the living room.* LILY *sits in the armchair reading a movie magazine.*]

Godfrey [*Hushed*]: Whole school thinks I'm a communist. It's all your fault, ya know.

Lily: And I suppose I'm to blame for segregation, war and polio as well.

Godfrey: You can't ever leave well enough alone. It's fine for you and your smart set, but I'm a working man gotta ride the bus each morning.

Lily: Surprised you ain't walking as tight as you are.

Godfrey: Don't change the subject on me.

Lily: Well, hell, Godfrey I ain't said nothing about nothing. I can't help it if that child got eyes and ears, and a mind that ain't limited to a few pages in the Bible. I ain't seen you this spirited since I got here … in fact, I think being a communist agrees with you.

[LILY *gives* GODFREY *a few playful jabs.* GODFREY *feigns laughter.*]

Godfrey: That's funny! Try telling that to the fellas at work, ain't none of them speaking to me. [*Pointing to* LILY] This is your doing. Got that old bad magic rubbing off on us.

Lily: Don't get superstitious on me. [*Laughs*]

Godfrey: My little voice told me something like this could happen.

Lily: That little voice got you wound too tight! Shucks, I think you need to come uptown with me and get a little taste of reality.

Godfrey: Sister, I don't care what you think, that's the honest-to-God truth. But I do care what my gals think. [*To* ERNESTINE] Darling, you gonna have to go up to school and apologize.

Ernestine: Why's that, Daddy?

Lily: Ya gonna make the chile do that? Punish her for having thoughts. How are we ever gonna get ahead? Have you read it? It might be a fine piece of writing, Godfrey. Look here, it says –

Godfrey: I don't care what it say, but it upset that white teacher and she seemed like a smart lady.

[LILY *makes a show of sitting down to read the essay.*]

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Lily: I like the way it starts already. Simple, don't bother with them highfalutin words.

[GODFREY *snatches the essay out of* LILY*'s hand.*]

Godfrey: She gonna apologize!

[ERNESTINE *shakes her head furiously.*]

And I'm going to tell you once, then I'm gonna leave it alone: we were doing just fine without your sorta learning. We don't want and we don't need it.

Lily: Well, I promised my mama I'd look after these babies. They need a woman's voice in this house, that's what they need.

Godfrey: Maybe you ain't the right woman.

[LILY *stares long and hard, fighting back the urge to respond.* GODFREY *turns away from her and jots down some notes in his pad.*]

Lily: That's right! Go on, ask Father Divine! Ask him what to think.

[*Lights begin to fade on a simmering* GODFREY*, leaving* ERNESTINE *and a laughing* LILY *in separate pools of light.*]

Ernestine: I … Darling Angel, apologize for anything in my essay that might suggest that communism is a good thing. My intent was to deal with the labor movement in the United States, which primarily consists of God-fearing patriotic Americans dedicated to improving the conditions for the working man.

[*She crosses her heart. The National Anthem plays.*]

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America … [*Her eyes cloud over with tears*]

(*from* Act 1, Scene 3)

How does Nottage powerfully convey the conflict between Godfrey and Lily at this moment in the play?

Or **1 (b)** Explore the ways in which Nottage movingly depicts the marriage between Gerte and Godfrey.

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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 carefully, and then answer the question that follows it:

Iyaloja: We called you leader and oh, how you led us on.

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There are some who choose to reverse
the cycle of our being.

(*from* Scene 5)

How does Soyinka make this such a powerful moment in the play?

Or **2 (b)** Explore how Soyinka strikingly conveys the way Simon Pilkings thinks and feels about Yoruba customs.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 3 (a) Read this passage carefully, and then answer the question that follows it:

Stella: My sister lived at Belle Reve.

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[*The bathroom door is opened and* BLANCHE *thrusts her head out holding a towel about her hair.*]

(*from* Scene 7)

In what ways does Williams make this moment in the play so shocking?

Or **3 (b)** Explore how Williams vividly conveys the feelings Blanche and Mitch have for each other.

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 4 (a) Read this passage carefully, and then answer the question that follows it:

Lysander: How now, my love! Why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

Hermia: Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

Lysander: Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But either it was different in blood –

Hermia: O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

Lysander: Or else misgraffed in respect of years –

Hermia: O spite! too old to be engag'd to young.

Lysander: Or else it stood upon the choice of friends –

Hermia: O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.

Lysander: Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness, did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
Brief as the lightning in the collied night
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
The jaws of darkness do devour it up;
So quick bright things come to confusion.

Hermia: If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny.
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor Fancy's followers.

Lysander: A good persuasion; therefore, hear me, Hermia:
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child –
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues –
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

Hermia: My good Lysander!
I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow, with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,

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By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage Queen,
When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lysander: Keep promise, love.

(*from* Act 1, Scene 1)

In what ways does Shakespeare make this early moment in the play so memorable?

Or **4 (b)** How does Shakespeare's use of magic 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 carefully, and then answer the question that follows it:

Desdemona: I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts
By being in his eye. Most gracious Duke,
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear,
And let me find a charter in your voice
T' assist my simpleness.

Duke: What would you, Desdemona?

Desdemona: That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
May trumpet to the world. My heart's subdu'd
Even to the very quality of my lord:
I saw Othello's visage in his mind;
And to his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
The rites for why I love him are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

Othello: Let her have your voice.
Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not
To please the palate of my appetite;
Nor to comply with heat – the young affects
In me defunct – and proper satisfaction;
But to be free and bounteous to her mind.
And heaven defend your good souls that you think
I will your serious and great business scant
For she is with me. No, when light-wing'd toys
Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dullness
My speculative and offic'd instruments,
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let huswives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!

Duke: Be it as you shall privately determine,
Either for her stay or going. Th' affair cries haste,
And speed must answer it. You must away to-night.

Desdemona: To-night, my lord!

Duke: This night.

Othello: With all my heart.

Duke: At nine i' th' morning here we'll meet again.
Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you;
With such things else of quality and respect
As doth import you.

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Othello: So please your Grace, my ancient;
A man he is of honesty and trust.
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good Grace shall think
To be sent after me.

Duke: Let it be so.
Good night to every one. [*To* BRABANTIO] And, noble signior,
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

1 Senator: Adieu, brave Moor; use Desdemona well.

Brabantio: Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

[*Exeunt* DUKE, SENATORS, OFFICERS]

Othello: My life upon her faith! – Honest Iago,
My Desdemona must I leave to thee.
I prithee let thy wife attend on her.

(*from* Act 1, Scene 3)

How does Shakespeare strikingly portray the characters at this early moment in the play?

Or **5 (b)** To what extent does Shakespeare suggest that Emilia is to blame for Desdemona's death?

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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 the conflict between Godfrey and Lily powerful because it is not simply a squabble between a brother-in-law and a lodger, but a battle over who will shape Ernestine's mind. Godfrey wants safety, obedience and silence; Lily wants questioning, pride and "a little taste of reality". The quarrel is fierce precisely because each believes they are protecting the girls, and Nottage lets the cost of their struggle fall, finally and painfully, on Ernestine.

The scene is framed by Ernestine's dry narration, which prepares us for the clash. Her ironic remark that the mistake was "using the word 'worker' too liberally" shows that she already understands the absurdity of the accusation, and the joke about the Levys, who would otherwise "sit in the darkness on Friday night", reveals a community where people speak to one another only out of need. Against this background Godfrey's first line is spoken "[Hushed]", as if even in his own living room he fears being overheard. The accusation "It's all your fault, ya know" is blunt and childish, and Lily's reply, blaming herself for "segregation, war and polio as well", deflates it with sarcasm. Nottage immediately establishes the rhythm of the conflict: Godfrey's anxious complaints are met by Lily's quicker, wittier tongue.

Much of the power comes from the contrast in their language. Godfrey defines himself as "a working man" who has to "ride the bus each morning", and the plain, practical image shows how much his fear is rooted in everyday exposure to white hostility. Lily's jibe that he is surprised he "ain't walking as tight as you are" mocks his meanness and rigidity in one phrase. Her playful "jabs" and her teasing claim that "being a communist agrees with you" turn his panic into comedy, while he can only "feign" laughter. Nottage shows that Lily's humour is a weapon: it

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refuses to take his fear seriously, which is exactly what makes him angrier.

The argument becomes darker when Godfrey retreats into superstition, blaming "that old bad magic" and his "little voice". These phrases suggest a man who explains the world through fear and faith rather than reason, and Lily's answer, that the little voice has him "wound too tight", turns his inner guide into a symptom of anxiety. The conflict is therefore also between two ways of seeing: Godfrey's world of Father Divine and caution, and Lily's world of politics and uptown energy.

The stage business makes the struggle physical. Lily "makes a show" of reading the essay aloud, and her praise of its simple style is a deliberate provocation. When Godfrey "snatches the essay out of LILY's hand" the essay itself becomes the object they fight over, a visible symbol of Ernestine's mind being tugged between them. His declaration that "we were doing just fine without your sorta learning" is chilling, especially the repeated rejection in "We don't want and we don't need it". Most wounding of all is the short line "Maybe you ain't the right woman". Its quietness after so much noise gives it cruelty, and the direction that Lily "stares long and hard, fighting back the urge to respond" lets the audience feel the injury in silence. She recovers with the scornful "Go on, ask Father Divine!", mocking his habit of handing his thinking to someone else.

Nottage's ending is the most moving part of the conflict. The lighting splits the family: a "simmering" Godfrey fades, while Ernestine and a "laughing" Lily stand "in separate pools of light", a visual sign that the household is divided and that Ernestine is alone. Her apology, stiff with borrowed phrases like "God-fearing patriotic Americans", is clearly not her own voice. When she crosses her heart, the anthem plays and her eyes "cloud over with tears", the irony is painful: she pledges

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loyalty to a country that has punished her for thinking. I find this moment powerful because the adults' conflict ends not with a winner but with a child forced to silence herself, and Nottage makes us feel that both Godfrey's fear and Lily's defiance have left her caught in between.

1b

Nottage presents the marriage between Gerte and Godfrey as something both brave and fragile: a union between two lonely, displaced people who reach for each other across the colour line, but who are never allowed the peace to build a real home. What makes it moving is that neither is a villain. Godfrey and Gerte both want comfort and belonging, yet their marriage exposes the grief, prejudice and divided loyalties that surround them.

The marriage is moving first because of where Godfrey begins. He arrives in Brooklyn as a widower still haunted by Ruby, clinging to Father Divine's teachings as a substitute for the wife he has lost. His notepad, his letters to Father Divine and his anxious, rule-bound manner suggest a man who cannot trust his own feelings. When he goes into the city for a weekend and returns with a German wife, the decision seems almost impulsive, and Nottage stages it as a shock: the daughters, who have been told nothing, are confronted with a white stranger in their living room. The abruptness tells us something poignant about Godfrey. His marriage seems less a calculated choice than a sudden grab at happiness by a man who has been starved of it, and perhaps also an attempt to live out Father Divine's ideal that race should not matter.

Gerte herself is drawn with real sympathy. She is foreign, uncertain and eager to be liked, and Nottage makes her efforts to win the girls both comic and sad. Her accent, her attempts to bring her own songs and cooking into the house, and her

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hopeful friendliness towards Ernestine and Ermina are met with suspicion and sulking. The audience sees a woman trying to make a family out of people who did not choose her. Her outsider status mirrors Godfrey's: both are migrants in New York, both have lost the world they came from, and Nottage suggests that this shared displacement is what draws them together.

The marriage is also moving because of the hostility it attracts. Lily, who had half expected to become the woman of the house, treats Gerte with open contempt, and the clashes between the two women make Godfrey's choice look like a betrayal of his own family and of Ruby's memory. Outside the home, a Black man walking with a white wife in the 1950s invites stares and threats, and Nottage shows the couple's happiness being constantly watched and judged. The daughters' resentment is understandable, yet we also feel for Gerte, who is punished for a love she cannot help. The tension of the household, held in tight domestic scenes, lets the audience feel how little privacy the couple are given.

Nottage complicates the marriage further through Godfrey's restraint. His faith encourages discipline and denial of the body, so there is an awkwardness and distance between husband and wife even in the moments when they try to be close. Gerte wants warmth and ordinary affection; Godfrey offers duty and good intentions. This gap makes the marriage feel tender rather than passionate, and it is affecting because both seem to be trying, in their limited ways, to do right by each other.

Ernestine's narration shapes our response throughout. Because the story is filtered through a daughter who initially resents Gerte, the audience watches her slowly reach a more complicated understanding of her father's need for companionship. Her direct addresses to the audience let Nottage show the marriage from the

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outside, through the eyes of someone who is growing up.

I find the marriage most moving because Nottage refuses to resolve it neatly. It does not heal the family's grief or defeat the prejudice around them, yet it remains an act of hope. Godfrey and Gerte are, as the play's title suggests, picking up crumbs of joy from a table that the world has not set for them, and Nottage asks us to respect them for trying.

2b

Soyinka strikingly conveys Simon Pilkings as a man who thinks of himself as reasonable, modern and even kind, yet who regards Yoruba customs with a mixture of amusement, contempt and blank incomprehension. What makes the portrayal so effective is that Soyinka rarely lets Pilkings be a simple tyrant. Instead he exposes, often through comedy and irony, how his confident ignorance does more damage than open cruelty could.

The first and most memorable image of Pilkings is visual. In Scene 2 he and Jane are discovered dancing to a tango on the gramophone dressed in the egungun costume, the sacred garment of the ancestral masquerade, which they have taken from arrested cult members and are wearing to a fancy dress ball. Soyinka makes the stage picture itself the argument: a holy object that, to the Yoruba, carries the presence of the dead is reduced to party clothes and danced in to European music. Pilkings sees nothing wrong in this. When Amusa, a Muslim and a policeman who has no love for the cult, still cannot bring himself to speak to his superior in that costume, Pilkings finds his stammering absurd and treats his fear as superstition. The scene is comic on the surface, but the comedy is at Pilkings' expense, because the audience sees what he cannot: that he is trampling on beliefs he does not even try to understand.

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His attitude is revealed through his language. He speaks of the ritual of the King's Horseman as a piece of savage nonsense and frames it in legal terms, as a crime to be stopped rather than a belief to be understood. His exchanges with Joseph, his Christian houseboy, are particularly telling. When the drumming starts and Joseph tries to explain what it signifies, Pilkings mocks him for clinging to old beliefs, and then is irritated when Joseph is offended. Soyinka gives Pilkings a brisk, clipped, schoolboyish English full of casual exasperation, and the tone tells us that for him these customs are an inconvenience to an evening's entertainment. The contrast with the rich, proverbial poetry spoken by Elesin, the Praise-Singer and the market women in the other scenes is deliberate. Their language is dense with meaning about death, continuity and the world of the ancestors; his is flat and dismissive. The audience feels that he is deaf to a whole way of seeing.

Soyinka is careful, though, to show that Pilkings believes he is doing good. His help in sending Olunde to study medicine in England, against Elesin's wishes, is something he clearly regards as an act of enlightenment, and his decision to arrest Elesin is presented to himself as saving a man's life. This is what makes him more than a caricature. He genuinely cannot imagine that a person might choose death for the sake of his people, so he reads Elesin's duty as either madness or coercion. The irony is that his humane intentions are the very thing that wrecks the ritual and causes far more death than they prevent.

The final scene shows the consequences of the way he thinks. Having imprisoned Elesin in the residence, Pilkings tries to talk to him as though one sensible man to another, and seems unable to grasp the depth of Elesin's shame. When Olunde has died in his father's place and Elesin strangles himself with his chain, Pilkings is left helpless and confused, still struggling to see what he has done. Iyaloja's bitter

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rebuke to him, that he has interfered with things he does not understand, gives the verdict the play has been building towards.

I find Soyinka's portrayal striking because it is so controlled. Pilkings is not a monster but a confident, well-meaning man whose arrogance makes him blind, and Soyinka uses costume, comedy, contrasting language and dramatic irony to show how that blindness turns an ordinary colonial officer into the instrument of tragedy.

3a

Williams makes this moment shocking because it is the point at which Blanche's carefully guarded past is dragged into the open, not by Blanche herself, but by Stanley, gleefully and in her absence. The shock lies partly in the revelations themselves, partly in the cruelty with which they are delivered, and above all in Williams' staging, which sets Stanley's brutal facts against Blanche's innocent, unknowing song from the bathroom.

The setting itself makes the moment more painful. It is Blanche's birthday, and Stella is preparing a celebration for her sister. Into this domestic, affectionate scene Stanley brings what he has dug up about Blanche's life in Laurel. Stella's insistence that her sister lived at Belle Reve shows her clinging to the family's version of Blanche as a lady of the old plantation, and Stanley's account systematically tears it down. Williams makes Stella the stand-in for the audience: we, like her, have half suspected Blanche's pretences, but we are still unprepared for the scale of what we hear.

The content of Stanley's story is genuinely shocking for the time. He describes Blanche living at the Flamingo, a seedy hotel where she became notorious, and

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then delivers the most damaging detail of all: that she lost her teaching post because of her involvement with a seventeen-year-old pupil and was effectively driven out of town. Each revelation is placed after the last like a blow, and Stanley's coarse, jeering language, full of mockery and relish, shows that he enjoys the destruction. He is not merely exposing lies; he is punishing Blanche for the contempt she has shown him. The audience is shocked not only by her past but by the pleasure he takes in revealing it.

Williams heightens all of this through dramatic irony. While Stanley speaks, Blanche can be heard in the bath, singing "Paper Moon", a sentimental popular song about a world that is only make-believe, a "Barnum and Bailey world" that would be real if only someone believed in it. The song is almost unbearably apt. It expresses exactly Blanche's philosophy of illusion, the magic she has been offering Mitch and herself, at the very moment that illusion is being destroyed. The cheerful sound of her voice cutting across Stanley's account makes the scene grotesque and cruel, and makes us pity her because she has no idea what is happening a few feet away. The bath, too, is significant: Blanche repeatedly retreats into it to soothe her nerves and to wash herself clean, and Williams seems to suggest that no amount of water can cleanse the reputation Stanley now holds over her.

Stella's reactions add to the shock. She is distressed and protective, and she tries to defend her sister by explaining what Blanche suffered with her young husband, but Stanley is unmoved. Her distress shows that the revelations wound the family as well as Blanche, and that Stella is being forced to choose between her husband and her sister. When Stanley reveals that he has already told Mitch, the scene's full cruelty becomes clear. Blanche's one hope of escape, the marriage she has been building with such care, has been destroyed before she even knows it is

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threatened. Williams lets the audience realise that the birthday celebration is now hollow, and that the "magic" Blanche has created will not survive the evening.

The moment ends as the bathroom door opens and Blanche looks out, towel round her hair, still fresh and unaware. This visual climax is perhaps the most shocking touch of all. The audience now knows everything, Blanche knows nothing, and Williams leaves us waiting for the moment she will sense it. I find this moment so disturbing because Williams turns us into helpless witnesses: we can see the trap closing on a woman whose fragility we have come to understand, and we cannot warn her.

3b

Williams vividly conveys the feelings between Blanche and Mitch as a hesitant, fragile tenderness built on mutual loneliness, but also on illusion. Each sees in the other a refuge: Blanche sees safety and rescue, Mitch sees refinement and someone to bring home to his mother. Because their feelings depend on Blanche hiding her past and her age, Williams makes us suspect from the start that the relationship cannot survive the light.

Their first meeting in Scene 3 establishes this pattern. Mitch stands out from the other poker players through his awkward politeness, and Blanche immediately singles him out as "superior" to the others. Their conversation is full of small courtesies, and Williams uses props to reveal their feelings. Mitch shows her the inscription on his cigarette case, a line from a Browning sonnet given to him by a girl who died, and Blanche responds with sympathy. The detail tells us that Mitch is gentle and sentimental, and that what draws them together is a shared experience of loss. At the same moment Blanche asks him to cover the bare bulb with a coloured paper lantern, saying she cannot stand a naked light bulb "any

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more than I can a rude remark or a vulgar action". The lantern is one of the play's most important symbols. It shows Blanche softening reality for Mitch, and it hints that his attraction is to a carefully lit version of her.

Williams develops this tenderness in Scene 6, after their date at the amusement park. The scene is quietly comic: Mitch carries a plaster statuette of Mae West he has won, and struggles with Blanche's flirtatious French, which she teases him with precisely because he cannot understand. His proud boasting about his weight and his muscles is clumsy and endearing. Yet the comedy gives way to the most intimate moment in the play, when Blanche tells him about her young husband's suicide. Her description of the moment the "searchlight" of love was switched off reveals how deeply her feelings for Mitch are bound up with her need to recover that lost light. Mitch's response, the simple suggestion that they both need somebody and that it might be "you and me", is touching in its plainness. Blanche's broken reply, with its sense that God has come so quickly, shows that for her this is close to salvation. Williams makes the audience want it to be real.

Even here there are warnings. Blanche plays the role of an innocent, old-fashioned girl, deliberately refusing more than a kiss because she wants Mitch to respect her. She lies about her age. Her feelings are genuine, but they are mixed with calculation and fear, and the audience senses how much depends on Mitch never discovering the truth.

When Stanley exposes her, Mitch's feelings turn violently in Scene 9. He arrives drunk and unshaven, and his first act is to tear the paper lantern off the bulb, forcing her into the light he says he has never seen her in. Blanche's cry, "I don't want realism. I want magic!", sums up the gulf between them: Mitch wants the truth, while she has offered him a dream. His cruelty is hurt pride. He tries to

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take what he was earlier denied, and then tells her she is not clean enough to bring into the house with his mother. The audience feels the injustice of this. He had loved an image, and when it breaks he blames her for not being it.

Yet Williams does not let us forget that Mitch did care. In the final scene he sits miserably at the poker table, unable to look at Blanche as she is led away, and he turns on Stanley, blaming him for what has happened before collapsing into tears. His grief suggests that his feelings, though weak and easily broken, were real.

Williams therefore makes their love vivid because it is so human: gentle, needy and doomed. Through symbols of light, through comic and tender dialogue, and through the brutal reversal of Scene 9, he shows two lonely people who might have saved each other but who could not survive the truth.

4a Shakespeare makes this early moment memorable because it is both genuinely moving and quietly playful. The lovers have just been told that Hermia must marry Demetrius, become a nun or die, and here they turn their misery into a duet about the troubles of love before turning it, just as quickly, into a plan to escape. The scene introduces the play's central idea, that "The course of true love never did run smooth", and does so in language so lyrical and so stylised that the audience is drawn in while also sensing the gentle comedy of young love taking itself very seriously.

The opening exchange is tender and poetic. Lysander's question about why the "roses" in Hermia's cheek "fade so fast" uses a conventional image of beauty, and Hermia answers by extending it: the roses lack "rain", which she could easily supply from "the tempest of my eyes". The metaphor is witty as well as sad. She

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turns her tears into a storm, and the hyperbole shows the intensity of her feeling while also hinting at the exaggeration typical of lovers. Their shared imagery suggests from the start that they are in harmony with each other, even as the world opposes them.

The most memorable part of the passage is the patterned exchange that follows. Lysander lists the obstacles that lovers have faced, and Hermia completes each one with an exclamation: "O cross!", "O spite!", "O hell!". This stichomythia makes the lovers sound like a single voice divided between two speakers, and the rhythm is almost ritualistic, like a lament or a litany. The obstacles themselves, differences of "blood", of "years" and the interference of "friends", show how love is threatened by society, and the last, "to choose love by another's eyes", directly describes Hermia's plight, since Egeus wants her to love through his choice rather than her own. Yet the very neatness of the pattern is slightly comic. Shakespeare lets us enjoy the lovers' sincerity while smiling at its theatricality.

Lysander's speech on the brevity of love is the poetic high point of the scene. The similes pile up, "momentary as a sound, / Swift as a shadow, short as any dream", and the effect of repetition is of love slipping away even as he speaks. The image of lightning in the "collied night" that reveals "both heaven and earth" before "The jaws of darkness do devour it up" is startling. The violent personification of darkness as a devouring beast gives the speech a sudden sense of danger, and the closing line, "So quick bright things come to confusion", is haunting in its simplicity. Shakespeare plants the idea that love is fragile and easily overturned, which the rest of the play will test, partly in comedy.

Hermia's response is memorable for its calm resolve. She argues that if true lovers have always been "cross'd", it is "an edict in destiny", and they must "teach our

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trial patience". Her maturity contrasts with the extravagance of Lysander's speech, and her final list of love's "followers", "thoughts and dreams and sighs, / Wishes and tears", has a gentle, rueful tone.

The scene then changes direction with Lysander's practical plan. The detail of the "widow aunt" of "great revenue" living "seven leagues" away, beyond the reach of "the sharp Athenian law", is almost comically down to earth after the soaring poetry. The plan to meet "in the wood, a league without the town" sets up the whole central action of the play, and the mention of Helena prepares us for the complications to come.

Hermia's oath ends the passage memorably. She swears by "Cupid's strongest bow", by "Venus' doves" and by the fire that "burn'd the Carthage Queen", piling up classical lovers' symbols in rhyming couplets that give her vow a song-like finality. Yet her choice of examples is ironic: Dido was betrayed, and Hermia adds, with a teasing edge, the vows that "men have broke", "In number more than ever women spoke". This is witty, but it is also prophetic, since Lysander will soon abandon her for Helena. Lysander's brief "Keep promise, love" closes the scene with simple trust. I find the moment memorable because Shakespeare balances real feeling with light irony, letting us believe in the lovers while preparing us for the chaos that will test them.

4b

Magic is the engine of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Without it the lovers' quarrel in Athens would end in a forced marriage or a convent; with it, the play becomes a night of confusion, comedy and transformation that finally allows order and love to be restored. Shakespeare uses magic to create humour and spectacle, but also to make us wonder about how irrational love really is, so that its dramatic impact is

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both delightful and thought-provoking.

The magic first adds to the drama by moving the action into the wood, a world beyond the "sharp Athenian law". The fairy kingdom is introduced through the quarrel between Oberon and Titania over the changeling boy, and Titania's speech describing how their dissension has disordered the seasons, flooding fields and confusing summer and winter, gives the supernatural real power. Their argument shows that magic is not just decoration: it is bound to the natural world, and when its rulers fall out, nature itself is thrown into chaos. This gives the comedy a slightly unsettling edge.

The love-juice is Shakespeare's central magical device. Oberon describes the flower "love-in-idleness", struck by Cupid's arrow, whose juice makes a sleeper dote on the next creature they see. This simple idea drives most of the plot. Puck's mistake, anointing Lysander's eyes instead of Demetrius', produces the reversal in which both young men suddenly pursue Helena and abandon Hermia. The dramatic impact is comic and painful at once. Helena, who has longed to be loved, now believes she is being mocked, while Hermia is bewildered and furious, and the quarrel between the two women, with its insults about height, is among the funniest scenes in the play. Yet the magic also makes a serious point. Lysander's love has changed in a moment, and Shakespeare invites us to ask whether love in the "real" world of Athens is any less arbitrary. Puck's delighted comment, "Lord, what fools these mortals be!", lets the audience share his amused distance from the lovers' suffering.

Magic produces the play's most famous comic image in the transformation of Bottom. Puck gives him an ass's head, his fellow mechanicals flee in terror, and Titania, under the love-juice, wakes and falls in love with him. The scenes in her

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bower, where the Fairy Queen caresses a weaver with donkey's ears while he asks her fairies to scratch his head, are pure visual comedy. Shakespeare uses the spectacle to mock the idea that love sees clearly: as Helena says earlier, love looks "not with the eyes, but with the mind". Bottom's calm, unflappable acceptance of his new admirer makes the scene even funnier, and his speech on waking about his "most rare vision", in which he jumbles up the senses, captures the strange feeling of having passed through a dream.

Magic also allows Shakespeare to resolve the conflicts he has created. Oberon orders Puck to draw a fog over the wood so that the young men cannot fight, and the antidote is applied to Lysander's eyes while Demetrius is left under the spell, now loving Helena. Titania is released and reconciled with Oberon. When Theseus and Egeus find the lovers asleep, the new pairings allow Theseus to overrule Egeus. Interestingly, Demetrius is never freed from the charm, so the happy ending itself depends on magic, which perhaps hints that love always contains an element of enchantment.

Finally, the fairies' blessing of the marriages in the last scene, and Puck's epilogue suggesting that if the play has offended we should think we "have but slumber'd here", turn the magic outwards to the audience. Shakespeare reminds us that theatre itself is a kind of magic, a shared dream that transforms ordinary people and spaces for a few hours.

The dramatic impact of magic is therefore enormous. It creates the misunderstandings, the farce and the spectacle that make the play entertaining, but it also lets Shakespeare explore how changeable and irrational love is, and how close the stage comes to a dream.

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Shakespeare strikingly portrays the characters at this early moment by letting us see them at their most confident and public, in the Venetian senate, while quietly planting the seeds of the tragedy to come. Desdemona speaks with courage and passion, Othello with dignity and self-control, the Duke with brisk authority, and Brabantio with bitterness. Above all, the scene is striking because of what Othello trusts: he hands his wife, and his faith in her, to "Honest Iago".

Desdemona's speech is the most surprising thing in the passage. A young Venetian woman, she addresses the Duke and senate directly and asks for "a charter in your voice", a formal right to speak. Her modest reference to her "simpleness" is undercut by the bold assurance of what follows. She declares that her "downright violence and storm of fortunes / May trumpet to the world" her love, and the loud, public image of the trumpet shows that she is not ashamed of her elopement but proud of it. Her claim that "My heart's subdu'd / Even to the very quality of my lord" shows complete devotion, and the line "I saw Othello's visage in his mind" is perhaps the most important in the speech. It answers the racial prejudice of Brabantio and Iago by insisting that she loves Othello's mind and character, not his appearance. The religious language of "consecrate" and "rites" makes her love sound almost sacred. Most strikingly, she refuses to stay behind as "A moth of peace", an image of something idle and fragile, and demands, "Let me go with him." The short, plain sentence gives her request real force.

Othello's response is portrayed as measured and noble. He supports her with "Let her have your voice", but immediately insists that he does not ask for her company "To please the palate of my appetite", as though anxious to prove that he is not ruled by desire. His wish to be "free and bounteous to her mind" echoes her own emphasis on the mind, showing a meeting of equals. Yet his long, elaborate oath that if love ever made him neglect his duty, "Let huswives make a skillet of my

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helm", reveals a man whose identity depends on his soldierly reputation. The homely image of his helmet turned into a cooking pot is vivid and slightly comic, but it also shows how much he fears being diminished. The audience may sense dramatic irony: the "light-wing'd toys / Of feather'd Cupid" he dismisses will, through Iago, eventually destroy his judgement.

The Duke is portrayed as a practical leader. His short lines, "Th' affair cries haste", and "You must away to-night", create urgency, and Desdemona's startled "To-night, my lord!" shows how suddenly the lovers are to be parted. Othello's instant "With all my heart" stresses his readiness for duty. The Duke's parting compliment to Brabantio, that his son-in-law is "far more fair than black", is meant generously, yet it still links virtue with fairness and blackness with its opposite, suggesting that even Othello's admirers in Venice see him through a lens of race.

Brabantio's final couplet is one of the most striking moments of the scene. His warning, "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see: / She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee", is spiteful, and its rhyme gives it a sinister, proverbial weight. It plants the idea of Desdemona as a deceiver, which Iago will later exploit almost word for word. Brabantio's use of "Moor" rather than Othello's name shows his contempt.

The passage ends with the most chilling irony. Othello answers Brabantio with "My life upon her faith!", a line that becomes terribly literal by the end of the play, and in the same breath turns to "Honest Iago" and entrusts Desdemona to him and to Emilia. He has already described his "ancient" as "A man he is of honesty and trust". The audience, who have heard Iago's hatred in the first scene, are aware of how misplaced this trust is. I find the moment striking because Shakespeare shows Othello and Desdemona at the height of their love and dignity,

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yet surrounds them with words such as "deceiv'd", "honesty" and "faith" that will be twisted into the weapons that destroy them.

5b

Emilia does contribute to Desdemona's death, but Shakespeare makes her guilt small, human and unknowing, set against the deliberate malice of Iago and the jealous credulity of Othello. She hands the weapon to the villain, yet she is also the one character who sees the truth most clearly, speaks it most bravely, and dies for it. To my mind, Shakespeare suggests that she is to blame only in a narrow sense, and that her real dramatic purpose is to expose those who are guilty.

The case against her rests on the handkerchief. When she picks it up in Act 3 Scene 3 she knows exactly what it means: "This was her first remembrance from the Moor". She also knows that her "wayward husband" has begged her many times to steal it, yet she gives it to him, saying "I nothing but to please his fantasy." The flat, self-effacing line suggests a wife so used to obeying that she does not stop to ask why Iago wants it, and her brief concern, "Poor lady, she'll run mad / When she shall lack it", shows she foresees Desdemona's distress, if not her danger. More damning is her silence in Act 3 Scene 4. When Desdemona asks "Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?", she replies "I know not, madam." Shakespeare makes this a small lie with enormous consequences, because moments later Othello demands the handkerchief and the audience watches Emilia say nothing. Her question, "Is not this man jealous?", is painfully ironic: she recognises the jealousy and still keeps quiet about the one fact that could disarm it.

However, Shakespeare carefully limits what Emilia knows. She never sees how Iago uses the handkerchief, and the audience, who have heard Iago's soliloquies, understand that he would have found another way to poison Othello's mind. Her

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cynical remark that men "are all but stomachs, and we all but food" shows that she understands male possessiveness in general, but not her own husband's particular evil. Indeed, in Act 4 Scene 2 she unknowingly describes him exactly: "I will be hang'd if some eternal villain" has invented the slander. The dramatic irony is sharp, since Iago stands beside her as she speaks, and it makes her seem more naive than complicit.

In the willow scene Shakespeare goes further, giving Emilia a voice that challenges the idea that women deserve blame at all. Her argument that "it is their husbands' faults / If wives do fall" is witty and worldly, and it places responsibility for marital breakdown on male cruelty and suspicion. Placed just before the murder, the scene works almost as a defence speech for both women, contrasting Emilia's earthy realism with Desdemona's innocence, and suggesting that the true cause of tragedy lies in how men treat their wives.

The final scene transforms Emilia from a careless servant into a fearless accuser. Faced with Othello's confession, she refuses to be silenced: "Thou hast not half that power to do me harm / As I have to be hurt." Her insults, "O gull! O dolt! / As ignorant as dirt!", are blunt and monosyllabic, stripping the noble general of his dignity and placing the blame where she believes it belongs. When she realises Iago's part, her stunned repetition of "My husband!" shows the horror of discovery, and she breaks with obedience entirely: "'Tis proper I obey him, but not now." It is only through her testimony that the truth of the handkerchief emerges, and she pays for it with her life, asking to be laid by her mistress's side. Her dying words, "Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor", restore Desdemona's reputation and are the last clear judgement the play offers on who is at fault.

Ultimately, Shakespeare does suggest that Emilia bears some blame: her theft and

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her lie supply the "ocular proof" Iago needs. Yet the structure of the play moves from her silence to her speech, as if she spends the last act atoning for that one mistake. Iago plans the murder and Othello commits it; Emilia's fault is that she trusted her husband too long, which is perhaps the same fault as Othello's. In this way she becomes less a cause of the tragedy than its conscience.