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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/32**

Paper 3 Drama (Open Text) **February/March 2025**

45 minutes



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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SHELAGH DELANEY: *A Taste of Honey*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 1 (a) Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

GEOF: Do you want a cigarette?

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[*Music to black out.*]

(*from* Act 2, Scene 1)

How does Delaney movingly portray the relationship between Jo and Geof at this moment in the play?

Or **1 (b)** Explore how Delaney powerfully depicts the impact of poverty in the play.

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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:

IYALOJA: Not we, but the very earth says No.

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As the girl kneels before IYALOJA*, lights fade out on the scene.*]

(*from* Scene 1)

In what ways does Soyinka make this moment in the play so ominous?

Or **2 (b)** How far does Soyinka encourage you to sympathise with Sergeant Amusa?

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:

[*More laughter and shouts of parting come from the men.*

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[*Her head falls on her arms.*]

(*from* Scene 1)

How does Williams create such vivid impressions of Stanley and Blanche at this moment in the play?

Or **3 (b)** To what extent does Williams portray Stella as a loyal sister to Blanche?

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:

OBERON: Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy
To be my henchman.

TITANIA: Set your heart at rest;
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a vot'ress of my order;
And in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side;
And, sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking th' embarked traders on the flood;
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive,
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait
Following – her womb then rich with my young squire –
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy;
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON: How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA: Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round,
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON: Give me that boy and I will go with thee.

TITANIA: Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away.
We shall chide downright if I longer stay.

[*Exit* TITANIA *with her Train*.]

OBERON: Well, go thy way; thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememb'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music.

PUCK: I remember.

OBERON: That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth
Cupid, all arm'd; a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal, throned by the west,
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon;

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And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell.
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it Love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flow'r, the herb I showed thee once.

(*from* Act 2, Scene 1)

In what ways does Shakespeare strikingly portray Oberon and Titania at this moment in the play?

Or **4 (b)** How does Shakespeare make the rehearsals and performance of *Pyramus and Thisby* so amusing?

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Antony and Cleopatra*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 5 (a) Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

EROS: What would my lord?

ANTONY: Since Cleopatra died,
I have liv'd in such dishonour that the gods
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword
Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
The courage of a woman; less noble mind
Than she which by her death our Caesar tells
'I am conqueror of myself'. Thou art sworn, Eros,
That, when the exigent should come – which now
Is come indeed – when I should see behind me
Th' inevitable prosecution of
Disgrace and horror, that, on my command,
Thou then wouldst kill me. Do't; the time is come.
Thou strik'st not me; 'tis Caesar thou defeat'st.
Put colour in thy cheek.

EROS: The gods withold me!
Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts,
Though enemy, lost aim and could not?

ANTONY: Eros,
Wouldst thou be window'd in great Rome and see
Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down
His corrigible neck, his face subdu'd
To penetrative shame, whilst the wheel'd seat
Of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, branded
His baseness that ensued?

EROS: I would not see't.

ANTONY: Come, then; for with a wound I must be cur'd.
Draw that thy honest sword, which thou hast worn
Most useful for thy country.

EROS: O, sir, pardon me!

ANTONY: When I did make thee free, swor'st thou not then
To do this when I bade thee? Do it at once,
Or thy precedent services are all
But accidents unpurpos'd. Draw, and come.

EROS: Turn from me then that noble countenance,
Wherein the worship of the whole world lies.

ANTONY: Lo thee! [*Turning from him.*]

EROS: My sword is drawn.

ANTONY: Then let it do at once
The thing why thou hast drawn it.

EROS: My dear master,
My captain and my emperor, let me say,
Before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell.

ANTONY: 'Tis said, man; and farewell.

EROS: Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now?

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ANTONY: Now, Eros.

EROS: Why, there then! Thus do I escape the sorrow
Of Antony's death. [*Kills himself.*]

ANTONY: Thrice nobler than myself!
Thou teachest me, O valiant Eros, what
I should, and thou couldst not. My queen and Eros
Have, by their brave instruction, got upon me
A nobleness in record. But I will be
A bridegroom in my death, and run into't
As to a lover's bed. Come, then; and, Eros,
Thy master dies thy scholar. To do thus

[*Falling on his sword.*]

I learn'd of thee. How? not dead? not dead? –
The guard, ho! O, dispatch me!

[*Enter* DERCETAS *and a Guard.*]

1 GUARD: What's the noise?

ANTONY: I have done my work ill, friends. O, make an end
Of what I have begun.

2 GUARD: The star is fall'n.

1 GUARD: And time is at his period.

ALL: Alas, and woe!

ANTONY: Let him that loves me, strike me dead.

(*from* Act 4, Scene 14)

In what ways does Shakespeare make this such a tragic moment in the play?

Or **5 (b)** How does Shakespeare's portrayal of Pompey contribute to the dramatic impact of the play?

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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.

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1b

Delaney depicts poverty not as a background detail but as a force that shapes every relationship in the play. It determines where the characters live, how they treat one another and what choices they believe they have. What makes her portrayal so powerful is that she rarely lets her characters complain about it in self-pity. Instead, poverty is shown through cramped rooms, broken plans and the hard, joking resilience with which Jo, Helen and Geof try to survive.

The play opens with Helen and Jo arriving at yet another shabby rented flat, and the setting itself makes a powerful statement. The room is cold and uninviting, the facilities are poor, and Helen, nursing a heavy cold, is too weary to care. Jo is far more critical, pointing out its defects with weary sarcasm, and the impression is that this move is one in a long line of moves. Delaney suggests that poverty means instability: they cannot settle anywhere, and so Jo has never had a proper home. Their sharp exchanges as they unpack immediately show how deprivation has made them abrasive with each other.

Poverty has also robbed Jo of opportunity. She is clearly talented at drawing, and Geof later admires her work, yet her education has been disrupted by constant moving, and she is about to leave school with no prospects beyond low-paid work. When she says she will get a job and leave Helen, her independence is real but also limited, because the only work open to her is casual and low paid. Delaney shows that intelligence and imagination count for little when there is no money to support them, which gives Jo's sharp wit a bitter edge.

Helen's behaviour is driven by poverty too, though in a different way. Her

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relationship with Peter is presented, at least partly, as a financial escape. He is younger, has money and offers her a house, and she marries him despite his drunkenness and his obvious contempt for Jo. Helen's openness about this is striking and funny, yet beneath the humour is something sad: for a woman of her age and background, a man with money seems the only route out. When the marriage collapses and Peter throws her out, she returns to Jo's flat with nowhere else to go, and Delaney's circular structure suggests that escape from poverty is temporary and fragile.

Jo's situation in Act 2 makes the impact of poverty even more vivid. Pregnant by Jimmie, the sailor who has disappeared, she lives in the same bleak flat with Geof, an art student who has been thrown out of his lodgings. Their household is improvised and makeshift. Geof cooks, cleans and prepares for the baby, making clothes and getting a doll so Jo can practise, because they cannot rely on anyone else. Delaney presents this tenderness as a kind of survival strategy among people the world has left behind. Their banter is touching precisely because it is so fragile.

Delaney also shows how poverty narrows emotional choices. Jo's fear of motherhood is bound up with her fear of being unable to cope, and Helen's eventual return, announcing that she will take charge, drives Geof away. Even help comes with conditions: as Jo's mother Helen claims authority in the flat, and Geof, with no money and no family tie, has no standing against her. In this way Delaney suggests that economic power quietly decides who stays and who goes.

Yet the play is never simply grim. Delaney's characters respond to hardship with humour, music hall asides and songs, and their resilience is part of what makes the portrayal so powerful. Helen's direct addresses to the audience and the jazz

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interludes give the play a defiant energy, as if the characters refuse to be defined only by what they lack.

Overall, Delaney depicts poverty powerfully by showing its effects on home, education, love and family. It makes the characters restless and harsh with each other, yet it also brings out moments of unexpected kindness. By ending with Jo alone, waiting for her baby, and Helen's commitment uncertain, Delaney leaves us with the sense that poverty is a cycle that may simply repeat itself in the next generation.

2b

Soyinka encourages a real but uneasy sympathy for Sergeant Amusa. He is a comic figure, often ridiculous in his self-importance and his broken English, yet he is also a man trapped between two worlds, scorned by the colonial masters he serves and despised by the people he comes from. Soyinka invites us to laugh at him and to pity him in almost equal measure, while never letting us forget that he has chosen to serve the colonial power.

Our first encounter with Amusa in the Pilkings' house is both funny and revealing. He arrives to report that Elesin intends to "commit death", and finds Pilkings and Jane dressed in the egungun costume for the fancy-dress ball. His horror is immediate: he refuses to look at them or speak to them while they wear clothes that belong to the cult of the dead. The scene is comic in performance, as Amusa stammers and averts his eyes while Pilkings grows irritated, but the comedy is double edged. Amusa is the only person in the room who takes the costume's meaning seriously. Although he has converted to Islam and wears the uniform of the colonial police, his reverence for the ancestral powers remains, and Soyinka shows that his new identity has not erased the old one. Pilkings mocks him for

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this, which makes us side with Amusa, since his respect seems far more decent than his superior's careless disrespect.

His relationship with Pilkings encourages sympathy because it is so plainly one of servility. Pilkings treats him impatiently, as a messenger rather than a man, and Amusa's anxious, deferential language contrasts with the casual authority of his employer. Soyinka uses Amusa's pidgin to highlight his marginal position: he speaks neither the full language of the colonisers nor, in this role, the dignified idiom of his own people. Yet the audience may also feel that Amusa is complicit. He accepts Pilkings' authority and is willing to arrest a revered elder of his own community in order to prevent a ritual he himself half believes in. Our sympathy is therefore qualified.

The market scene is where Soyinka most fully exposes Amusa's humiliation. Sent with constables to arrest Elesin, he finds his way barred by the market women. They mock his authority, question his manhood and taunt him as a servant of the white man, and the young girls seize the constables' batons and stage a mocking imitation of colonial officials, parodying their clipped English and their condescension. The scene is extremely funny, but Amusa is caught in the cross fire. The girls' satire is aimed at the British, yet Amusa is the one who must stand there and endure it. His bluster collapses, and he is forced to retreat with threats that he will return, which only underlines his powerlessness. We may laugh, but we also see a man who belongs nowhere: the women reject him as a traitor, while his masters do not respect him either.

Later, when Amusa reports to Pilkings at the Residency, he again refuses to address him directly because of the costume, even after his ordeal. His persistence is almost touching. He has been beaten back by the women, ignored by his

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master, and still clings to a kind of spiritual integrity that the colonial characters lack.

At the same time, Soyinka does not let Amusa become a tragic victim in the way that Elesin or Olunde are. His role is largely comic, and his loyalty to the colonial order makes him partly responsible for his own humiliation. The women's contempt, though harsh, is grounded in his willingness to act against his own people. His divided loyalties contrast with Olunde's clarity: Olunde has studied in England yet returns to fulfil his duty, whereas Amusa has adopted the outward forms of the coloniser without gaining their respect.

Overall, Soyinka encourages us to sympathise with Amusa to a significant extent, because he is mocked from both sides and seems genuinely confused about where he belongs. However, this sympathy is mixed with amusement and with a recognition of his complicity. He is a small, comic figure, but through him Soyinka shows how painful it is to stand between two cultures and be fully accepted by neither.

3a

Williams creates vivid impressions of Stanley and Blanche at this moment by setting their first meeting up as a confrontation between two opposing worlds. Stanley is physical, blunt and completely at ease in his own home; Blanche is nervous, refined and already trying to hide things. Although the conversation is outwardly polite, the audience senses immediately that Stanley has the upper hand, and the scene ends with Blanche collapsing, a disturbing foreshadowing of what is to come.

The stage directions that introduce Stanley are some of the most striking in the

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play. The phrase "Animal joy" captures his energy and appetite, suggesting a man driven by instinct rather than thought. Calling him a "gaudy seed-bearer" compares him to a brightly coloured male bird, proud and sexually confident. Williams tells us that he sizes up women at a glance in sexual terms, so when he looks at Blanche the audience reads his stare as a kind of appraisal. Blanche's instinctive drawing back from him is telling: she feels the threat before a word has been exchanged.

Stanley's speech is direct and casual, in sharp contrast to Blanche's. His abrupt "You going to shack up here?" is crude and almost insolent, using slang that reduces her visit to something cheap. Blanche answers with elaborate courtesy, saying she would stay if it is not inconvenient, and his reply is a single, flat word. The mismatch in register shows how little room Blanche's Southern gentility has in this world.

The business with the whisky is especially vivid. Stanley notices that the bottle has gone down and remarks that "Liquor goes fast in hot weather". The comment seems innocent, but he is clearly letting her know that he has noticed. When Blanche claims she rarely drinks, his retort, "Some people rarely touch it, but it touches them often", is witty and quietly menacing. The chiasmus turns her words back on her, and suggests that he sees through her pretences far more quickly than she realises. Williams makes Stanley seem shrewd as well as crude, which makes him more dangerous.

Stanley's physical confidence also unsettles Blanche. He announces that his clothes are sticking to him and, with "Be comfortable is my motto", removes his shirt in front of her. The action is natural for him in his own home, but for Blanche it is an assault on her sense of propriety, and the audience senses the sexual tension that will dominate their relationship. His mock apology, "I'm afraid

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I'll strike you as being the unrefined type", is double edged. He is half joking, but he is also defiantly proud of what he is, and perhaps mocking the airs he expects from her.

Blanche, by contrast, appears fragile and evasive throughout. She is anxious about her appearance, uncertain how to respond to his questions, and keeps trying to fall back on polite formality. Her nervousness makes her seem like a moth against Stanley's harsh light, struggling to keep control of how she is seen.

The climax of the extract comes when Stanley asks, almost carelessly, "You were married once, weren't you?" For him it is a routine question, but for Blanche it reopens her deepest wound. Her faltering reply about the boy dying breaks down, and she says she is going to be sick. The fragmented speech and the final stage direction, as her head falls on her arms, show her composure completely collapsing. Williams gives this painful memory a physical force, and the audience realises that Blanche is haunted by her past in a way she cannot conceal.

Overall, Williams makes this moment vivid by combining expressive stage directions, contrasting speech styles and small, loaded actions. Stanley appears powerful, perceptive and threatening; Blanche appears delicate, guarded and close to breaking. Their first encounter already contains the conflict that will drive the play to its tragic end.

3b

Williams portrays Stella as a sister whose loyalty is genuine but limited. She loves Blanche, protects her feelings and defends her against Stanley for much of the play, yet whenever that loyalty conflicts with her marriage and her desire for Stanley, it is Blanche who is sacrificed. By the final scene her loyalty has become

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a painful betrayal, and Williams makes us feel the cost of that choice for both sisters.

From the start Stella is tender and patient with Blanche. In Scene 1 she endures Blanche's criticisms of the apartment and her own appearance without protest, and she is quick to reassure her. In Scene 2 she shows real understanding of her sister's fragility when she urges Stanley to "Admire her dress and tell her she's looking wonderful", explaining that this matters to Blanche. Stella knows Blanche's vanity covers deep insecurity, and her instinct is to shield it. She even takes Blanche out to dinner during the poker night so that she can escape the cramped flat.

However, Williams soon reveals the limits of this loyalty. After Stanley's violence in Scene 3, the sisters take refuge with Eunice, but when Stanley bellows for her from the street, Stella goes back down to him. The stage directions emphasise that they embrace with a kind of animal intensity, and Blanche is left alone, frightened and bewildered. In Scene 4, when Blanche urges her to leave, Stella answers calmly, "I'm not in anything I want to get out of." The simple, confident line shows that her loyalty to Stanley comes first. Her reference to "things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark" suggests that desire binds her more strongly than sisterly duty. Blanche's long speech describing Stanley as an animal is overheard by Stanley, and Williams lets Stella hug him in front of Blanche, a gesture that wounds her sister.

Even so, Stella does defend Blanche with real passion. In Scene 7, when Stanley exposes the rumours about Blanche's past in Laurel, Stella refuses to simply condemn her. She reminds him of Blanche's tragic young marriage and insists that no one knew how tender and trusting Blanche had been as a girl. She is appalled

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when Stanley reveals he has told Mitch and when he presents Blanche with a bus ticket home as a birthday present. In Scene 8, Stella criticises Stanley's table manners and calls him greasy, showing she can stand up to him on her sister's behalf. These moments show loyalty that is emotional and sincere, even if it is ineffective against Stanley's power.

The final scene is where Williams tests Stella's loyalty most severely. Blanche has told her that Stanley raped her, and Stella has arranged for her to be taken to an asylum. Her confession to Eunice is devastating: "I couldn't believe her story and go on living with Stanley." The line is honest and self-aware. Stella does not truly decide that Blanche is lying; she decides that she cannot afford for her to be telling the truth. Eunice's advice, "Don't ever believe it. Life has got to go on", turns this betrayal into a kind of survival strategy that women in the Quarter seem to share. Yet Stella is not at peace. When the doctor and matron arrive, she cries out in anguish at what she has done to her sister and tries to stop Blanche being handled roughly, though Eunice holds her back. Her horror shows that her love for Blanche has not vanished; it has simply been overpowered.

The play ends with Stella holding her baby and sobbing while Stanley comforts her with "Now, honey. Now, love." The stage directions describe something "luxurious" in her surrender to crying now that her sister has gone, which is deeply ambiguous. Her grief is real, but so is her relief at returning to the life she has chosen.

To a large extent, then, Williams shows Stella as loyal in feeling but disloyal in action. She loves Blanche sincerely, yet she chooses Stanley, her child and her own security. Williams presents this not as simple treachery but as a tragic compromise, which makes Stella one of the most quietly painful characters in the

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play.

4a

Shakespeare portrays Oberon and Titania here as two rulers locked in a quarrel that is both petty and grand. On the surface they argue over who should keep "a little changeling boy", yet the language they use is so rich and so powerful that the dispute feels cosmic. What strikes me most is the contrast between them: Titania's loyalty is rooted in love and memory, while Oberon's desire is rooted in pride and control, and by the end of the passage he has turned from a petitioner into a schemer.

Oberon opens with a question that reveals his sense of entitlement. "Why should Titania cross her Oberon?" Referring to himself in the third person and calling her "her Oberon" makes his claim sound like a husband's right, as if her refusal were a kind of disloyalty. His request is presented as modest, "I do but beg", but the purpose is telling: he wants the boy "To be my henchman". The child is a possession and a status symbol to him, nothing more.

Titania's reply is crisp and final. "Set your heart at rest" sounds soothing but is actually a dismissal, and "The fairy land buys not the child of me" is a superb retort: even the whole of Oberon's kingdom could not purchase the boy. The verb "buys" exposes Oberon's attitude as mercenary. She then moves into a long, lyrical memory of the boy's mother, and the change in tone is moving. The "spiced Indian air" and "Neptune's yellow sands" create a warm, exotic world of female friendship, where the two women "gossip'd" and "laugh'd". The image of the sails that "conceive, / And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind" is playful and affectionate, and it links the ships to the pregnant mother who would "imitate" them with "pretty and with swimming gait". The boy becomes a living reminder of

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someone she loved.

The mood darkens with the stark monosyllables of "But she, being mortal, of that boy did die". After the flowing description, this blunt line lands heavily, reminding us of the gulf between immortal fairies and fragile humans. The repetition of "for her sake" in the next two lines gives Titania's refusal the force of a vow: "for her sake I will not part with him." Her motive is loyalty, which makes her far more sympathetic than Oberon at this point.

The terse exchange that follows shows the deadlock. Titania offers a kind of truce, inviting Oberon to "patiently dance in our round", but his response simply repeats his demand: "Give me that boy and I will go with thee." Her answer, "Not for thy fairy kingdom", echoes her earlier "buys not", and her abrupt exit with "Fairies, away" shows her as a queen who refuses to be bargained with.

Left alone, Oberon reveals a darker side. "Thou shalt not from this grove / Till I torment thee for this injury" is a chilling threat, and the word "injury" shows how wounded his pride is. Yet strikingly, he immediately shifts into some of the most beautiful verse in the play. His memory of the mermaid, at whose song "the rude sea grew civil" and stars "shot madly from their spheres" shows his own imaginative power and his command over the natural world. The story of Cupid's arrow missing "a fair vestal" who passed on "In maiden meditation, fancy-free" is graceful, but its purpose is sinister: he is leading towards the flower, "Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound". The colour change from innocence to the bruise of passion foreshadows what he plans for Titania. The final imperative, "Fetch me that flow'r", turns all that poetry into an instrument of revenge.

Overall, Shakespeare makes this moment striking by letting both rulers speak with

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magnificent eloquence while exposing very different motives. Titania appears loyal, proud and grieving; Oberon appears charming but possessive and vengeful. The audience is left uneasy, sensing that the beauty of fairy power can easily be turned to cruelty.

4b

Shakespeare makes the rehearsals and performance of Pyramus and Thisby amusing because the mechanicals take their tragedy with complete seriousness while getting almost everything wrong. The comedy grows out of the gap between their noble ambitions and their clumsy execution, and it builds from the casting scene to the gloriously bad performance at court. Yet the humour is rarely cruel, and I think that is what makes it so enjoyable.

The first meeting in Act 1 Scene 2 establishes the characters with economy. Quince's attempts at order are constantly undermined by Bottom, who wants to play every part. He longs for a role "to tear a cat in", and when he hears about the lion he begs to play that too, promising that he will "roar you as gently as any sucking dove". The self-contradiction is delightful: he wants to be terrifying and harmless at once. Flute's protest that he cannot play a woman because "I have a beard coming" and Snug's anxiety that he is "slow of study" even for a part that is only roaring add to the impression of earnest, anxious amateurs. Quince's flattering insistence that Bottom "can play no part but Pyramus" shows a director managing a difficult star.

The rehearsal in Act 3 Scene 1 is funny because the mechanicals are so literal minded. They worry that the ladies will be frightened by the sword and the lion, so Bottom proposes a prologue explaining that Pyramus is not really killed and that he is really Bottom the weaver. Their solutions to staging problems, a man to play

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Moonshine and another to "present Wall", are absurdly concrete, revealing that they cannot trust an audience's imagination. Shakespeare is gently mocking bad theatre while celebrating the magic of real theatre, which works precisely through imagination. Verbal blunders add to the fun: Bottom's "flowers of odious savours sweet", corrected by Quince to "odours", and Flute's repeated "Ninny's tomb". The scene then turns into farce when Puck gives Bottom an ass's head. Quince's horrified "thou art translated" is funny because Bottom has literally become what his behaviour has suggested all along, and his total unawareness, singing to show he is not afraid, deepens the comedy.

In Act 5 the comedy becomes layered, because we watch the court watching the play. Quince's prologue is mispunctuated so that it says the opposite of what he intends: "If we offend, it is with our good will." Theseus drily observes that "This fellow doth not stand upon points". The performers keep breaking the frame. Wall explains his own function; Snug reassures the ladies that he is only "Snug the joiner"; and Bottom stops the play to correct Theseus directly, unable to resist explaining what will happen next. The verse itself is a parody of overblown tragic style, crammed with alliteration and apostrophe: "O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!" The heavy repetition in Pyramus's death, "Thus die I, thus, thus, thus", and later "Now die, die, die, die, die", turns a moment that should be tragic into ridiculous excess, because Bottom simply cannot stop dying.

Thisby's lament is just as funny. Flute's blazon of Pyramus's beauty muddles the conventional love poetry, giving him "lily lips" and a "cherry nose" and eyes "green as leeks". The clichés are applied to the wrong features, and the homely comparison to leeks is wonderfully bathetic.

The courtly commentary adds another level. Demetrius and Lysander mock the

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actors with sarcastic praise, and even Hippolyta calls it "the silliest stuff that ever I heard", though she is later moved to pity Pyramus. Theseus, however, defends them: "The best in this kind are but shadows". This line invites the audience to reflect that we too have been watching shadows all evening. The humour is therefore affectionate. Pyramus and Thisby is a tragedy of lovers separated by a wall and by parental opposition, and it parodies the lovers' near-disaster in the forest. By making this story absurd, Shakespeare lets the audience laugh at the dangers the young lovers escaped.

Ultimately the play within the play is amusing because of its sincerity. The mechanicals are proud, nervous and utterly committed, and Shakespeare invites us to laugh with them as well as at them, ending the comedy on a note of generosity.

Sa

Shakespeare makes this moment tragic because it shows a great man, once master of the world, unable even to master his own death. Antony is driven to suicide by grief and shame, his loyal servant chooses death rather than kill him, and his own attempt fails humiliatingly. The scene mixes nobility and indignity so painfully that the audience feels both admiration and pity.

Antony's first speech is built on a contrast between past glory and present shame. He remembers how he "Quarter'd the world" with his sword and made "cities" of ships on "green Neptune's back". These hyperbolic images give him an almost godlike stature, so that his confession that he now lacks "The courage of a woman" is all the more shocking. The irony is deepened because the audience knows Cleopatra is not dead: Antony is acting on a false report. His admiration for her imagined last words, "I am conqueror of myself", makes his tragedy one of

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misunderstanding as much as defeat. He measures his own honour against hers and finds himself wanting.

His appeal to Eros is moving because he presents death as a victory rather than an end: "Thou strik'st not me; 'tis Caesar thou defeat'st." The antithesis turns suicide into a final act of defiance. The vivid picture of being "window'd in great Rome" with "pleach'd arms", led behind "the wheel'd seat / Of fortunate Caesar", shows what Antony truly fears: public humiliation. The bowed head and the "penetrative shame" create a striking image of a Roman general reduced to a spectacle. Eros's simple reply, "I would not see't", shows how completely he shares his master's values.

Eros is central to the tragedy. His reluctance is expressed in short, anguished outbursts, calling on the gods to stop him and begging "O, sir, pardon me!" He reminds Antony that even the "Parthian darts" could not harm him, suggesting that the loyal servant cannot do what enemies failed to do. Antony's insistence becomes almost cruel, as he reminds Eros that he was freed on condition of this oath. When Eros asks him to turn away "that noble countenance, / Wherein the worship of the whole world lies", we see the devotion Antony still inspires, even in defeat. The farewell is tender and dignified: "My dear master, / My captain and my emperor". The rising list of titles gives Antony the respect the world has taken from him. Then comes the twist: "Thus do I escape the sorrow / Of Antony's death." Eros kills himself instead. His suicide is an act of love which is also a rebuke, and Antony recognises it at once: "Thrice nobler than myself!"

Antony's response is deeply poignant. He sees that "My queen and Eros" have taught him "nobleness", and he resolves to imitate them. The image of being "A bridegroom in my death" who runs into it "As to a lover's bed" fuses love and

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death, recalling the passion that has driven the whole play. Death becomes a consummation, a reunion with Cleopatra. The phrase "Thy master dies thy scholar" reverses their roles with real humility.

Yet Shakespeare denies him the noble death he imagines. The stage direction "Falling on his sword" is followed by the desperate repetition "How? not dead? not dead?" The broken rhythm and questions show his confusion and pain, and the plea "O, dispatch me!" is a cry for help from a man who once commanded armies. "I have done my work ill" is almost bathetic in its plainness. This failure is what makes the moment so tragic: Antony cannot even die well.

The guards' responses universalise the catastrophe. "The star is fall'n" and "time is at his period" present Antony's fall as a cosmic event, an end of an era, and the chorus of "Alas, and woe!" sounds like a lament. Yet they only lament, and his last line here, "Let him that loves me, strike me dead", hangs in the air as a desperate test of their love. Shakespeare leaves us with a hero whose greatness is still felt by others but who is now utterly alone, and that isolation is the heart of the tragedy.

5b Pompey is on stage for only a handful of scenes, yet Shakespeare makes him far more than a minor military threat. He is the force that drags Antony out of Egypt, the occasion for the uneasy alliance of the triumvirs, and, most memorably, a man who is offered the whole world and refuses it. Through him Shakespeare dramatises the play's central concerns with fortune, honour and opportunity, and his quiet disappearance shows how ruthless the Roman world is becoming. For me his impact lies in this combination of rising danger, dramatic irony and anticlimax.

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Long before we see him, Pompey is built up as a menace through report. In Egypt, Antony learns that Sextus Pompeius "hath given the dare to Caesar" and commands the sea, and he uses this news to justify leaving Cleopatra. In Rome, Caesar describes how the fickle people turn to whoever is absent, comparing the common body to a "vagabond flag upon the stream" which drifts with the tide. Pompey is the pressure that ends Antony's idleness and sets the political plot moving.

When Pompey finally appears, Shakespeare makes his confidence dramatically ironic. He declares "I shall do well: / The people love me, and the sea is mine", the short, assertive clauses suggesting a man certain of his destiny. He mocks Antony as trapped in Egypt and prays that "Salt Cleopatra" will keep him there with her charms, the sensual adjective revealing his contempt for Antony's indulgence. Yet this is undercut almost at once by Varrius's news that Antony is expected in Rome. Pompey's admission that Antony's soldiership is "twice the other twain" shows him shrewd enough to fear Antony, but the audience senses that his whole strategy rests on a hope that has already failed. Ironically, fear of Pompey drives Antony and Caesar to patch up their quarrel through the marriage to Octavia.

The parley and the feast on Pompey's galley form the dramatic centre of his role. Pompey enters with grievances about his father's death, presenting himself as the champion of an older, honourable Rome, but he settles for Sicily and Sardinia in return for clearing the sea of pirates. The tension of an expected battle dissolves into a banquet, and Shakespeare exploits the contrast brilliantly. While Lepidus is carried off drunk and the "world-sharers" join hands in a riotous dance, Menas whispers that if Pompey will let him "cut the cable" he can make him master of the world. Pompey's reply is one of the most revealing moments in the play: "Ah, this thou shouldst have done, / And not have spoke on't!" He would accept the

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crime but will not commit it, since "In me 'tis villainy; / In thee't had been good service." His insistence that it is not profit that leads his honour may seem admirable, but Shakespeare also exposes its hypocrisy: Pompey's honour is really a concern for reputation rather than a refusal of murder. The irony is sharpened because the men he spares are drunk and helpless.

Menas's aside turns the moment into a judgement on Pompey's future: "Who seeks, and will not take when once 'tis offer'd, / Shall never find it more." The balanced, proverbial line sounds like a verdict from Fortune herself, and it foreshadows the play's concern with how chances, once lost, never return. Pompey here becomes a mirror for Antony, who will also choose glory and feeling over cold calculation, as when he fights at sea against all advice. Caesar, by contrast, never hesitates, and Pompey's scruple helps define Caesar's chilling efficiency.

The final dramatic impact of Pompey is his absence. He is not given a death scene; instead, in Act 3, Eros simply reports that Caesar has made war on Pompey and that an officer of Antony's has murdered him, while Lepidus has been deposed. The flat, reported delivery is shocking precisely because it is so casual. A man who once held "three world-sharers" in his ship is disposed of offstage in a few lines, and the triumvirate collapses into a direct struggle between Antony and Caesar.

Shakespeare's portrayal of Pompey therefore contributes powerfully to the play. He creates suspense, generates irony, and in the galley scene offers a vivid, almost comic yet deeply serious study of a man who lets fortune slip through his fingers. His fate quietly anticipates Antony's own, reminding the audience that in Caesar's Rome honour without ruthlessness cannot survive.