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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/21**

Paper 2 Drama **October/November 2024**

1 hour 30 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions.
- Your answers must be on **two** different set texts.
- You must answer **one** (a) passage-based question and **one** (b) essay 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.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- 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:

[ERMINA*'s leg stops twitching. She quickly approaches her father and throws her arms around his waist.*]

Ernestine: Ermina!

[ERMINA *reaches into her father's pocket and retrieves a cookie.*]

Ermina: WELL!

Godfrey: That's my girl … Had to clear my head, bring some order to things. I think everything's gonna be all right … I got someone for y'all to meet.

[GERTE*, wearing a haggard smile, steps into the apartment carrying a suitcase. She clears her throat.*]

Darling, Devout, this is Gerte.

[ERNESTINE *and* ERMINA *stare at* GERTE.]

My new wife.

[*The girls are dumbfounded, caught off guard by the declaration.* GERTE *gracefully extends her hand as if practiced.*]

Gerte [*By rote*]: I'm very pleased to meet you. I'm sure we will get on fondly. I've heard charming stories about you both. Devout, you are as pretty as your father said, and Darling, congratulations are in order for completing your studies this coming summer.

[*Both girls gasp.* GERTE *turns to* GODFREY *to ensure that she has produced the correct information; he nods affectionately.*]

Ermina: She white!

[*Awkward silence.*]

Godfrey: Well, should we all sit?

Ermina: Why? She won't be white if we sit down?

[GODFREY *clumsily fumbles for* GERTE*'s hand. The gesture is mechanical, the mark of unfamiliarity.*]

Gerte: It is a lovely apartment.

Godfrey: She won't bite. Will ya?

[GERTE *lets out a deep belly laugh. The girls continue to stare contemptuously at* GERTE*, who slaps* GODFREY*'s hand.*]

Gerte: I told you not to make me laugh.

[GERTE *continues to laugh heartily, without taking a breath for air.* ERNESTINE *and* ERMINA *stare at her.*]

Ernestine [*To audience*]: Oh God, did she have to be German? If he had to have a white lady, why not a French lady or an English lady like the demure Olivia de Havilland with her modest downward glance. But there she is like Marlene Dietrich, a cold bitter whore laughing in our doorway. She might as well be wearing a satin tuxedo and blowing smoke in our faces.

Godfrey: Ain't you going to say anything?

Ermina: Ya drunk? Ya all right?

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Godfrey: Don't stand there looking foolish, say something.

Ermina: Huh?

Godfrey: Darling.

[GERTE *extends her hand a second time.*]

Take her hand.

[ERNESTINE *reluctantly seizes* GERTE*'s hand, giving it a hard shake.*]

Ernestine: Mommy wouldn't like this one bit. Oh no! Mommy ain't even dead a year.

[GERTE *ceases to be amused.*]

Gerte: I'm sorry. I lost my mother when I was young.

[LILY *stands in the doorway.*]

Ernestine: I don't want you here!

Godfrey: Don't say that, Darling.

[ERMINA*'s leg begins to jerk uncontrollably.*]

Lily: What's this all about, Godfrey?

Godfrey [*Defensive*]: We met, we fell in love, we married.

[*Blackout*]

(*from* Act 1, Scene 6)

In what ways does Nottage make this such a shocking moment in the play?

Or **1(b)** How does Nottage make Lily such a dramatically compelling character?

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:

Jane [*pokes her head round the door*]: Have you found him?

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Lights fade.]

(*from* Scene 2)

How does Soyinka create striking impressions of Jane and Simon Pilkings at this moment in the play?

Or **2(b)** In what ways does Soyinka's portrayal of the Praise-Singer contribute to the dramatic impact of the play?

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:

Mitch: You lied to me, Blanche.

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The distant piano is slow and blue.]

(*from* Scene 9)

How does Williams make this such a dramatic moment in the play?

Or **3(b)** Explore how Williams strikingly conveys Blanche's sense of her own superiority.

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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:

Helena: Wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unlov'd?
This you should pity rather than despise.

Hermia: I understand not what you mean by this.

Helena: Ay, do – persever, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back,
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up;
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well; 'tis partly my own fault,
Which death, or absence, soon shall remedy.

Lysander: Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse;
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

Helena: O excellent!

Hermia: Sweet, do not scorn her so.

Demetrius: If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

Lysander: Thou canst compel no more than she entreat;
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee, by my life I do;
I swear by that which I will lose for thee
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Demetrius: I say I love thee more than he can do.

Lysander: If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

Demetrius: Quick, come.

Hermia: Lysander, whereto tends all this?

Lysander: Away, you Ethiope!

Demetrius: No, no, he will
Seem to break loose – take on as you would follow,
But yet come not. You are a tame man; go!

Lysander: Hang off, thou cat, thou burr; vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent.

Hermia: Why are you grown so rude? What change is this,
Sweet love?

Lysander: Thy love! Out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathed med'cine! O hated potion, hence!

Hermia: Do you not jest?

Helena: Yes, sooth; and so do you.

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Lysander: Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

Demetrius: I would I had your bond; for I perceive
A weak bond holds you; I'll not trust your word.

Lysander: What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

Hermia: What! Can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love?
Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me.
Why then, you left me – O, the gods forbid! –
In earnest, shall I say?

Lysander: Ay, by my life!
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

(*from* Act 3, Scene 2)

How does Shakespeare dramatically portray the characters' emotions at this moment in the play?

Or **4(b)** Explore how Shakespeare's portrayal of the mechanicals adds to your enjoyment 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:

Bianca: Wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.
Cassio: How now, my sweet Bianca! how now! how now!
Othello: By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!
Bianca: An you'll come to supper to-night, you may; an you will not, come when you are next prepar'd for.
[*Exit*.]
Iago: After her, after her.
Cassio: Faith, I must; she'll rail i' th' street else.
Iago: Will you sup there?
Cassio: Faith, I intend so.
Iago: Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.
Cassio: Prithee come; will you?
Iago: Go to; say no more.
[*Exit* Cassio.]
Othello [*Coming forward*]: How shall I murder him, Iago?
Iago: Did you perceive how he laugh'd at his vice?
Othello: O Iago!
Iago: And did you see the handkerchief?
Othello: Was that mine?
Iago: Yours, by this hand. And to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! She gave it him, and he hath giv'n it his whore.
Othello: I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!
Iago: Nay, you must forget that.
Othello: Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damn'd to-night; for she shall not live. No, my heart is turn'd to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature; she might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks.
Iago: Nay, that's not your way.
Othello: Hang her! I do but say what she is: so delicate with her needle, an admirable musician – O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear! – of so high and plenteous wit and invention.
Iago: She's the worse for all this.
Othello: O, a thousand, a thousand times – and then of so gentle a condition.
Iago: Ay, too gentle.
Othello: Nay, that's certain. But yet the pity of it, Iago! O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

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Iago: If you be so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend; for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

Othello: I will chop her into messes. Cuckold me!

Iago: O, 'tis foul in her.

Othello: With mine officer!

Iago: That's fouler.

Othello: Get me some poison, Iago – this night. I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again – this night, Iago.

Iago: Do it not with poison; strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

Othello: Good, good; the justice of it pleases; very good.

Iago: And for Cassio – let me be his undertaker. You shall hear more by midnight.

Othello: Excellent good.

(*from* Act 4, Scene 1)

How does Shakespeare make this moment in the play so distressing?

Or **5(b)** In what ways does Shakespeare make the ending of the play so powerful?

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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 shocking by staging an ambush. Godfrey has disappeared to "clear my head", and the girls expect him to return alone; instead he brings home a stranger and a marriage, and the scene is built so that each shock lands before the characters, or the audience, have recovered from the last. What makes it so disturbing, I think, is not only Gerte's race but the casual way Godfrey drops a life-changing decision into his daughters' laps.

The opening is deceptively warm. Ermina's twitching leg "stops", she throws her arms around her father and finds a cookie in his pocket, and Godfrey's "That's my girl" restores a moment of family comfort. His reassurance that "everything's gonna be all right" is dramatically ironic, because the pause before "I got someone for y'all to meet" signals that the peace is about to break. Nottage then delays the revelation: Gerte enters with "a haggard smile" and a suitcase, which already suggests she is staying, and only after the girls "stare" does Godfrey add, in a separate line, "My new wife." Isolated like this, the three words hit with real force, and the stage direction that the girls are "dumbfounded" confirms how unprepared they are.

Gerte's speech heightens the shock rather than easing it. Delivered "By rote", with her hand extended "as if practiced", it sounds rehearsed and formal, full of polite phrases like "get on fondly" and "charming stories". The comedy is uncomfortable: she knows facts about the girls that they never chose to share, and her glance at Godfrey "to ensure that she has produced the correct information" makes the meeting feel like a performance she has been coached for. The girls' gasp suggests they are horrified that a stranger has been told so much about them.

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Ermina's blunt "She white!" cuts through all the politeness, and the stage direction "Awkward silence" lets the audience feel the shock in the theatre itself. Her sarcastic "She won't be white if we sit down?" is darkly funny, exposing how inadequate Godfrey's suggestion to "sit" is. Nottage also undercuts the marriage physically: Godfrey "clumsily fumbles" for Gerte's hand, a gesture "mechanical, the mark of unfamiliarity", which hints that these two barely know each other. Gerte's long "deep belly laugh", continuing "without taking a breath", seems grotesquely out of place against the girls' contemptuous stares.

Ernestine's direct address to the audience turns private shock into vivid fantasy. She measures Gerte against the film stars who shape her imagination, wishing for the "demure Olivia de Havilland" but seeing instead "Marlene Dietrich, a cold bitter whore". The harsh noun is startling from a teenager and reveals the violence of her resentment, while the image of "a satin tuxedo" and "blowing smoke in our faces" makes Gerte seem both glamorous and insulting. The aside lets us share Ernestine's view while also sensing that it is unfair, which complicates our reaction.

The scene's most painful shock comes when grief surfaces. Ernestine's "Mommy ain't even dead a year" reminds the audience how recent the family's loss is and makes Godfrey's haste seem almost a betrayal. Interestingly, Gerte's reply, "I lost my mother when I was young", briefly humanises her, and the direction that she "ceases to be amused" suggests she is hurt. Yet Ernestine's cry "I don't want you here!" leaves no room for sympathy to grow.

Nottage completes the moment with a final twist: Lily appears in the doorway. Her terse "What's this all about, Godfrey?" carries the outrage of the whole

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household, and Ermina's leg beginning "to jerk uncontrollably" again shows the return of the children's anxiety. Godfrey's defensive summary, "We met, we fell in love, we married", reduces a whole romance to three short clauses, almost absurd in its brevity, and the sudden "Blackout" refuses any resolution. The audience is left, like the girls, stunned, with the conflict only just beginning.

1b

Lily is dramatically compelling because Nottage makes her a figure of glamour and defiance who is also, beneath the performance, restless and vulnerable. She bursts into the Crump household as a disruptive force, challenging Godfrey's careful order, and yet the more confidently she talks, the more the audience senses a woman who has not found the place she is looking for. That tension between dazzle and fragility is what keeps her so watchable.

Nottage first makes Lily compelling through the sheer energy of her arrival. The girls' late mother's sister turns up unannounced from Harlem with her luggage, stylish and self-assured, and immediately changes the atmosphere of the quiet Brooklyn apartment. Her smoking, drinking and fashionable clothes clash vividly with the strict, devout household Godfrey is trying to build around the teachings of Father Divine. On stage this contrast is visual as well as verbal: Lily is colour and noise in a home ruled by rules and restraint. The audience, like Ernestine, is drawn to her because she seems to promise a life larger than the one the family is living.

Her politics add a further dimension. Lily speaks passionately about revolution, workers and the injustices facing Black Americans, and she openly mocks Godfrey's faith as a way of accepting things as they are. This conflict between them is one of the play's central oppositions: Godfrey looks for salvation through religious

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obedience, Lily through radical change. Nottage makes their arguments lively and often funny, but they also give Lily real moral weight, because many of her criticisms of the world outside the apartment are clearly justified. She is compelling because she voices anger that other characters keep silent.

Lily is also compelling because of what she represents for Ernestine. Ernestine narrates the play and frequently imagines scenes in heightened, cinematic ways, and Lily becomes almost a heroine in her fantasies, a model of a bold, independent woman. Through Ernestine's eyes, Lily seems thrilling. Yet the structure of the play gradually invites us to look past this image. Lily's talk of the coming revolution is never matched by visible achievement; she seems to have no steady work, and her flirtation with Godfrey, which he resists, suggests that she may be seeking security and affection as much as freedom. Nottage lets us glimpse the gap between Lily's self-presentation and her actual situation, and this dramatic irony makes her more human and more poignant.

The arrival of Gerte sharpens this. In the passage where Godfrey introduces his "new wife", Lily simply "stands in the doorway" and asks, "What's this all about, Godfrey?" Her brief, cutting question is powerful precisely because she has been displaced: whatever hopes she had of a place in this household, or with Godfrey, have been overturned in a moment. The rivalry between Lily and Gerte in the second half of the play stages a clash of two outsiders, and Lily's hostility, while understandable, is also tinged with jealousy and pain. Nottage refuses to make her simply admirable; she can be cruel and unfair, which only makes her more complex.

By the later part of the play, Lily's bravado looks increasingly brittle. Her drinking and her sense of being out of place in the changed household expose a loneliness

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that her speeches once concealed. For Ernestine, coming of age, part of growing up is learning to see Lily clearly: still an inspiration in her refusal to accept injustice, but also a warning about the cost of living on defiance alone. Ernestine takes something of Lily's courage forward without simply copying her.

Ultimately, Lily is dramatically compelling because Nottage makes her both catalyst and casualty. She shakes the family out of its narrow world and opens Ernestine's mind, yet she herself remains unsettled and unfulfilled. The audience is left admiring her spirit and feeling for her disappointments, which is exactly why she lingers so strongly after the play ends.

2b

Soyinka's Praise-Singer is far more than a court entertainer. He is the voice of the Yoruba world's memory and expectation, and his presence frames the whole tragedy: at the start he celebrates Elesin and binds him to his duty, during the ritual he becomes the bridge between the living and the dead, and at the end he pronounces the community's judgement on Elesin's failure. Through him, Soyinka makes the audience feel exactly how much is at stake.

In the opening scene the Praise-Singer establishes the play's heightened poetic register. He follows Elesin through the market, matching him in a lively exchange of riddles, proverbs and images, and his teasing and flattery create an atmosphere of celebration and energy. The relationship feels close and affectionate, which makes it all the more moving later. Yet even here his praise carries an undertone of anxiety. He voices the community's fear that the world might be knocked off its course, and he seeks reassurance that Elesin will not fail them. When Elesin tells the story of the Not-I bird, the Praise-Singer acts as an eager audience and prompter, drawing out the tale of all those who flee from death, so that Elesin's

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boast that he alone will not flinch is spoken in front of a witness who will remember it. Dramatically, the Praise-Singer turns Elesin's promise into a public vow.

The Praise-Singer also embodies continuity with the dead king. At moments he speaks as though in the voice of Elesin's departed master, reminding him of the bond they shared in life and of the companionship he owes him in death. This gives the Praise-Singer an uncanny double role: he is both a living friend and a channel for the ancestral world. Soyinka uses this to show that, in Yoruba belief, the boundary between worlds is permeable, and that Elesin's sacrifice is a matter of cosmic order, not personal choice.

This role reaches its climax in the scene of Elesin's trance. As the drums build and Elesin dances towards death, the Praise-Singer chants to him, asking whether he can still hear the voices of the living and describing the passage he must make. His language becomes increasingly urgent and incantatory, repeated questions and images of journeying creating a hypnotic rhythm. The effect on stage is powerful, because the audience experiences the ritual through his words and senses that a sacred threshold is being crossed. When the colonial authorities interrupt, the shock is all the greater because the Praise-Singer has drawn us so deeply into the ceremony.

The Praise-Singer's most devastating contribution comes in the final scene. Confronting Elesin in his cell, he no longer flatters but condemns. His imagery suggests that the community entrusted the world to Elesin, and that Elesin has allowed it to fall into a void. The reversal is striking: the voice that once praised Elesin as a great man now names his shame. Soyinka uses the Praise-Singer here almost like a chorus, articulating the communal verdict, and his grief is not only

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for Elesin's dishonour but for the disorder that now threatens everyone. Alongside Iyaloja, he makes Elesin, and the audience, face the full consequence of hesitation, which is made unbearable when Olunde is revealed to have died in his father's place.

Through the Praise-Singer, then, Soyinka gives the play its ritual frame and its moral centre. His poetry creates the music of the drama, his loyalty makes Elesin's betrayal feel personal, and his final lament turns individual failure into communal tragedy. Without him, the play would lose much of its intensity and much of its sense that a whole world hangs on one man's courage.

3a

Williams makes this moment intensely dramatic because it is the point at which Blanche's last hope of rescue collapses. Mitch, the one man who seemed to offer her safety, now confronts her with the truth, and the scene moves from accusation through confession and memory to a brutal rejection. What makes it so gripping is that Blanche is both exposed and, for once, startlingly honest, so the audience's judgement of her is complicated even as she is destroyed.

The passage opens with blunt, almost childlike simplicity: "You lied to me, Blanche." Mitch's plain statement contrasts sharply with the elaborate language Blanche usually commands, and his repetition in "Lies, lies, inside and out, all lies" has the hammering rhythm of a verdict. Blanche's reply, "Never inside, I didn't lie in my heart", is one of the most revealing lines in the play. She distinguishes between factual truth and emotional truth, suggesting that her deceptions were a way of protecting an inner self that remained sincere. An audience may be torn: we know she has deceived Mitch, yet we also sense that her "heart" has been genuine in wanting love.

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Williams then breaks the realism of the scene with the appearance of the Mexican Woman, selling tin flowers and calling "Flores para los muertos". This expressionist touch is chilling. The flowers for the dead act as a symbol of everything Blanche fears, and her horrified reaction shows that the past is literally arriving at her door. The interruption turns an argument between two people into something closer to a vision of fate, and it foreshadows the death of Blanche's hopes.

Her reply is a haunting speech of memory. Fragmented phrases such as "Crumble and fade" and talk of "regrets" and "recriminations" capture the slow decay of Belle Reve and the deaths she nursed there, and the broken syntax suggests a mind slipping between present and past. When she says of death, "The opposite is desire", Williams crystallises the central tension of the play: Blanche has turned to desire as a defence against the death that surrounded her. Her memory of the drunken soldiers calling for her on the lawn at night makes this concrete and pitiful, showing how loneliness drove her to seek comfort in strangers. The audience is drawn into her confession, and its sadness makes Mitch's response all the harsher.

That response marks the scene's turning point. Mitch fumbles to embrace her and asks for "what I been missing all summer", revealing that, now he believes she is not respectable, he sees her only as a body. Blanche's desperate "Then marry me, Mitch!" exposes how much rests on him; she is pleading not just for love but for survival. His answer, "I don't think I want to marry you any more", is devastating in its flatness, and his cruel justification, "You're not clean enough to bring in the house with my mother", condemns her through the double standard that has followed her throughout the play. The man who once seemed gentle becomes another judge.

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Blanche's response is explosive. Her cry "Fire! Fire! Fire!" is a theatrical shock, forcing Mitch to flee, and it suggests both real panic and a desperate act of self-defence: she cannot bear his presence and uses the only weapon left, noise. The scream also hints at the emergency of her mental state, a woman alarmed by her own destruction.

Williams closes with stage effects that leave the audience in grief. Blanche is left alone, and "The distant piano is slow and blue", the blues motif turning mournful as though the city itself laments her. The moment is dramatic because it removes her final refuge and prepares for the catastrophe of the next scene. We leave it pitying Blanche far more than condemning her.

3b

Williams conveys Blanche's sense of her own superiority as something both absurd and tragic. She clings to an image of herself as a refined Southern lady, cultured, delicate and above the coarse world of Elysian Fields, and Williams makes this pose vivid through her language, her rituals and the sharp contrasts he builds around her. Yet the more strikingly she asserts her superiority, the more the audience sees it as a fragile defence against poverty, ageing and shame.

From her first appearance, Blanche's superiority is shown through her horror at her surroundings. Arriving in her white suit, "daintily dressed" amid the shabby street, she looks visually out of place. Her ironic description of having been told to take "a streetcar named Desire" and transfer to "Cemeteries" displays a literary wit she uses to distance herself from the ordinary world. When she sees the Kowalskis' flat she exclaims, "Only Poe! Only Mr Edgar Allan Poe could do it justice!" The reference is snobbish and theatrical: she measures the apartment against Gothic

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literature, implying both that she is educated and that the place is a kind of horror. Even her nervous drinking is disguised with polite pretence, as if a lady could not be seen to need it.

Williams makes her superiority most striking in her attitude to Stanley. In Scene 4 she pours contempt on him to Stella, insisting that he "acts like an animal" and calling him "sub-human". Her extended image of him "bearing the raw meat home from the kill in the jungle" turns him into a caveman, while she urges Stella not to "hang back with the brutes" but to cling to art, poetry and music. Her speech is eloquent and in some ways perceptive, yet the dramatic irony is sharp, because Stanley overhears it. Her sense of superiority, voiced so confidently, gives him a motive to destroy her, and the audience feels the danger in her arrogance.

Her language with other characters reinforces this. With Mitch she slips into French, teasing him with questions she knows he cannot understand, and enjoys his embarrassment; her vanity is shown in her insistence on dim light and her hatred of "a naked light bulb", which she compares to "a rude remark or a vulgar action". Williams cleverly links her social snobbery to her fear of exposure: the paper lantern she places over the bulb is both a sign of refinement and a way of hiding her age. Her superiority is, in effect, a lantern over the truth.

Williams also shows the class history behind her pride. Belle Reve, the "beautiful dream", stands for the vanished world of the plantation aristocracy that Blanche believes she belongs to. Stanley, by contrast, insists that he is "one hundred percent American" and dismisses her airs. The conflict between them dramatises a clash between an old, decaying gentility and a new, vigorous working class, and Blanche's superiority looks increasingly like a relic.

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As the play progresses, her pretensions become more desperate. In Scene 10, dressed in a soiled evening gown and a tiara, she boasts of an invitation from Shep Huntleigh and declares herself "a cultivated woman, a woman of intelligence and breeding". She accuses Stanley of having made her cast "my pearls before swine". The image is grandly biblical, but the costume tells another story: the tawdry glamour reveals that her superiority now exists only in fantasy. Williams makes the moment painfully ironic because it immediately precedes Stanley's assault.

Finally, even in defeat Blanche retains her manner. Led away by the doctor, she says, "Whoever you are, I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." The gracious tone is still that of a lady, yet the line reveals her total dependence. Williams therefore conveys her superiority strikingly not to mock her alone, but to show how a woman with no power left could only survive by believing she was better than the world that destroyed her.

4a

Shakespeare dramatically portrays the lovers' emotions at this moment as wild, extreme and rapidly shifting, so that the scene is both comic and genuinely painful. Because the audience knows that Puck's love-juice has caused Lysander and Demetrius to dote on Helena, we can laugh at the absurd reversals, yet Shakespeare gives Helena and Hermia such intense hurt and bewilderment that their suffering feels real.

Helena's opening speech conveys wounded pride and suspicion. Her questions, "Wherefore doth Lysander / Deny your love", show that she cannot believe the men's sudden devotion is sincere and assumes Hermia has planned it "by your setting on". Her self-pity is clear in the paradox of being "miserable most, to love

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unlov'd", where the repeated sounds stress her sense of rejection. When Hermia replies simply, "I understand not what you mean by this", the short, plain line exposes the gulf between them: Hermia is innocent, while Helena is convinced she is being mocked.

Helena's anger then intensifies. Her imperatives, "persever, counterfeit sad looks, / Make mouths upon me", build a list of imagined insults, and she believes the whole scene is a "sweet jest". The bitter sarcasm of "This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled" suggests she feels humiliated in public. Yet her emotion turns quickly to despair when she says her fault is one "Which death, or absence, soon shall remedy". The extreme language shows how deeply she feels unloved, and the audience may pity her even while laughing at the confusion.

The men's emotions are presented as exaggerated and competitive. Lysander's triple declaration, "My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!", is so excessive that it becomes comic, and Helena's ironic "O excellent!" punctures it. Demetrius and Lysander quickly turn love into rivalry, trading boasts such as "I say I love thee more than he can do" and preparing to fight. The rapid, short exchanges and the urgent "Quick, come" create pace and tension, and Shakespeare satirises the way young men's passions can flip into aggression.

The most shocking emotional shift is Lysander's cruelty to Hermia. The man who eloped with her now insults her with a stream of harsh names, "you Ethiope", "thou cat, thou burr; vile thing", and threatens to "shake thee from me like a serpent". These animal images make him seem violent and repelled, and the racially charged references to Hermia's darker complexion, "tawny Tartar", are designed to wound. Calling her "loathed med'cine" and "hated potion" is especially ironic, since it is a magic potion that has changed him, and the audience enjoys

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this joke even as we feel for Hermia.

Hermia's emotions move from confusion to anguish. Her questions, "Why are you grown so rude? What change is this, / Sweet love?", show her clinging to affectionate language despite his cruelty. Her line "What! Can you do me greater harm than hate?" is deeply moving, turning Lysander's promise not to "harm" her into a reminder that rejection is itself the worst injury. The rush of broken questions, "Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?", suggests that her very sense of identity is being shaken, and her insistence "I am as fair now as I was erewhile" reveals her insecurity. The dashes and exclamations in her speech make her distress audible.

Shakespeare ends the passage with Lysander's emphatic confirmation that "'tis no jest / That I do hate thee and love Helena". The blunt antithesis of "hate" and "love" in a single line crushes Hermia's last hope. Throughout, Shakespeare dramatises love as irrational and unstable, and the comedy depends on the audience's knowledge of the magic, but the emotional honesty of Helena and Hermia gives the scene a sharp edge. It is funny, but it also shows how easily love can turn to cruelty.

4b

The mechanicals add enormously to my enjoyment of A Midsummer Night's Dream because Shakespeare uses them to bring broad, warm-hearted comedy into a play otherwise dominated by aristocrats and fairies. Their earnest attempts at drama are hilarious, but they also mirror and gently mock the play's serious themes of love, imagination and theatre itself, so that laughing at them becomes a way of laughing at all the characters, and perhaps at ourselves.

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Much of the pleasure comes from their first rehearsal scene. Quince's attempts to organise his company are constantly derailed by Bottom, whose enthusiasm is boundless. He wants to play every part, offering to play the lion too, and promising that he will "roar you as gently as any sucking dove". The comic contradiction of a gentle roar sums up Bottom's mixture of vanity and innocence. Flute's protest, "let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming", and Snug's worry that he is "slow of study" for a part that consists only of roaring are delightfully simple, and Shakespeare enjoys the gap between their ambitions and their abilities. Puck's later description of them as "hempen home-spuns" captures their homely, working-class status, which makes them a refreshing contrast to the polished verse of the court.

The mechanicals also generate some of the play's most memorable comedy through their collision with the fairy world. When Puck gives Bottom an ass's head, Quince's horrified cry, "Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee! Thou art translated", is both funny and apt, since Bottom has literally been transformed into the fool he always partly was. The scene in which Titania, under the love-juice, wakes and asks "What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?" is wonderfully absurd: the fairy queen adores a weaver with donkey's ears. What adds to the enjoyment is Bottom's unflappable calm. He accepts the fairies' attentions as if they were natural, asking for hay and a scratch, and his dignity in this ridiculous situation is strangely endearing. Shakespeare also uses this to satirise the irrationality of love, since Titania's infatuation is no more foolish than the young lovers' sudden changes of heart.

Bottom's waking speech is a highlight. Struggling to describe his "most rare vision", he scrambles the senses in a garbled echo of scripture, and concludes that "man is but an ass" who tries to explain the dream. It is funny because he nearly says what happened to him, yet it is also quietly profound, suggesting that some

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experiences of wonder are beyond words. His plan to have it called "Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom" is a perfect pun, both silly and meaningful.

The play-within-the-play in Act 5 brings the mechanicals' contribution to a joyful climax. Their "Pyramus and Thisbe" is a tragedy of doomed lovers, ironically close to what might have happened to Hermia and Lysander, yet it is performed with such incompetence that it becomes farce. Wall holds up his fingers for the "chink", the lion explains he is not really a lion so the ladies will not be afraid, and Bottom's overblown verse, from "O grim-look'd night!" to the repeated "die, die, die, die, die", parodies clumsy dramatic writing. The aristocrats' mocking comments add another layer: Hippolyta calls it "the silliest stuff that ever I heard", but Theseus replies that "The best in this kind are but shadows". This line invites us to reflect that all plays, including Shakespeare's own, depend on the audience's imagination.

In the end, the mechanicals add to my enjoyment because their comedy is affectionate rather than cruel. Shakespeare laughs with them as much as at them, valuing their sincerity and good intentions. Through their bumbling efforts, he celebrates the magic and absurdity of theatre, and leaves the audience with a sense of shared, generous delight.

Sa

This moment is so distressing because the audience watches a noble man being led, step by step, into planning the murder of an innocent wife he still loves. Shakespeare makes it painful by showing Othello torn between tenderness and savagery, while Iago calmly feeds his rage. We know the truth about the handkerchief and about Desdemona's innocence, so every line becomes an agony of dramatic irony.

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The passage begins with a seemingly trivial domestic quarrel. Bianca throws back the handkerchief, refusing to "take out" the work on it, and Cassio's light "How now, my sweet Bianca!" shows he is unaware of being watched. Yet for the concealed Othello this is devastating proof: "By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!" The oath suggests the depth of his shock, and the audience is distressed because the evidence is entirely circumstantial, a token passed through Emilia and Iago's scheming. Shakespeare shows how easily appearances can be manipulated.

Once Cassio leaves, Othello's first words, "How shall I murder him, Iago?", are chilling in their directness. There is no question of whether, only how. Iago's response is to inflame rather than calm him, reminding him of how Cassio "laugh'd at his vice" and stressing the handkerchief. His cruel lie that Desdemona "gave it him, and he hath giv'n it his whore" twists the knife, degrading both Desdemona and the gift that symbolised Othello's love. Othello's broken replies, "O Iago!" and "Was that mine?", show how disorientated he is, a once eloquent general reduced to fragments.

What makes the scene most distressing is Othello's oscillation between violence and love. He wants Cassio "nine years a-killing", an image of prolonged torture, and immediately cries "A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!", the triple repetition revealing that his love has not died. He curses Desdemona to "rot, and perish, and be damn'd to-night", then admits "my heart is turn'd to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand". This striking image shows him trying to harden himself, but the pain he feels proves his heart is still alive. He praises her gifts, saying she is "so delicate with her needle" and could "sing the savageness out of a bear", reminding the audience of the gentle, accomplished woman we have seen. Each time, Iago intervenes with brief, cold remarks, "Nay, you must forget that" and

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"She's the worse for all this", turning her virtues into evidence of sin. The contrast between Othello's passion and Iago's control is horrifying.

The emotional climax comes with "But yet the pity of it, Iago! O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!" The repetition of Iago's name is deeply ironic, as Othello appeals for understanding to the very man destroying him. For a moment he seems to glimpse the tragedy, and the audience longs for him to pull back. Instead, Iago twists his grief into weakness, suggesting that if he is so "fond over her iniquity" he might as well license her to offend.

The final movement is the most disturbing of all. Othello's threat "I will chop her into messes" uses brutal, almost bestial language, showing how far Iago's poison has reduced him. His outrage at being made a cuckold "With mine officer!" reveals his wounded pride. When he asks for poison, he admits he fears that Desdemona's "body and beauty" will "unprovide my mind", tacitly recognising that seeing her might restore his reason. Iago instead suggests he "strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated", a grotesque image that turns the marriage bed into a scene of punishment. Othello's delighted "Good, good; the justice of it pleases" is terrible because he now believes murder is justice.

Shakespeare ends with Iago offering to be Cassio's "undertaker" and Othello's simple "Excellent good". The audience is left distressed by how completely Iago has taken control, and by the knowledge that a loving, noble man has now agreed to destroy the person he loves most.

Sb

The ending of Othello is powerful because Shakespeare makes us watch a crime we know to be built entirely on a lie, and then forces the truth out only when it is

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too late to save anyone. The final scene is claustrophobic, tender and horrifying at once: it holds us between pity for Othello and revulsion at what he does, and it denies us the comfort of a full explanation.

Shakespeare opens the scene with a disturbing calm. Othello enters not raging but reasoning, repeating "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul", as if he were a priest performing a sacrifice rather than a husband committing murder. The repetition suggests a man trying to convince himself. His language is still beautiful: he will not "scar that whiter skin of hers than snow, / And smooth as monumental alabaster". The image is lovely, yet "monumental" already turns Desdemona into a tomb effigy, so his poetry seems to kill her before his hands do. The pun in "Put out the light, and then put out the light" links the candle to her life, and his recognition that he cannot relight the second makes the moment almost unbearable, because he understands the finality of what he is about to do and does it anyway.

The murder itself is distressing because Desdemona is so helpless and so innocent. Her pleading, "Kill me tomorrow; let me live tonight", shrinks from tomorrow to a single night and then, implicitly, to a moment, showing her desperate bargaining for time. The audience, who know about the handkerchief and Iago's plot, are trapped in dramatic irony, longing to interrupt. Shakespeare then adds a cruel twist: Desdemona briefly revives and, asked who has done this, answers "Nobody; I myself", asking to be commended to her "kind lord". Her final act is to protect the man who killed her, and this selfless loyalty makes Othello's crime seem even more monstrous.

Emilia gives the ending much of its energy. Her fury at Othello, "O gull! O dolt! / As ignorant as dirt!", is blunt and monosyllabic, puncturing his grand language.

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When she realises her own husband's guilt, she declares that it is "proper I obey him, but not now", choosing truth over obedience and paying with her life. Her dying echo of the Willow Song, "I will play the swan, / And die in music", binds her to Desdemona and creates a mournful, almost musical stillness amid the violence.

Perhaps most powerful is Iago's silence. When asked why he did it, he replies "Demand me nothing; what you know, you know: / From this time forth I never will speak word." The man who has talked everyone into ruin simply stops talking. Shakespeare refuses us a motive, and the evil remains unexplained, which is far more unsettling than any confession. Othello's attempt to look at Iago's feet for cloven hooves, admitting "that's a fable", shows that the devil here is all too human.

Finally, Shakespeare gives Othello a last speech that divides audiences. "Soft you; a word or two before you go" brings back the controlled, eloquent voice of the general we first met, as he asks to be remembered as one "that loved not wisely but too well". Some may find this moving; others may feel he is still shaping his own story, since "not easily jealous" seems hard to accept. The simile of "the base Indian" who "threw a pearl away / Richer than all his tribe" is a precise recognition of Desdemona's worth. Then the speech becomes an action: he recalls killing "a malignant and a turban'd Turk", and as he says "smote him, thus" he stabs himself, so he becomes both the Venetian hero and the enemy he executes. His last words, "Killing myself, to die upon a kiss", recall the kiss he gave before killing her and close the play on a heartbreaking symmetry.

Lodovico's instruction to "Look on the tragic loading of this bed", followed by "The object poisons sight; / Let it be hid", turns the bed into an image too terrible to

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keep looking at. The ending is powerful because Shakespeare makes us look anyway, holding beauty and horror together until the very last line.