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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/31**

Paper 3 Drama (Open Text) **October/November 2025**

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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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:

JO: Has your husband thrown you out?

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Living

like pigs in a pigsty.

(*from* Act 2, Scene 2)

In what ways does Delaney make this moment in the play so revealing?

Or **1(b)** How far does Delaney make Boy a likeable 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, and then answer the question that follows it:

[PILKINGS *returns with* IYALOJA.]

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No, you said, I am the hunter's dog and I shall eat
the entrails of the game and the faeces of the hunter.

(*from* Scene 5)

How does Soyinka vividly convey the characters' thoughts and feelings at this moment in the play?

Or **2(b)** To what extent does Soyinka's portrayal of Olunde encourage you to feel sympathy for him?

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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:

[STELLA *opens the door and they enter.*]

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I'm sorry, but I haven't noticed the stamp of genius even on Stanley's forehead.

(*from* Scene 3)

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

Or **3(b)** Explore how Williams dramatically portrays Blanche's breakdown in the play.

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:

[*Enter* PYRAMUS.]

THESEUS: Pyramus draws near the wall; silence.

PYRAMUS: *O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!*
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night, alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine;
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne.

[WALL *holds up his fingers.*]

Thanks, courteous wall. Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss;
Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS: The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

PYRAMUS: No, in truth, sir, he should not. *Deceiving me* is Thisby's cue. She is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see it will fall pat as I told you; yonder she comes.

[*Enter* THISBY.]

THISBY: *O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,*
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYRAMUS: *I see a voice, now will I to the chink,*
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face. Thisby!

THISBY: *My love! thou art my love, I think.*

PYRAMUS: *Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;*
And like Limander am I trusty still.

THISBY: *And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.*

PYRAMUS: *Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.*

THISBY: *As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.*

PYRAMUS: *O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall.*

THISBY: *I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.*

PYRAMUS: *Will thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?*

THISBY: *Tide life, tide death, I come without delay.*

[*Exeunt* PYRAMUS *and* THISBY.]

WALL: *Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;*
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

[*Exit* WALL.]

THESEUS: Now is the moon used between the two neighbours.

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DEMETRIUS: No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

HIPPOLYTA: This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS: The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them. *45*

HIPPOLYTA: It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THESEUS: If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men.

(*from* Act 5, Scene 1)

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

Or **4(b)** 'Oberon wants to be in control.'

In what ways does Shakespeare's portrayal of Oberon show this?

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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:

[*Enter a* SERVANT.]

SERVANT: A messenger from Caesar.

CLEOPATRA: What, no more ceremony? See, my women!
Against the blown rose may they stop their nose
That kneel'd unto the buds. Admit him, sir.

[*Exit* SERVANT.]

ENOBARBUS: [*Aside*] Mine honesty and I begin to square.
The loyalty well held to fools does make
Our faith mere folly. Yet he that can endure
To follow with allegiance a fall'n lord
Does conquer him that did his master conquer,
And earns a place i' th' story.

[*Enter* THYREUS.]

CLEOPATRA: Caesar's will?

THYREUS: Hear it apart.

CLEOPATRA: None but friends*:* say boldly.

THYREUS: So, happy, are they friends to Antony.

ENOBARBUS: He needs as many, sir, as Caesar has,
Or needs not us. If Caesar please, our master
Will leap to be his friend. For us, you know
Whose he is we are, and that is Caesar's.

THYREUS: So.
Thus then, thou most renown'd: Caesar entreats
Not to consider in what case thou stand'st
Further than he is Caesar.

CLEOPATRA: Go on. Right royal!

THYREUS: He knows that you embrace not Antony
As you did love, but as you fear'd him.

CLEOPATRA: O!

THYREUS: The scars upon your honour, therefore, he
Does pity, as constrained blemishes,
Not as deserv'd.

CLEOPATRA: He is a god, and knows
What is most right. Mine honour was not yielded,
But conquer'd merely.

ENOBARBUS: [*Aside*] To be sure of that,
I will ask Antony. Sir, sir, thou art so leaky
That we must leave thee to thy sinking, for
Thy dearest quit thee.

[*Exit.*]

THYREUS: Shall I say to Caesar
What you require of him? For he partly begs
To be desir'd to give. It much would please him

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That of his fortunes you should make a staff
To lean upon. But it would warm his spirits
To hear from me you had left Antony,
And put yourself under his shroud,
The universal landlord.

CLEOPATRA: What's your name?

THYREUS: My name is Thyreus.

CLEOPATRA: Most kind messenger,
Say to great Caesar this: in deputation
I kiss his conqu'ring hand. Tell him I am prompt
To lay my crown at's feet, and there to kneel.
Tell him from his all-obeying breath I hear
The doom of Egypt.

THYREUS: 'Tis your noblest course.
Wisdom and fortune combating together,
If that the former dare but what it can,
No chance may shake it. Give me grace to lay
My duty on your hand.

CLEOPATRA: Your Caesar's father oft,
When he hath mus'd of taking kingdoms in,
Bestow'd his lips on that unworthy place,
As it rain'd kisses.

[*Re-enter* ANTONY *and* ENOBARBUS.]

ANTONY: Favours, by Jove that thunders!
What art thou, fellow?

THYREUS: One that but performs
The bidding of the fullest man, and worthiest
To have command obey'd.

ENOBARBUS: [*Aside*]: You will be whipt.

ANTONY: Approach there. – Ah, you kite! – Now, gods and devils!
Authority melts from me. Of late, when I cried 'Ho!'
Like boys unto a muss, kings would start forth
And cry 'Your will?' Have you no ears? I am Antony yet.

[*Enter* SERVANTS.]

Take hence this Jack and whip him.

(*from* Act 3, Scene 13)

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

Or **5(b)** Explore **two** moments in the play which Shakespeare makes particularly moving for you.

Do **not** use the passage printed in **Question 5(a)** in answering this question.

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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 makes Boy likeable to a large extent, but she deliberately keeps him at a distance, so that our liking is mixed with doubt. He is warm, funny and gentle with Jo in a play where almost every other adult is selfish or careless, yet he is also the man who leaves her pregnant and never returns. I think Delaney wants us to enjoy his charm while recognising that charm alone cannot protect Jo, and the tension between these two responses is what makes him so interesting.

The most obvious reason we like Boy is the contrast he offers with Helen. Jo's mother mocks her, forgets her and abandons her for Peter, whereas Boy listens to Jo and seems genuinely delighted by her. Their first scene together, as he walks her home, is full of light teasing and quick exchanges in which Jo is allowed to be playful and clever rather than sullen. The rhythm of their dialogue is easy and affectionate, and for once Jo sounds like a girl enjoying herself. Delaney makes the audience feel the relief of this tenderness, especially since we have just watched Helen treat her daughter as a nuisance in the bleak flat.

Boy is also likeable because he is honest about the prejudice around them. He is aware of how people look at a black sailor walking out with a white girl, and his jokes about it are a way of facing that reality with humour rather than bitterness. When he plays at being dangerous or exotic, Jo refuses to be frightened, and the joke becomes a shared rejection of other people's assumptions. Delaney makes him gentle and self-mocking rather than threatening, which quietly undermines the stereotypes that Helen later voices so crudely when she learns the baby's father was black.

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His proposal and the ring add to our sympathy. Jo has to wear the ring on a ribbon round her neck because she is still at school, a detail that is touching but also a reminder of how young she is. The engagement seems sincere in the moment, and Boy talks of coming back to her after his voyage. Their Christmas together, while Helen is away, is presented as a brief, almost secret happiness, a small world of two that the audience wants to last.

However, Delaney is careful not to let us trust him completely. We never see the relationship from Boy's side; he exists mainly in a few short scenes, and then he simply disappears from the play. The audience is left to wonder whether his promises were meant or whether, like many sailors, he says what a girl wants to hear before his ship leaves. Jo herself seems to half know this. She later speaks of him without much expectation that he will return, and her refusal to rely on him suggests that she has learned not to depend on adults. Some might see Boy as just another person who leaves Jo, joining Helen and her absent father in a pattern of desertion.

Yet I think it would be unfair to see him as a villain. Delaney gives no hint of cruelty in him, and Jo does not really condemn him; she speaks of him more with resignation than with bitterness. By making his absence, rather than any wicked act, the problem, Delaney turns the focus onto the society around Jo, which offers a young working class girl very little security. Boy becomes almost a symbol of a brief sweetness in her life, the "honey" of the title, that cannot be held on to.

In conclusion, Delaney makes Boy likeable through his humour, kindness and the genuine pleasure he takes in Jo, especially in contrast with the selfish adults around her. But by keeping him offstage for most of the play and leaving his intentions uncertain, she ensures that our affection is always shadowed by doubt.

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	He is likeable, but not dependable, and that combination is exactly what makes Jo's situation so poignant.
2b	Soyinka's portrayal of Olunde encourages a great deal of sympathy, but it is a sympathy mixed with awe and some discomfort. Olunde is dignified, intelligent and painfully alone, caught between his father's world and the colonial one, and his death is the most shocking event in the play. Yet Soyinka also makes him cool, proud and at times merciless, so that we admire him as much as we pity him. Our sympathy begins before we even meet him. In Scene 2 the Pilkingses discuss how Olunde left for England to study medicine against his father's wishes, with Pilkings' help, and how Elesin disowned him. Soyinka presents a young man who has already paid a price for his choices: he is estranged from his family and seen by the colonials as a kind of success story of their own. Ironically, both worlds seem to claim him without understanding him. When Olunde appears at the Residency ball in Scene 4, Soyinka makes him the calmest and most perceptive figure on stage. He is deeply offended to see the Pilkingses wearing egungun costume as fancy dress, and his quiet anger at this desecration earns our support, since the audience has already watched Amusa's terror at the sight of it and the Pilkingses' careless mockery of something sacred. His conversation with Jane is full of irony at her expense. He tells her that in his four years among her people he discovered that they have no respect for what they do not understand, and the measured, precise sentence is far more cutting than shouting. Soyinka makes him articulate the play's critique of colonial arrogance, and we feel the loneliness of a man who must keep explaining himself to people who will not listen.

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His story of the ship's captain who blew up his vessel to save the harbour is central here. Jane is horrified by it, but Olunde sees it as an act of noble self sacrifice for the community. Soyinka uses this to show that Olunde's values are not simply "native" or "English" but grounded in a belief that an individual life can be given for the good of all. This also foreshadows his own end, and on rereading the scene the quiet way he speaks becomes deeply moving.

Yet some moments make our sympathy less comfortable. When he hears the drums and believes his father has died, Olunde accepts it with a composure that Jane finds chilling, and an audience may share her shock that a son could speak so calmly of his father's death. Soyinka challenges us here: is this coldness, or is it a faith so complete that grief seems irrelevant? Even harsher is his reaction when Elesin is brought in under arrest, having failed to die. Olunde refuses to recognise him, telling him he has no father and calling him an "eater of left-overs". The cruelty of this moment is startling, and our sympathy may briefly shift to the humiliated Elesin. However, Soyinka makes clear that Olunde's contempt comes from shame and from his sense that the whole world's order has been betrayed.

The greatest sympathy comes in Scene 5, when Iyaloja and the women bring his body to the cell. Olunde has taken his father's place and died so that the King's passage will not be lost. Soyinka keeps him offstage for this act, so his death is revealed rather than shown, which makes it all the more shattering. A young doctor, the hope of the future, has been sacrificed because his father failed, and the waste is almost unbearable. Elesin's immediate suicide confirms how completely the son has shamed the father.

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To a large extent, then, Soyinka makes us sympathise with Olunde: he is isolated, misunderstood, and finally destroyed by others' failures. But his pride and his harshness towards Elesin stop him from being simply pitiable. I think Soyinka wants us to feel something closer to tragic admiration, the sense that Olunde is the strongest and most honourable figure in the play, and that this strength is exactly what kills him.

3a This moment, when Blanche and Stella return to the flat in the middle of the poker night, is revealing because Williams uses a small domestic interruption to expose the power struggle at the heart of the play. In a few lines we see Stanley's dominance over his territory and his wife, Blanche's habit of performing a refined femininity, and the first stirrings of her interest in Mitch as a possible escape. It also reveals how differently the two sisters see Stanley, a difference that will eventually tear them apart.

From the moment the women enter, Williams makes it clear that the kitchen belongs to the men. Blanche's gracious "Please don't get up" is met by Stanley's flat "Nobody's going to get up, so don't be worried." The exchange is almost comic, but it is revealing. Blanche speaks as if she were a Southern hostess receiving gentlemen callers, assuming that the old codes of chivalry still apply, and Stanley bluntly refuses to play along. The contrast between her elegant politeness and his rough, mocking reply shows that her manners have no currency in his world, and that he takes pleasure in letting her know it.

Stanley's treatment of Stella reinforces this. He dismisses the women's wish for the game to end and tells them to go upstairs, and the stage direction in which he gives Stella a loud whack on the thigh is especially telling. It is a casual,

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possessive gesture made in front of his friends, a public display of ownership. Stella's protest shows she is embarrassed, but she does not challenge him seriously, which hints at the way she has accepted his rule. When Blanche asks if she could kibitz and is told "You could not", Williams reveals how firmly Stanley excludes her from the male world of the game, a world of competition, chance and aggression that mirrors the larger contest between them.

The moment is also revealing about Blanche's loneliness. Her attention is quickly caught by Mitch, and the way she questions Stella about him is a kind of eager interrogation. She remarks that he seems to have a "sensitive look", and her questions about whether he is married and whether he is a "wolf" show that she is already assessing him as a potential protector. The rapid, short questions create a sense of urgency beneath the light tone. Blanche is not simply flirting; she is looking for safety, and the audience may sense how vulnerable she is when even a quiet man from the spare parts department seems a hopeful prospect. Her reaction to Stella's description of his job, asking whether it is "something much", reveals her snobbery but also her anxiety about status and security.

Most revealing of all is the final exchange about Stanley. Stella insists that he is the only one of his crowd likely to get anywhere and tells Blanche simply to look at him. Blanche's reply, "I've looked at him", followed by her ironic remark that she has not noticed "the stamp of genius" on his forehead, exposes the gulf between the sisters. Stella sees energy and promise, perhaps sexual vitality, while Blanche sees only coarseness. The wit of Blanche's line is typical of her, sharp, literary and superior, but it is also dangerous, because her contempt for Stanley is exactly what he senses and resents. Williams lets her mockery sit in the air, and the audience may feel that she is underestimating a man who is far more formidable than she thinks.

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Overall, this moment is revealing because it shows, in miniature, the forces that will drive the tragedy: Stanley's assertion of power over his home, Stella's loyalty to him, and Blanche's mixture of fragility, snobbery and need. The light, almost comic surface of the scene makes these tensions all the more unsettling, preparing us for the violence that erupts later the same night.

3b

Williams portrays Blanche's breakdown not as a sudden collapse but as a gradual unravelling that the audience watches through sound, light and her own increasingly fractured language. Using the stage itself to show what is happening inside her mind, he makes us experience her disintegration rather than simply observe it, so that by the final scene we feel both horror and pity.

From her first entrance Williams shows that Blanche is already fragile. Her arrival in Elysian Fields, dressed in white as if going to a garden party, is visually out of place, and her description of being told to take a streetcar named Desire and transfer to one called Cemeteries charts her life as a journey from passion to death. She drinks secretly, jumps at noises and admits to Stella that she cannot be alone. Her rapid, breathless speech and constant questions suggest a nervous system close to breaking point, while her obsession with how she looks reveals a terror of ageing and of being seen clearly.

Williams uses light as a central symbol of this fear. Blanche covers the bare bulb with a paper lantern because she cannot bear its harshness, and later tells Mitch that she does not want realism but "magic". The lantern becomes an image of the illusions she uses to protect herself. When Mitch tears it off in Scene 9 to look at her properly, the act is a kind of violation, stripping away her defences. Williams

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makes the physical stage action carry the psychological meaning: as the light becomes harsher, Blanche's fantasies become harder to sustain.

Sound is even more important. The Varsouviana polka, the tune that was playing when her young husband Allan Grey shot himself, recurs whenever Blanche is reminded of her guilt. In Scene 6, when she tells Mitch the story, the music rises and fades, and Williams indicates that she hears it in her head until the gunshot that ends it. This expressionist device lets the audience share her inner experience. Later, as Mitch confronts her and Stanley exposes her past in Laurel, the polka returns, showing that her mind is trapped in that moment of shame. Her bitter memory of telling Allan he disgusted her explains much of her self destruction: she has been punishing herself ever since.

Stanley's role in her breakdown is crucial. In Scene 7 Blanche sings "Paper Moon" in the bath while Stanley reveals her history to Stella, and Williams places her cheerful, fragile song against his brutal facts, so that her illusions and his reality collide on stage. His birthday present of a bus ticket back to Laurel is a cruel way of telling her she has nowhere to go, and Williams marks her reaction with a physical collapse as she runs to the bathroom choking.

The climax comes in Scene 10. Blanche, drunk and dressed in a soiled evening gown and tiara, talks to imaginary admirers and invents a telegram from Shep Huntleigh. Her fantasies are now spoken aloud as if they were true. When Stanley returns, Williams uses lurid reflections and grotesque shadows on the walls, with inhuman voices sounding outside, to show how her perception has become nightmarish. Stanley's line that they have had this date with each other from the beginning makes the rape seem the terrible end of their long conflict, and the scene closes on her total defeat.

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In Scene II the breakdown is complete. Blanche fantasises about dying at sea and is confused by the arrival of the doctor and matron. Her panic when the matron restrains her, and Stanley's tearing down of the lantern, are painful to watch. Yet Williams gives her a final dignity when the doctor treats her gently and she leaves on his arm, saying she has always depended on the kindness of strangers. The line is heartbreaking because it is so untrue: strangers have used and discarded her.

Williams therefore portrays Blanche's breakdown through a powerful combination of symbolic lighting, recurring music, expressionist effects and her own increasingly detached speech. By making us hear what she hears and see the world distorting around her, he ensures that we understand her collapse from the inside, and feel its full tragic weight.

4a

Shakespeare makes this moment hilarious through a double layer of comedy: the clumsy, overblown performance of the mechanicals, and the witty, often mocking commentary of their noble audience. We laugh at Bottom's dreadful verse and the absurdity of a man playing a wall, but we also laugh at the courtiers laughing, so that the scene becomes a playful reflection on theatre itself.

Much of the humour comes from the ridiculous language of the play within the play. Pyramus opens with a string of apostrophes, "O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!", and the repetition of "O night" five times in four lines turns tragic lament into absurdity. The second line, "O night, which ever art when day is not!", is gloriously pointless, a solemn statement of the obvious. The triple "alack, alack, alack" pads out the metre with empty noise, and the rhyming couplets are so heavy that they plod. Shakespeare is parodying the inflated style of old

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fashioned tragedy, and Bottom's earnest delivery makes it even funnier.

The treatment of Wall is a masterpiece of literal mindedness. Pyramus addresses it as "O sweet, O lovely wall", piling up endearments on a man covered in plaster, and then begs it to "Show me thy chink". The stage direction for Wall to hold up his fingers is pure visual comedy, the actor's hand standing in for a crack in the masonry. Within a few lines Pyramus swings from "courteous wall" to "O wicked wall" and "Curs'd be thy stones", and the rapid change of mood is absurdly exaggerated. There is also a vein of bawdy innuendo, especially when Thisby says she kisses "the wall's hole, not your lips at all", which Thisby delivers without any sense of how it sounds.

Bottom's mistakes add another layer. "I see a voice" and "To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face" mix up the senses in a way that echoes his earlier confusion when he wakes from his dream. The garbled classical allusions are equally funny: "Limander" for Leander, "Shafalus to Procrus" for Cephalus and Procris, and the meeting at "Ninny's tomb" instead of Ninus' tomb. The last error is particularly delicious, since "ninny" means a fool. The lovers' rhyming exchange of vows, "Tide life, tide death, I come without delay", is so rushed and sing-song that it drains the scene of any real passion.

The comedy is heightened by the breaking of the theatrical frame. When Theseus jokes that the wall, "being sensible, should curse again", Bottom steps out of character to correct him, "No, in truth, sir, he should not", and explains the plot as if the Duke were a slow child. His confident "You shall see it will fall pat as I told you" shows his total lack of self awareness. Wall's farewell, announcing in a neat couplet that his part is done and he will now go away, is equally deflating, since no illusion is left to break.

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The courtiers' remarks give the audience a second source of laughter. Theseus's pun, "Now is the moon used between the two neighbours", and Demetrius's dry comment about walls "so wilful to hear without warning" turn the performance into a game of wit. Hippolyta's blunt verdict, "This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard", may voice what the audience is thinking, and its plain prose punctures the strained verse before it.

Yet Shakespeare complicates the laughter. Theseus's reply, "The best in this kind are but shadows", reminds us that all actors, including the ones performing the whole play we are watching, rely on the audience's imagination. His generosity suggests that the mechanicals deserve kindness rather than scorn. So the moment is humorous not only because the performance is terrible, but because Shakespeare invites us to laugh at ourselves as spectators who are also imagining a wood full of fairies.

4b

Shakespeare's portrayal of Oberon certainly shows a king who wants to be in control: of his queen, of the lovers, and of the whole night in the wood. Yet what makes him fascinating is that his control is constantly slipping, both because Titania resists him and because his chief instrument, Puck, makes mistakes. Shakespeare presents Oberon's desire for mastery as at once powerful, petty and, by the end, surprisingly benevolent.

Oberon's first line, "Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania", immediately frames their relationship as a contest. The adjective "proud" is an accusation: Titania's pride is what Oberon cannot tolerate. His question "Am not I thy lord?" shows that he believes his authority as husband should settle the argument, but Titania's sharp

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reply, that she must then be his lady, turns his claim of hierarchy into a demand for mutual faithfulness. She then delivers a long speech describing how their quarrel has thrown the seasons into chaos, so Shakespeare shows that Oberon's struggle for control has consequences for the whole natural world. His response is strikingly small: he says he only begs "a little changeling boy / To be my henchman". The diminutive "little" and the casual "but" reveal that this huge disorder is caused by a question of possession and pride.

When Titania refuses, Oberon's need for control becomes vengeful. "Thou shalt not from this grove / Till I torment thee for this injury" has the force of a royal sentence, and the verb "torment" is surprisingly cruel. He plans to use the love juice so that she will dote on the next creature she sees, imagining with relish that it might be a lion, a bear or an ape. Later, as he squeezes the juice on her eyes, his incantation, "What thou seest when thou dost wake, / Do it for thy true-love take", is written in short, chanting lines that sound like a spell of command. Shakespeare makes Oberon a kind of director, arranging the scene from outside while his victim sleeps.

This directorial role extends to the lovers. Declaring "I am invisible", Oberon overhears Demetrius rejecting Helena and decides to intervene. His promise that before Demetrius leaves the grove Helena will "fly him" and he will "seek thy love" shows his wish to rearrange human emotions as easily as he commands fairies. Interestingly, here his control seems motivated by sympathy rather than spite, which complicates the statement in the question. However, Shakespeare undercuts his authority when Puck anoints the wrong Athenian. Oberon's angry "What hast thou done?" reveals that his plans depend on a servant he cannot fully govern, and the chaos of Act 3 shows how quickly control in the wood turns into confusion. Oberon has to order Puck to cover the night with fog and lead the rivals astray,

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constantly patching up the damage.

The humiliation of Titania with Bottom is the clearest sign of Oberon's need to dominate. He takes delight in hearing that she loves a monster, and he only releases her once she has given him the boy. His remark that he now begins to pity her "dotage" comes after he has got what he wanted, which suggests that his mercy is conditional on her submission. Some audiences find this deeply uncomfortable, seeing Oberon as a controlling husband who uses magic to win an argument. Others may see the play's comic structure softening it, since the result is reconciliation and the restoration of order.

By the final scene Oberon's control is presented as harmonious rather than tyrannical. He leads the fairies in blessing the three marriages, promising that the couples will "ever true in loving be". Here his authority is used to protect and bless, and the incantatory rhyme makes his power feel gentle.

In the end, Shakespeare's Oberon does want control, and he largely achieves it, but the play also reveals the cost and fragility of that control. His power is magnificent, yet it depends on deception, on a mischievous servant, and on Titania's enforced obedience. Shakespeare leaves us admiring the king of shadows while questioning whether anyone should hold such power over another's heart.

Sa

This moment is intriguing because Shakespeare refuses to let us know what Cleopatra really intends. As Caesar's messenger flatters her and invites her to abandon Antony, she seems to bargain her loyalty away, yet her words are so ambiguous that they could be calculated diplomacy, genuine betrayal or simply a queen keeping her options open. Around this uncertainty Shakespeare places

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Enobarbus's wavering loyalty and Antony's furious decline, so that the scene becomes a study of shifting allegiance and fading power.

The opening reveals Cleopatra's acute awareness of her changed status. Her complaint "What, no more ceremony?" suggests wounded pride that Caesar's man is admitted so casually. Her image of courtiers who "stop their nose" at "the blown rose" though they knelt to "the buds" is bitter and beautiful: the rose that has bloomed and faded is herself, and the metaphor shows her recognising that power attracts flattery only while it is fresh. This self awareness is intriguing, because it raises the question of whether what follows is a performance designed to survive.

Enobarbus's asides give the audience a second, sceptical perspective. "Mine honesty and I begin to square" personifies his honesty as an opponent he is about to fight, and his reasoning that loyalty to fools "does make / Our faith mere folly" shows a practical man arguing himself towards desertion. Yet he still imagines that the one who stays with "a fall'n lord" will earn "a place i' th' story". Shakespeare makes his inner conflict intriguing because we watch him weigh honour against survival in real time. His later image of Antony as a leaking ship, "thou art so leaky / That we must leave thee to thy sinking", is coldly vivid, and his exit to fetch Antony suggests that he believes Cleopatra is betraying him.

The exchange between Thyreus and Cleopatra is full of double meaning. When Thyreus claims that she embraced Antony not out of love but fear, her response is simply "O!", a single syllable that an actress could play as outrage, surprise or sly agreement. Her reply that her honour was "not yielded, / But conquer'd merely" seems to accept Caesar's excuse for her, presenting herself as a victim. Even her praise, "He is a god, and knows / What is most right", is so extravagant that it may well be ironic. Shakespeare keeps the audience guessing whether this is the

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woman who loves Antony or the politician who must protect Egypt.

Her message to Caesar intensifies the intrigue. She promises to "lay my crown at's feet, and there to kneel", and says she hears "The doom of Egypt" from his "all-obeying breath". The language of submission is total, yet it is deliberately theatrical, and Cleopatra is always performing. When Thyreus asks to kiss her hand, she recalls that Caesar's father "Bestow'd his lips on that unworthy place, / As it rain'd kisses." The image is sensuous and boastful, reminding Thyreus of her past power over great Romans. Is she flirting, or reminding Caesar's man that she has handled greater men than his master?

Antony's entrance at precisely this moment is a brilliant piece of dramatic timing. His outburst, "Favours, by Jove that thunders!", shows him seeing only betrayal. His speech then reveals his own crisis: "Authority melts from me." The verb "melts" recalls the earlier imagery of dissolving Rome and suggests his power is losing its solid shape. He looks back to a time when kings would "start forth" at his cry, and his desperate "Have you no ears? I am Antony yet" is both defiant and pitiful, since the need to insist on his identity shows how far it has slipped. Ordering Thyreus to be whipped is an attempt to reassert control through violence on a mere messenger, which only confirms his weakness.

The moment is intriguing, then, because every character is unstable: Cleopatra's loyalty is ambiguous, Enobarbus is moving towards desertion, and Antony clings to an authority he is visibly losing. Shakespeare leaves us suspended between interpretations, and that uncertainty is what makes the scene so gripping.

Sb

For me, the most moving moments in Antony and Cleopatra are not the grand

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public scenes of battle and politics but the private moments when characters finally see themselves clearly, too late to change anything. Shakespeare makes the death of Enobarbus and the death of Antony in Cleopatra's monument particularly affecting because in both, love and loyalty are revealed at the very moment they are lost.

Enobarbus has been the play's sceptical commentator, the soldier whose dry humour punctures romance. When he finally deserts to Caesar, we might expect him to feel nothing. Instead, Shakespeare devastates him with generosity: Antony sends his treasure after him. Antony's own response, "O, my fortunes have / Corrupted honest men!", is moving because he blames himself rather than his friend, and the adjective "honest" shows that he still believes in Enobarbus. When Enobarbus hears the news, his language collapses into self-condemnation: "I am alone the villain of the earth, / And feel I am so most." The superlative and the word "alone" isolate him completely; the man who always judged others now judges himself, and finds no defence.

His death scene by night deepens this. He addresses the moon as "O sovereign mistress of true melancholy", turning to an image of loneliness and change, and the formal, almost prayer-like apostrophe contrasts painfully with the cynical prose he once spoke so easily. He asks to "Throw my heart / Against the flint and hardness of my fault", a violent image in which guilt itself becomes a stone that will break him. Most moving of all is his plea, "O Antony, / Nobler than my revolt is infamous, / Forgive me". The balanced comparison measures Antony's nobility against his own shame, and Antony never hears it. Shakespeare lets the watching soldiers find him dead, so his repentance is witnessed only by strangers. I find this unbearably sad because loyalty, the quality Enobarbus thought foolish, turns out to be what he valued most; he dies, it seems, of a broken heart rather than

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any wound.

The death of Antony is moving in a different way, because it is shared, yet it is also full of painful incongruity. Antony has stabbed himself after Cleopatra's false message that she is dead, and even his suicide fails, so he must be carried to her wounded. Cleopatra, afraid of capture, will not come down, and the dying general has to be hauled up into the monument. Her line "How heavy weighs my lord!" is both literal and deeply poignant: the man who once carried the weight of the world is now a burden, yet she still calls him "my lord", and I think Shakespeare uses this awkward staging to show love working through humiliation.

Antony's last words are strikingly selfless. His simple repetition, "I am dying, Egypt, dying", uses the name of her country as a name for her, so that in his final moments she is his whole world. Rather than blaming her for the lie that killed him, he gives her practical advice to trust "Proculeius" and asks her not to lament "The miserable change now at my end". He wants to be remembered as "a Roman by a Roman / Valiantly vanquish'd", reclaiming dignity from defeat.

It is Cleopatra's response, however, that moves me most. Her grief is expressed through images of a whole universe collapsing: "The crown o' th' earth doth melt", "wither'd is the garland of the war", and finally "there is nothing left remarkable / Beneath the visiting moon." The verb "melt" suggests something precious dissolving, while "nothing left remarkable" implies that the world has become flat and meaningless. Her earlier question, whether she must stay in a world that is "No better than a sty" without him, shows the theatrical queen at last speaking with complete sincerity. Throughout the play we have doubted whether her love is real; here Shakespeare removes that doubt, and the effect is all the more powerful for having been delayed.

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In both moments, then, Shakespeare makes us feel the cost of the lovers' story. Enobarbus discovers his loyalty only after betraying it, and Cleopatra reveals the depth of her love only as Antony dies. What makes these scenes so moving for me is that recognition and loss arrive together, leaving characters, and audience, with a love that can only be fully known once it is gone.