Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

English Literature

Paper 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

Friday 25 May 2018 – Morning
Question Booklet

Paper Reference
4ET1/02

Do not return this booklet with your Answer Booklet.
Clean copies of your set texts may be taken into the examination.

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Answer TWO questions:

Answer ONE question from Section A and ONE question from Section B.

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SECTION A: Modern Drama

Answer ONE question on ONE text from this section.

You should spend 45 minutes on your chosen question.

***A View from the Bridge*, Arthur Miller**

EITHER

1 Alfieri: 'A lawyer means the law…'

Explore the significance of different kinds of law in the play.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 1 = 30 marks)

OR

2 How does Miller present the relationship between Eddie and Marco in this play?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 2 = 30 marks)

***An Inspector Calls*, J B Priestley**

EITHER

3 'The mystery of the play revolves around Inspector Goole.'

How far do you agree with this view?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 3 = 30 marks)

OR

4 In what ways does Sheila Birling change as the play progresses?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 4 = 30 marks)

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***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, Mark Haddon**
(adapted by Simon Stephens)

EITHER

5 Explore the significance of Ed Boone in this play.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 5 = 30 marks)

OR

6 How is the theme of fear presented in the play?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 6 = 30 marks)

***Kindertransport*, Diane Samuels**

EITHER

7 'Know your number. If you don't know it you might forget who you are.'

How does Samuels present the importance of identity in *Kindertransport*?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 7 = 30 marks)

OR

8 Explore the significance of Helga in this play.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 8 = 30 marks)

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***Death and the King's Horseman*, Wole Soyinka**

EITHER

9 How are Jane and Simon Pilkings presented in this play?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 9 = 30 marks)

OR

10 Explore the theme of death in *Death and the King's Horseman*.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 10 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 30 MARKS

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SECTION B: Literary Heritage Texts

Answer ONE question on ONE text from this section.

You should spend 45 minutes on your chosen question.

***Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare**

EITHER

11 'Paris is a more suitable husband than Romeo for Juliet.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 11 = 30 marks)

OR

12 Explore the theme of loss in this play.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 12 = 30 marks)

***Macbeth*, William Shakespeare**

EITHER

13 How is evil presented in *Macbeth*?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 13 = 30 marks)

OR

14 '… my soul is too much charged / With blood of thine already.' (Macbeth)

In what ways does Shakespeare present Macbeth's conscience in this play?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 14 = 30 marks)

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***The Merchant of Venice*, William Shakespeare**

EITHER

15 'Appearances are sometimes misleading.'

Explore the use of appearance and reality in this play.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 15 = 30 marks)

OR

16 Discuss the presentation of Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 16 = 30 marks)

***Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen**

EITHER

17 In what ways does Darcy change during the course of the novel?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 17 = 30 marks)

OR

18 How does Austen present friendship in *Pride and Prejudice*?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 18 = 30 marks)

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***Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens**

EITHER

19 How does Dickens explore the theme of death in this novel?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 19 = 30 marks)

OR

20 In what ways is the character of Estella presented in *Great Expectations*?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 20 = 30 marks)

***The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne**

EITHER

21 Explore the relationship between Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale in this novel.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 21 = 30 marks)

OR

22 How does Hawthorne present the nature of evil in *The Scarlet Letter*?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 22 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 60 MARKS

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English Literature

Paper 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

Friday 25 May 2018 – Morning **Time: 1 hour 30 minutes**	Paper Reference **4ET1/02**

You must have:
Question Booklet (enclosed)

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer **ONE** question from each section.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided – *there may be more space than you need.*

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets – *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- Copies of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* may **not** be brought into the examination.
- Dictionaries may **not** be used in this examination.
- Clean copies of your set texts may be taken into the examination.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.

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SECTION A: Modern Drama

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number:

Question 1 ☒	**Question 2** ☒	**Question 3** ☒
Question 4 ☒	**Question 5** ☒	**Question 6** ☒
Question 7 ☒	**Question 8** ☒	**Question 9** ☒
Question 10 ☒		

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TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 30 MARKS

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SECTION B: Literary Heritage Texts

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number:

Question 11 ☒	**Question 12** ☒	**Question 13** ☒
Question 14 ☒	**Question 15** ☒	**Question 16** ☒
Question 17 ☒	**Question 18** ☒	**Question 19** ☒
Question 20 ☒	**Question 21** ☒	**Question 22** ☒

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TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 60 MARKS

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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

1

In A View from the Bridge, Miller sets two kinds of law against each other: the written civil law of America, which Alfieri serves, and the older, unwritten law of Sicilian honour, which Eddie, Marco and the Red Hook community live by. A third law sits beneath both: the natural law of family and desire that Eddie breaks long before he breaks any statute. I would argue that the significance of these laws lies in their failure to fit together, so that Eddie is crushed in the gap between them, and Miller leaves the audience uncertain which law, if any, truly deserves our loyalty.

Miller introduces the conflict through Alfieri's opening speech. His statement that "A lawyer means the law" sounds solid, yet he immediately qualifies it: in Sicily, "from where their fathers came", the law "has not been a friendly idea since the Greeks were beaten". The phrase suggests that for these immigrants, official law is something imposed by outsiders, so loyalty is owed to family and community instead. Alfieri's claim that "now we settle for half, and I like it better" presents American law as a compromise, civilised but diminished. The word "half" is telling: it implies that civil law offers safety at the cost of passion and wholeness, which prepares us for a hero who refuses to settle for anything.

The unwritten law is made vivid through the story of Vinny Bolzano, the boy who "snitched" on his uncle and was dragged down the stairs by his own family. Eddie tells this story to warn Catherine and the brothers, and his disgust is absolute. Structurally, this is a clear moment of foreshadowing: the audience senses that the law Eddie preaches in Act One is the law he will violate in Act Two. When he finally telephones the Immigration Bureau, the dramatic irony is crushing, because

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Eddie becomes Vinny, and the community's punishment of him is as certain as the earlier one.

Eddie's tragedy is that he looks for help from the wrong law. In his meetings with Alfieri he wants the written law to stop Rodolfo marrying Catherine, insisting that "he ain't right". Alfieri's patient explanation that the law can do nothing about such a feeling, and that Eddie has "no recourse in the law", shows the limits of civil law: it cannot touch the jealousy and forbidden love that really drive Eddie. Alfieri's image of a river is crucial here. He warns that when the law is natural, "a river will drown you if you buck it now". The metaphor presents natural law as a powerful current: Catherine growing up and leaving is as inevitable as water flowing downstream, and Eddie's attempt to hold her back is futile. The contrast between Alfieri's measured, educated diction and Eddie's broken, insistent speech dramatises two systems of thought that simply cannot meet.

Marco embodies the Sicilian law most fully. After the arrest he states plainly that in his country Eddie "would be dead now", and his insistence that "All the law is not in a book" rejects the legal system that has betrayed his starving children. Alfieri's reply, that "Only God makes justice", is perhaps the play's most humane line, yet Marco cannot accept it. The audience is placed in a difficult position: Marco's code is violent, but it seems more honest than an immigration law that would punish a man for feeding his family. Miller may be suggesting that civil law is not the same as justice.

Form is central to this theme. Alfieri acts like a Greek chorus, framing the action and speaking directly to the audience, and his opening admission that a lawyer long ago "sat there as powerless as I, and watched it run its bloody course" tells us from the start that law cannot prevent the catastrophe. This sense of

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inevitability belongs to classical tragedy, where an older, almost divine law governs events. Alfieri himself, who represents civil law, is reduced to a spectator, even though he tries to bind Marco with a promise and secures bail for the brothers.

The ending deepens the ambiguity. Eddie's cry for his "name" shows that what he values is not legal status but honour, and he dies by his own knife in Marco's hand. Alfieri admits that "something perversely pure" calls to him from Eddie's memory, because he allowed himself "to be wholly known". Yet he still concludes that "it is better to settle for half". His final mourning "with a certain alarm" captures the play's tension perfectly: we admire the man who obeyed only his own deepest law, but we fear what that obedience destroys. In this way, Miller makes the different kinds of law the very structure of the tragedy, leaving the audience to judge between a safe, limited justice and a wild, destructive integrity.

2 Miller presents the relationship between Eddie and Marco as a slow transformation from respectful hospitality into a deadly rivalry over honour. Although the two men share few lines, their relationship is expressed through silences, gestures and stage directions, and it carries the tragic weight of the play: Eddie's real conflict may be with Rodolfo and Catherine, but it is Marco who finally becomes the agent of his destruction.

At first the relationship is built on gratitude and a clear hierarchy. Marco arrives in Red Hook dependent on Eddie's charity, and his promise, "when you say we go, we go", shows a man who knows the rules of a guest and accepts Eddie's authority in his own house. The stage direction that Marco speaks with a "certain stiffness" is revealing: it suggests the discomfort of a proud man forced to rely on another's generosity. Eddie, for his part, enjoys the role of protector. Marco's quiet

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description of his starving children and sick wife earns Eddie's sympathy, and the audience senses a bond rooted in a shared Sicilian code of family loyalty.

Yet Miller plants signs of tension early. Louis's description of Marco as "a regular bull" stresses physical power, and the audience may notice how Eddie's masculinity, so central to his sense of self, is quietly threatened by a stronger man under his roof. Marco also says much less than Rodolfo. His reserve makes him hard to read, and this unpredictability contributes to the growing unease.

The turning point is the boxing scene at the end of Act One, which Miller stages almost entirely through action. Eddie teaches Rodolfo to box and then lands a punch, a thinly disguised attack. Marco responds not with words but by challenging Eddie to lift a chair by one leg. Eddie fails; Marco succeeds and holds the chair over Eddie's head. The stage direction describes the chair "raised like a weapon", and Marco's look as a "glare of warning" turning into "a smile of triumph". This is a brilliant moment of non-verbal drama: without a single threat, Marco establishes that he is the stronger man and that he will protect his brother. The curtain falls on this image, so the audience carries the threat of violence into the interval, and the balance of power in the relationship has visibly shifted.

In Act Two the relationship is destroyed by Eddie's betrayal. By calling the Immigration Bureau, Eddie breaks the very code of honour that bound the two men together. Marco's response is public and devastating. As he is led away, he spits in Eddie's face and accuses him in front of the whole street: "That one! He killed my children!" The short, exclamatory sentences and the pointing demonstrative "That one" turn Eddie into an object of shame. For Marco, Eddie has not simply reported him; he has condemned his family to hunger. Miller uses

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the neighbours' silent withdrawal from Eddie to show that the community sides with Marco.

What makes the relationship tragic is that both men are trapped by the same idea of honour. Eddie insists Marco must "take that back" and repeatedly demands his "name", revealing that his identity depends on his reputation in Red Hook. Marco, too, refuses Alfieri's civil law, believing in his country Eddie "would be dead now". Alfieri secures his promise not to harm Eddie, but Marco's sense of natural justice proves stronger than any legal oath. The two men are mirror images: both proud, both immovable, both convinced that honour must be restored with blood.

The final confrontation brings the relationship to its brutal conclusion. Marco's imperative "Animal! You go on your knees to me!" reverses the opening hierarchy completely: the grateful guest who once promised to leave when told now demands that his host kneel. Eddie draws the knife, Marco turns it on him, and Eddie dies in Beatrice's arms. Miller's choice to let Eddie die by his own weapon is significant, implying that Eddie's betrayal has turned his own violence back on him.

Through Alfieri's choric framing, the audience is told from the beginning that events will "run" their "bloody course", so the relationship between Eddie and Marco has the inevitability of Greek tragedy. Miller seems to suggest that the code they share, admirable in its loyalty, becomes destructive when pride replaces compassion. Marco is perhaps the moral centre of the play, yet even he cannot "settle for half", and the audience is left to consider whether his revenge is justice or another form of the same tragic pride that ruined Eddie.

3 I largely agree that the mystery of An Inspector Calls revolves around Inspector

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Goole: his arrival, his uncanny knowledge and his unexplained identity drive the play's suspense. However, I would argue that Priestley uses this mystery as a means rather than an end. The Inspector is a puzzle designed to make the audience ask a deeper question, not "who is he?" but "who is responsible?", so the real mystery the play revolves around is moral rather than supernatural.

From his entrance, Priestley surrounds Goole with an aura of strangeness. The stage directions state that he creates "an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness", and that he has a "disconcerting habit" of looking hard at the person he addresses before speaking. These details suggest a figure of moral weight rather than an ordinary policeman. The timing of his arrival is equally mysterious: the "sharp ring" of the doorbell interrupts Birling just as he is lecturing Gerald and Eric that a man must "mind his own business and look after himself and his own". Structurally, it is as though Birling's selfishness has summoned the Inspector, and the lighting shift the stage directions call for, from "pink and intimate" to "brighter and harder", signals that comfortable illusions are about to be exposed.

His name deepens the mystery. "Goole" echoes "ghoul", hinting at a ghost or spirit, and his knowledge seems to go beyond any real investigation. He claims to have learnt everything from Eva's diary and letter, yet these are never seen, and he shows the photograph to each character separately, so no one can be sure they are looking at the same girl. Sheila recognises this strangeness first when she says that he "never seemed like an ordinary police inspector", and she later observes that they "hardly ever told him anything he didn't know". Priestley thus encourages the audience to wonder whether Goole is a conscience, an avenging angel or even a figure from the future.

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The structure of the play, too, revolves around the Inspector. Priestley takes the form of a detective thriller and turns it inside out. Instead of searching for one criminal, the Inspector questions each family member in turn, and each "chain" of revelations links them to Eva. He controls entrances and exits, holding back information to create cliffhangers, such as the end of Act Two when the audience realises before Mrs Birling that Eric is the father of the child she has condemned. The dramatic irony works only because the Inspector seems to know the plot in advance, almost like a playwright inside his own play.

However, the mystery does not belong to Goole alone. Eva Smith is equally enigmatic. She changes her name to Daisy Renton, she never appears on stage, and Gerald later argues that there may have been several different girls. This mystery is crucial to Priestley's purpose: Eva becomes representative of the "millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths" the Inspector describes in his final speech. The uncertainty over her identity allows her to stand for every exploited worker, which is why the Birlings' attempt to solve the "mystery" by proving there was no single girl misses the point entirely.

Indeed, the climax of the play suggests that the Inspector's identity matters less than the characters' response. Once Gerald discovers that "that man wasn't a police officer", Birling and Mrs Birling treat the mystery as solved and their guilt as cancelled. Sheila and Eric insist that it does not matter who he was, because they still did what they did. The Inspector's last speech, warning that if men will not learn their lesson they will be taught it "in fire and blood and anguish", has a prophetic, almost biblical tone, and its power does not depend on his being a real policeman.

Priestley's final twist then reopens the mystery. The telephone rings and Birling

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announces that a girl has just died on the way to the Infirmary, and that a police inspector is on his way to ask questions. The curtain falls on the family's shocked silence. This circular structure denies the audience a neat solution, suggesting that the investigation will repeat until the lesson is learned.

So, while it is true that the mystery of the play centres on Inspector Goole, I think Priestley makes him mysterious in order to point beyond himself. The unanswered question of who he is keeps the audience engaged, but the question that truly haunts us as we leave the theatre is the one he asks the Birlings: whether we accept that "we are responsible for each other".

4 Sheila Birling changes more than any other character in An Inspector Calls. Priestley takes her from a sheltered, slightly spoilt girl absorbed in her engagement to a young woman who sees through her family's hypocrisy and accepts the Inspector's message of shared responsibility. Her transformation is not sudden, however: Priestley shows hints of her conscience from the start, and her growth gives the play its strongest sense of hope.

In the opening stage directions, Priestley describes Sheila as "a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited". The adjectives suggest youthful charm but also a lack of depth, as though her world is bounded by her own happiness. Her childish language reinforces this: she calls her mother "Mummy" and greets the ring with delighted exclamations, asking Gerald whether it is "the one you wanted me to have". Her focus on the ring shows how she, like her parents, measures love through possessions. Yet even here there is an edge. Her teasing reference to "all last summer, when you never came near me" is half a joke, but it hints that she is more perceptive than she appears and plants a seed

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of the revelation to come.

Sheila's first real change comes when she hears of Eva's death. Unlike her father, she responds with immediate sympathy, insisting that girls like Eva "aren't cheap labour" but "people". This is a significant moment structurally, because it places her on the Inspector's side before she even knows she is involved. When she sees the photograph and realises her own part, her guilt is intense. She confesses that she had Eva sacked from Milwards out of jealousy and a "furious temper", and she promises she will "never, never do it again". The repetition of "never" conveys sincere remorse, though some audiences may notice that she still asks whether the girl was pretty, a reminder that her vanity has not vanished overnight. Priestley makes her change believable by showing it as a process.

In Act Two Sheila becomes increasingly perceptive. She warns her mother not to "build up a kind of wall" between the family and Eva, an image that captures the class barrier the older Birlings rely on. She also understands the Inspector's method before anyone else, telling Gerald that the Inspector is "giving us the rope" so that they will hang themselves. This metaphor shows her new insight: she recognises that the truth will come out and that evasion is pointless. Her response to Gerald's affair is equally mature. Rather than reacting with hysteria, she respects his honesty but returns the ring, explaining that they are not the same people who sat down to dinner. The returned ring is a powerful symbolic reversal of the opening scene, showing that she no longer values the outward show of a respectable engagement.

Her change is also shown through her growing conflict with her parents. When Mrs Birling refuses to accept responsibility, Sheila tries desperately to stop her before she condemns the father of the child, and the audience watches with dramatic

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irony as she realises the truth about Eric. By Act Three she openly challenges her parents, telling them, "The point is, you don't seem to have learnt anything." Her tone has become direct and authoritative, a striking contrast with the giggling girl of Act One. Notably, she now uses "Mother" rather than "Mummy", a small but telling sign of independence.

At the end of the play Sheila becomes, in effect, the Inspector's voice. She repeats his warning, "Fire and blood and anguish", and adds that "it frightens me the way you talk", showing that she has absorbed his lesson and fears her parents' refusal to change. When Gerald offers the ring back, she refuses for now, saying it is too soon and she must think. This hesitation is perhaps her most mature moment: she will not return to the comfortable illusions of the opening simply because the Inspector may not have been real.

Priestley uses Sheila's transformation to suggest that the younger generation can learn and that society can improve. Alongside Eric, she contrasts sharply with Mr and Mrs Birling, who are relieved rather than chastened by the possibility of a hoax. Through Sheila, Priestley shows the audience that change begins with honest self-examination, and her development from self-absorption to moral clarity makes her the true heart of the play's message.

5 Ed Boone is significant in The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time because he is both the solution to Christopher's mystery and the source of his deepest crisis. Stephens presents him as a loving, exhausted, deeply flawed father whose lies and temper drive the plot, yet whose patient efforts to rebuild trust give the play its emotional resolution. Ed is never simply a villain; he is perhaps the most human character on stage.

Question number

From the start, Stephens shows Ed's devotion and understanding. When Christopher is held at the police station after hitting the policeman, it is Ed who collects him, and their ritual of spreading their fingers into a fan and touching them together is one of the play's most moving images. Because Christopher cannot bear to be hugged, this gesture becomes a private language of love. The stage direction requires only a small physical action, but its repetition makes it carry great emotional weight. Ed's understanding of his son is also clear in his speech: he offers structured choices and clear time limits, such as "I'll do you a deal", recognising that Christopher feels safe with rules and precise expectations.

However, Ed is also a man under great strain, and Stephens uses his anger to create tension. When Christopher continues his detective work, Ed's frustration erupts. The audience is shocked by his swearing and by the moment in the stage directions when he grabs and shakes Christopher, and later strikes him after finding the book. These outbursts are uncomfortable to watch, but they are rooted in fear: Ed is desperate to stop Christopher uncovering the truth about Mrs Shears and his mother. Stephens makes the audience understand Ed's motives even as we condemn his actions.

Ed's significance becomes clearest when his two great secrets are revealed. First, Christopher discovers the letters from his mother hidden in a shirt box in Ed's room. The revelation that Judy is alive, and that Ed has lied about her death, is a structural turning point, transforming Christopher's mystery about a dog into a story about family betrayal. Judy's letters, read aloud while she appears on stage, also complicate our view of Ed: she admits that he was more patient with Christopher than she was, praising him as a better parent. This shows that Ed's lie was born of hurt and a misguided wish to protect his son.

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The second revelation is Ed's confession that he killed Wellington. Stephens makes this moment painfully tender and terrible at once. Ed tries to be honest, explaining that after Judy left he grew close to Mrs Shears, that they argued, and that he lost his temper when the dog attacked him. His dismissive reference to the "stupid mutt" reveals his raw bitterness. For Christopher, though, the confession has a logical consequence: if his father killed a dog, he might kill a boy. Ed's attempt at honesty therefore drives Christopher to flee to London, which forms the climax of the play. Ironically, Ed's truthfulness causes as much damage as his lies, showing how difficult it is for him to reach his son.

In the final part of the play Stephens gives Ed a slow path to redemption. He follows Christopher to London and, back in Swindon, proposes that they build trust gradually, by spending small amounts of time together. He also fights for Christopher's right to sit A level Maths, and when the school says no one has done it there before, he answers, "He can be the first then." This shows his fierce pride in his son. Most importantly, he gives Christopher a puppy, Sandy. The gift is symbolic: having destroyed one dog, Ed offers another, a living sign of his remorse and of his willingness to start again. Structurally, this offers a hopeful, almost fairy-tale resolution that contrasts with the violent image of the dead dog at the opening.

Stephens's use of form also shapes Ed's significance. Because much of the play is presented as Christopher's book, read and performed by Siobhan and the ensemble, the audience sees Ed largely through Christopher's literal and honest eyes. This makes his failures stark, yet the simplicity of Christopher's narration also lets Ed's love shine through without sentimentality. His question, "Christopher, do you understand that I love you?", is heartbreaking because it reveals Ed's fear that his

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love can never be fully received.

Ultimately, Ed Boone is significant because he embodies the play's exploration of trust, truth and love. Through him, Stephens shows that parents can be both protective and harmful, and that rebuilding a relationship requires patience. Ed's journey from deceit to honesty mirrors Christopher's journey from fear to independence, and the play suggests that both have learned to be brave.

6 In The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, Stephens presents fear as a force that shapes almost every character, but he places the audience inside Christopher's fear in particular, using staging, sound and movement to make it physical and immediate. Yet fear is not only presented as something that limits people. The play's structure shows Christopher learning to act in spite of his fear, so that the theme becomes, in the end, a celebration of courage.

Christopher's fears are often different from the audience's, and Stephens makes us understand them on his terms. He explains that he does not like people shouting at him because it makes him scared that they are going to hit him or touch him and he does not know what is going to happen. The plain, repetitive syntax mirrors his logical mind, and the final clause reveals that the root of his fear is unpredictability. This is why being touched is so threatening: when the policeman takes hold of him at the start, Christopher hits him. The opening scene, which begins with the dead dog and a frightened boy, establishes immediately that fear can lead to dramatic, even violent, reactions.

Stephens also shows how Christopher manages his fear. He groans, covers his ears, curls up, or retreats into maths, reciting numbers or solving problems in his head.

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These coping strategies are often staged physically, so the audience sees fear as a bodily experience rather than simply a feeling. His decision to continue investigating Wellington's death despite his anxiety shows bravery: he reasons that if you are going to do detective work you have to be brave, so he has no choice. Here fear is presented as something that can be reasoned with.

However, the play suggests that the adults are just as fearful, though less honest about it. Ed is afraid of telling Christopher the truth about Judy, so he invents her death and hides her letters. Judy, in her letters, admits her own fear and inability to cope, recalling the time in Bentalls when Christopher was frightened by all the people in the shop and she could not calm him. Even the Reverend avoids Christopher's question about where God is, promising to discuss it another day. Stephens contrasts Christopher's direct expressions of fear with the adults' evasions, which perhaps implies that their fear causes more harm than his.

The climax of fear comes when Christopher learns that Ed killed Wellington. Because he thinks logically, he concludes that his father might kill him too, and he describes him as dangerous. This fear is so great that it overcomes his terror of the outside world, and he decides to travel alone to London. Structurally, this journey is the heart of the second half, and Stephens's staging makes it overwhelming. The ensemble crowds around Christopher, voices overlap with fragments of signs and announcements, and lighting and projections fill the space. The audience is bombarded with the same sensory overload that Christopher experiences, so fear is not just shown but shared. Moments such as hiding on the train while a policeman searches for him, or trying to navigate the Underground with Toby, are full of tension because the audience knows how close he is to being overwhelmed.

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Language also conveys his fear vividly. Christopher recalls being in France, where he could not understand anyone in a shop or restaurant, which he found frightening. This anecdote shows that, for him, fear comes from not understanding the rules of a situation. In London he relies on his own strict logic, using the image of a mental grid or map to keep himself safe, and the stage design, often a grid of lines and lights, reflects this inner method of controlling chaos.

By the end, Stephens suggests that fear can be overcome. Christopher returns to Swindon, takes his A level Maths exam despite his anxiety, and gradually begins to trust his father again. His final question to Siobhan, "Does that mean I can do anything?", is full of hope, showing that by facing his fears he has discovered his own potential. The fact that the question is left unanswered might add a note of uncertainty, but the overall effect is uplifting.

In conclusion, Stephens presents fear as both a barrier and a challenge. Through Christopher's honest narration and the play's immersive theatrical form, the audience is invited to experience fear from his perspective, while the contrast with the fearful, evasive adults suggests that true courage lies in confronting the truth. Christopher's journey shows that fear does not have to define a person.

7 The instruction "Know your number. If you don't know it you might forget who you are" is darkly ironic, because in Kindertransport identity cannot be reduced to a label, and yet Eva comes close to forgetting who she is. Samuels presents identity as fragile, layered and painfully contested: something that is lost through displacement, rebuilt through survival, suppressed through shame and finally, perhaps, recovered. Through her innovative dramatic structure, she suggests that the past is never truly erased from who we are.

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The reduction of a child to a number is itself significant. On the Kindertransport, children travelled with labels and numbers, and the quotation captures the bureaucratic process by which a person becomes a piece of cargo. The second sentence, though, contains a deeper truth: Eva's identity really is under threat. The very need to "know" a number suggests how little else of her familiar self she will be allowed to keep once she leaves her mother.

At the start, Samuels establishes Eva's German Jewish identity clearly. Eva speaks German with Helga, reads the story of "Der Rattenfänger", and struggles to sew buttons on her coat as her mother prepares her for the journey. Her innocent question, "What's an abyss, Mutti?", is heavily ironic: she is about to fall into a figurative abyss, losing family, language, religion and home. When she arrives in England, the language barrier strips her of her ability to explain herself, as the English officer tells her he cannot understand a word she is saying. Identity, Samuels implies, is bound up with being understood.

In England, Eva's identity is gradually remade. Lil Miller is warm and practical, but she gently reshapes Eva's beliefs, telling her that "the Lord Jesus said we needn't keep the old laws any more". This line shows how the loss of Jewish identity is presented not as violent coercion but as kindly assimilation, which makes it more poignant. Eva eventually chooses to become Evelyn, taking British citizenship and converting to Christianity. The change of name is a powerful symbol: she sheds the child who was sent away. Samuels presents this choice with sympathy, as a survival strategy, but also as a self-inflicted wound.

The adult Evelyn embodies the cost of this suppression. She is anxious, controlling and obsessively tidy, and she hides her past in boxes in the attic, which forms the

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main setting of the play. The attic itself is a metaphor for her mind: a place where memories are stored but never examined. When Faith discovers the letters and books, she uncovers an identity she never knew she had, and her outrage that her mother has hidden it shows that identity is inherited as well as chosen. The name "Faith" is ironic here, since her faith in her mother, and in her own sense of who she is, is shaken by the discovery.

Samuels's most original technique is her use of simultaneous time frames. Eva and Evelyn appear on stage at the same time, often in the same space, but do not see each other. This structure presents identity as divided: the child and the woman are the same person, yet Evelyn has cut herself off from her younger self. The overlapping dialogue allows past and present to echo, so that the audience sees how Eva's choices have shaped Evelyn's fears. The doubling of the Ratcatcher with officials such as the border guard and the postman also suggests that the threat to identity is everywhere, a shadow that follows Eva from Germany to England.

The conflict over identity reaches a climax when Helga returns after the war. Eva, now seventeen, refuses to go with her mother to New York, choosing her English life and rejecting the German Jewish past Helga represents. Helga's insistence that "Through our children we live" presents identity as continuity between generations, which makes Eva's rejection all the more painful. Later, Evelyn's bitter confrontation with Lil, insisting "I wasn't your child", shows that she feels she belongs fully to neither mother.

By the end, Evelyn begins to acknowledge Eva, and the final image of the Ratcatcher's shadow suggests that the past cannot be escaped. Samuels presents identity as something that may be hidden, renamed or denied, but never truly lost. The warning in the quotation proves true in an unexpected sense: Evelyn did try to

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forget who she was, and the play shows the damage that forgetting causes.

8 Helga is significant in Kindertransport because she embodies both the love that saves Eva and the loss that haunts her for the rest of her life. Samuels presents her first as a devoted, practical mother who makes the ultimate sacrifice, and later as a changed, almost unrecognisable survivor whose return forces Eva to confront what she has become. Through Helga, the play explores the pain of separation, the meaning of inheritance and the impossibility of returning to the past.

In the opening scenes, Helga is warm but firm. She prepares Eva for the journey with a mixture of tenderness and urgency, teaching her to sew a button on her coat. When Eva resists and wants to do it later, Helga replies, "There's no later left." The short, stark sentence conveys the terrible pressure of time: Helga knows that childhood is ending for Eva, and that she may never see her again. Her insistence on practical skills shows her love through preparation rather than sentiment, and the audience feels the dramatic irony of her calm in the face of catastrophe.

Helga also hides jewellery and a watch in the heels of Eva's shoes, explaining that "We old ones invest our future in you." The financial metaphor is revealing. It presents Eva as the family's hope and continuation, and it suggests that the older generation's survival now depends on the child. At the same time, the image places a heavy burden on Eva, which helps explain the guilt she later feels.

Samuels uses form inventively to show the bond between mother and daughter after they are separated. Helga and Eva sometimes appear to converse on stage, though Helga is actually reading a letter. This technique creates intimacy, as

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though the two are still together, yet it also emphasises their geographical and cultural distance. As the letters continue, Helga urges Eva to find work permits for her parents, and the audience watches Eva's increasingly desperate efforts fail. Structurally, the silence that follows the outbreak of war makes Helga's absence felt more powerfully than her presence.

Helga is also linked to the story of "Der Rattenfänger", which she reads to Eva the night before her departure. Initially the tale is just a childhood story, but its image of a figure who leads children away from their homes becomes deeply significant. Later, Eva even associates her mother with the Ratcatcher, accusing her of having "razor eyes". This metaphor shows how far Eva's perception of Helga has shifted: the mother who sent her to safety now seems, to her, like the figure who stole her away. Samuels thus presents Helga with real ambiguity. Her sacrifice was an act of love, but to the abandoned child it felt like betrayal.

Helga's return after the war is the emotional centre of the play. She is described as "wizened" and old-looking, and her physical change reflects the horrors she has survived, including the loss of her husband. She has kept her promise to come for Eva, but the daughter she finds has become Evelyn, a Christian with an English name and a new mother in Lil. Helga's hope that Eva will go with her to New York and her reminder that "Through our children we live" express her belief that family identity must be passed on. Eva's refusal is therefore devastating, and the confrontation shows the gulf the Kindertransport has created between them. Helga's disappointment and harshness towards Eva are understandable, but Samuels leaves the audience torn between sympathy for both women.

Helga's significance continues even when she is no longer on stage. The adult Evelyn's bitter words to Faith, that "Germany spat her out", use personification to

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suggest that Helga was rejected by her homeland and, implicitly, by her daughter too. This line reveals Evelyn's unresolved anger and guilt, and it shows that Helga lives on in her mind as a painful presence. Faith's discovery of her grandmother through letters and objects in the attic suggests that Helga's legacy will not be erased, however hard Evelyn has tried.

Ultimately, Helga represents the sadness and loss at the heart of Kindertransport. In saving Eva, she loses her for ever, not to death but to a new identity. Samuels uses her to explore the cost of survival and the complexity of a mother's love, and the audience is left to reflect that Helga's sacrifice succeeded and failed at the same time: her daughter lived, but the bond between them did not.

9 Soyinka presents Simon and Jane Pilkings as decent enough people by their own standards, yet completely unable to see beyond those standards. They are not monsters but they are blind, and their blindness is the "catalytic incident", as Soyinka calls it in his Author's Note, that turns Elesin's ritual into a catastrophe. Although Jane is shown to be gentler and more curious than her husband, I would argue that Soyinka ultimately presents them as two versions of the same limitation: the colonial habit of judging another world only by the measure of one's own.

Structurally, the Pilkings are introduced in sharp contrast to the vibrant market of Act One. After Elesin's rich, proverbial poetry and the praise-singing of the Yoruba, the stage moves to the Pilkings' bungalow, where the couple are tangoing on the verandah to a gramophone, dressed in egungun costume for a fancy dress ball. The juxtaposition is deliberate and almost satirical. A garment which, for the Yoruba, embodies the presence of the ancestral dead becomes a party outfit, and the cold,

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borrowed rhythm of the tango replaces the drumming of the market. Soyinka immediately suggests that the Pilkings consume culture as decoration without any sense of its meaning.

Simon is presented as the more rigid of the two. His dismissive treatment of Amusa, who refuses to address him while he wears the costume of the dead, shows that he regards Yoruba belief as superstition to be laughed at. He even mocks Joseph's Christianity, which reveals that his contempt is not really for one faith but for belief itself: he trusts only rules and order. His sarcastic comparison with the death of a British king, "We don't make our chiefs commit suicide to keep him company", exposes his misunderstanding. The flippant tone reduces a sacred passage between worlds to a barbaric custom, and Soyinka allows the audience to hear the arrogance in it. Simon's job as District Officer is to keep the peace, and his answer to the ritual is administrative: arrest, lock up, prevent. The irony is that this act of "law and order" produces the very chaos he wants to avoid.

Jane, by contrast, is initially presented sympathetically. She notices when Simon has hurt Joseph's feelings and rebukes him, and she takes Amusa's objection to the costumes more seriously than her husband does. In Act Four her conversation with Olunde suggests a genuine curiosity, as she questions him about the custom and about his life in England. However, Soyinka uses this scene to show the limits of her understanding. When Olunde calmly accepts his father's death, she cries out "How can you be so callous!", and at a moment of frustration she falls back on calling him a "savage", even though he is a medical student who has lived in England. The word is revealing: underneath her politeness lies the same assumption of superiority as her husband's. Soyinka sharpens this through dramatic irony when Jane recounts the story of the ship's captain who blew himself up to save the

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harbour from a burning ship. To her it is heroic self-sacrifice; to Olunde it is exactly the same kind of honourable death his father must undergo. Jane cannot make the connection, and Olunde's measured, ironic responses make her seem, for all her goodwill, the less educated of the two.

The final act confirms that neither of them changes. Simon remains convinced he has saved a life, while Elesin and Iyaloja make clear that he has destroyed one and endangered a whole people's relationship with the ancestors. Iyaloja addresses him with weary scorn, treating him almost as an ignorant child who meddles in what he cannot understand. When Olunde's body is revealed and Elesin strangles himself with his chain, the Pilkings are left helpless spectators to a tragedy they caused. Simon's final attempts to give orders sound hollow beside Iyaloja's closing words to the bride, "Now forget the dead, forget even the living", because the true drama has moved beyond his control.

In terms of form, the Pilkings can be seen as near-caricatures of British expatriate officials, and their clipped, colloquial prose is deliberately flat beside the dense imagery of the Yoruba characters. Yet Soyinka is careful not to make them simple villains. Their good intentions are real, which makes them more disturbing: they show how ordinary people, confident that they are being reasonable, can wreck a world they have never tried to enter. In this way the Pilkings are presented less as individuals than as a lens through which Soyinka exposes the deafness of colonial power, while insisting, as his Note suggests, that the deeper tragedy is Elesin's own.

10 Death in Soyinka's play is not an ending but a passage. The very title gives "Death" equal billing with Elesin, as if it were a character in its own right, and the

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whole action is built around a single appointed death that must happen on a single night. Soyinka presents death as something the Yoruba world prepares for, celebrates and depends upon, and he sets this against the British view of death as a tragedy to be prevented at all costs. The real horror of the play, I would argue, is not that people die but that they die at the wrong time and in the wrong way.

From the opening, Soyinka presents Elesin's death as a joyful, communal event. Elesin enters the market surrounded by drummers and praise-singers, and his language is full of energy and appetite. His long tale of the "Not-I bird" is significant: every creature who meets Death flees, crying "Not I", but Elesin presents himself as the one man who will not run. The repetition of the refrain becomes almost comic, and it lets Elesin set himself apart from ordinary fearful mortals. Yet the story also plants a structural irony, since the audience will later watch Elesin become exactly the "Not-I" he mocks. Soyinka's verse here, rich in proverb and image, makes death sound like a journey of honour, with the Horseman riding after his King to keep the passage between the living, the dead and the unborn open.

However, Soyinka quietly shows that Elesin's attachment to life is already dangerous. His insistence on marrying the young bride on the very day of his death suggests that he wants to taste the world one last time. Iyaloja agrees, partly because she believes the union may leave a child behind, so death and new life are bound together. But the delay also hints that the flesh is pulling against the spirit. When Elesin falls into the trance at the end of Act Three, with the women's chanting and the drumming growing more intense, the language becomes hypnotic and incantatory, enacting the slow crossing between worlds. It is at this exact point that the colonial police interrupt, and the structure of the play pivots on that interruption.

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The British characters treat death in an entirely different register. Their prose is flat and practical, and Jane's insistence that life should never be thrown away expresses a sincere but limited belief that death is always a loss. Soyinka exposes the irony of this through Jane's own story of the ship's captain who blew himself up to save the harbour: the British honour self-sacrifice when it is their own. Olunde sees the parallel immediately, and his calm acceptance of his father's death shocks Jane into crying "How can you be so callous!" For Olunde, death undertaken for one's people is duty and honour, not cruelty. The juxtaposition of these two scenes in Act Four, a British ball and a Yoruba son waiting to bury his father, sharpens the contrast between two ways of understanding mortality.

The climax reverses everything. Elesin has failed to die, and it is Olunde, the Western-educated son, who takes his father's place and kills himself so that the King will not travel alone. Soyinka makes his death the most honourable act in the play precisely because it is chosen. When the women bring his body to Elesin's cell, death becomes a terrible accusation. Iyaloja's scornful words make clear that Elesin has chosen to cling to life, eating what is left over rather than taking the feast he was promised, and that his son has paid for it. Elesin's own death, strangling himself with his chain, is presented as a desperate escape from shame rather than a sacred passage. It comes too late, and Iyaloja's bitter response suggests that he will arrive in the other world without honour, behind the son who went before him. Death, which was meant to unite the worlds, now only marks their breaking.

The ending gives death its final meaning. Iyaloja tells the bride, "Now forget the dead, forget even the living. Turn your mind only to the unborn." The imperative "forget" is repeated, steering the community away from mourning and towards the

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future, and the tricolon of dead, living and unborn reminds the audience that for the Yoruba these are one continuous cycle. Soyinka therefore presents death not as something to fear but as something to honour. The tragedy lies in Elesin's weakness and in the colonial intrusion that exploits it, so that what should have been a single willing death becomes two shameful ones and leaves a whole world uncertain of its place in the order of things.

11 By the standards of Shakespeare's Verona, and of his Elizabethan audience, Paris is undoubtedly the more "suitable" husband: he is noble, wealthy, related to the Prince and approved by Juliet's father. However, Shakespeare deliberately separates suitability from love. I largely disagree with the statement, because the play exposes a marriage arranged for status as hollow and, in Juliet's eyes, a kind of death, even though Romeo's own impulsiveness means he is far from a safe choice.

Paris's suitability is established through the conventions of courtship. In Act One Scene Two he approaches Capulet rather than Juliet, asking "But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?" The legal noun "suit" frames marriage as a formal negotiation between men, and the third-person approach makes him strangely detached from the girl herself. In a patriarchal society where daughters were regarded as their fathers' property, this is exactly what a respectable suitor should do. His practical reply to Capulet's worry about Juliet's age, "Younger than she are happy mothers made", shows a conventional view of marriage as a matter of producing heirs. Capulet's response, "And too soon marred are those so early made", puns on "made" and "marred" and hints that the arrangement may destroy her. Lady Capulet's extended book metaphor, praising Paris as a volume that lacks only a "cover", reinforces the idea that he is attractive on the surface and that Juliet is to complete him like a binding.

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Romeo, in contrast, breaks every rule of restrained courtly love. He forgets Rosaline within moments of seeing Juliet, claiming he "ne'er saw true beauty till this night", and the audience may well doubt his constancy. Their first exchange, however, is a shared sonnet in which he describes his lips as "two blushing pilgrims". Shakespeare's choice of form is significant: the lovers co-create a poem, alternating lines and rhymes, which suggests an equality and intimacy that Paris never achieves. Romeo's religious imagery, calling Juliet a "saint", may be extravagant, but it treats her as someone to be won rather than a property to be transferred. Juliet herself recognises the danger of his haste, calling their vow "too rash, too unadvised, too sudden", and Friar Lawrence warns that "they stumble that run fast". Romeo's hot temper, which leads him to kill Tybalt and earn banishment, shows that he cannot offer the stability a husband was expected to provide.

Yet Paris is not truly patient either. After Tybalt's death he presses for a quick wedding, and Shakespeare uses the scene at Friar Lawrence's cell to show how little he knows Juliet. His greeting, "Happily met, my lady and my wife!", is presumptuous, and the stichomythia that follows reveals the gap between them. When he insists "That may be must be, love, on Thursday next", the modal verb "must" exposes the coercion behind his politeness, while Juliet's evasive replies are full of double meanings he never notices. His remark that "Venus smiles not in a house of tears" shows him willing to postpone talk of love but not the wedding itself. Most tellingly, he claims "Thy face is mine". Paris possesses Juliet rather than loving her, and the dramatic irony of the audience knowing she is already married makes him seem oblivious.

Juliet's own view matters, and it is unambiguous. When the Nurse calls Romeo "a dishclout" compared with Paris, Juliet secretly condemns her as "Ancient

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damnation!" and resolves to trust only the Friar. She would rather be shut in a charnel house than marry Paris, and she takes the potion knowing it might kill her. For Shakespeare's audience, defying a father was shocking, but the play invites sympathy for her choice by showing Capulet's violent rage when she refuses.

Both men die for her in the tomb, and here Shakespeare is fair to Paris. He comes to strew flowers on her "bridal bed", and his grief seems genuine. However, his last request, to be laid beside her, is granted by Romeo, who calls him "one writ with me in sour misfortune's book". The image unites them as victims of the same fate. Even so, the ending is shaped around Romeo and Juliet together, and the families raise golden statues to the two lovers, not to Paris.

Ultimately, Paris is the suitable husband in the eyes of Verona's society and of Elizabethan convention, while Romeo is the dangerous, passionate one. Shakespeare suggests that suitability without love is a kind of imprisonment, but he also shows, through the tragic structure set out in the Prologue, that love without patience destroys. Neither man is ideal, but Romeo is the only one who ever truly sees Juliet.

12 Loss in Romeo and Juliet is not confined to the deaths of the two lovers. Shakespeare presents it as something that touches every character and every household, from lost children and lost friends to lost plans, lost innocence and the loss of a city's peace. Because the Prologue announces the ending before the play begins, the audience watches loss approach with a sense of inevitability, so that the tragedy becomes less about whether things will be lost than about how much, and who is to blame.

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The Prologue frames the whole play in terms of loss. The lovers are "star-crossed" and their love "death-marked", compound adjectives which present their fate as sealed from the start. The sonnet form, usually associated with love poetry, is turned into a summary of a tragedy, so Shakespeare signals that love and loss will be inseparable. For an Elizabethan audience who may already have known the story from Arthur Brooke's poem, the interest lies not in suspense but in watching the characters walk towards what the audience knows they will lose.

Loss is also part of the background of the older generation. Capulet tells Paris that "Earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she", a metaphor which presents the earth as a devouring mouth and reveals that Juliet is his only surviving child. The Nurse remembers her daughter Susan, who "is with God; / She was too good for me", and the gentle, accepting tone reflects a world where losing a child was a common grief. Infant mortality was high in Shakespeare's time, so these lines would have resonated with the audience, and they make Juliet's eventual death more painful because she is the last of the Capulets' "hopes".

The turning point of the play is the loss of Mercutio in Act Three Scene One. Shakespeare gives him a wit that survives even his fatal wound: "ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man." The pun on "grave" mixes comedy with mortality and makes the loss more shocking, as the audience laughs and then realises he is dying. His repeated curse, "A plague o' both your houses!", spreads the blame to both families and works almost as a prophecy, since the plague later prevents Friar John from delivering the Friar's letter. Mercutio's death is followed immediately by Tybalt's, and Romeo's cry "O, I am fortune's fool!" shows him recognising that he has lost control of his own life. Feuding and duelling were real ways of settling quarrels in Elizabethan England, so Shakespeare shows how a code of honour turns ordinary pride into irreversible loss.

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For the lovers, banishment is presented as a loss equal to death. Romeo insists "There is no world without Verona walls", and Juliet finds the single word "banishèd" more terrible than the loss of her cousin, saying that it has "slain ten thousand Tybalts". The hyperbole shows how completely their identities have become bound to each other. Shakespeare also shows Juliet losing her childhood: her Nurse betrays her by recommending Paris, and her father threatens to disown her, so by the time she takes the Friar's potion she has lost every adult she once trusted.

The Friar's plan is itself a structural device built on loss. Its failure turns on a lost message, and the dramatic irony of the audience knowing that Juliet is alive while Romeo believes her dead makes the final scene almost unbearable. Capulet's lament over her apparent body, "Death lies on her like an untimely frost / Upon the sweetest flower of all the field", uses a simile of nature destroyed out of season to stress that her death is unnatural. When the real deaths come, Romeo's "Thus with a kiss I die" turns a gesture of love into a final farewell. Suicide was regarded as a mortal sin and a crime, so an Elizabethan audience would have felt the full weight of what the lovers lose, both in this world and possibly the next.

In the final scene, loss finally spreads across the whole of Verona. Montague reveals that his wife has died of grief at Romeo's exile, and Paris lies dead beside the lovers. Prince Escalus admits his own failure, having "lost a brace of kinsmen" by "winking at your discords", and concludes "All are punished." The short, blunt statement denies anyone an escape from responsibility. The reconciliation of the families, symbolised by the golden statues, suggests that something is gained, but Shakespeare makes clear the cost is far too high. The closing couplet, "For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo", leaves the audience

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with the sense that peace has only been bought by the loss of the young, and that the adults' hatred is what has truly been lost too late.

13 Shakespeare presents evil in Macbeth as a force that exists outside human beings, in the witches and the "instruments of darkness", but which only becomes destructive when people choose to welcome it. Evil in the play is contagious: it begins with a whisper on a heath, takes root in Macbeth and his wife, and spreads outward until the whole of Scotland and even the natural world are infected. For a Jacobean audience who believed in witchcraft and in the divine right of kings, this was a terrifying picture of how sin could corrupt an individual and a nation.

The play opens with evil already present. The witches' chant "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" uses a chiasmus that inverts moral values, and its trochaic rhythm and rhyme set their speech apart from the blank verse of the noble characters, making them sound like a spell. In Act One Scene Three they boast of tormenting a sailor because his wife refused to share her chestnuts, promising to "drain him dry as hay". The pettiness of the grievance makes their malice more chilling, but Shakespeare also shows the limits of their power: "Though his bark cannot be lost, / Yet it shall be tempest-tossed." They can torment, but not destroy, unless their victim cooperates. King James had written Daemonologie and been involved in witch trials, so an audience in 1606 would have seen the witches as genuine agents of the devil.

Crucially, Shakespeare leaves open whether evil is planted by the witches or already lies in Macbeth. Banquo notices that Macbeth seems "rapt" by the prophecies, and Macbeth admits that the "horrid image" of murder makes his hair stand on end. His aside "Stars, hide your fires; / Let not light see my black and

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deep desires" reveals that the desire is his own. The imagery of light and darkness becomes a recurring motif, presenting evil as something that must hide from God's sight. Banquo, by contrast, warns that the witches tell "truths" to "betray's / In deepest consequence", showing that evil works through temptation rather than force.

Lady Macbeth is presented as actively choosing evil. In her soliloquy she commands "Come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here", and the imperatives make her sound as though she is summoning demons, which is why some critics see her as a fourth witch. She asks to be filled with "direst cruelty" and calls on "thick night" to hide her in "the dunnest smoke of hell". Her rejection of femininity would have horrified a patriarchal audience, and her claim that she would dash out the brains of her own nursing baby is perhaps the most shocking image of evil in the play. Her advice to "look like th'innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't" alludes to the serpent in Eden, linking her persuasion to the original temptation of mankind.

Once Duncan is murdered, Shakespeare presents evil as a disease in nature itself. The Old Man and Ross describe a darkness that "strangles the travelling lamp" during the day, a falcon killed by a "mousing owl", and Duncan's horses eating each other. This pathetic fallacy reflects the belief in the Great Chain of Being: killing God's anointed king disorders the entire universe. Macbeth's evil then multiplies. He arranges Banquo's murder, and his line "O, full of scorpions is my mind" presents evil as poisonous to the one who commits it. The slaughter of Macduff's wife and children, carried out purely from fear, marks the point at which his evil has no purpose beyond itself.

Structurally, Shakespeare charts evil's progress through the changing labels given to

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Macbeth. He begins as "brave Macbeth" and "worthy gentleman", but by the end he is a "tyrant", a "hell-hound" and, in Malcolm's words, "this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen". The shift from heroic epithets to animal and demonic ones shows evil stripping away his humanity. Meanwhile Shakespeare balances evil against good, especially in the English scenes, where the saintly King Edward cures the sick with his touch, a deliberate contrast with Macbeth's diseased Scotland and a compliment to James's own lineage.

In the end good triumphs: Macduff kills Macbeth, Malcolm restores order, and evil appears to be purged. Yet Shakespeare's presentation is not entirely reassuring. Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking admission that "Hell is murky" and Macbeth's despairing view of life as signifying nothing suggest that evil destroys its servants from within long before it is defeated from outside. Shakespeare therefore presents evil as both supernatural and deeply human, a temptation that is always present but which only gains power when ambition opens the door to it.

14 Shakespeare presents Macbeth's conscience as the part of him that never fully dies. It is loud and vivid before the murder of Duncan, tormenting immediately afterwards, then deliberately silenced as he wades further into blood. Yet the line quoted, spoken to Macduff in the final act, suggests that even the hardened tyrant still feels the weight of his crimes. For a Jacobean audience, conscience was the voice of God within the soul, and Macbeth's tragedy lies in the fact that he hears it clearly and chooses to ignore it.

At first, Macbeth's conscience works as a restraint. After the witches' prophecy he is horrified by the "horrid image" of murder that makes his "seated heart knock at my ribs", and he tries to step back: "If chance will have me king, why, chance

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may crown me / Without my stir." The physical imagery shows conscience as something felt in the body, while the hope in "chance" reveals a man who wants the crown without the sin. Even so, his aside "Stars, hide your fires" shows that conscience is already making him ashamed of desires he cannot quite give up.

The clearest dramatisation of his conscience comes in the soliloquy of Act One Scene Seven. Shakespeare uses the soliloquy form to let the audience into Macbeth's moral reasoning. He recognises that Duncan is "here in double trust", since he is both "his kinsman and his subject" and also his "host", who should shut the door against a murderer rather than "bear the knife" himself. In Shakespeare's time, these bonds of loyalty and hospitality were sacred, so the audience would see how clearly Macbeth understands the scale of his betrayal. His imagination then becomes apocalyptic: Duncan's virtues "Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued", and "pity, like a naked new-born babe" rides the wind. These similes cast conscience as heavenly and Judgement-Day imagery, suggesting he knows that murder will damn him. His decision, "We will proceed no further in this business", is short and firm, the voice of conscience winning.

Structurally, Shakespeare places Lady Macbeth's entrance immediately after this to show conscience being overridden. She accuses him of cowardice, asking whether he is "afeard / To be the same in thine own act and valour / As thou art in desire", and attacks his manhood. In a patriarchal society, such a challenge from a wife would have been shocking, and it shows how Macbeth's conscience is defeated not by argument but by shame.

After Duncan's murder, conscience returns as torment. Macbeth cannot say "Amen" when the grooms pray, a detail that would have deeply disturbed a Christian audience, since being unable to pray suggests being cut off from God's grace. He

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hears a voice cry that "Macbeth does murder sleep", and his reference to himself in the third person shows a man split from his former self. His hyperbolic question, whether "all great Neptune's ocean" could wash the blood from his hand, presents guilt as a stain that nothing can remove. Unlike Lady Macbeth, who believes "A little water clears us of this deed", he understands immediately that the deed is permanent.

As the play progresses, Shakespeare shows Macbeth trying to destroy his own conscience. His confession "O, full of scorpions is my mind" reveals inner torment, and the appearance of Banquo's ghost at the banquet can be read as his guilt made visible, since nobody else can see it. Yet after this crisis he decides "I am in blood / Stepped in so far" that going back would be as hard as going on. The extended metaphor of wading through a river of blood presents conscience as something he now considers useless. By Act Four he vows that "The very firstlings of my heart shall be / The firstlings of my hand", deliberately removing any pause for reflection, and the massacre of Macduff's family follows. Ironically, as Macbeth's conscience goes quiet, Lady Macbeth's becomes unbearable, and her sleepwalking and death show where suppressed guilt can lead.

That is why his words to Macduff are so striking. "Of all men else I have avoided thee", he says, admitting that his "soul is too much charged / With blood of thine already." The word "soul" brings the language back to salvation and damnation, and "charged" suggests a burden or a debt he cannot pay. Macbeth's earlier speeches about the "yellow leaf" of his life and his loss of "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends" show that he knows exactly what his crimes have cost him.

Shakespeare therefore presents conscience as Macbeth's best quality and the source of his tragedy. He is never ignorant of evil, only unwilling to resist it, and

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his final flicker of guilt makes his fall all the more painful to watch.

15 In The Merchant of Venice, almost nothing is quite what it appears to be. Shakespeare builds the play around tests, disguises and bargains in which outward show conceals a very different reality, and he invites the audience to look beneath the surface of characters who seem generous, villainous, foolish or wise. The casket plot makes this the explicit moral of the play, but Shakespeare also turns the idea back on the Christian characters themselves, suggesting that the society of Venice is far less virtuous than it appears.

The casket test, set by Portia's dead father, is the clearest dramatisation of appearance and reality. The gold casket promises "what many men desire", the silver "as much as he deserves", and the lead warns that the chooser "must give and hazard all he hath". Morocco, dazzled by gold, finds a skull and the scroll "All that glisters is not gold". The rhyming proverb sounds like a moral spelled out for the audience. Arragon's choice of silver brings him "the portrait of a blinking idiot", exposing his pride. Bassanio succeeds because he reflects that "the world is still deceived with ornament", and his speech explores how law, religion and beauty can all be disguised: a corrupt plea, "being seasoned with a gracious voice", can hide "the show of evil". Ironically, Bassanio himself has borrowed money to dress as a wealthy suitor, so the man who sees through ornament is wearing it.

Disguise is central to the play's structure. Jessica escapes her father's house dressed as a boy, admitting that Cupid himself would "blush" to see her "transformèd to a boy". Portia and Nerissa disguise themselves as the lawyer Balthazar and his clerk, and the most important scene of the play, the trial, depends on a deception the audience is in on. This creates dramatic irony,

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especially when Bassanio declares that he would sacrifice "life itself, my wife, and all the world" to save Antonio while his wife stands before him in disguise. Her dry reply, that his wife would give him "little thanks" for that, draws comedy from the gap between appearance and truth. On the Elizabethan stage these roles were played by boy actors, so the audience watched boys playing women playing men, layering illusion upon illusion. Cross-dressing was frowned on in society, yet on stage it allowed Shakespeare to show that a woman could outthink the men of Venice.

Portia herself is a study in misleading appearances. In Act One she seems a bored heiress, trapped by her father's will and mocking her suitors. Even here, her comment on Morocco, that if he had "the complexion of a devil" she would rather he heard her confession than married her, reveals the prejudice under her charm. At the trial, however, her intelligence becomes clear. Her speech on mercy, "The quality of mercy is not strained", presents her as a voice of Christian grace, but her real victory comes from a legal trick: "Tarry a little; there is something else." The bond allows flesh but "no jot of blood". The pause reveals that the gentle advocate of mercy is also a shrewd strategist.

Shakespeare makes Shylock and Antonio the most complex examples of appearance and reality. Shylock offers the bond as a "merry sport" and claims "I would be friends with you and have your love", but the audience has already heard him admit in an aside that he hates Antonio "for he is a Christian". Antonio, in turn, seems the model of generosity, yet he spits on Shylock and calls him a dog. Antonio warns that "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose" and describes Shylock as "A goodly apple rotten at the heart", but these images could just as easily apply to the Christians who preach mercy while showing none.

Anti-Semitism was widespread in Elizabethan England, and the trial of the Queen's

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Portuguese Jewish physician Roderigo Lopez in 1594 had inflamed it. Shylock's speech "Hath not a Jew eyes?" breaks through the stereotype and forces the audience to see the human reality beneath the label of villain.

The ring plot extends the theme into the comic ending. Portia and Nerissa, still exploiting their disguises, test their husbands' promises, and Bassanio's embarrassment shows that his vow that the ring would only leave his finger with his life was less solid than it sounded. The confusion ends happily, but suggests that vows in Belmont, as in Venice, need testing.

Shakespeare therefore uses appearance and reality not only to create comedy and suspense, but to question his audience's judgements. The lead casket teaches that true worth lies hidden, and the play as a whole asks us to look beneath the polished surface of its Christian society, where the line between mercy and cruelty is far less clear than it first seems.

16

Shakespeare presents Bassanio as an attractive romantic hero who is also, at least at first, an extravagant young man looking for a wealthy wife to pay his debts. The tension between these two sides runs through the play: is he a fortune-hunter who uses his friend and his bride, or a loyal friend and true lover who grows through the casket test? I would argue that Shakespeare deliberately keeps him ambiguous, so that the audience must judge whether his charm conceals self-interest or genuine worth.

Bassanio's first appearance establishes his sociable, easy nature. His greeting, "Good signors both, when shall we laugh?", suggests a man who loves company and pleasure, and he admits to Antonio that he has "disabled" his estate by living

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beyond his means. His chief care, he says, is to come "fairly off" from his debts. Shakespeare shows that his solution is to borrow yet again. His metaphor of shooting a second arrow after a lost one to find both may be playful, but it reveals a gambler's logic. When he describes Portia, the order of his priorities is revealing: "In Belmont is a lady richly left, / And she is fair". Her wealth comes before her beauty, and only afterwards does he mention her "wondrous virtues". He compares her golden hair to "a golden fleece" and her suitors to "Jasons", a classical allusion which turns courtship into a quest for treasure.

However, Shakespeare also presents the bond between Bassanio and Antonio as deeply sincere. Bassanio tells him "To you, Antonio, / I owe the most in money and in love", and the pairing of "money" and "love" captures the ambiguity of their friendship. In Renaissance thought, male friendship was often regarded as the highest form of love, and Antonio's willingness to risk his flesh for Bassanio's sake shows the depth of their attachment. At the same time, Bassanio's need for money draws Antonio into the bond with Shylock, so his charm has dangerous consequences. Money-lending at interest was condemned by Christian teaching and associated with Jews in Elizabethan England, and Bassanio shares Venice's prejudice, calling Shylock's dealings villainous and treating him with contempt.

The casket scene presents Bassanio at his best. Shakespeare gives him a long, reflective speech in which he resists the glitter of gold and silver: "So may the outward shows be least themselves; / The world is still deceived with ornament." He recognises that "In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt / But, being seasoned with a gracious voice, / Obscures the show of evil?" This wisdom is all the more striking because he himself arrived in Belmont dressed in borrowed finery. His choice of lead, which demands that the chooser "give and hazard all he hath", suggests that he is ready to risk everything for love rather than gain. His earlier

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metaphor, "as I am, I live upon the rack", presents the suspense of the choice as torture, and the intensity of his language implies real feeling. When he wins, his praise of Portia's portrait is rapturous, and her reply, giving "Myself and what is mine" to him, reminds the audience of the patriarchal reality that a wife's lands passed to her husband on marriage.

Bassanio also shows honesty when Antonio's letter arrives. He confesses to Portia that when he told her he had no wealth except his gentle blood, he was worse than nothing, since he was in debt to his friend. This admission suggests growth from the careless young man of Act One. He leaves Portia immediately to help Antonio, and in court he offers to pay many times the sum owed. His declaration that "life itself, my wife, and all the world" are worth less to him than Antonio's life is generous, but Portia's dry aside that his wife would give "little thanks" for that turns the moment into dramatic irony.

The ring plot tests Bassanio once more. He had sworn that the ring would leave his finger only when his life did, yet he gives it to the "lawyer" out of gratitude for Antonio's rescue. Structurally, this places his loyalty to his friend in direct competition with his loyalty to his wife. His embarrassed apology in Act Five, and his promise never to break an oath to her again, show him accepting her authority, and the comic resolution forgives him.

Shakespeare's presentation of Bassanio therefore remains double. He is a spendthrift who sees Portia's fortune first, yet he is also the only suitor who sees beyond appearances. Perhaps Shakespeare suggests that love and money in Venice can never be fully separated, and that Bassanio's real virtue lies not in being free of self-interest but in being willing, finally, to hazard everything.

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17

Darcy changes from a man whose manners are governed by the pride of rank into one whose pride is disciplined by principle and genuine feeling. Yet Austen is careful: Darcy does not become a different person so much as a better version of himself, and part of his "change" is really a change in how Elizabeth, and the reader, see him. By tying his transformation to the "Pride" of her title, Austen turns one gentleman's reform into a quiet argument about what a gentleman in Regency England ought to be.

At the Meryton assembly Austen presents Darcy almost entirely from the outside, through the shifting opinion of the room. He begins the evening admired for his "fine, tall person" and ten thousand a year, but within hours he is judged "the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world". The speed of this reversal is ironic: Meryton's judgement is as shallow as its admiration, and Austen hints that Darcy is being read by his income and his manners rather than his character. Nevertheless, his own words are damning. "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me" is cold, deliberate and spoken within Elizabeth's hearing. The cool, balanced phrasing reflects a man who assumes his rank exempts him from the ordinary courtesies of country society. To a contemporary reader, Darcy embodies the land-owning gentry's sense of superiority over families like the Bennets, whose relations are attorneys and tradespeople.

Austen signals change early but slowly. Darcy finds himself caught by Elizabeth's "fine eyes", and the narrative begins to give us glimpses of his feelings, which makes the reader aware of more than Elizabeth knows. This dramatic irony prepares for the first proposal at Hunsford, which is the novel's turning point. "In vain have I struggled. It will not do" is passionate, yet his declaration of love is immediately undercut by his account of her "inferiority" and the degradation of the match. His feeling is real, but his pride still shapes how he speaks. Elizabeth's

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reply that he might have behaved in a more "gentleman-like manner" strikes at exactly the quality on which his self-respect rests, and Austen makes this rejection the wound that begins his reform.

Structurally, Darcy's letter is crucial. Austen briefly gives him the narrative voice, and the epistolary form lets him explain Wickham's attempted seduction of Georgiana and his reasons for separating Bingley from Jane. The letter is controlled and rational rather than romantic, which suggests that Darcy was never the villain Wickham described. Here Austen complicates the idea of change: the letter alters Elizabeth's "prejudice" more than Darcy's character. Her realisation, "Till this moment I never knew myself", shows that the novel's double title applies to both of them.

The visit to Pemberley marks the most visible change. Mrs Reynolds insists, "I have never had a cross word from him in my life", and her praise of him as a landlord and brother offers an independent witness to his worth. Pemberley itself, natural and tasteful, becomes an emblem of his true character. Most strikingly, Darcy is gracious to the Gardiners, whom he could easily have dismissed as people "in trade" from Cheapside. For a man of his class this civility is a real sign of humility, and Austen uses it to show that a true gentleman's manners extend beyond his own social circle.

His greatest act is his secret rescue of Lydia. By paying Wickham's debts and securing the marriage, Darcy saves the Bennets from a disgrace which, in Austen's society, would have ruined the marriage prospects of all the sisters. That he acts without seeking credit, and that Elizabeth learns of it only through Mrs Gardiner's letter, matters: Darcy's pride has turned from display into private integrity. He even binds himself to Wickham as a brother-in-law, the man he most despises,

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which shows how far he has subordinated pride to love.

In the second proposal Darcy confesses that he was taught good principles but left to follow them "in pride and conceit", and that Elizabeth properly humbled him. This self-knowledge completes his arc. In contrast, Lady Catherine remains unchanged, a portrait of the arrogance Darcy has outgrown. The final sentence, in which "Darcy, as well as Elizabeth, really loved" the Gardiners, closes the novel on his warmth towards a family of trade. Austen's ending suggests that Darcy changes most where it matters most: his rank remains, but he learns that it gives him duties rather than permission to despise.

18 Austen presents friendship as one of the truest tests of character in Pride and Prejudice. In a society where marriage was a financial necessity for women, and where etiquette discouraged open displays of feeling, friendship offers a space for honesty and loyalty. Yet Austen also shows that friendships can be distorted by class, self-interest and misplaced judgement, and the novel's ideal marriage is finally presented as a deep friendship between equals.

The warmest friendship in the novel is between Elizabeth and Jane, who are sisters but also confidantes. Austen often stages their private conversations in their bedroom, away from the noise of Mrs Bennet, so that friendship becomes a refuge from the public world of the ballroom. Their dialogue reveals contrasting temperaments: Jane sees good in everyone, while Elizabeth is sharper and more sceptical. When Jane admits she likes Bingley, Elizabeth teases, "You have liked many a stupider person." The playful frankness shows a trust that allows each to speak her mind. When Bingley leaves Netherfield, it is Elizabeth to whom Jane turns, and Elizabeth's anger on Jane's behalf, later directed at Darcy at Hunsford,

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shows that loyalty to a friend can shape the whole plot.

The friendship between Elizabeth and Charlotte Lucas is more troubling. Charlotte's view that "Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance" is presented in pragmatic, almost clinical language, and her acceptance of Mr Collins shocks Elizabeth, who feels their friendship can never be quite the same. Yet Austen allows Charlotte to explain herself: she is not romantic and asks only for "a comfortable home". For a plain woman of twenty-seven with little fortune, in a world where unmarried women risked poverty and dependence, this is rational rather than mercenary. Austen invites the reader to share Elizabeth's disappointment but also to question it, so the friendship exposes the cruel economics of women's lives. Structurally, Elizabeth's dutiful visit to Hunsford, made though "she foresaw little pleasure in the visit", brings her back into contact with Darcy, so even a strained friendship drives the narrative forward.

Austen uses the friendship between Darcy and Bingley to explore loyalty and its limits. The narrator explains that Bingley was endeared to Darcy by "the easiness, openness, ductility of his temper", and the word "ductility" suggests that Bingley is easily shaped. The two men work as foils: Bingley's warmth contrasts with Darcy's reserve. Darcy's friendship is genuine, but it becomes controlling when he persuades Bingley to leave Jane, and his letter reveals that he "congratulated himself" on saving a friend from an imprudent marriage. The irony is pointed: Darcy's interference is an act of friendship coloured by class prejudice against the Bennets' connections. When he later admits his error and encourages Bingley to return, true friendship is restored on more honest terms.

Against these, Austen sets false friendships. Caroline Bingley professes affection for Jane, but her cold behaviour when Jane visits London exposes friendship as

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social strategy. Jane is slow to see it, which shows how goodness can be exploited. Wickham's charm wins Elizabeth's confidence, but it masks the betrayal of his childhood companion Darcy. Austen uses these figures to warn that friendship based on appearances and flattery is dangerous, a lesson central to a novel originally titled First Impressions.

The Gardiners provide a model of steady, sensible friendship. They welcome Jane in London, take Elizabeth to Derbyshire, and act calmly when Lydia elopes. Notably, Mr Gardiner earns his money in trade, yet he and his wife are more genteel in conduct than many of higher rank. Austen suggests that true friendship, like true gentility, does not depend on class, even though in her society friendships were usually formed between social equals.

Finally, Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship grows from hostility into a friendship of mutual respect. After Charlotte's engagement Elizabeth tells Jane, "There are few people whom I really love, and still fewer of whom I think well", and this selectiveness makes her eventual love for Darcy convincing. Their union is founded on honesty, correction and shared values rather than on fortune alone, which was not the usual priority of a Regency marriage. By ending with Darcy and Elizabeth's continued closeness to the Gardiners, Austen presents friendship as the foundation of happiness, and implies that the best marriage is one in which husband and wife are also each other's truest friend.

19 Death hangs over Great Expectations from its first page to its last. Dickens uses it not only as a source of Gothic fear and pathos but as a moral force: the deaths in the novel expose the cruelty of Victorian justice, satirise the hypocrisy of social ritual, and, most importantly, mark the stages of Pip's journey from selfish

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ambition to compassion. In a society where death was an everyday presence, Dickens makes it the shadow against which Pip must learn what truly matters.

The novel opens in a churchyard, with Pip staring at the graves of his parents and the "five little stone lozenges" of his brothers. The detail would have been painfully familiar to Victorian readers, for whom infant mortality was common and orphanhood widespread. Dickens's first-person retrospective narration creates a blend of comedy and sadness: the older Pip recalls how he "drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly" from the shape of the letters on her tombstone. The humour of the child's logic makes his isolation more poignant, since he can know his family only through the dead. Structurally, the setting among graves and bleak marshes establishes death as the backdrop to Pip's identity: he discovers who he is in the same moment he discovers that he is alone.

Into this landscape of death Dickens propels Magwitch, rising up from among the graves as if he were a ghost. The convict threatens to cut Pip's throat and invokes an imaginary young man who will tear out his heart and liver. The violent, exaggerated threats belong to the Gothic, but Dickens also hints at the society that has made Magwitch desperate. The gibbet on the marshes and the prison hulks remind the reader that the state itself dealt freely in death, and that a returned transport faced execution. Magwitch's fate is shaped by that law from the start.

Miss Havisham represents a living death. At Satis House the clocks are stopped at twenty minutes to nine, and she still wears her yellowing wedding dress beside a rotting cake. Dickens's imagery of decay, the cake covered in cobwebs and the dress like a shroud, presents her as a corpse who refuses to die, and Pip compares her to a waxwork and a skeleton. She even imagines being laid out on the table

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where the cake stands when she is dead. Through her Dickens suggests that clinging to past injury is a form of self-destruction. Fittingly, her death comes by fire after she begs Pip's forgiveness: Pip's left arm is "a good deal burned" as he saves her, and her repentance shows that even she can be redeemed before the end.

Dickens uses the death of Mrs Joe to satirise Victorian mourning culture. Her funeral, organised by Trabb, is a grotesque performance, with mourners wrapped in black cloaks and Pumblechook relishing the show. The comic hyperbole exposes how death had become a commercial spectacle, more about appearances than grief. Yet the episode also returns Pip to the forge, and his promise to Biddy that he will visit often reveals his guilt about the home he has neglected. Biddy's quiet doubt shows that Pip still has much to learn.

The most significant death is Magwitch's. Dickens condemns capital punishment through the trial scene, where many prisoners are sentenced together and are described as "wretched creatures". Pip even hopes Magwitch will die before the Recorder's report rather than be executed, a striking reversal in which death becomes a mercy. At his bedside Pip tells him that his daughter lives and is a lady, and then Magwitch's "head dropped quietly on his breast". The gentle, simple sentence contrasts with the violence of their first meeting, and Pip's prayer, "O Lord, be merciful to him, a sinner!", echoes the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. Pip has learned to love the convict he once found repulsive, and this marks his moral rebirth.

Death therefore structures Pip's growth: the churchyard begins his story, and the death of his benefactor ends his false expectations. Even his own near death, when Orlick tries to kill him at the limekiln, and the fever that follows, function

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as a symbolic death of his old self. Dickens suggests that confronting mortality strips away the illusions of class and wealth, leaving only the values of loyalty, gratitude and love that Joe has embodied all along.

20 Estella is presented as both the brilliant object of Pip's desire and a victim of the same distorted values that shape his own life. Dickens filters her almost entirely through Pip's adoring, retrospective narration, so she often appears remote and unknowable, a "star" to be gazed at rather than understood. Yet as the novel develops Dickens reveals the damage done to her, and her final appearance suggests that suffering has made her more human.

From her first appearance, Estella's beauty and contempt are inseparable. She lights Pip's way through Satis House with a candle, and the image of her light coming towards him like a star in the dark passage echoes her name, which means "star". The symbolism is apt: she is beautiful, cold and impossibly distant. Her scorn is immediate: "He calls the knaves, Jacks, this boy!" She mocks his "coarse hands" and "thick boots", and her sharp, exclamatory insults teach Pip to feel shame about Joe and the forge. In this sense Estella is the catalyst for Pip's great expectations, since his desire to become a gentleman is born from his longing to be worthy of her. Dickens explores the way class prejudice is learned, for Estella's snobbery is not natural but taught.

Dickens makes clear that Estella has been deliberately shaped by Miss Havisham as an instrument of revenge against men. Miss Havisham urges her to "break their hearts" and have no mercy, and later commands Pip, "Love her, love her, love her!" The repetition has a frantic, possessive quality that exposes love in Satis House as something twisted into a weapon. Estella herself warns Pip that she has no heart,

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and her honesty is ironic: the one character who seems incapable of feeling is the one who repeatedly tells Pip the truth. When she finally turns on Miss Havisham, she says, "I am what you have made me." This short, cold sentence is one of the most powerful in the novel, because it shifts responsibility from Estella to her guardian and invites the reader's sympathy.

As a young woman in London, Estella is presented through Pip's painful longing. His declaration that she is "part of my existence, part of myself" uses repetition and an almost religious intensity, which shows how completely he has invested his identity in her. Yet Estella remains guarded, explaining that she has no softness or sympathy to give. Dickens uses this imbalance to criticise the romantic idealisation that blinds Pip to real goodness. Biddy, warm and plain-speaking, acts as a foil to Estella: where Estella offers glamour and rejection, Biddy offers kindness, and Pip's failure to value Biddy mirrors his failure to value Joe.

Estella's marriage to Bentley Drummle, "the Spider", is the clearest sign of her self-destructive upbringing. She chooses a brutal man she does not love, partly to avoid deceiving Pip, and Dickens lets readers infer that she suffers in the marriage. Ironically, a life of wealth and refinement gives her no happiness. This subverts Victorian expectations: the beautiful, privileged lady is the most trapped figure in the novel.

Dickens adds a further twist by revealing her parentage. The proud lady Pip has idolised is the daughter of Magwitch, a convict, and Molly, Jaggers's housekeeper, who was tried for murder. This revelation exposes the absurdity of the class distinctions on which Pip has built his ambitions. At a time when Victorian society was becoming more fluid, and fortunes could be made rather than inherited, Dickens suggests that gentility is a matter of upbringing and conduct, not blood.

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In the final chapter Estella has been changed by suffering. She tells Pip she has been "bent and broken, but", she hopes, "into a better shape". The metaphor of reshaping links her to the forge and to Joe's honest craft, suggesting that pain has refined her rather than destroyed her. Dickens famously revised this ending after advice from Bulwer-Lytton, and the closing line, "I saw no shadow of another parting from her", is hopeful but carefully hedged. Estella's presentation therefore reflects the novel's central concern with growth: she, like Pip, must lose her false expectations before she can find a truer self. She defies the Victorian ideal of the meek, yielding woman, yet Dickens finally grants her the dignity of moral change.

21 The relationship between Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale is built on a shared sin but an unequal burden. Hester is publicly punished and grows strong, while Dimmesdale hides his guilt and is slowly destroyed by it. Through their bond, Hawthorne explores the gulf between public and private morality in Puritan Boston, and asks whether love that society calls sin may contain its own kind of truth.

Hawthorne structures the novel around three scaffold scenes, and the first establishes the painful irony at the heart of the relationship. Hester stands on the scaffold with Pearl and the scarlet letter, while Dimmesdale, the respected young minister, is asked to urge her to name the child's father. His appeal is double-edged: he tells her not to stay silent out of "mistaken pity and tenderness for him", words which secretly describe himself. The reader, who later understands the truth, sees a man begging to be exposed but lacking the courage to confess. Hester's reply, "I will not speak!", reveals her loyalty and strength. For a contemporary reader, her refusal would have seemed remarkable, since in the Puritan colony of the 1640s adultery was both a sin and a crime, and a minister

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was expected to be spotless.

In the middle of the novel the relationship is defined by separation and secrecy. Hester lives on the edge of the town, while Dimmesdale's guilt eats away at his body. Hawthorne describes his private penance with the "bloody scourge" which this "Protestant and Puritan divine" had plied on his own shoulders. The heavy irony of the phrasing contrasts the minister's holy reputation with his secret self-torture, and highlights the difference between Hester's open shame and his hidden one. Chillingworth, living with Dimmesdale as his physician, intensifies this suffering, so that the lovers are bound together by the same man who seeks to destroy them.

The midnight scaffold scene captures the relationship's divided nature. Dimmesdale stands on the scaffold in darkness, then holds hands with Hester and Pearl, and feels a rush of new life. Yet when Pearl asks whether he will stand with them at noon, he refuses. A meteor appears to trace a great letter in the sky, and Hawthorne leaves it ambiguous whether this is a sign from heaven or the product of the minister's guilt. The symbolism suggests that the truth of their bond is waiting to be revealed, but that Dimmesdale can face it only in the dark.

The forest scene is the emotional centre of their relationship. Away from the town, Hawthorne's natural imagery creates a space beyond Puritan law. Dimmesdale's cry of relief at being able "to look into an eye that recognizes me for what I am" shows that Hester is the only person who knows him truly. Hester's defiant claim, "What we did had a consecration of its own", reframes their sin as something sacred, and the exclamations that follow capture her passion. When she removes the letter and lets down her hair, sunshine floods the forest, as if nature blesses their love. Yet Hester is clearly the stronger partner: Dimmesdale

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begs her to think for him and leans on her resolve. Hawthorne, writing in the age of Romanticism, seems drawn to this vision of natural freedom, while also hinting that it is a dangerous escape from responsibility.

Pearl acts as a living link between them. She refuses to cross the brook until Hester replaces the letter, and she washes off Dimmesdale's kiss. Hester's promise that one day he will "walk hand in hand with us" remains unfulfilled until the final scene, so Pearl's demands keep pressing the question of public acknowledgement.

The relationship reaches its climax on the final scaffold. After his Election Day sermon, Dimmesdale calls Hester and Pearl to him, confesses, and reveals the mark on his breast. "Is not this better than what we dreamed of in the forest?" he asks, choosing confession over escape. When Hester asks whether they will meet in eternity, he replies only "His will be done!", placing God above their love. This is poignant but also characteristic of a man always more anxious about his soul than about Hester. Fittingly, Hawthorne ends with their shared tombstone, marked "On a field, sable, the letter A, gules." The heraldic language transforms the badge of shame into something almost noble. Hawthorne, whose ancestor had been a judge in the Salem witch trials, presents their relationship with sympathy, suggesting that a love condemned by a rigid society may be more humane than the society that condemned it.

22 Hawthorne presents evil as something far more complex than the Puritan community believes. Seventeenth-century Boston defines evil as visible transgression, marked by a scarlet letter and punished on the scaffold. Yet the novel gradually suggests that the worst evil is hidden, deliberate and cold: the

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corruption of a heart by revenge. Writing in 1850 about his Puritan forebears, Hawthorne questions a society that brands sinners while overlooking the cruelty within itself.

From the opening chapter, Hawthorne associates Puritan judgement with darkness. The prison is described as the "black flower of civilized society", a striking metaphor that presents punishment as something rooted in the community itself, while the wild rose bush by the door offers a glimpse of mercy. The women gathered at the scaffold call for Hester to be branded on the forehead or even put to death, and their harshness suggests that self-righteousness can be its own form of evil. For the Puritans, adultery was both a serious sin and a crime, and Hester is treated as an embodiment of wickedness. The scarlet letter is meant to fix that identity, but Hawthorne complicates it: it becomes "her passport into regions where other women dared not tread", a metaphor suggesting that shame has given her an insight and freedom denied to the respectable.

The Puritan imagination also locates evil in the supernatural figure of the "Black Man" of the forest, with whom witches were said to sign their names. Mistress Hibbins, the governor's sister, invites Hester to the forest at night, and Hester replies that she must stay to keep Pearl. Hawthorne draws on the real belief in witchcraft that led to the Salem trials, in which his own ancestor served as a judge. By making the Black Man a figure of folklore and rumour, Hawthorne implies that the community projects evil outwards onto devils and witches rather than recognising it in human motives.

Pearl is a fascinating test of this. The Puritans see her as a demon offspring, the living product of sin, and some wish to remove her from Hester. Her wildness and strange intuition seem unsettling. Yet Hawthorne presents her as a blessing as

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much as a punishment, the "scarlet letter endowed with life" whose questions push the adults towards truth. The ambiguity suggests that what society calls evil may be something natural and untamed.

The true embodiment of evil is Roger Chillingworth. Hawthorne charts his transformation with imagery of physical deformity and fire: his face darkens over the years, and his eyes reveal the "lurid fire" of his heart. He attaches himself to Dimmesdale as a physician, and the townspeople's name for him, the "leech", is grimly apt, as he feeds on the minister's suffering. His remark that Dimmesdale would have been better had he "died at once" reveals a deliberate cruelty that prolongs pain for the pleasure of revenge. Hawthorne suggests that evil is not a single act but a process of self-corruption: in devoting himself to torment, Chillingworth turns himself into a fiend.

Dimmesdale articulates the novel's central moral distinction in the forest, when he says that Chillingworth's revenge has been "blacker" than his own sin, because he has "violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart". The contrast between the lovers' passion and Chillingworth's "cold blood" frames evil as the absence of human warmth. Even so, Hawthorne does not let Dimmesdale escape: his hypocrisy, preaching purity while concealing his guilt, is a quieter evil that eats away at him physically. The novel's structure, built on secrecy and its exposure, suggests that hidden sin festers, while open confession offers redemption.

The scaffold is the structural symbol of this. Hester is shamed there at the beginning, and Dimmesdale finally confesses there at the end. His confession robs Chillingworth of his purpose, and the old man withers and dies within a year, as if evil has nothing to sustain it once the truth is told. Intriguingly, he leaves his fortune to Pearl, a final act that complicates any simple judgement. The narrator

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even speculates that love and hatred may be the same passion at bottom. Ultimately Hawthorne presents evil not as the sin of passion the Puritans condemn, but as the cold, calculating violation of another person's soul, a warning to any society too certain of its own righteousness.