# Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

**Time** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Paper reference** **4ET1/02**

# English Literature

## PAPER 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts
## Question Booklet

**Do not return this Question 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** How is Eddie Carbone presented as a breaker of rules in the play?

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

**(Total for Question 1 = 30 marks)**

**OR**

**2** 'All the characters in the play make choices that have an impact on the unfolding events.'

Explore the significance of making choices in *A View from the Bridge*.

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

**(Total for Question 2 = 30 marks)**

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

**EITHER**

**3** Explore the significance of the title of the play, *An Inspector Calls*.

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

**(Total for Question 3 = 30 marks)**

**OR**

**4** Discuss the presentation of **one** character you sympathise with in the play.

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** 'Both Ed Boone and Roger Shears have a relationship with Judy Boone.'

How are Ed and Roger presented in the play?

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

**(Total for Question 5 = 30 marks)**

**OR**

**6** How is communication shown to be important in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*?

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

**(Total for Question 6 = 30 marks)**

***Kindertransport*, Diane Samuels**

**EITHER**

**7** 'Some of the key action of the play takes place in Evelyn's attic.'

Discuss the significance of different settings in *Kindertransport*.

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

**(Total for Question 7 = 30 marks)**

**OR**

**8** How does the character of Faith develop in the 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** 'Jane Pilkings and Amusa both show that they are open to the views of others.'

How far do you agree with this statement about the play?

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

**(Total for Question 9 = 30 marks)**

**OR**

**10** Explore the theme of fear 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** Explore the theme of anger in *Romeo and Juliet*.

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** 'Friar Lawrence acts with good intentions.'

How far do you agree with this view of the 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** In what ways are the Witches important 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** Explore the theme of ambition in the 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)**

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

**EITHER**

**15** 'Shylock lacks any power throughout the play.'

How far do you agree with this view?

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** Explore the significance of marriage 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** Explore the theme of prejudice in 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** In what ways is Jane Bennet presented as a character who always sees the best in people 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** 'Estella is presented as a victim in the novel.'

How far do you agree with this view?

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** Explore the theme of kindness 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** Discuss the theme of female independence 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 21 = 30 marks)**

**OR**

**22** 'Arthur Dimmesdale is presented as cowardly in the novel.'

How far do you agree with this view?

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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Please check the examination details below before entering your candidate information

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# Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

**Time** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Paper reference** **4ET1/02**

# English Literature

## PAPER 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

**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.
- Good luck with your examination.

*Turn over* ▶

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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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## 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

Miller presents Eddie Carbone as a man who lives by rules only as long as they serve him. He polices the people around him, Catherine, Beatrice and Rodolpho, with a set of strict expectations, yet he breaks the two codes that matter most in the play: the unwritten Sicilian code of loyalty and the moral law that should govern his feelings for his niece. What makes Eddie tragic rather than simply villainous is that he never seems fully aware of the rules he is breaking until it is too late.

Miller establishes the community's code early through the story of Vinny Bolzano, the boy who informed on his uncle to the immigration authorities. Eddie tells it with relish, describing Vinny dragged down the stairs "bouncin' like a coconut" while "they spit on him in the street, his own father and his brothers". The comic simile is chilling because it shows that violence against an informer is treated almost as entertainment; there is no pity for a fourteen year old, only for the betrayal itself. Structurally, this anecdote works as foreshadowing. Eddie is the one who lays down the law to Catherine that she must never speak about the cousins, so the audience is primed to see the full irony when he later commits exactly the same crime. He becomes Vinny Bolzano, and Miller makes us watch it happen.

Eddie's rule breaking begins inside his own home, and it is disguised as protection. He objects to Catherine's skirt, her walk and her new job, and later insists "The guy ain't right" about Rodolpho. The blunt, colloquial declarative suggests certainty, yet it is a certainty without evidence. He presents himself as guardian of the rules of respectability, but Beatrice sees through this: "You want somethin' else, Eddie, and you can never have her!" The pronoun "her" makes the unspoken explicit, and

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the absolute "never" names the taboo that Eddie cannot admit to himself. Miller keeps Eddie's desire beneath the surface of the dialogue, so that he breaks the most fundamental rule of family life without ever putting it into words.

His treatment of Beatrice shows the double standard most clearly. He commands her loyalty while denying her a marriage in any real sense, and when she plans to attend the wedding he threatens, "You walk out that door to that wedding you ain't comin' back here, Beatrice." The conditional structure turns marriage into an ultimatum, as if Eddie alone writes the rules of the household. Yet this is the same man who has just broken faith with the whole neighbourhood.

Eddie also tests the unwritten rules of masculinity, using them as a weapon against Rodolpho. The boxing lesson begins with the almost rhetorical "Betcha you have done some, heh?", a question designed to expose Rodolpho as soft. The scene is staged as a game, but when Eddie lands a blow the playfulness cracks, and Marco's silent lifting of the chair, held over Eddie's head, is a non verbal warning that Eddie has crossed a line. Later, in the drunken kiss, Eddie breaks the very codes of masculinity he claims to defend. Perhaps he intends to humiliate Rodolpho, but the act is so taboo that it exposes his own confusion rather than his rival's.

The form of the play sharpens our sense of rules being broken. Alfieri, a lawyer, should represent American law, but he also understands the older code. He warns Eddie that the law cannot help him, and that if he goes further "You won't have a friend in the world, Eddie!" As narrator he speaks from after the events, so his warnings carry the weight of inevitability: he has already watched it "run its bloody course". The chorus figure makes the audience complicit, aware of the rules and their consequences while Eddie walks straight past them.

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The climax shows Eddie breaking the code completely when he phones the Immigration Bureau, and Miller's stage directions emphasise the silence afterwards, as if the community itself is holding its breath. Even then Eddie tries to make the rules work for him, demanding public vindication with the cry "I want my name, Marco!" The irony is devastating: he wants the honour that the code bestows, but he has forfeited it by breaking the code's central rule. His death on the street, by his own knife turned against him, is the community's punishment and the tragic resolution of the play.

Ultimately, Miller presents Eddie as a breaker of rules who cannot see himself clearly. He judges others harshly by laws he refuses to apply to himself, and the structure of the play, from Vinny Bolzano to Eddie's final cry, ensures that the rules he breaks return to destroy him.

2 In A View from the Bridge, Miller presents choice as the tension at the centre of tragedy. The play constantly asks whether its characters are free to choose or are swept along by forces of desire, poverty and community law. I would argue that Miller suggests every character does make real choices, but that those choices are narrowed by circumstance, and that it is Eddie's one catastrophic choice, made against all warning, which turns a domestic drama into a tragedy.

Miller first presents choice as something shaped by necessity. Marco and Rodolpho choose to enter America illegally, but Marco's explanation suggests that this is barely a choice at all: "if I stay there they will never grow up". The stark conditional presents emigration as the only route to his children's survival, and his metaphor that they "eat the sunshine" is quietly devastating, turning hunger into

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something almost poetic while exposing its cruelty. Miller makes the audience sympathise with a decision that breaks the law, because the law offers no alternative. This sets up a key structural contrast: the brothers choose out of need, whereas Eddie's later choices are driven by desire, jealousy and obsession.

Eddie, meanwhile, tries to make choices on Catherine's behalf. When she is offered a job he insists, "You'll never get nowhere unless you finish school. You can't take no job." The double negatives and blunt declaratives show his adamance, as if his word settles the matter, yet the real motive is his fear of losing her. Catherine's development is shown through her growing willingness to choose for herself. Supported by Beatrice, she takes the job and later chooses Rodolpho despite Eddie's insistence that "The guy ain't right". Miller presents her final decision to marry as a painful but necessary act of independence, a choice to grow up which Eddie cannot accept.

Beatrice's choices are perhaps the most morally complex. She is the one who tells Catherine that she must become a woman and make her own decisions, and she is the one who names Eddie's feelings when she says "you can never have her". Yet at the climax she chooses to stay with her husband rather than attend the wedding, and she holds him as he dies. Miller suggests that loyalty can be both admirable and self-defeating. Beatrice chooses love over judgement, and the audience may admire or pity her for it.

Alfieri's role in the form of the play draws attention to choice most directly. As narrator he speaks from a point after the events, so his account has an air of fate: he knows how the story ends and admits he could only watch it "run its bloody course". Yet within the scenes he repeatedly offers Eddie a way out. He tells him that the law cannot stop Catherine marrying and warns that betraying

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the cousins means "You won't have a friend in the world, Eddie!" The tension between Alfieri as chorus, who sees inevitability, and Alfieri as lawyer, who gives advice, mirrors the play's central question. Eddie is told what will happen and still chooses it.

That choice, the telephone call to the Immigration Bureau, is the turning point of the play. Eddie knows the community's code from the story of Vinny Bolzano, which he himself tells with disgust early on, so the structure makes his decision feel deliberate rather than accidental. Miller's stage directions emphasise the consequences when the officers arrive: "For an instant there is silence." Then the officer "gives a last, informative look at EDDIE", a look which publicly marks him as the informer. The silence is the sound of a choice that cannot be undone.

In the final act, the characters choose revenge over survival. Marco spits in Eddie's face and accuses him in front of the neighbourhood, and Eddie chooses to demand his "name" back rather than accept disgrace. Rodolpho desperately tries to prevent the fight, pleading "Eddie, please, he has children! You will kill a family!" His exclamations remind us that other choices are still possible, even at the last moment. Both men refuse them, and Eddie dies by his own knife turned against him.

Miller's ending, with Alfieri's reflection that it is better to settle for half, suggests that wise choices often involve compromise, which Eddie could never make. The play implies that circumstances may limit choice, but responsibility remains: Eddie is destroyed not by fate alone, but by what he chose to do with it.

3 Priestley's title, An Inspector Calls, seems at first to promise a conventional

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detective drama, but each of its three key words opens up a deeper meaning. The "Inspector" examines not a single crime but a whole way of life; his "call" is both a visit and a summons to conscience; and the indefinite article "An" hints that he could be anyone, or something other than human. By the end of the play, the title has become a warning that the call will come again.

The title first plays with the expectations of the "whodunit". An inspector calling suggests a murder, a body and a culprit, and Priestley does use the structure of an investigation, with each character questioned in turn and a new revelation at the end of each act. However, there is no murder and no body on stage. Instead, the Inspector reveals how each member of the family contributed to the suicide of Eva Smith. Priestley subverts the genre so that the guilty party is not one person but a whole class, and the audience realises that the "inspection" is moral rather than criminal.

The word "Calls" matters because it marks the moment everything changes. Before the Inspector's arrival the family are celebrating Sheila's engagement, and Birling is delivering confident speeches about a future of progress, declaring that a man must "look after himself and his own" and dismissing "community and all that nonsense". Priestley interrupts this complacency with "the sharp ring of a front door bell", a sound effect that literally cuts across Birling's philosophy. The lighting shifts from "pink and intimate" to "brighter and harder", suggesting that the call exposes the family to a harsher, more truthful light. The present tense of "Calls" also creates immediacy, as if the visit is happening now, to us, and not only to the Birlings in 1912.

The stage directions make the Inspector's presence dominant from the start. He "creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness". The

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triplet of abstract nouns suggests weight and moral certainty, in contrast to the flimsy self-importance of Birling. His method of dealing with "one person and one line of enquiry at a time" structures the play, controlling who speaks and when, so that the Inspector becomes, in effect, the director of the action. The title's focus on him is justified: he is the force that drives every revelation.

Yet the indefinite article "An" keeps his identity uncertain. He is not "The Inspector" or "Inspector Goole" but simply an inspector, which suggests he represents a type, perhaps a voice of social conscience that might visit any household. His name, Goole, sounds like "ghoul", hinting at the supernatural, and his uncanny knowledge of events, including a warning of "fire and blood and anguish", suggests he sees beyond the time of the play. His final speech turns the title outward, insisting "We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other." The shift to the collective pronoun "We" moves the inspection from the Birlings to the audience.

The structure of the ending reveals the most significant layer of the title. After the Inspector leaves, Gerald and Birling discover that no Inspector Goole is on the force, and the older characters relax, treating the evening as a hoax. Sheila and Eric, however, refuse to forget: Sheila insists "I remember what he said, how he looked, and what he made me feel." In a sense the Inspector's role passes to them, as they now question their parents. Then the telephone rings and Birling announces that a police inspector is on his way. The title takes on a double meaning: an inspector "calls" at the door, and an inspector "calls" on the telephone. The cyclical structure suggests that the inspection will be repeated until the lesson is learnt.

Ultimately, Priestley's title is far more than a label for a mystery. It describes a

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moral visitation that refuses to end with the final curtain. The simple, almost everyday phrase An Inspector Calls becomes unsettling because it implies that any comfortable family, and any audience, might be the next to receive the call.

4 The character I sympathise with most in An Inspector Calls is Sheila Birling. Priestley does not present her as blameless: her jealous complaint at Milwards helps push Eva Smith further into poverty. However, it is precisely because Sheila is flawed, and because she faces her guilt honestly and then struggles alone to make her family face theirs, that she earns the audience's sympathy. Priestley uses her journey from sheltered daughter to moral voice to show that change is possible, and painful.

At the start of the play Sheila is presented as young and protected. The stage directions describe her as "very pleased with life and rather excited", and her playful teasing of Gerald about the summer when he hardly came near her hints at insecurity beneath the celebration. Her parents treat her like a child, and the "pink and intimate" lighting suggests the comfortable, rose-tinted world she lives in. We can sympathise with her because she has been kept ignorant of how others live; her later shock is that of someone who has never been asked to look.

Sheila's first reaction to Eva's story is instinctive compassion, which sets her apart from her father immediately. When Birling defends sacking the strikers, she responds, "But these girls aren't cheap labour", insisting on their humanity. Her language shifts the focus from economics to people, anticipating the Inspector's message. Yet Priestley then turns the investigation on her. When she sees the photograph she runs out, and on her return she confesses that she had Eva dismissed because she was "in a furious temper" and Eva looked "very pretty". Her

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honesty is striking. She admits that she "couldn't be sorry for her" at the time, but now says "if I could help her now, I would". The modal "could" captures the agony of hindsight: the desire to act comes too late. Her promise "I'll never, never do it again" is almost childlike in its repetition, yet it feels sincere, and the audience pities a young woman confronting the cruelty of her own past behaviour.

Sympathy deepens when Sheila also suffers at the hands of others. The revelation of Gerald's affair with Daisy Renton wounds her personally, and she handles it with surprising maturity, returning the ring not in anger but because they are no longer the same people. She also senses the Inspector's power before the others do, warning her mother not to "build up a kind of wall" between themselves and Eva. The metaphor of the wall shows her insight into her family's defensiveness, and it is Sheila who realises, with growing horror, that Mrs Birling is condemning her own son.

Structurally, Priestley makes Sheila increasingly isolated as the play ends. After the Inspector leaves and the older characters begin to dismiss the evening as a hoax, Sheila refuses to let it go: "The point is you don't seem to have learnt anything." The plain, direct sentence exposes her parents' moral emptiness. She echoes the Inspector's words, "Fire and blood and anguish. And it frightens me the way you talk." The short, fragmented phrases suggest emotion breaking through, and the verb "frightens" reveals that her fear is no longer of the Inspector but of her own family. We sympathise because she sees clearly but cannot persuade those who matter most. Her parents laugh and Gerald even offers the ring back, as if nothing has changed. Sheila's lonely clarity is, in its own way, a punishment.

Priestley's choice of form reinforces this. Sheila functions partly as a mouthpiece for the Inspector after he has gone, carrying his message into the final scene. The

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final telephone call, announcing that a real inspector is on his way, seems to vindicate her. The audience is left feeling that Sheila was right to keep hold of her guilt, and that her parents' relief was hollow.

In conclusion, I sympathise with Sheila because Priestley presents her as someone who does wrong, recognises it fully and tries to change, only to find that her family will not change with her. Her growth from a giggling fiancée to a young woman who speaks uncomfortable truths makes her the emotional heart of the play, and the character through whom Priestley offers hope for the future.

5 In Stephens' adaptation, Ed Boone and Roger Shears are linked by their relationships with Judy, but they are presented as opposites in the way that matters most: their relationship with Christopher. Ed is a deeply flawed father who lies, loses his temper and commits the act that begins the mystery, yet his love for his son is constant and practical. Roger, by contrast, is presented as a man who tolerates Christopher at best and resents him at worst. The play invites us to judge both men not by their conduct towards Judy but by how they treat the boy at its centre.

Ed is presented first as a patient single father who understands his son's needs. The stage direction in which "Ed holds his right hand up and spreads his fingers out in a fan" and Christopher mirrors him is one of the play's most tender images. Because Christopher cannot bear to be hugged, the touching fingertips become a private language of love, and Christopher himself explains that it means his father loves him. Ed's careful use of exact time frames, "Five minutes ok? That's all", also shows that he has learnt how to speak to Christopher in a way that reassures him. Even Judy's letters praise him: "Your father is a much more patient person."

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Through this form, the letters read aloud, Stephens allows an absent character to vouch for Ed's goodness at the moment the audience is beginning to doubt him.

However, Ed's relationship with Judy reveals his capacity for deception and rage. He tells Christopher that his mother has died and hides her letters, a lie that is perhaps meant to protect his son but also protects Ed from confrontation. The structural twist of the play is his confession, "I killed Wellington", which turns the detective story inside out: the investigator's own father is the culprit. Ed's explanation shows that his jealousy over Judy's affair with Roger, and his hurt at Mrs Shears, spilled over into violence. Stephens does not excuse this. The stage direction "Ed shakes Christopher hard with both hands" earlier in the play has already shown a temper that frightens his son. Yet the confession is also an act of honesty, an attempt to stop lying, and it is significant that it destroys Christopher's trust precisely because Christopher values truth above everything.

Roger is presented through Christopher's suspicions before we meet him. Christopher's deduction that Mr Shears is his "Prime Suspect" is logical but wrong, and this misdirection makes Roger seem a shadowy figure. When he finally appears in London, he is reluctantly welcoming, but his language soon reveals resentment. His sarcastic comment on Judy's reward chart, "A gold star. Well that's very original I have to say", mocks Judy's attempt to communicate with her son and dismisses the patience that Christopher needs. His reaction to Christopher pushing Judy away, "What the hell is going on?", shows that he has no understanding of Christopher's condition, while his present of a puzzle book, which Christopher dismisses as "for children", shows how little he knows him.

As the London scenes progress, Roger's hostility escalates. Drunk and aggressive, he grabs Christopher and demands "Don't you ever, ever think about other people

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for one second, eh?" The repetition of "ever" and the tag question "eh?" sound bullying and contemptuous. There is an irony here: Roger accuses Christopher of selfishness when it is Roger who cannot see beyond his own irritation. Stephens contrasts this sharply with Ed's response to the school, where he insists that Christopher can sit his Maths A level and tells the staff, "Then get the facilities." Ed fights for Christopher's opportunities; Roger resents his existence.

The structure of the ending makes the contrast clear. Judy leaves Roger and returns to Swindon with Christopher, so Roger simply disappears from the play, while Ed begins the slow work of rebuilding trust. His gift of a puppy and his acceptance of Christopher's rules about time together show a father willing to earn back his son's confidence on Christopher's terms.

Ultimately, Stephens presents both men as damaged by the breakdown of their relationships with Judy, but only Ed is redeemed. Roger is defined by impatience and mockery; Ed, despite his lies and his violence, is defined by a stubborn, practical love that the play suggests is worth repairing.

6 Communication is at the heart of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, both as a theme and as the principle behind its unusual form. Christopher finds most human communication baffling because it relies on gesture, implication and metaphor, yet the play suggests that he is not simply a failed communicator. Rather, it exposes how often the people around him communicate badly, and it shows that the relationships that matter most are built on finding a shared language.

Stephens establishes Christopher's difficulty in the opening scenes. When the

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Policeman asks "And what precisely are you doing in the garden?", Christopher answers "I'm talking to you." The exchange is comic, but it also reveals that Christopher takes language literally, hearing the words rather than the intention behind them. Moments later, when the Policeman touches him, Christopher hits him, showing that physical contact is a form of communication he cannot tolerate. The play begins, therefore, with a breakdown that leads directly to Christopher's arrest, and the audience understands from the start that misunderstanding has real consequences.

Christopher himself explains why he struggles, and his explanation is precise. He says that "people do a lot of talking without using any words" and that "people often talk using metaphors". He prefers dogs because "You always know what a dog is thinking." The simplicity of the dog's "four moods" contrasts with the bewildering range of human signals, such as the raised eyebrow that Siobhan explains might mean very different things. Christopher's view that a metaphor "should be called a lie" because "a pig is not like a day" is both funny and revealing. For him, honesty and accuracy are the same thing, which is why lies, including those told by adults who love him, are so devastating.

His habit of over-sharing information adds to this theme. When the Station Policeman asks "A pet rat?", Christopher replies that Toby is "very clean and he hasn't got bubonic plague". The unnecessary detail is humorous, but it also shows that Christopher communicates by giving all the facts, assuming others need them as much as he does. Language for him is about accuracy, and numbers are his most fluent language. His confidence with mathematical problems, which the play celebrates in the final explanation of his A level question, shows that he is a highly articulate thinker in a medium that is logical and certain.

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The characters who communicate well with Christopher are those who adapt to him. Siobhan draws faces showing emotions so that he can carry a guide in his pocket, and she gives him clear, direct instructions such as "You need to open it and read it." Ed's spread fingers, touching Christopher's own, become a gesture of love that Christopher accepts because it is predictable and on his terms. These moments suggest that communication is not about one person conforming, but about meeting another person where they are.

In contrast, Stephens shows how other characters' communication fails. Roger's sarcasm, "A gold star. Well that's very original I have to say", mocks Judy's attempt to reach her son, and his aggressive question "Don't you ever, ever think about other people for one second, eh?" ironically shows that he cannot think about Christopher. Even Judy, who loves him, misreads him on arrival in London: "She goes to hug him. He pushes her away so hard that he falls over." The stage direction shows that love without understanding can still hurt.

The form of the play is itself a statement about communication. Judy is introduced through the letters Christopher finds hidden in his father's wardrobe, so that her voice reaches him, and us, only in writing, long after it was meant to. Siobhan acts as a narrator, reading Christopher's book aloud and helping to convey thoughts he cannot explain to others. The second half becomes a play within a play, as Siobhan suggests turning his book into a performance. The ensemble voices, movement sequences and projected numbers allow the audience to experience the world as Christopher does, overwhelming and noisy, which is a form of communication in itself.

By the end, Christopher has communicated with strangers on his journey to London, sat his exam, and begun to rebuild trust with his father. His final

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question, "Does that mean I can do anything", suggests a new confidence in his own voice. Stephens presents communication as vital, not because Christopher must learn to speak like everyone else, but because everyone must learn to listen to him.

7 In Kindertransport, Samuels uses setting not simply as a backdrop but as a way of mapping memory. The attic of Evelyn's house is the play's fixed physical space, yet within it the past constantly breaks through: a home in Germany, a train crossing Europe, stations in Manchester, a dockside. I would argue that the different settings trace Eva's transformation into Evelyn, while the attic, where everything is stored and hidden, becomes a symbol of the mind that tries to lock the past away.

The opening stage direction sets the tone: a "Dusty storage room filled with crates, bags, boxes and some old furniture". The list of containers suggests a place built for keeping things out of sight, and the adjective "Dusty" implies neglect, a past that has been deliberately left untouched. It is significant that the play begins and ends here, because the attic frames all the other settings. When Faith "finds a trunk" and, after hesitating, "tentatively opens it", the stage directions slow down the action so that opening a box becomes an act of courage. The attic is where secrets are buried and where they are unearthed.

Samuels' form makes the attic double as other places. Past and present scenes are staged in the same space, often overlapping, so that Helga checking a case "hidden amongst the boxes" in Germany appears alongside Faith searching through the same kind of boxes decades later. The parallel is telling. In Germany, hiding belongings is a means of protecting the future; in England, Evelyn hides her

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belongings to erase her past. The same physical action carries opposite meanings, and the setting makes the audience feel that the past is never truly separate from the present.

The family home in Germany is presented through small domestic tasks. Helga insists "Eva, sew on your buttons now. Show me that you can do it." The imperatives sound brisk, but they are a mother's way of preparing her daughter to survive without her. The home is a place of love, but it is already shadowed by departure, and the sewing becomes an image of Helga trying to equip Eva for a life she cannot share.

Trains and stations dominate the middle of the play, fitting the title, which means "children's transport". On the train, Eva tries to reassure her mother through the window: "See, I'm not crying. I said I wouldn't." The short sentences suggest a child holding herself together by force of will. Although the train carries her to safety, it remains a frightening place. The Officer marks her papers with a "huge star of David" and demands "What money have you got?", and the setting becomes one of intimidation rather than escape. Samuels heightens this through the Ratcatcher, whose music and shadow appear at moments of threat. Because the same actor plays the Ratcatcher and the various officials, the setting itself seems to be haunted by one menacing figure who follows Eva across borders.

England, and Manchester in particular, is where Eva remakes herself. At first she is relieved, writing that she is fortunate to be drinking "the tea of England even if it does taste like dishwater". The comic simile shows her gratitude mixed with homesickness. Gradually she absorbs English manners so completely that, in a crisis, she offers "Would cups and saucers be of any use?" The very Englishness of the line reveals how far she has travelled from her German Jewish roots.

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Manchester station is used twice, and both times it is painful: Eva flees from an evacuation train because she imagines the Ratcatcher is coming for her, and later she waits for parents who do not arrive, realising "I'll never see them again, will I?" The station, a place of arrivals, becomes a place where hope ends.

The dockside scene between Helga and Evelyn is perhaps the most poignant setting of all. Helga has survived and wants her daughter to join her in New York, but Evelyn refuses. A place of departure becomes a place of final separation, chosen this time rather than imposed.

Finally, the attic returns as a place of exposure. Evelyn is desperate to get Faith and Lil out: "Come on out and I'll lock the door." The impulse to lock the door shows how she treats memory, as a room to be sealed. Through its settings, Samuels suggests that the journeys of the past cannot be locked away, because they live on in the spaces, and the people, they have shaped.

8 Faith begins Kindertransport as an uncertain young woman on the edge of leaving home, and ends it as someone determined to claim a history that has been hidden from her. Samuels presents her development as a journey from innocence to knowledge, and from dependence to independence, but it is not a simple growing up. Faith's discoveries in the attic force her to see her mother differently, and the play leaves open whether that knowledge will bring the two women closer or drive them apart for good.

At the start, Faith is hesitant about the move she is about to make. Evelyn urges her, "You've made a commitment to moving into that place. Stick by it", while Faith admits, "It feels all wrong." The contrast in their language is revealing:

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Evelyn's imperatives are firm and practical, while Faith's vague "all wrong" suggests anxiety she cannot name. There is already distance between them. When Evelyn questions the cost of the flat, Faith retorts, "Maybe you should have come to see it", a pointed remark that hints at a relationship lacking warmth. Samuels creates a tragic irony here. Faith has the freedom to choose her future, a freedom that Evelyn insists on with "This is your life, Faith", while the young Eva had no choice at all when she was put on a train.

Faith's innocence is emphasised as she plays with the old toys in the attic. Singing "Runaway train went down the track", she seems childlike and carefree, but the audience recognises the echo of Eva's journey on the Kindertransport. The structure of the play, with past and present scenes overlapping in the same space, means that Faith is unknowingly handling the remnants of a trauma that is being staged around her. Her playfulness is poignant precisely because she does not yet understand what the objects mean.

The turning point comes when she discovers letters from a girl called Eva, and her innocence drains away as she pieces the puzzle together. Her blunt question to Lil, "Is she Mum?", is short and direct, as if she is trying to force the truth out in as few words as possible. Once she knows, Faith feels betrayed. She refuses to let the subject drop, declaring "I'm not letting go", and the phrase suggests a new tenacity. Her anger is focused on what she has lost: "You stopped me from knowing her." The direct accusation, with "You" placed first, lays the blame squarely on Evelyn for denying her a grandmother and a heritage.

Samuels also shows Faith's development through her language. As a young adult, she is more forthright and confrontational than her mother expects, prompting Evelyn's disapproving comment that she did not raise her "to speak as if your

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mouth were filled with sewage". The image reveals Evelyn's horror at disorder, but it also shows that Faith is no longer willing to be the polite, contained daughter her mother has tried to create. Her outspokenness is part of her refusal to inherit her mother's silence.

The discovery gives Faith a sense of purpose that she lacked at the start. She resolves, "I'm going to find out what everything means. Get in touch with my relatives. I want to meet them." The series of short, determined statements, each beginning with an intention, contrasts sharply with the indecision of "It feels all wrong". Her name becomes significant here: "Faith" suggests belief and hope, and she seems to represent a generation that will face the past rather than bury it. Structurally, she is the third generation of women in Helga's family, and she is the one who may end the cycle of guilt and concealment.

Yet Samuels does not give Faith a tidy resolution. Evelyn wants her to remain her "little girl forever", which suggests that she fears the independence that Faith has gained. In the final scenes, the stage directions show Faith reaching out, "Faith tries to get close to Evelyn. Evelyn does not turn to face Faith". Faith's compassion here shows real maturity; she has moved from anger to an attempt at understanding. But the rejection suggests that understanding cannot be forced.

The play's last spoken line belongs to Faith. When Evelyn says "All done in here then", Faith replies "Yes, we are." The shift from "done in here" to "we are" is ambiguous. It may simply mean the packing is finished, or it may suggest that something between mother and daughter has ended. Either way, Faith has developed into a character who speaks with authority, and Samuels leaves the audience to decide whether her new knowledge is a beginning or an ending.

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I only partly agree with this statement. Jane Pilkings and Amusa are both, at moments, more willing to listen than the people around them, and Soyinka uses them as figures who stand between the colonial and Yoruba worlds. However, their openness has clear limits. Amusa respects Yoruba belief deeply but cannot act on that respect because of his duty, while Jane's openness is a kind of polite curiosity that collapses the moment her own values are challenged. In the end, Soyinka seems to suggest that genuine openness requires more than good manners, and that neither character fully achieves it.

Amusa's openness is clearest in Act Two, when he arrives to report on Elesin and finds the Pilkingses dressed in egungun costumes for the ball. Although he is a Muslim, he is horrified by the misuse of a sacred ancestral mask. His broken English, "I cannot against death to dead cult. This dress get power of dead", is grammatically fractured but morally precise: the repetition of "dead" shows that he understands the costume is not fancy dress but a vessel of real spiritual power. The stage direction "Eyes to the ceiling" makes his respect physical, as he literally refuses to look at the desecration. Soyinka creates an ironic reversal here, since the uneducated sergeant, whom Simon mocks, shows far greater cultural sensitivity than the British District Officer. Amusa's question, "How can man talk against death to person in uniform of death?", suggests that he can hold a belief that is not his own and still honour it.

Yet Amusa's openness is compromised by the uniform he himself wears. In the market scene, he arrives to arrest Elesin, and the women and girls ridicule him as a "white man's eunuch", a cruel image which suggests he has been stripped of his manhood and his identity by serving the colonial power. The girls' mimicry of English voices turns his authority into a comic performance. Although Amusa understands the importance of the ritual, he still tries to prevent it, and when he

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is forced to retreat he insists that he will return. Soyinka presents him as a man caught between two systems: he is open to Yoruba views in private, but his actions serve those who reject them. His openness, therefore, never becomes action.

Jane at first appears far more open than her husband. When Simon dismisses Joseph's faith in holy water, she rebukes him: "Calling holy water nonsense to our Joseph is really like insulting the Virgin Mary before a Roman Catholic." The careful simile shows that she can imagine how another person's belief feels from the inside, and she tries to soften Simon's contempt for Amusa too, asking, "Oh Amusa, what is there to be scared of in the costume?" However, this question also exposes her limits. Its gentle, almost maternal tone treats Amusa's fear as childish rather than as a serious spiritual response. She is kind, but she does not take his belief seriously.

The fullest test of Jane comes in Act Four, in her conversation with Olunde. Structurally, this scene is the intellectual centre of the play, and Soyinka gives Jane real curiosity: she asks Olunde to explain the ritual and admits, "I feel it has to do with the many things we don't really grasp about your people." This sounds open, but the phrase "your people" keeps Olunde at a distance, as though he belongs to a separate category of humanity. Her earlier remark that the Yoruba "don't count the hours the way we do. The moon, or something" is trailing and vague, its ellipsis revealing condescension. When Olunde calmly accepts that his father must die, she cries, "How can you be so callous!" and later calls him a "savage". The sudden shift from polite inquiry to insult shows that her openness only extends as far as views that do not threaten her own. Olunde's judgement that the British "have no respect for what you do not understand" could be aimed directly at her. She also fails to see that the story of the ship's captain who

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sacrificed himself, which Olunde admires, mirrors Elesin's duty.

Ultimately, Soyinka contrasts the two characters to show different failures of understanding. Amusa understands but cannot act; Jane acts politely but cannot understand. Both are more open than Simon, which makes them more sympathetic, yet the tragedy still happens around them. I would therefore argue that the statement is only half true: they show a willingness to listen, but not a true openness that might have changed the outcome of the play.

10 In Death and the King's Horseman, fear is the hidden force beneath almost every action. Elesin's whole role demands that he show no fear of death, and Soyinka builds the play around the gap between his confident words and his failure to act. Yet fear is not only personal: the colonial officials fear disorder and humiliation, Amusa fears the spiritual power of the dead, and the Yoruba community fears what will happen to the world if the ritual is broken. Soyinka seems to suggest that the most dangerous fear is not the fear of death but the fear of losing one's hold on life.

At the start of the play, Elesin performs fearlessness. He tells the Praise-Singer, "Tell my tapper I have ejected / Fear from my home and farm", and the verb "ejected" makes fear sound like an unwanted guest he has physically thrown out. The confident, rhythmic verse and his question, "Has no one told you yet / I go to keep my friend and master company", present death as a social visit rather than an ending. Most strikingly, he tells the fable of the Not-I bird, in which farmers, priests and even spirits all flee from the bird of death. The repeated refusal of each figure to claim the bird creates a comic chain that mocks cowardice, and Elesin places himself outside it: "Safe without care or fear. I unrolled / My

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welcome mat for him to see." The domestic image of a "welcome mat" makes death homely and invited. However, the fable also contains a warning, as he observes that "even those / We call immortal / Should fear to die". Placing this line in his own mouth hints that Elesin knows how universal fear is, and the audience may begin to doubt whether his bravado is too loud to be fully sincere.

His demand to marry the young bride on his last day deepens this doubt. The market women admire his daring, since "Not many men will brave the curse of a dispossessed husband", but structurally the marriage is the first sign that Elesin is clinging to the earth. His desire for sensual pleasure and for a child to leave behind can be read as a refusal to let go, and in that sense as a disguised fear of death.

The fear becomes visible in Act Three, when Elesin enters his trance. His words, "I have freed myself of earth and now / It's getting dark. Strange voices guide my feet", sound calm, but the short clauses and the image of darkness create unease. The Praise-Singer's questions are sharper: "Elesin-Oba why do your eyes roll like a bush-rat who sees his fate like his father's spirit, mirrored in the eye of a snake?" The simile reduces the great horseman to a frightened animal facing a predator, and the layered image of reflection suggests that death is closing in from every side. This hesitation matters dramatically, because it gives Pilkings's men time to arrest him. Later, in his cell, Elesin admits that his own longing for life weakened his will, and he describes his feet as "leaden on this side of the abyss". The heavy adjective and the image of standing at the edge of a chasm capture paralysis: he is held back as much by his own desire as by the colonial interruption.

Soyinka also shows fear in the colonial world. Amusa is terrified by the egungun costumes, and Jane cannot understand why: "Oh Amusa, what is there to be

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scared of in the costume?" Her bewildered question reveals that the British cannot even recognise fear of the sacred. Simon Pilkings, meanwhile, fears losing control, and his anxiety grows around the Prince's visit. Soyinka contrasts this petty fear of embarrassment and riot with the far deeper fear of the Yoruba community, who believe that the broken ritual will leave the world unbalanced.

Olunde, by contrast, is unafraid. His certainty, "His willpower has always been enormous; I know he is dead", is dramatically ironic, since the audience knows Elesin has failed. When Olunde takes his father's place in death, his courage exposes Elesin's fear completely. Iyaloja's mockery is merciless as she asks whether words like "Please save me" are fitting from "an ancestral mask", contrasting the dignity of the role with the pleading of a frightened man. Only when Elesin sees his son's body does he overcome his fear, strangling himself with his chain. Even this act comes too late to restore what has been lost, and Iyaloja's final instruction to "Turn your mind only to the unborn" suggests that fear has cost the community its future as well as its present.

The play's tragedy lies not in Elesin's death but in the moment when fear of leaving life outweighed his duty.

11 In Romeo and Juliet, anger is the fuel of tragedy. Shakespeare presents it as something inherited and public, rooted in the "ancient grudge" of the feud, but he also shows how quickly it can flare inside individuals, turning friends into killers and loving parents into tyrants. For an Elizabethan audience, who were taught that unchecked passion threatened both the soul and social order, the play works as a warning: anger spreads like a disease until it destroys the young people who had no part in starting it.

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Shakespeare establishes anger as the atmosphere of Verona from the first scene. The brawl begins with the servants' crude jokes and the insulting gesture of biting a thumb, so anger is shown to reach even the lowest ranks of the households. Its triviality is the point: a feud with no remembered cause still produces drawn swords. Prince Escalus's furious speech condemns the citizens as "Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace", and his warning, "If ever you disturb our streets again, / Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace", introduces the legal threat that will later lead to Romeo's banishment. The Prince embodies the Elizabethan ideal of order imposed from above, and his authority frames the play's anger as a political problem as well as a personal one.

Tybalt is Shakespeare's embodiment of anger. His first words to Benvolio, "What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word, / As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee", are structured as an escalating list that narrows from the abstract "peace" to the personal "thee", showing how his hatred seeks a target. Mercutio mocks him as the "King of Cats", an animal image that suggests a predatory, instinctive aggression, and in the context of Elizabethan theories of the humours Tybalt could be seen as dominated by choler. At the Capulet feast his reaction to Romeo is immediate: "Fetch me my rapier, boy." When Capulet forbids a fight, Tybalt's rhyming couplet, "I will withdraw, but this intrusion shall, / Now seeming sweet, convert to bitt'rest gall", sounds controlled and menacing. The neat rhyme seals his threat like a vow, and the metaphor of sweetness turning to "gall" foreshadows how the sweetness of Romeo and Juliet's meeting will turn bitter.

The central turning point is Act 3 Scene 1, where Shakespeare shows anger as contagious. Romeo, newly married to Juliet, refuses to fight, but Mercutio, enraged by this "calm, dishonourable, vile submission", takes up the challenge and is killed.

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His repeated curse, "A plague o' both your houses!", widens his anger from Tybalt to the whole feud, and the image of plague is chillingly prophetic, since it is literally plague that later traps Friar John and stops the letter reaching Romeo. Romeo's response marks his transformation: "Away to heaven, respective lenity, / And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!" The personification of "fire-eyed fury" as his guide suggests that anger has taken control of him, replacing gentleness. In a culture where male honour demanded revenge, the audience might understand Romeo's choice, yet Shakespeare makes clear its cost, as Romeo cries that he is "fortune's fool".

Anger also invades the domestic world. When Juliet hears that Romeo has killed Tybalt, her fury is expressed through oxymoron: "A damnèd saint, an honourable villain!" The clashing opposites show her anger at war with her love, and she quickly turns that anger on the Nurse for criticising him. Lord Capulet's rage is even more shocking. Earlier he seemed protective, but when Juliet refuses Paris he explodes: "Hang thee, young baggage! Disobedient wretch!" The harsh insults and imperatives reveal patriarchal anger at a daughter who has defied the law of a father who, in Elizabethan society, controlled her marriage and future. Lady Capulet's cold wish that "the fool were married to her grave" is a bitter piece of dramatic irony, since Juliet's marriage bed will indeed become a tomb.

Structurally, the play ends by revealing anger's consequences. In the Capulet vault, the Prince tells the fathers, "See what a scourge is laid upon your hate", and concludes that "All are punished." The word "scourge" suggests divine punishment, implying that heaven has used the lovers' deaths to end the feud. Capulet and Montague finally clasp hands, but the reconciliation comes too late. Shakespeare therefore presents anger as a force that feeds on pride and honour and leaves only grief behind, inviting his audience to see that peace, so despised by Tybalt, was

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the only true honour available.

12 I largely agree that Friar Lawrence acts with good intentions. His central aim, to heal the feud between the Montagues and Capulets, is a noble one, and he repeatedly tries to protect the lovers from their own rashness. However, Shakespeare complicates our judgement by showing that good intentions are not enough: the Friar's secrecy, his dangerous schemes and finally his flight from the tomb contribute to the tragedy. He may be best understood as a well-meaning man whose wisdom fails him when he needs it most.

The Friar is introduced in Act 2 Scene 3 gathering herbs at dawn, and his soliloquy establishes him as a thoughtful moral voice. He reflects that "Within the infant rind of this weak flower / Poison hath residence, and medicine power". The antithesis of "poison" and "medicine" introduces the idea that the same thing can heal or kill depending on how it is used. Structurally, this is ironic foreshadowing: his knowledge of plants will produce the potion that is meant to save Juliet but leads to death. Shakespeare seems to suggest from the outset that the Friar's good intentions carry a hidden danger.

When Romeo arrives asking to be married, the Friar reacts with sharp humour: "Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!" He mocks Romeo's fickle transfer of love from Rosaline, and his advice, "Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast", is a balanced proverb that captures the play's warnings about haste. Yet he agrees to the marriage almost at once. His reasoning, "For this alliance may so happy prove / To turn your households' rancour to pure love", reveals the political goodness of his intention, as he hopes that love will cure hatred. The rhyming couplet gives his hope a neat, optimistic finality. However, an Elizabethan audience might have

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viewed a secret marriage, conducted without parental consent, as a serious breach of order. In a Protestant England where Catholic friars were often regarded with suspicion as secretive schemers, his willingness to act behind the fathers' backs might have made him seem less trustworthy.

The Friar's warnings also expose a contradiction. Before the wedding he cautions that "These violent delights have violent ends", the repetition of "violent" acting as a grim prophecy. If he can see the danger so clearly, why does he hurry the marriage? One reading is that he is reckless; another is that he is so committed to peace that he is willing to gamble. Either way, Shakespeare uses his words to remind the audience of the inevitability of tragedy.

After Romeo's banishment, the Friar becomes a protector. He scolds Romeo's suicidal despair and offers practical hope, planning to reveal the marriage and win a pardon. When Juliet arrives "past hope, past cure, past help", threatening to kill herself, he answers, "I spy a kind of hope", and offers the potion. The tentative phrase "a kind of hope" shows his uncertainty, but his motive is clearly compassionate, since he wants to prevent both suicide and the sin of bigamy. Nonetheless, the plan is extraordinarily risky, relying on timing, secrecy and a single letter. He seems to forget his own advice to act "Wisely and slow".

The tragedy turns on chance as much as on the Friar's choices. Friar John is trapped by plague and the letter never arrives, and Friar Lawrence recognises the danger: "The letter was not nice, but full of charge". Here, the Elizabethan belief in fate and fortune helps to explain events beyond his control, and the Prologue's "star-crossed lovers" suggests that the lovers were doomed whatever he did. Yet the Friar's final actions are harder to defend. In the tomb, when Juliet wakes, he hears a noise and cries, "I dare no longer stay", abandoning her. The short, fearful

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line undermines his role as a spiritual guardian: at the crucial moment he protects himself, not her.

At the end, his long explanation begins, "I will be brief, for my short date of breath / Is not so long as is a tedious tale". The irony is that his speech is not brief at all. It could be read as an honest confession or as an attempt to justify himself, and he offers his life to the law if he is to blame. The Prince replies, "We still have known thee for a holy man", which suggests that Verona's authority accepts his good intentions.

Overall, Shakespeare presents Friar Lawrence as a sincere peacemaker whose intentions are good but whose methods are flawed. His tragedy mirrors the lovers' own: he, too, acts too fast, and good intentions cannot save anyone in a world ruled by hatred and chance.

13 The Witches are important in Macbeth because they set the play in motion, shape its atmosphere of moral confusion and raise its central question: is Macbeth driven by fate or by his own choices? Shakespeare never fully answers that question, and this ambiguity is the source of the Witches' power. For a Jacobean audience, and for a king who had written a book about witchcraft, they would also have been terrifyingly real agents of evil, threatening the natural and political order.

Shakespeare gives the Witches the very first scene, a short, storm-filled exchange that establishes their importance structurally before we have even met Macbeth. Their question, "When shall we three meet again", and the announcement that they will meet "Macbeth" make him their target from the start. Their chant, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair: / Hover through the fog and filthy air", uses chiasmus to

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invert moral values, while the alliteration of "fog and filthy" creates a murky, polluted atmosphere. Their speech is written in trochaic tetrameter, a shorter, falling rhythm that sounds like a spell and sets them apart from the iambic pentameter of the noble characters. When Macbeth's first words echo them, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen", Shakespeare suggests an unsettling connection: Macbeth is already in tune with their world.

The Witches' prophecies in Act I Scene 3 are the catalyst for the tragedy. They greet Macbeth with three titles, ending with "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!" The triple structure builds to a climax, and the modal "shalt" sounds like certainty. Yet they never tell him to kill Duncan. Their riddling words to Banquo, "Lesser than Macbeth, and greater" and "Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none", rely on paradox, showing how they deal in half-truths. Banquo recognises the danger, warning that "The instruments of darkness tell us truths" in order to "win us to our harm". This contrast is important, because the Witches speak to both men, but only Macbeth begins to imagine murder. His aside, "This supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill, cannot be good", reveals his inner conflict and shows that the Witches have not forced him but tempted him. In this sense they function as a dramatic device that brings his hidden ambition to the surface.

The Witches are also important for what they reveal about evil. In Act I Scene 3, the First Witch plots revenge on a sailor because his wife refused her chestnuts, promising "I'll drain him dry as hay". However, she also admits, "Though his bark cannot be lost, / Yet it shall be tempest-tost." Their power has limits: they can torment but not destroy. This suggests that they can only harm Macbeth because he allows them to, making his downfall partly self-inflicted. James I's Daemonologie and the North Berwick witch trials, in which witches were accused of raising storms to wreck the king's ship, mean that this storm imagery would

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have had a particular charge for the original audience.

In Act 4 Scene 1, Shakespeare reverses the balance of power: now Macbeth seeks them out. Their gleeful chant, "Double, double toil and trouble; / Fire burn and cauldron bubble", with its insistent rhyme and grotesque list of ingredients, presents a world of disorder and corruption. The Second Witch's line, "By the pricking of my thumbs, / Something wicked this way comes", is chillingly ironic, since the "wicked" thing is Macbeth himself. The apparitions give him false security: he is told that "none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth" and that he will not be defeated until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. These prophecies are equivocations, true in a way he does not expect, and in a period still haunted by the equivocation of the Gunpowder plotters, Shakespeare's audience would have recognised the danger of words designed to deceive. The show of eight kings descending from Banquo also flattered James, who believed himself to be Banquo's descendant, confirming that the rightful line will triumph.

Finally, the Witches' importance is measured by their absence. They disappear after Act 4, and Macbeth is left to face the consequences alone. When Macduff reveals that he was "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb, Macbeth curses the "juggling fiends" who tricked him, but the audience knows his crimes were his own. Shakespeare therefore uses the Witches to explore temptation rather than compulsion. They are essential to the plot, the atmosphere and the play's moral warning, yet their greatest importance lies in showing that evil succeeds only when a human being chooses to listen.

14 Shakespeare presents ambition in Macbeth as a desire that begins in the imagination and ends in a wasteland. Macbeth's ambition is not imposed on him

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from outside; the Witches and Lady Macbeth awaken and sharpen it, but the play suggests that it was already within him. Through the structure of a tragedy, Shakespeare traces how ambition that ignores loyalty and God's order turns a hero into a tyrant and brings nothing but emptiness, a warning with special force for a Jacobean audience living in the shadow of the Gunpowder Plot.

At the opening, ambition is masked by heroism. The Captain describes "brave Macbeth" carving his way through the battle, and Duncan rewards him with the title of Thane of Cawdor. Yet Shakespeare quickly hints at danger. The previous Thane of Cawdor was a traitor, and Duncan's reflection that "There's no art / To find the mind's construction in the face" is dramatically ironic, because he immediately places his trust in another man who will betray him. Ambition, Shakespeare implies, hides behind honourable appearances. When the Witches hail Macbeth as future king, his startled reaction and his thoughts of "horrible imaginings" show how fast his ambition leaps to murder. By Act I Scene 4, when Malcolm is named heir, his aside, "Stars, hide your fires; / Let not light see my black and deep desires", uses the contrast of light and darkness to reveal that he knows his ambition is shameful. The imperative to the stars is almost a prayer to the heavens to look away.

Lady Macbeth intensifies this ambition. Her fear that her husband is "too full o'th'milk of human kindness" suggests that ambition requires the rejection of compassion, and she calls on spirits to "unsex me here", rejecting her femininity to make herself fit for murder. Her advice to "look like th'innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't" alludes to the serpent in Eden, presenting ambition as satanic temptation. In Jacobean society, where women were expected to be obedient, her domination of Macbeth would have seemed unnatural, reinforcing the idea that ambition overturns the proper order of things.

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Shakespeare's most important insight comes in Macbeth's Act I Scene 7 soliloquy, where he weighs the murder. He lists the reasons against it, recognising that Duncan is his king, his kinsman and his guest, and admits, "I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent, but only / Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself / And falls on th'other." The horse-riding metaphor captures ambition as reckless energy that overshoots its target, foreshadowing his fall. He briefly resolves, "We will proceed no further in this business", but Lady Macbeth's taunt, "When you durst do it, then you were a man", shows how ambition is entangled with ideas of masculinity. The scene's structure, a moral argument overturned by manipulation, shows that ambition wins not through reason but through pride.

After the murder, ambition brings no satisfaction. Macbeth's line "To be thus is nothing, / But to be safely thus" reveals that power alone is meaningless without security, and he fears Banquo, whose sons were promised the throne. His bitter images of a "fruitless crown" and a "barren sceptre" suggest that his ambition is sterile, since he has no heir. Here Shakespeare draws on the belief in the divine right of kings: a usurper can seize the crown, but he cannot create a legitimate line. The contrast with Banquo is pointed. Banquo heard the same prophecy, yet his ambition was restrained, and James I, who claimed descent from Banquo, would have seen his own line honoured. Macbeth's admission that "I am in blood / Stepped in so far" presents ambition as a river of violence from which he cannot return, and the murder of Macduff's family shows ambition decaying into pure tyranny.

By the final act, ambition has destroyed both characters. Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking reveals guilt eating away at her mind, a striking reversal of her earlier confidence. Macbeth's "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" soliloquy, with its

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weary repetition and its image of life as "a tale / Told by an idiot", shows that the summit of his ambition is meaningless. The structure of the play is cyclical: it begins and ends with a battle and the beheading of a traitor, and Malcolm's description of "this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen" reduces the once noble pair to monsters. Order is restored under a rightful king.

Overall, Shakespeare presents ambition as Macbeth's tragic flaw, a force that promises greatness but delivers emptiness. For an audience taught that the king was God's anointed, the play confirms that ambition which breaks the Great Chain of Being leads inevitably to destruction.

15 I largely disagree with the view that Shylock lacks any power throughout the play. For much of The Merchant of Venice, Shylock holds real and frightening power: the economic power of money, the legal power of his bond and, perhaps above all, the rhetorical power to expose Christian hypocrisy. However, Shakespeare shows that this power is always precarious, because it depends on a society that despises him. In the trial scene it is stripped away completely, so the statement is true of the ending but not of the play as a whole.

From his first appearance, Shylock's power is economic. Bassanio and Antonio come to him for money, and the reversal is significant: the wealthy Christian merchant must ask a favour of the Jewish moneylender he has insulted. Shylock savours this moment, reminding Antonio, "You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog, / And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine". The list of insults, and the physical image of spitting, reveal the humiliation he has suffered, while his ironic questions about whether a dog can lend money expose Antonio's hypocrisy. His aside, "If I can catch him once upon the hip, / I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him", uses a wrestling

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metaphor and an image of feeding that make his hatred physical and patient. In Elizabethan England, where Jews had been expelled since 1290 and usury was condemned by the Church, audiences would have seen Shylock as a villain, but Shakespeare also lets us see the injustice that fuels him. His power is born from his exclusion.

The bond itself gives Shylock legal power. The "merry sport" of a pound of flesh seems a joke, but it binds Antonio to the law of Venice, a commercial republic whose wealth depended on the enforcement of contracts. When Antonio's ships are lost, Shylock's power grows. His speech "Hath not a Jew eyes?" is the moment of his greatest moral power. Written in prose, its series of rhetorical questions, such as "If you prick us, do we not bleed?", asserts a shared humanity that the Christians refuse to recognise. Yet it ends with a turn to revenge: "The villainy you teach me I will execute". Structurally, Shakespeare shows that Shylock has learned his cruelty from the Christians themselves, which gives his power a dark legitimacy.

Even so, Shylock's power is matched by deep vulnerability. Jessica's elopement with Lorenzo, taking his money and jewels, strips him of his family. Solanio's mocking report of his cry, "My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!", turns his grief into comedy, and the jumbled repetition suggests confusion of love and wealth. However, his pain at the loss of the turquoise ring, which he says he would not have given "for a wilderness of monkeys", reveals a man wounded in his private life. Here he is almost powerless, mocked in the streets.

The trial scene shows Shylock at the height of his power before his fall. He refuses every plea, declaring, "I stand here for law", and sharpens his knife in front of the court. The Duke, the most powerful man in Venice, cannot overturn the

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bond. Portia's famous speech, "The quality of mercy is not strained", fails to move him, and for a moment the Christian order seems helpless. Yet Shakespeare reverses everything with Portia's "Tarry a little; there is something else", revealing that the bond allows "no jot of blood". The legal power Shylock relied on now becomes the weapon against him, and under the law that punishes an alien who seeks a citizen's life, his wealth and life are at the mercy of the state. Gratiano's mocking repetition of Shylock's own words about a "learned judge" makes his defeat humiliating.

His final loss is total. Antonio demands that he become a Christian, which for Shylock means losing his identity as well as his property. He protests that taking his means of living is taking his life, but he is reduced to the brief, broken words "I am content" and "I am not well." The contrast with his earlier fluent, defiant speech is devastating. Shylock then leaves the play entirely, and the final act in Belmont proceeds without him, showing structurally how completely he has been removed from society.

Overall, Shylock does not lack power; he has it and loses it. Shakespeare presents him as a man whose power is real but borrowed from the law of a hostile society, and who is crushed when that law is turned against him. A modern audience may see this as tragic injustice, while an Elizabethan audience may have seen it as comic justice, but either way the play depends on Shylock's power to give his downfall its force.

16 Marriage is central to The Merchant of Venice, both as the conventional happy ending of a comedy and as a means of exploring money, power and loyalty. Shakespeare shows marriage as a financial and social contract in which women are

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traded between men, yet he also allows women like Portia to test, manipulate and control that system. Its significance lies in the tension between love and wealth, and between the loyalty a husband owes his wife and the loyalty he owes his male friends.

Marriage first appears as a commercial venture. Bassanio describes Portia in terms of her fortune before her virtues: "In Belmont is a lady richly left". The adverb "richly" places her inheritance first, and his pursuit of her is funded by Antonio's borrowed money, so the courtship is literally financed by debt. He compares her to the golden fleece, presenting her as a treasure to be won by adventurers. For an Elizabethan audience this would not be shocking, since marriage among the wealthy was widely understood as an exchange of property and status, and a wife's possessions passed to her husband.

Portia's lack of choice reveals the patriarchal control of marriage. She complains, "I may neither choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father." The pun on "will", meaning both desire and a legal testament, shows how her personal wishes are bound by her father's legal power, even after his death. The casket test turns marriage into a riddle: suitors must choose between gold, silver and lead. Morocco's choice of gold and Arragon's of silver expose their vanity, while the lead casket's inscription, "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath", defines true marriage as risk and sacrifice. Ironically, Bassanio wins by rejecting outward show, though he is himself a fortune hunter.

However, Portia's mocking of her suitors also exposes the prejudice in the marriage market. After Morocco fails, she says, "Let all of his complexion choose me so." Her relief reveals that racial and religious difference limited who could be

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considered acceptable, which links the marriage plot to the play's treatment of outsiders like Shylock.

When Bassanio chooses correctly, Portia's speech presents marriage as surrender. She calls herself "an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised", the triple negative presenting a modest, obedient bride, and declares, "Myself and what is mine to you and yours / Is now converted." The verb "converted" suggests a total transfer of ownership, reflecting the legal reality that a wife's property became her husband's. Yet this humility is ironic, because Portia is the most intelligent character in the play. She gives Bassanio a ring and warns that losing it would "presage the ruin of your love", making the ring a symbol of fidelity and setting up the later test.

The trial scene tests the loyalty of marriage against male friendship. Bassanio claims that his wife and all the world are not valued above Antonio's life, and Portia, disguised as the lawyer, remarks dryly that his wife would give him little thanks for that. This dramatic irony is comic but pointed: it exposes the rival claims of male bonds and marriage. Portia's disguise is itself significant, as she can only exercise power in the male world by abandoning her identity as a wife.

The ring plot in Act Five shows Portia reclaiming control. By demanding the ring as payment and then pretending to accuse Bassanio of infidelity, she teaches him that his first loyalty must be to her. Antonio himself must act as surety for Bassanio's faithfulness, binding his soul this time rather than his flesh. Structurally, this echoes the bond plot, transforming a cruel contract into a loving one, and suggests that marriage, like commerce, depends on trust.

Jessica's marriage offers a darker view. She escapes her father's house disguised as a boy, taking his money, and claims that her husband has made her a Christian.

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Marriage becomes a means of escape and conversion, but it also involves betrayal and theft. Shylock's anguish over the ring that Leah gave him before their marriage, which Jessica trades away for a monkey, suggests that marriage once meant love and memory to him, and that this love has been carelessly destroyed.

The play ends with three marriages, as a comedy should, yet Gratiano's final bawdy joke about keeping Nerissa's ring safe leaves a note of unease. Shakespeare presents marriage as a source of harmony and order, but also as a contract shaped by money, prejudice and power, in which women must be clever to have any say at all.

17 Austen presents prejudice not simply as snobbery but as a failure of perception: a judgement made too quickly, on too little evidence, and then defended out of wounded pride. The novel's original title, "First Impressions", points to this concern. Austen suggests that in a society which judged people by rank, fortune and manners, almost everyone is prejudiced in some way, and that the real test of character is whether a person can recognise and correct their own prejudice.

The famous opening sentence, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife", is itself a joke about prejudice. The confident, generalising tone of "universally acknowledged" is undercut by irony, since the "truth" belongs only to the mothers of Meryton who have already decided what Bingley wants. From the first line, Austen teaches the reader to distrust assumptions presented as facts, and the rest of the novel tests that lesson.

Darcy's prejudice is the most obvious and is founded on class. At the Meryton

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assembly he dismisses Elizabeth as "tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me", and his remark that there is "not another woman in the room" whom it would not be a "punishment" to dance with turns a social courtesy into a form of suffering. The hyperbole exposes how far his rank has insulated him from ordinary politeness. In Regency England, where the gentry guarded their status carefully, Darcy's contempt for the Bennets' "low connections" would have seemed natural to many readers, yet Austen makes it look ugly. His first proposal is the clearest example: he declares "In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed", and the short, broken sentences show passion fighting against social conscience. He loves Elizabeth but still dwells on the inferiority of her family, so even his declaration of love is soaked in prejudice.

However, Austen's real subtlety lies in Elizabeth, the heroine with whom the reader most closely identifies. Because the narrative is largely filtered through her viewpoint by free indirect discourse, we share her prejudices without noticing them. Hurt by Darcy's slight, she accepts Wickham's story at Mrs Phillips' house after a single evening, seduced by his charm and good looks. She even boasts to Jane that she could forgive Darcy's pride "if he had not mortified mine", revealing that her judgement grows from injured vanity rather than evidence. Austen structures the novel so that the reader is misled alongside her, which makes the later revelation more powerful.

That revelation comes through form. Darcy's letter, delivered after the failed proposal, is a shift from dialogue to a long written document that Elizabeth must read and reread. The letter genre allows Darcy's version of events to be set out calmly, away from the heat of conversation, and it forces Elizabeth to reflect. Her response, "How despicably have I acted!", followed by "Till this moment I never knew myself", is the novel's turning point. The exclamatory self-condemnation and

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the language of self-knowledge show that overcoming prejudice is presented as a moral awakening. She admits that "vanity, not love, has been my folly", linking her prejudice directly to the pride in the title, so that the two faults are shown to feed each other.

Austen also uses minor characters to show prejudice in a comic or satirical light. Miss Bingley and Mrs Hurst sneer at Elizabeth's muddy petticoat after her walk to Netherfield, judging her by appearance and decorum rather than by her loyalty to her sick sister. Mr Collins displays a grotesque positive prejudice towards Lady Catherine, praising everything from her chimney piece to her advice, simply because she is his patron. Lady Catherine herself embodies aristocratic prejudice when she storms into Longbourn and asks whether the "shades of Pemberley" are to be "polluted" by Elizabeth. The metaphor of pollution reveals a belief that class is almost a matter of purity, yet Elizabeth's calm, witty replies make the great lady seem ridiculous. Through these figures, Austen satirises a social order in which rank too often replaced real worth.

Structurally, the novel moves both main characters from prejudice to understanding. Darcy's courtesy to the Gardiners at Pemberley, whom he once would have despised for living by trade, proves that he has changed, while Elizabeth learns to judge him by his actions, particularly his secret rescue of Lydia. Their marriage at the end is therefore not just a romantic resolution but a moral one, suggesting that people of different ranks can unite when prejudice gives way to respect. Austen does not reject class altogether, but she implies that a person's value lies in character and conduct, and that the willingness to admit one has judged wrongly is the beginning of wisdom.

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18

Jane Bennet is presented as a character whose generosity of judgement is both her greatest virtue and her greatest weakness. Austen makes her almost the opposite of Elizabeth: where Elizabeth is quick, witty and inclined to judge harshly, Jane is slow to blame and determined to think well of everyone. Through her, Austen explores whether seeing the best in people is a form of goodness or a kind of blindness in a society where reputations, money and marriage prospects were often decided by deception and gossip.

From the start, Jane's view of others is presented through her own warm, unguarded language. After the Meryton ball she tells Elizabeth that Bingley is "just what a young man ought to be", a phrase that sounds like a description of an ideal rather than a real person. Elizabeth's affectionate reply, "You never see a fault in anybody", turns this into a defining trait. Austen uses the sisters' private conversations as a structural device throughout the novel, and in these scenes Jane's charity is constantly set against Elizabeth's scepticism. Elizabeth even tells her that she wishes "to think all the world respectable", which captures both admiration and gentle mockery. The reader is invited to love Jane but also to doubt whether her judgement can be trusted.

Jane's goodness is tested most painfully by the Bingley sisters. When she is ill at Netherfield, Mrs Hurst claims an "excessive regard" for her and calls her "a very sweet girl", yet in the same breath laments her "low connections". Austen's irony is sharp here: the reader hears the hypocrisy, while Jane accepts the sisters' kindness at face value. Her stay at Netherfield is itself shaped by Regency etiquette, since a respectable young woman could only remain at a single man's house for a reason such as illness, and Mrs Bennet's scheming in sending her on horseback in the rain shows how little control Jane has over her own courtship. Later, in London, Caroline Bingley's cold, delayed visit finally opens Jane's eyes,

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and she writes to Elizabeth: "I confess myself to have been entirely deceived in Miss Bingley's regard for me". The formal, measured phrasing is typical of her: even in disappointment she blames her own misjudgement more than Caroline's cruelty.

Jane's charitable instinct also shapes her reaction to Wickham and Darcy. When Elizabeth reports Wickham's story, Jane refuses to condemn either man and tries to imagine a misunderstanding that would leave both of them blameless. Austen presents this as comically impossible, yet it also proves wiser than Elizabeth's confident condemnation of Darcy. In this way Jane acts as a moral foil: her reluctance to judge, though naive, avoids the kind of prejudice that leads Elizabeth astray, and the novel's structure eventually vindicates Jane's caution.

However, Austen suggests that Jane's serenity has real costs. Charlotte Lucas warns early on that a woman who hides her feelings too well may lose the man she loves, and this proves true. Darcy's letter explains that he believed "the serenity of your sister's countenance" showed that her heart "was not likely to be easily touched". The language of composure and calm, which elsewhere signals Jane's sweetness, here becomes the reason she is misread. In a world where a woman could not openly pursue a man and where, as the eldest daughter, Jane was expected to marry first and secure the family's future, her modest restraint leaves her almost powerless. Austen seems to criticise a society that demanded female reserve and then punished women for being too reserved.

By the end, Jane's capacity to see the best in people is rewarded rather than corrected. When Bingley returns and proposes, she exclaims, "I am certainly the most fortunate creature that ever existed!" The superlative and the exclamation show genuine joy, but also humility: she sees her happiness as fortune rather than

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something she has earned. Characteristically, she receives the Bingley sisters warmly once more, forgiving them without being asked. Mr Bennet's teasing prediction that she and Bingley are each "so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on" adds a note of comedy, suggesting that two such gentle people may be happy but rather passive.

Overall, Austen presents Jane as admirable but limited. Her belief in other people's goodness makes her the moral heart of the Bennet family and a contrast to the cynicism of characters like Charlotte and the snobbery of the Bingley sisters. Yet her story also shows the reader that kindness without discernment can be exploited. Austen seems to suggest that the ideal lies somewhere between the two eldest sisters: Jane's generosity tempered by Elizabeth's intelligence.

19

I largely agree that Estella is presented as a victim, but Dickens makes her a complex one. She is cruel to Pip and wounds him repeatedly, so she is also a cause of suffering. Yet Dickens suggests that her coldness is not natural but manufactured by Miss Havisham, and by the end of the novel she has suffered as much as anyone. She is perhaps best read as a victim who has been trained to create other victims.

Estella's first appearance shows her as a figure of power rather than pity. When the young Pip plays cards with her at Satis House, she sneers, "He calls the knaves, Jacks, this boy!", and mocks his "coarse hands" and "thick boots". The repeated, dismissive noun "boy" strips Pip of identity and asserts her superior class. Because the novel is narrated by the older Pip looking back, the reader feels the sting of these insults through his memory, and it is easy at first to see Estella only as a tormentor. Dickens's choice of her name, meaning "star", reinforces this:

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she is beautiful, distant and unreachable, a light Pip can only gaze at.

However, Dickens quickly reveals who is directing the cruelty. Miss Havisham whispers to her, "Break their hearts my pride and hope, break their hearts and have no mercy!" The repetition and the imperative mood make the command sound like an incantation, and the phrase "my pride and hope" shows that Estella is valued only as an instrument of revenge. Later Miss Havisham admits, "I stole her heart away and put ice in its place." The metaphor of ice suggests that Estella's capacity for love has been frozen deliberately, almost surgically, while she was a child. In this sense she is a victim of psychological abuse, just as Pip is a victim of the physical abuse of Mrs Joe's "Tickler". Dickens structures the novel so that both children are shaped by the adults who raise them, Pip "by hand" and Estella by design.

Estella's own words increasingly show awareness of what has been done to her. She warns Pip, "You must know, that I have no heart", which is both a cruel rejection and an honest warning. When she confronts Miss Havisham, she says, "I must be taken as I have been made." The passive construction "have been made" presents her as an object constructed by someone else, and her claim that the success and failure are "not mine" shifts responsibility to her guardian. Dickens uses this scene to turn the reader's judgement: Miss Havisham, who demanded love, cannot receive it from a girl she has deliberately emptied of feeling. The irony is bitter, and Estella emerges as the more sympathetic figure.

Dickens deepens this impression through what we learn of her origins. The revelation that Estella is the daughter of Magwitch and Molly, a woman tried for murder, is one of the novel's great ironies. The proud, refined young lady who looked down on Pip as "common" is in fact of lower birth than he is. This twist

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allows Dickens to attack the Victorian obsession with class, suggesting that gentility is a surface which money and training can paint over anyone. It also makes Estella a victim of the class system itself, passed from a convict's household to a wealthy recluse and shaped to serve another person's purposes. Since the novel was published in weekly instalments in "All the Year Round", Dickens could release these revelations gradually, keeping readers uncertain whether to blame or pity her.

Estella's marriage to Bentley Drummle completes her suffering. She chooses him partly to escape Miss Havisham and partly because she cannot feel love, and he treats her with cruelty. In the final chapter she says she has been "bent and broken" but hopes into "a better shape". The metaphor, taken from Joe's own blacksmith's craft, suggests that suffering has reforged her, and the novel's last line, "I saw no shadow of another parting from her", offers a hesitant hope that she is finally free to love. In Victorian terms, Estella defies the ideal of the meek, yielding woman, yet Dickens shows that her hardness was imposed rather than chosen, which complicates any simple condemnation.

Ultimately, Estella is both victim and victimiser, but Dickens weights the novel towards sympathy. Her cruelty to Pip is real, yet it is the cruelty of a weapon rather than of the hand that wields it. Through her, Dickens criticises the adults and the social values that distort children, and he suggests that only experience and suffering can undo that damage.

20 In Great Expectations, Dickens presents kindness as the true measure of a gentleman, in contrast to the money, manners and social rank that Pip mistakenly worships. Acts of kindness drive the plot, often in secret, and the novel's moral

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journey is Pip's slow discovery that the people who loved him most were the humble ones he learned to despise. Dickens, who had known poverty himself, uses kindness to challenge Victorian assumptions that worth depends on class.

The novel's central plot begins with a child's frightened act of kindness. On the marshes, Pip steals food for the starving convict, bringing "a beautiful round compact pork pie" along with bread, cheese and brandy. The detailed listing and the almost comic adjective "beautiful" capture a child's perspective, yet the act is genuinely generous: Pip pities Magwitch even while terrified of him. Dickens structures the whole novel around this moment, because Magwitch's secret repayment, his anonymous funding of Pip's expectations, is itself an extraordinary act of gratitude. When he returns and declares, "I've made a gentleman on you!", the repetition of possessive pride shows that kindness has become his reason for living. Because the benefactor remains hidden for most of the novel, a structure suited to its serialisation in weekly parts, the reader, like Pip, wrongly credits Miss Havisham. Dickens thereby reveals that real kindness may come from the least expected, most socially despised places.

Joe Gargery is the novel's purest embodiment of kindness. Pip describes him as "a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easygoing, foolish, dear fellow", and the long list of gentle adjectives, ending in the tender "dear", creates an image of simple goodness. Joe protects Pip from Mrs Joe's violence, warning him about "Tickler", and shares his comforting refrain "what larks". Dickens contrasts this warmth with Mrs Joe, who raises Pip "by hand" and constantly reminds him of the sacrifice. In Victorian society relatives were expected to take in orphans, so Mrs Joe's care may come from duty rather than love, and Dickens makes the difference between obligation and true kindness very clear.

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Pip's tragedy is that he learns to repay kindness with coldness. After visiting Satis House, he imagines how "common" Estella would think Joe, with his "thick" boots and "coarse" hands, borrowing her very words of contempt. Dickens uses this echo to show how quickly snobbery infects Pip. When Joe visits him in London, his awkwardness with his hat is comic, but Pip's embarrassment is painful, and Joe's quiet dignity in leaving exposes Pip's ingratitude. The structure of the novel sets Pip's rise in fortune against his decline in kindness, suggesting that wealth can corrupt the heart.

Biddy works as a foil to Estella. Pip calls her "pleasant and wholesome and sweet-tempered", language of ordinary goodness that contrasts with Estella's cold, starlike beauty. Biddy nurses Mrs Joe after Orlick's attack and keeps house for Joe, at a time when there was little care available for an injured woman of their class. Her patience and honesty show that kindness can be practical and unglamorous, yet Pip takes years to value it.

Dickens also shows that kindness can redeem. Wemmick, so dry and mechanical in Jaggers's office, becomes warm and playful at his Walworth castle with his Aged Parent, and he risks his position to warn Pip of danger. Pip himself grows kinder as he loses his expectations. He secretly arranges Herbert's partnership, an anonymous gift that mirrors Magwitch's. He forgives Miss Havisham, who cries "What have I done!" in remorse, and he saves her from the fire, burning his hands. Most movingly, he stays loyal to Magwitch, holding his hand in court and comforting him as he dies, so that the young boy's kindness on the marshes is completed by the man.

The climax of kindness comes when Pip falls ill and Joe nurses him and pays his debts without telling him. Pip's cry "O God bless him! O God bless this gentle

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Christian man!" shows the depth of his repentance, and Joe's assurance that "you and me was ever friends" offers total forgiveness. Dickens suggests that this, rather than a fortune, is what makes a true gentleman. Through the theme of kindness, he criticises a Victorian society that valued class over character and reminds readers that humble, unselfish love is the most precious inheritance of all.

21 Hawthorne presents female independence as something that grows out of punishment. The Puritan community intends the scarlet letter to humble Hester Prynne and to bind her to its rules, yet the isolation it creates gives her a freedom of thought that the men around her lack. Writing in 1850, at a time when the first women's rights convention had recently met at Seneca Falls, Hawthorne seems both fascinated by and uneasy about the independent woman, and the novel explores how far such independence can go in a rigid patriarchal society.

From her first appearance, Hester refuses to be passive. When the beadle leads her from the prison she repels him and steps out "as if by her own free-will". The phrase "as if" is significant: she is not truly free, but she performs freedom, turning a scene of disgrace into one of dignity. The letter itself, which should be a badge of shame, is embroidered "with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread", so Hester turns the symbol into an expression of her own artistry and pride. Hawthorne contrasts her with the hard-faced goodwives in the crowd, who wish she had been branded on the forehead or put to death. These women uphold the Puritan law most harshly, which suggests that patriarchal control is enforced by women as well as men.

Hester's independence is also shown through her silence. On the scaffold she refuses to name Pearl's father, even when the ministers urge her, and in the prison

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she tells Chillingworth, "That thou shalt never know!" Her secret is the one power left to her, and the exclamatory defiance shows that she will not surrender it. She is equally frank about her marriage, admitting, "I felt no love, nor feigned any." The balanced phrasing suggests a woman who refuses to pretend, an honesty unusual in a society built on public appearances.

Hawthorne develops this independence through Hester's economic and maternal role. She supports herself and Pearl through her needlework, and at Governor Bellingham's mansion she fights to keep her child, crying "God gave me the child!" In seventeenth century Boston, a woman who bore a child outside marriage could expect to have that child taken away, so her stand is remarkable. Significantly, however, she cannot win alone: she must ask Dimmesdale to speak for her, which shows the limits of female independence when all authority belongs to men.

The narrator's commentary suggests that exile has freed Hester's mind. "The scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread." The metaphor of a passport turns the symbol of exclusion into a licence to travel intellectually beyond Puritan thought. Hawthorne tells us that "Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers", and the list of abstract nouns as "teachers" implies that suffering has educated her. She reflects that the whole relationship between the sexes must change before women can take "a fair and suitable position", yet she sees this as a hopeless task. Hawthorne allows her radical thoughts but also distances himself from them, perhaps reflecting his own ambivalence about the early feminist movement.

The forest chapters are the climax of this theme. Free from the town's gaze, Hester insists, "What we did had a consecration of its own", claiming a moral authority independent of Puritan law. She tears off the letter and lets down her

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hair, and "Her sex, her youth, and the whole richness of her beauty came back". The setting is symbolic: the wild forest, associated with Mistress Hibbins and the "Black Man", represents freedom but also danger. Mistress Hibbins herself, the Governor's sister who openly frequents the forest, offers a darker image of female independence, one the community will later destroy, as she is executed as a witch. Hester's independence is admirable, but Hawthorne suggests it could become lawless.

Structurally, the ending complicates the theme. Pearl, who has always been wild and untameable, independently guesses Dimmesdale's secret and later leaves New England, becoming "married, and happy, and mindful of her mother". Hester, by contrast, returns to Boston and puts the letter back on voluntarily. This choice could be read as a final act of independence, since she now wears the letter on her own terms and counsels troubled women, and some townspeople even read the "A" as "Able". Yet it also shows her accepting the community's moral framework. Hawthorne ends with her hope that a future woman will reveal "a new truth" about men and women, deferring true independence to a later age. His presentation is therefore sympathetic but cautious: female independence is born from suffering, admired, yet not fully realised in Hester's world.

22 For most of the novel, Arthur Dimmesdale is presented as cowardly: he allows Hester to bear the public shame of their shared sin for seven years while he enjoys the reverence of Boston. However, Hawthorne complicates this judgement. Dimmesdale's cowardice is not comfortable or careless; it tortures him, and his final confession on the scaffold suggests a hard-won courage. I agree that he is presented as cowardly, but Hawthorne seems more interested in the suffering caused by hidden guilt than in simple condemnation.

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The first scaffold scene establishes his cowardice through dramatic irony. Dimmesdale is asked to persuade Hester to name her partner, and he urges her not to stay silent out of "mistaken pity and tenderness for him", saying it would be better for the man to stand beside her "than to hide a guilty heart through life". The reader later realises he is describing himself. His words are eloquent and apparently brave, but they place the burden of disclosure on Hester rather than on himself. Hawthorne exposes the gap between his public speech and private action, a hypocrisy made sharper by his role as a minister in a Puritan society that demanded public punishment for sin.

Hawthorne develops this weakness through physical imagery. Dimmesdale repeatedly presses his hand over his heart, a gesture that both hides and points to his guilt, and his health declines as the years pass. In private he punishes himself with a "bloody scourge", fasts and keeps vigils. Puritans considered such penance meaningful, so it could be argued that he is not avoiding punishment entirely. Yet Hawthorne suggests that private self-torture is no substitute for honest confession. Dimmesdale even tells his congregation that he is "utterly a pollution and a lie", but he speaks in such general terms that they revere him more for his humility. The irony is cruel: his attempts at confession become another form of concealment, and his guilt makes his sermons more powerful.

The midnight scaffold scene shows his cowardice most clearly. He climbs the scaffold in darkness, a half-confession with no witnesses, and when Pearl asks him to stand with them at noon he replies that he will do so only "At the great judgment day". He adds that "the daylight of this world shall not see our meeting". The contrast between darkness and daylight runs throughout the novel as a symbol of concealment and truth, and Dimmesdale chooses darkness. His use

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of religious language here seems to disguise fear as piety. Chillingworth's torment of him is also only possible because he will not confess, which shows how cowardice makes him vulnerable.

In the forest, Dimmesdale's dependence on Hester becomes almost pitiful. He tells her, "Happy are you, Hester, that wear the scarlet letter openly upon your bosom! Mine burns in secret!" The metaphor of a burning letter conveys his agony, yet the word "Happy" is shocking, since Hester has endured years of isolation. He seems unable to see that her openness required a courage he lacks. When she proposes escape, he begs, "Thou art strong. Resolve for me!" The imperative reverses the gender roles expected in Puritan society: the minister, supposedly a moral guide, asks a disgraced woman to make his decisions. Hawthorne makes Hester the stronger character and Dimmesdale the weaker.

Nevertheless, the novel's structure builds towards his redemption. Its three scaffold scenes, at the beginning, middle and end, trace his progress from silent observer to secret penitent to public confessor. After preaching his triumphant Election Sermon, he climbs the scaffold in daylight with Hester and Pearl and reveals his breast to the crowd, calling himself "the one sinner of the world". He asks Hester, "Is not this better than what we dreamed of in the forest?", suggesting that he has finally chosen truth over escape. Pearl's kiss, which breaks the "spell", shows that his confession has healed something. This act takes great courage, since he sacrifices his reputation and dies moments later.

Even so, the confession comes very late. Hester has suffered alone for seven years, and in a Puritan world where salvation was linked to righteous conduct on earth, his delay may seem too great to forgive. Hawthorne's moral, "Be true! Be true! Be true!", implies that Dimmesdale's failure was one of honesty. Overall, Hawthorne

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presents him as cowardly for most of the novel, but his torment and final confession make him a tragic rather than a contemptible figure, a man destroyed by the gap between his public role and his private sin.