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SALEM - 636 011

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

(CDOE)

M.A ENGLISH

SEMESTER - II

CORE IV: SHAKESPEARE

(Candidates admitted from 2024 onwards)

Prepared by

Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE),

Periyar University, Salem – 636 011.

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SYLLABUS

CORE IV

SHAKESPEARE

Course Objectives:

- To introduce the significance of Shakespeare and his works.
- To kindle the enthusiasm, interest and desire to study his plays further.
- To appreciate his contribution to English literature.

Course Outcomes:

On successful completion of the course, the students will be able to

CO1 - understand the greatness and uniqueness of Shakespearean characterisation, themes and techniques

CO2 - analyse and differentiate personalities in literature and life

CO3 - understand the effectiveness of language in Shakespeare's plays

CO4 - acquire skills like decision-making and problem-solving

CO5 - apply Shakespearean technique of handling people in the present context

Unit I

Introduction to Shakespeare - Shakespeare's Stage, Theatre, Audience, Fools, Clowns, Villains and Women

Unit II

Othello

Unit III

The Tempest

Unit IV

Henry VIII

Unit V

The Comedy of Errors

Sonnets – 28, 55, 66, 127, 131

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Unit I

SHAKESPEARE

UNIT I – SHAKESPEARE

Introduction to Shakespeare-Shakespeare's Stage, Stage, Theatre, Audience, Fools, Clowns, Villains and Women.

Unit objectives

In this unit learners will have comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural context of Elizabethan England, where his works were created. This unit will explore Shakespeare's biography including his influences, personal experiences and contributions to literature. It helps the learners to learn the different dramatic techniques employed by Shakespeare. It further imbibes the good values upheld by the Shakespearean characters.

SECTION 1.1: SHAKESPEARE

1.1.1 Introduction to Shakespeare

William Shakespeare's early life remains somewhat shrouded in mystery, as historical records from that period are often sparse and incomplete. However, scholars have pieced together some details about his family background and upbringing.

Born to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, William was baptized on April 26, 1564, in the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon. His father, John, was a prominent figure in the town, engaging in various occupations such as glove-making, trading wool and corn, and even serving as an alderman and mayor. Mary Arden, William's mother, hailed from a respected family of farmers in the nearby village of Wilmcote, and she inherited substantial land holdings from her father, Robert Arden.

William was the third of John and Mary's eight children, with four sisters and three brothers. He was the eldest son, indicating that he likely bore the expectations of carrying on his father's business and family name. However, despite being part of a relatively large family, only one of William's sisters is believed to have survived into adulthood, highlighting the harsh realities of mortality during that time.

In 1556, records indicate that John Shakespeare purchased a house on Henley Street in Stratford-upon-Avon, which would later become known as Shakespeare's birthplace. This modest dwelling, situated in the heart of the town, provided the backdrop for William's formative years and may have played a significant role in shaping his early experiences and aspirations. Though details about Shakespeare's childhood education are scarce, it is widely assumed that he attended the local grammar school, where he would have received instruction in Latin, Greek, rhetoric, and literature. The King's New School in Stratford was renowned for its rigorous curriculum and esteemed faculty, providing a solid foundation in classical learning for its students. It was a practical decision, driven by the family's financial difficulties and the need for William to contribute to their income. Despite his abbreviated formal education, Shakespeare's early exposure to literature and language at the grammar school in Stratford laid the foundation for his later literary achievements.

John Shakespeare's various business ventures, including glove-making and trading in wool and corn, initially brought prosperity to the family. His success in business also translated into social and political prominence, as he ascended to positions of leadership within the local government of Stratford-upon-Avon. His tenure as Mayor in 1569 reflected his standing in the community and his ability to navigate the complexities of municipal governance. However, by the mid-1570s, the Shakespeare family faced financial troubles, with John Shakespeare grappling with debts and mortgages. The exact circumstances that led to this downturn are not fully documented, but economic instability and fluctuating market conditions likely played a role. John's decision to mortgage Mary Arden's property underscores the severity of their financial predicament and the lengths to which he went to alleviate their burdens.

As the eldest son, William would have felt the weight of responsibility to support his family during these trying times. Despite his youth, he likely took on various odd jobs to contribute to the household income, sacrificing his formal education in the process. The decision to leave school at a young age was not unusual for children of the era, especially those from lower-income families, who often prioritised practical considerations over academic pursuits. While the lack of formal schooling may have limited William's opportunities for higher learning, it did not hinder his intellectual curiosity or creative potential. His exposure to literature and language at an early age, coupled with his natural talent and keen observation of the world around him, laid the groundwork for his future success as a playwright and poet.

Let Us Sum Up

Ultimately, the financial struggles faced by the Shakespeare family during William's formative years undoubtedly influenced his life and career trajectory. Despite the adversity he encountered, Shakespeare's resilience, resourcefulness, and unwavering determination propelled him toward literary immortality, leaving an indelible mark on the world of literature and theatre for centuries to come.

Check Your Progress

1) In what year Shakespeare born

a) 1564

b) 1558

c) 1559

d) 1560

2) Shakespeare was born in which town or city?

a) Sniterfield

b) Oxford

c) Stratford-upon-Avon

d) London

3. In what year the Globe Theatre Built?

a.1599

b. 1608

c. 1613

d.1594

4. How many plays did Shakespeare write?

a.25

b.46

c. 37

d. 50

5. When did Shakespeare write his plays?

a. 16th and 17th Century

b. 15th and 16th Century

c. 19th and 20th Century

d. None

Section 1.2: Works of Shakespeare

William Shakespeare's early exposure to Latin during his schooling undoubtedly played a significant role in shaping his literary prowess and thematic interests. The Latin curriculum of the time would have introduced him to the works of classical writers such as Ovid, Terence, and Plautus, whose influence can be discerned in Shakespeare's poetry and plays. His familiarity with Latin literature provided him with a rich tapestry of stories, themes, and characters to draw upon, infusing his own works with a sense of classical resonance and sophistication.

Indeed, Shakespeare's plays often delve into themes of Roman history and mythology, showcasing his deep engagement with the classical world. From the political intrigue of Julius Caesar to the tragic love story of Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare's evocative portrayal of ancient Rome reflects his intimate knowledge of its history and culture. His adept handling of Roman themes demonstrates not only his literary skill but also his keen understanding of human nature and societal dynamics.

Despite the limitations imposed by his truncated formal education, Shakespeare's intellectual curiosity and innate talent enabled him to transcend his humble beginnings and become one of the most celebrated writers in history. While his schooling may not have earned him the reputation of a "learned man" in the traditional sense, it provided him with a solid foundation in literature, language and arithmetic—a foundation upon which he would build his remarkable literary career. At the age of 19, Shakespeare's life took a significant turn with his marriage to Anne Hathaway, a union that would profoundly impact his personal and professional trajectory. Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a prosperous yeoman from Shottery, brought a measure of stability and social standing to their relationship. However, the circumstances surrounding their

marriage remain shrouded in mystery, with some suggesting that it was hastily arranged due to Anne's pregnancy.

The couple went on to have three children: Susannah, Judith, and Hamnet, the latter two being twins. While Shakespeare's domestic life may have been fraught with challenges and uncertainties, his experiences as a husband and father undoubtedly informed his understanding of human relationships and emotions, enriching his portrayal of characters and themes in his works. The purported deer-stealing episode and the subsequent departure from his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon have become part of the enigmatic narrative surrounding William Shakespeare's early life. While the details of these events remain speculative and shrouded in myth, they have contributed to the legend of the Bard's "lost years" and his mysterious transition to life in London.

1.2.1 Shakespeare in his youth

Accounts of Shakespeare's youth are rife with anecdotal tales and speculative conjecture, making it difficult to separate fact from fiction. The deer-stealing incident, if true, would suggest a youthful indiscretion and a brush with the law—an episode that may have prompted Shakespeare to seek a fresh start elsewhere. However, without concrete evidence to substantiate these claims, they remain speculative at best and embellished at worst. What is known with greater certainty is that around 1587, a few years after his marriage to Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare left his native Stratford and made his way to London—a decision that would irrevocably alter the course of his life and career. This period coincided with a burgeoning interest in drama and theatrical performance in the capital, fueled in part by the influence of the University Wits—a group of educated writers who were instrumental in shaping the Elizabethan theatrical landscape.

London offered Shakespeare a wealth of opportunities for artistic and professional advancement, and he wasted no time in immersing himself in the vibrant theatrical scene. Initially finding work as an actor, Shakespeare soon discovered a

passion for playwriting—a talent that would catapult him to fame and fortune in the years to come. Despite his burgeoning success as a playwright, Shakespeare continued to tread the boards as an actor, honing his craft and lending his talents to the burgeoning theatrical productions of the time.

The transition from actor to playwright marked a pivotal moment in Shakespeare's career, as he began to explore the boundless possibilities of dramatic storytelling. His early plays, such as "Titus Andronicus" and "The Taming of the Shrew," showcased his burgeoning talent and established him as a rising star in the London theatre scene. With each new work, Shakespeare pushed the boundaries of dramatic form and content, captivating audiences with his wit, insight, and unparalleled mastery of language. In hindsight, Shakespeare's decision to leave behind the comforts of home and venture into the unknown of London proved to be a stroke of genius—a bold leap of faith that would ultimately cement his legacy as one of the greatest playwrights in history. His journey from provincial obscurity to theatrical superstardom remains a testament to the transformative power of talent, ambition, and unyielding determination.

By 1592, William Shakespeare had indeed made a name for himself in the literary world, with several of his plays already having been performed on the stage to considerable acclaim. His talent for crafting compelling stories and vivid characters had garnered attention and admiration from audiences and fellow playwrights alike. However, it wasn't just his literary prowess that was attracting notice—Shakespeare's rising prominence also brought with it a measure of controversy and scrutiny. In 1592, a pamphlet written by the playwright Robert Greene contained what many scholars interpret as a veiled reference to Shakespeare, albeit in a derogatory manner. Greene's remarks, which referred to an "upstart crow," are widely believed to have been aimed at Shakespeare, suggesting a certain level of jealousy or resentment towards his rapid ascent to success. Despite the disparaging tone of Greene's comments, they

inadvertently served to underscore Shakespeare's growing stature within the theatrical community.

It's worth noting that during Shakespeare's formative years in Stratford-upon-Avon, traveling groups of professional actors frequently visited the town, performing plays and entertainments for the local populace. These itinerant performers, known as "playing companies," would have provided young William with his earliest exposure to the world of theatre and may have sparked his interest in the stage. Some critics and historians speculate that Shakespeare's eventual transition to the London theatre scene may have been facilitated by the connections he forged with these traveling actors during his youth. By building relationships with members of these playing companies, Shakespeare may have gained valuable insights into the workings of the theatrical profession and cultivated contacts that would prove invaluable in his future career.

Whether through inspiration gleaned from watching traveling performers in his hometown or through the contacts he established with them, Shakespeare's early exposure to the world of theatre undoubtedly played a pivotal role in shaping his destiny as one of the greatest playwrights of all time. His journey from the provincial confines of Stratford-upon-Avon to the bustling streets of London's theatrical district is a testament to the transformative power of talent, ambition, and the enduring allure of the stage.

1.2.2 Plague break out

In the year 1593, when the plague broke in London city most of the theatres were shutdown. During this period Shakespeare turned his attention towards writing poetry. In the very same year, Shakespeare published Venus and Adonis, which was an erotic poem. The poem was dedicated to Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton. It is believed that Henry was young courtier and Queen Elizabeth held him in high affection. In the year 1594 William Shakespeare became the founding member as well as shareholder for Lord Chamberlain’s Men. He also contributed as actor and playwright in the company.

Let Us Sum Up

Shakespeare essayed the role of Richard III, Othello, King Lear and Hamlet. Few years later the company was renamed to The King's Men. They performed mostly in the court then in other venues. It is understood that Shakespeare remained in London for close to 20 years after this. He worked hard and produced a few plays every year which helped them grow both in popularity as well as in wealth. He soon became a shareholder into of the major theatre company of his time - the Globe and the Blackfrairs. Apart from being the shareholder he also possessed property in Stanford as well as London. But the years as they passed by not only brought him success and fortune but also misfortune. In the year 1596, his only son departed for the heavenly abode. In the year 1601, his father too passed away. In the year 1607, his younger brother Edmund who was also an actor died unexpectedly. And as if this was not difficult enough, Shakespeare's mother passed away in the very next year, in 1608. Sometimes between the years 1610 to 1612, William Shakespeare moved to Stratford. Here he had brought himself the biggest house in the area- new palace. By that time his elder daughter had married Dr. John Hall (the famous physician). And by 1616 Judith married Thomas Quincy. Thomas Quincy's father was a great friend of Shakespeare.

Check Your Progress

1. Which Shakespeare play is set in a plague-ridden city?

a) Romeo and Juliet

b) Hamlet

c) Macbeth

d) Timon of Athens

2. What was the name of the theatre where Shakespeare's plays were performed during the plague?

a) The Globe

b) The Rose

c) The Swan

d) The Fortune

3. Which Shakespeare play contains the line "A plague o' both your houses!"?

a) Romeo and Juliet

b) Hamlet

c) Macbeth

d) A Midsummer Night's Dream

4. How did the plague affect Shakespeare's writing?

a) It inspired him to write more comedies

b) It led to a decrease in his productivity

c) It influenced his themes of mortality and disease

d) It had no impact on his writing

5. What was the approximate year when the plague closed London's theatres, including The Globe?

a) 1590

b) 1600

c) 1603

d) 1610

SECTION 1.3: FIRST FOLIO

By 1616, Shakespeare's health had completely dwindled and in that year itself on 23rd April his soul departed. Shakespeare was buried at Holy Trinity Church at Stratford. Seven years after Shakespeare's death, in the year 1623, two actors from the King's company, John Heminge and Henry Condell, published the plays of Shakespeare. This was the first folio. It contains 36 plays and it was sold for 1 pound. Anne Hathaway, the widow of Shakespeare, died in the year 1623. She was buried beside him in Holy Trinity Church. It is believed that the family line of William Shakespeare came to an end after the death of his granddaughter in the year 1670.

If we leave aside few miscellaneous and ambiguous texts, then Shakespeare can be credited with two narrative poems, these are 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece'. Both the pieces are comprised of 154 sonnets out of which 126 are addressed to a man and rest are probably addressed to a lady. These sonnets have given rise to innumerable discussions but none of them are concrete nor based on authentic evidences. They indicate about a broken friendship or love (none with any certainty). But one thing that is obviously clear is that the texts talk about extremely refined and beautiful poetry that has transcended beyond time. In the modern times it is accepted that Shakespeare wrote around 37 plays. But scholars insists that some of these materials are probably collaborative by him and few others are actually him rewriting existing or older materials. But what is sure is that as a dramatist his most productive periods were within the years 1588 to 1612. And that is why we can say without any hesitation that Shakespeare dominated the last phase of the 16th century and early phase of 17th century. William Shakespeare's works can be divided into four different stages:

1.3.1: First stage

1. 1588 to 1593: This was the beginning of Shakespearean experiments. As an apprentice he learnt the art of improvising and revising the existing pieces. He revised

the three parts of Henry VI and Titus Andronicus. It was during this period that he composed his early comedies (under the influence of Lyly). Shakespeare composed Love's Labour's Lost, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Comedy of Errors during this phase. Under the influence of Marlowe, he tried to experiment with the historical play Richard III. Showcasing his versatility, Shakespeare wrote the young tragedy- Romeo and Juliet. The works composed during this period lacks the typical Shakespearean finesse, the characterizations are definitely shallow and overall, they appear to be extremely immature. Moreover, one can definitely witness regular use of puns, a stiff use of blank verse, and rhyming dialogues in the works which were composed during this period.

1.3.2: Second stage

2. 1594 to 1600: This was a period of chronicle plays and great comedies. The chronicle plays that came around this time were: Richard II, The Merchant of Venice, Henry IV (Part 1 & II), King John, and Henry V. The comedies of the period were: The Taming of the Shrew, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night and The Merry Wives of Windsor. In these works, Shakespeare shows his craftsmanship as an original composer. None of these plays have any kind of influence from his predecessor. All these works highlight Shakespeare's command over the power of development in technique. There is an intense and detailed exploration of human motives and passions. The use of prose and blank verse increases gradually while discarding the use of rhymes in dialogues. In fact, the stiffness of blank verse paves way to more lucid and flexible use of the form.

1.3.3: Third stage

3. 1601 to 1608: This was a period when Shakespeare composed the best of his tragedies. This was also a phase which witnessed some of the serious comedies of Shakespeare. This was the most successful phase of Shakespeare as a playwright. His competency as a dramatist, his intellectual abilities as well as his power of expression

has bestowed the literary world with some of the most memorable compositions. But more than creative talent, what is most amusing is to see the way the spirit of Shakespearean work changed. He now seemed to be more interested in the darker side of human experiences. He was solely focused on challenging the existing social moral order. By doing so he manages to show how destructive passion can ruin the lives of both the guilty as well as the innocent together. Most of the plots of Shakespeare's plays composed during this period takes a deep insight into the power of good and evil where the powers of evil are finally questioned upon. He composed Julius Caesar, Hamlet, All's Well That Ends Well, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida, Coriolanus and Timon Of Athens during this period.

1.3.4: Fourth stage

4. 1608 to 1612: This was the period of later comedies or as we call it dramatic romances. The shifting period is very obvious during this period. It is almost as if the terrible phase of his life has now given way to a more beautiful sunny phase of his life.

Let Us Sum Up

Unlike the previous period where everything in his fictional world was dark and somber this was a phase which brought in happiness and hope. Even though there is the element of traffic aspect in each of these later plays, one cannot deny that in this place good always prevails the evil.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the First Folio of Shakespeare?

a) A collection of his plays and poems

b) A biography of Shakespeare's life

c) A critique of his works

d) A dictionary of Shakespearean language

2. When was the First Folio published?

a) 1600

b) 1623

c) 1650

d) 1700

3. Who compiled the First Folio?

a) Shakespeare himself

b) His wife, Anne Hathaway

c) His friends, Heminges and Condell

d) A rival playwright

4. How many plays are included in the First Folio?

a) 20

b) 30

c) 36

d) 40

5. What is notable about the First Folio's publication of Shakespeare's plays?

a) They were all previously unpublished

b) They were all previously published

c) Some were previously published, while others were not

d) They were all revised by Shakespeare himself

SECTION: 1.4 SHAKESPEARE'S LEGACY

Even the tone and manner are more tender and optimistic in comparison to the previous works. But needless to say, this is also the period which clearly marks the decline of the great playwright that Shakespeare was. The construction is definitely unsatisfactory, the character development is careless, and the style has no resemblance to the powerful impact that the preceding years of his creative talent ahead recorded. Critics now agree that, of the various plays that are credited to Shakespeare during this period, only three of them are solely authored by him: Cymbeline, The Tempest and The Winter's Tale. And he has definitely co-authored more plays: Pericles and Henry VIII. If we take into account all the works composed by Shakespeare, it will not be wrong to mention that he probably has contributed the most to the body of literature as a single author. And what makes the most amazing and time immemorial popular writer is his variety.

Of course, there have been numerous other authors who have been better than him at some point or other but without a doubt no one has ever been close to him in terms of the vast body of work that he has composed and versatility that he has displayed. Even though slightly imbalanced, there is no denial that he was good with both tragedy as well as comedy. Ingenious spread not only to the stage plays but also in the area of poetry. He was comfortable in imagination as well as delicate fancy. Of course, he was never an original thinker. But he had the power to recreate magic from the material that was available to him in a manner which supported the original writing and managed to attach with it a time immemorial quality. One of his major strong points was the ability to characterize. It can be safely mentioned that no other author has managed to create so many varieties of characters - both men and women- who never at any point of time felt like a figment of imagination from the authors mind but were probably true and alive. Many scholars admire the range of vocabulary that Shakespeare places in his works. It is believed that his vocabulary had more than 15000 words whereas even Milton fell short in his comparison.

As of now, all the manuscript plays of Shakespeare are lost. Since Shakespeare himself did not print any of the text we rely on the first print. Even though it must be mentioned here that 16 of his place where published in quarter version during his lifetime itself. But we cannot take it as authentic version because they were all unauthorized editions. As already mentioned the first edition of 1623, (Pericles was omitted in this) is considered to be the first folio edition that came out in print. This one is kind of considered to be the standard and universally accepted version of Shakespearian works. But one of the biggest drawbacks of this Folio edition is that they are not arranged in chronological order nor the date of the original composition is mentioned in it.

1.4.1 The Stage & Theatre:

William Shakespeare, often regarded as the epitome of literary brilliance, holds an exalted position among the pantheon of playwrights in the English language. His works, characterized by their profound exploration of timeless themes, intricate characterizations, and unparalleled linguistic mastery, have left an indelible mark on literature, theatre, and culture since the late 16th century. To fully appreciate Shakespeare's genius, one must recognize the interconnectedness between his plays, the venues where they were staged, and the audiences they sought to engage. Shakespeare's theatrical compositions were not merely static works of literature but dynamic performances designed to captivate and resonate with live audiences.

The symbiotic relationship between Shakespeare's plays and their theatrical settings is evident in the rich tapestry of his works. Whether set against the backdrop of ancient Rome, medieval Scotland, or Renaissance Italy, Shakespeare's plays transport audiences to vividly realized worlds teeming with vibrant characters and gripping narratives. Central to the immersive experience of Shakespearean drama were the theatres themselves—boisterous arenas where actors and spectators converged to partake in the shared spectacle of human emotion and imagination. From the iconic

Globe Theatre to the intimate confines of the Blackfriars Playhouse, these venues served as crucibles for the alchemical fusion of text, performance, and audience reaction.

Moreover, Shakespeare's acute awareness of his audience's sensibilities and preferences played a pivotal role in shaping his artistic vision. Whether catering to the raucous laughter of groundlings or the refined tastes of aristocratic patrons, Shakespeare crafted his plays with a keen eye towards eliciting emotional responses and intellectual engagement from diverse audiences. In essence, Shakespeare's enduring legacy as a playwright rests upon the symbiotic relationship between his literary genius, the theatrical spaces in which his works were brought to life, and the audiences who continue to be enthralled by his timeless tales. Across centuries and continents, Shakespeare's plays remain as relevant and resonant as ever, a testament to the enduring power of human drama and the boundless depths of the human spirit.

Shakespeare's famous quote, "The Drama's laws, the drama's patrons give for we that live to please, must please to live," encapsulates his understanding of the reciprocal nature of theatre. He recognised that the success of his plays depended not only on his artistic vision but also on the desires and expectations of his audience. Unlike many playwrights of his time, Shakespeare crafted his works not to be read in isolation but to be performed live on stage, engaging directly with his spectators.

Let Us Sum Up

During the Elizabethan era, theatre was a popular form of entertainment, attracting audiences from all walks of life. The bustling atmosphere of the playhouses provided a space for socializing, storytelling, and shared cultural experiences. Shakespeare tapped into this vibrant milieu, tailoring his plays to suit the tastes and preferences of his contemporaneous audience.

Check Your Progress

1. What was the name of Shakespeare's theatre company?

a) The Lord Chamberlain's Men

b) The King's Players

c) The Globe Theatre Company

d) The Royal Shakespeare Company

2. Where was Shakespeare's primary theatre located?

a) The Globe in London

b) The Rose in London

c) The Swan in London

d) The Fortune in London

3. What was the name of the area in the theatre where the groundlings stood?

a) The Pit

b) The Gallery

c) The Stage

d) The Yard

4. What was the purpose of the "heavens" in Shakespeare's theatre?

a) To provide a space for actors to change costumes

b) To create a sense of height and grandeur

c) To house the theatre's musicians

d) To provide a space for the audience to sit

5. What was the name of the device used to lower actors or objects onto the stage?

a) Trapdoor

b) Fly

d) Winch

d) Pulley

SECTION 1.5: THE GLOBE THEATRE

At the heart of Shakespearean performance lay the physical structure of the Elizabethan theatres. The Globe Theatre, one of the most iconic venues of Shakespeare's time, was a small, round wooden structure with an open-air design. This unique layout influenced the staging and production of Shakespeare's plays in significant ways. The stage itself was divided into several sections, each serving a distinct purpose. The front stage, which projected far into the auditorium, was used for outdoor scenes, battles, and public gatherings. Meanwhile, the back stage, situated behind the pillars, served as indoor settings such as palaces, taverns, and private chambers. The inner stage, often concealed behind curtains, provided additional space for intimate scenes or secretive encounters. Shakespeare ingeniously utilized these

different stage areas to create dynamic and immersive theatrical experiences. Whether it was the bustling streets of Verona or the secluded chambers of a royal court, the stage design facilitated the seamless transition between diverse settings and moods.

The Elizabethan stage was not merely a passive backdrop for performances but a dynamic space that actively engaged with its audience. Spectators were seated in various sections of the theatre, ranging from the groundlings standing in the pit to the aristocrats occupying tiered galleries. This diverse audience composition shaped the atmosphere of the performances, with groundlings providing vocal feedback and upper-class patrons enjoying a more refined viewing experience. The tiring house, a backstage area for actors, served as a hub for costume changes and quick entrances/exits. Its proximity to the main stage allowed for seamless transitions between scenes and characters. Additionally, the upper stage or balcony provided elevated perspectives for pivotal moments, such as Juliet's balcony soliloquy or Cleopatra's tragic demise.

Despite the lack of elaborate sets or movable scenery, Shakespeare capitalized on the versatility of the Elizabethan stage to create vivid and evocative theatrical worlds. His mastery of language and imagery compensated for the absence of visual spectacle, immersing audiences in richly imagined landscapes and emotional landscapes throughout his career, Shakespeare demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt his writing to suit the constraints and opportunities of the Elizabethan stage. Whether it was the absence of actresses necessitating male actors to portray female characters or the lack of painted scenery prompting imaginative descriptions of settings, Shakespeare's plays thrived within the limitations of their theatrical context.

Shakespeare's plays reflect a keen awareness of audience expectations and preferences. From the raucous humor of the groundlings to the refined wit of the upper class, Shakespeare tailored his works to appeal to a broad spectrum of spectators. His

understanding of human nature and dramatic storytelling transcended temporal and cultural boundaries, resonating with audiences then and now.

Shakespeare's theatre was not just a physical space but a dynamic arena for creativity, innovation, and collaboration. His enduring legacy as a playwright is intrinsically linked to the theatrical traditions of his time, from the raucous energy of the Elizabethan stage to the enduring allure of live performance. By understanding the interplay between Shakespeare, his theatre, and his audience, we gain deeper insight into the enduring power of his works.

Shakespeare's theatre transcended mere physical dimensions to become a vibrant crucible of creativity, innovation, and collaboration. His unparalleled legacy as a playwright is inextricably intertwined with the rich theatrical traditions of his era, from the exuberant vitality of the Elizabethan stage to the enduring magic of live performance. By delving into the dynamic interplay between Shakespeare, his theatrical milieu, and his audience, we unlock profound insights into the timeless allure and enduring relevance of his works.

At the heart of Shakespeare's theatrical enterprise lay a profound understanding of the symbiotic relationship between playwright and performer, text and interpretation, artist and audience. His plays were not static literary artifacts but living, breathing creations meant to be experienced in the communal space of the theatre. From the bustling confines of the Globe to the more intimate environs of the Blackfriars, Shakespeare's plays came to life through the alchemy of performance, inviting audiences to participate in the unfolding drama with all their senses engaged.

The Elizabethan stage, with its raucous energy and rowdy crowds, provided the perfect backdrop for Shakespeare's dramatic explorations of human nature and society. In this tumultuous environment, actors and audiences alike were swept up in the immediacy of the theatrical experience, where laughter, tears, and applause reverberated in unison. It was here, amidst the clamor of the playhouse, that

Shakespeare's words took flight, transcending the limitations of time and space to touch the hearts and minds of generations to come. Yet, Shakespeare's theatre was not merely a reflection of its time but a crucible of innovation and experimentation. From the intricacies of stagecraft to the nuances of performance, Shakespeare and his fellow artisans pushed the boundaries of theatrical convention, constantly seeking new ways to captivate and enthrall their audiences. Whether through the use of elaborate sets and costumes, the deployment of music and dance, or the manipulation of light and sound, Shakespeare's theatre was a laboratory of artistic exploration, where creativity knew no bounds.

Central to this creative ferment was the collaborative spirit that permeated Shakespeare's theatrical world. Playwrights, actors, directors, musicians, and stagehands all worked in tandem to bring his vision to life, each contributing their unique talents and perspectives to the collective endeavor. It was through this spirit of collaboration that Shakespeare's plays achieved their fullest expression, resonating with audiences across time and space. In essence, Shakespeare's enduring legacy as a playwright is a testament to the transformative power of theatre as a communal art form. By embracing the dynamic interplay between artist and audience, Shakespeare transcended the constraints of his era to create works of enduring beauty, complexity, and resonance. Today, as we continue to engage with his plays in theatres, classrooms, and beyond, we are reminded of the timeless allure and universal relevance of Shakespeare's theatre—a testament to the enduring power of the human imagination.

1.5.1: The Audience

Shakespeare's artistry was indeed shaped by the tastes and preferences of his Elizabethan audience, whose appetite for entertainment often leaned towards the bawdy, boisterous, and irreverent. While some of Shakespeare's contemporaries decried the perceived coarseness of the audience's sensibilities, Shakespeare himself embraced the challenge of catering to their demands, turning necessity into a virtue and

elevating popular entertainment to artistic heights. In navigating the rough terrain of the Elizabethan stage, Shakespeare recognized the need to strike a delicate balance between satisfying the audience's craving for mirth and merry-making while also exploring the deeper themes and emotions inherent in his dramatic works. Rather than railing against the demands of the audience, Shakespeare ingeniously incorporated elements of comedy into his tragedies, thereby enriching the theatrical experience and achieving nuanced artistic effects.

One of Shakespeare's most notable innovations was the use of comic relief—a technique whereby moments of levity are interspersed within the darker, more intense passages of his tragedies. By juxtaposing scenes of humor with those of profound tragedy, Shakespeare created a dynamic tension that heightened the impact of both comedic and tragic elements. Examples of this can be found throughout Shakespeare's plays, where comic characters and situations provide much-needed respite from the weighty themes and emotional intensity of the main plot. In "Macbeth," for instance, the character of the porter delivers a drunken soliloquy filled with puns and wordplay immediately following Duncan's murder, offering a brief reprieve from the grim proceedings and allowing the audience to catch their breath.

Similarly, in "Hamlet," the gravediggers' witty banter serves to lighten the mood amidst the somber contemplation of mortality, while in "Antony and Cleopatra," the rustic humor of the old countryman provides a welcome contrast to the grandeur and tragedy of the titular characters' doomed romance. In employing these devices, Shakespeare demonstrated his keen understanding of the theatrical dynamics at play and his ability to manipulate the audience's emotions for maximum dramatic effect. Far from compromising his artistic integrity, Shakespeare's willingness to engage with the tastes and expectations of his audience allowed him to craft works of enduring brilliance that continue to resonate with audiences to this day.

The Elizabethan audience had a voracious appetite for music and spectacle, and playwrights like Shakespeare skillfully incorporated these elements into their works to engage and entertain their patrons. Unlike some of his contemporaries, who inserted songs into their plays merely for the sake of musical interludes, Shakespeare's songs always served a dramatic purpose, enriching the narrative and deepening our understanding of the characters and their emotions. In plays like "As You Like It," for example, the songs sung in the Forest of Arden not only evoke a sense of atmosphere and mood but also provide insights into the inner thoughts and feelings of the characters. Similarly, in "Twelfth Night," Feste's songs serve as a reflection of his wit and wisdom, shedding light on the themes of love, folly, and melancholy that permeate the play.

Moreover, Shakespeare was adept at using sound and spectacle to heighten dramatic tension and intensify emotional impact. In "Julius Caesar," for instance, the ominous thunderstorm serves as a backdrop to Casca and Cassius's nefarious plotting, underscoring the darkness and turmoil brewing within their hearts. Similarly, in "Othello," the ringing alarm bell signals the escalation of violence and chaos, ultimately leading to Cassio's downfall and Othello's anguished command to silence the ominous sound. Furthermore, Shakespeare understood the importance of tailoring his plays to suit the specific demands and expectations of his audience. Whether performing in the grandiose confines of a theatre or the more intimate setting of an inn, Shakespeare crafted his works with a keen awareness of the theatrical space and the preferences of his spectators. By embracing the tastes and inclinations of his audience rather than dismissing them, Shakespeare was able to create works of enduring artistic merit that resonated deeply with both contemporary and future generations.

In essence, Shakespeare's willingness to cater to the desires of his audience while simultaneously elevating the art form to new heights exemplifies his genius as a playwright. Far from compromising his artistic integrity, Shakespeare's ability to

seamlessly integrate music, spectacle, and dramatic effect into his works not only entertained his audience but also enriched the theatrical experience, ensuring his enduring legacy as one of the greatest playwrights in history.

1.5.2: Clowns and Fools in Shakespeare's Plays

In Shakespearean drama, the term "fool" carries a specific and nuanced meaning that distinguishes it from its colloquial usage. In Elizabethan society, a fool was not merely a jesting or foolish individual but rather a professional entertainer employed to amuse and enlighten the nobility, particularly kings, dukes, or other wealthy patrons who sought diversion and insight from their court jesters. Contrary to modern perceptions, the fool in Shakespeare's plays is far from a simpleton or buffoon. Instead, he occupies a unique role as a perceptive observer and truth-teller, using humor and wit to offer incisive commentary on the events unfolding around him. While his jests may provoke laughter, they often conceal deeper truths and insights that challenge the assumptions and pretensions of those in power.

The convention in Elizabethan drama dictates that the fool is often the most astute and intelligent character in the play, possessing a keen insight into human nature and the complexities of the world. His role extends beyond mere entertainment to serve as a mirror for the follies and foibles of society, offering sage counsel and moral guidance to his aristocratic patrons. It is important to distinguish the Shakespearean fool from the "clown," a separate archetype in Elizabethan theater. Whereas the fool embodies wisdom and wit, the clown is typically portrayed as a simple rural character—a yokel or bumpkin—whose humor derives from his rustic naivety and unsophisticated mannerisms.

In essence, the Shakespearean fool is a multifaceted character whose seemingly frivolous antics conceal a profound depth of insight and understanding. By subverting expectations and challenging conventional hierarchies, Shakespeare imbued his fools

with a complexity and richness that transcends their comedic role, elevating them to the status of enduring symbols of wisdom and truth in his timeless theatrical works.

1.5.3: Functions of Fools and Clowns:

Shakespeare's fools serve as indispensable figures within the intricate tapestry of his plays, fulfilling multiple roles that contribute to the richness and depth of the dramatic experience. Primarily appearing as servants to principal characters, Shakespeare's fools wield a unique and multifaceted influence on the unfolding narrative. Through their humor and foolery, they inject levity and comedic relief into the often weighty and intense proceedings, providing much-needed moments of respite amidst the dramatic tension. Yet, the significance of Shakespeare's fools extends far beyond mere comic relief. In addition to adding spice to the comedy, they also serve as conduits for dramatic relief, offering poignant insights and observations that illuminate the complexities of the human condition. Their presence serves to heighten the emotional impact of tragic scenes, offering a counterbalance to the darkness and despair that often pervade Shakespeare's tragedies.

Moreover, Shakespeare's fools occupy a unique position within the social hierarchy of his plays, granting them the freedom to speak truth to power in a context where such boldness is otherwise perilous. Like the chorus in Greek drama, they act as keen-eyed observers and commentators, offering astute observations on the characters and events unfolding before them for the benefit of the audience. In this way, Shakespeare's fools serve as both entertainers and truth-tellers, their seemingly lighthearted jests often containing profound insights into the human condition. Through their wit and wisdom, they challenge the conventions of their time and offer a mirror to society, reflecting its virtues and vices with unparalleled clarity. In essence, Shakespeare's fools embody the duality of human nature—combining levity and profundity, humor and insight—in a manner that enriches and enlivens the dramatic tapestry of his plays. Far from being mere jesters, they are integral and indispensable

figures whose presence enhances the depth and complexity of Shakespeare's timeless works.

Shakespeare's fools indeed hold a unique and revered position within his plays, often serving as the wisest and most perceptive characters despite their outward appearance of folly. While they may be referred to simply as "the fool" or "the jester," they possess a depth of insight and wisdom that belies their comedic role. Among Shakespeare's vast array of characters, there are several notable figures who embody the archetype of the Shakespearean fool. While characters like Bottom in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and Dogberry in "Much Ado About Nothing" may exhibit foolish behavior, they do not fit the technical definition of Shakespearean fools. Instead, it is characters like Feste in "Twelfth Night," Touchstone, Trinculo, and the Fool in "King Lear" who truly exemplify the essence of the Shakespearean fool.

Feste, in particular, stands out as one of Shakespeare's most iconic fools. As a member of Olivia's household in "Twelfth Night," Feste's primary role is to entertain through singing, dancing, and making jokes. However, his importance transcends mere amusement, as he possesses a keen intellect and a remarkable command of language. Olivia values his opinion and he freely moves among the other characters, lending his insights and observations to the unfolding drama. What sets Feste apart is his ability to straddle the line between insider and outsider, participating in the action of the play while also observing it from a detached perspective. This duality imbues him with a sense of complexity and depth that elevates him beyond the traditional role of the fool. In many ways, Feste can be seen as a precursor to the postmodern character, existing both within and outside the confines of the narrative. In essence, Shakespeare's fools are not mere jesters or buffoons, but complex and multidimensional characters who offer profound insights into the human condition. Through their wit, wisdom, and unconventional perspectives, they challenge societal norms and shed light on the deeper truths that lie beneath the surface of human experience.

Touchstone in "As You Like It" and the Fool in "King Lear" exemplify the rich complexity of Shakespeare's fool characters, each contributing their own unique insights and perspectives to the plays in which they appear. Touchstone, Duke Frederick's court jester in "As You Like It," is renowned for his quick wit and keen observations of human nature. Throughout the play, he serves as a sharp-tongued commentator, offering caustic commentary on the foibles and follies of the other characters. His cynical outlook and penchant for nitpicking are balanced by his facility with language, as he effortlessly twists arguments and delights in the art of verbal sparring. Touchstone's frequent musings on the wisdom of foolishness highlight the paradoxical nature of human behavior, adding depth and nuance to the play's exploration of love, identity, and redemption.

In contrast, the Fool in "King Lear" occupies a more somber and tragic role, serving as Lear's constant companion on his journey into madness and eventual demise. Unlike Touchstone, the Fool remains nameless, a symbolic representation of Lear's inner consciousness and his own folly. Throughout the play, the Fool serves as Lear's alter ego, offering pointed commentary on his actions and decisions. Every time Lear succumbs to his own hubris and folly, the Fool is there to remind him of the consequences, serving as a voice of reason and wisdom amidst the chaos and confusion. In the climactic moments of the play, as Lear begins to comprehend the extent of his own folly, the need for the Fool diminishes, and he tragically meets his end. Yet, his presence lingers as a poignant reminder of the human capacity for both wisdom and folly, and the profound interconnectedness of the two.

In essence, both Touchstone and the Fool exemplify Shakespeare's masterful exploration of the multifaceted nature of human existence. Through their wit, wisdom, and unwavering presence, they offer profound insights into the human condition, enriching the thematic depth and emotional resonance of their respective plays.

Trinculo in "The Tempest" presents a departure from the traditional archetype of the wise fool, as he is portrayed as an exceptionally foolish character rather than one possessing profound insights or wisdom. As Alonso's court jester who becomes shipwrecked alongside the royal party, Trinculo's antics are characterized by stupidity and ineffectuality. He forms an unlikely alliance with Alonso's drunken butler, Stephano, and Prospero's indigenous servant, Caliban, in a misguided plot to overthrow Prospero. However, their bumbling efforts and comedic antics ultimately provide some of the most entertaining moments in the play. Throughout the course of "The Tempest," Trinculo and Stephano's foolishness and incompetence serve as a source of humor and levity amidst the more serious themes of magic, power, and redemption. Their absurd antics and misguided schemes highlight the folly of human ambition and the absurdity of attempting to subvert natural order.

Trinculo's characterization as a foolish clown reflects Shakespeare's broader exploration of the role of clowns and jesters in society. Dating back to medieval times, clowns have served as entertainers and jesters, providing comic relief to both kings and commoners alike. In Shakespeare's plays, clowns and jesters often occupy a liminal space, existing on the fringes of society and offering a unique perspective on the human condition through their humor and absurdity. In essence, Trinculo's portrayal as a foolish court jester in "The Tempest" underscores Shakespeare's keen understanding of the comedic potential inherent in human folly. Through characters like Trinculo, Shakespeare invites audiences to laugh at the absurdity of human behavior while also reflecting on deeper truths about the nature of power, ambition, and the human capacity for self-deception.

In Shakespearean drama, clowns play a vital role in providing comedic relief and highlighting the absurdities of human behavior. Characters like Bottom in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and Dogberry and Verges in "Much Ado about Nothing" exemplify the unintentionally funny clown archetype, eliciting laughter through their foolish antics and

misunderstandings. As Gordon astutely observes, the true extremes of clowning in Shakespeare's plays are represented by the rustic fool and the Court Jester. While each character embodies a unique blend of these archetypes, their primary purpose remains the same: to entertain the audience and evoke laughter. Whether through their rustic simplicity or courtly buffoonery, clowns are integral to the comedic fabric of Shakespeare's plays, serving as conduits for laughter and amusement.

Among Shakespeare's vast array of characters, Sir John Falstaff stands out as a lasting embodiment of ridiculous humanity. Witty, irresponsible, and larger-than-life, Falstaff epitomizes the quintessential figure of fun, drawing laughter from both his own absurdity and the reactions of those around him. Similarly, Bottom the weaver, with his preposterous vanity and ambition, adds a touch of comedic absurdity to "A Midsummer Night's Dream," particularly in his role as Pyramus in the play within the play. Characters like Dogberry and Verges, with their pompous posturing and comically misguided attempts at enforcing the law, further enrich Shakespeare's comedic palette. Through their exaggerated personas and witty banter, they offer a satirical commentary on the follies of human vanity and self-importance.

Let Us Sum Up

Overall, Shakespeare's fools serve as integral manifestations of his humor, which is characterized by its kindness and tolerance. Rather than mocking or belittling his characters, Shakespeare laughs alongside them, embracing their flaws and foibles with a spirit of camaraderie and good-natured amusement. However, he is not averse to employing sharp satire when the occasion calls for it, using his wit and insight to skewer hypocrisy and pretension with a lash-like precision.

Check Your Progress

1. What was the name of the area where the groundlings stood in Shakespeare's Globe Theatre?

a) The Pit

b) The Gallery

c) The Stage

d) The Yard

2. Which Shakespeare play features the clownish character of Touchstone?

a) As You Like It

b) Twelfth Night

c) A Midsummer Night's Dream

d) The Tempest

3. Who is the wise and witty fool in Shakespeare's King Lear?

a) Cordelia

b) Goneril

c) Regan

d) The Fool

4. What was the purpose of the "fool" character in Shakespeare's plays?

a) To provide comic relief

b) To offer wise counsel

c) To create dramatic tension

d) To advance the plot

5. Which Shakespeare play features the clownish characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?

a) Hamlet

b) Macbeth

c) A Midsummer Night's Dream

d) Twelfth Night

SECTION 1.6: VILLAINS IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Shakespeare has penned some of the most iconic villains in English literature. Here we round up seven of his most famous murdering usurpers, power-hungry backstabbers and scheming sinners Tamora in Titus Andronicus: Tamora, Queen of the Goths, is a cruel and brutal central player in William Shakespeare's revenge tragedy, Titus Andronicus. We are introduced to Tamora as a conquered queen, begging the general of Rome, Titus Andronicus, to show her captured sons mercy. When Titus refuses and instead executes her sons he unleashes a maelstrom of vengeance, as Tamora becomes fuelled by the need to wreak revenge on Titus and his family. Tamora is patient in her quest for vengeance. She secures herself a powerful position by marrying the weak-willed emperor Saturninus. Tamora's villainy reaches a shocking peak when she orders her two surviving sons to rape and mutilate Titus's daughter Lavinia, cruelly ignoring the innocent girl's pleas for mercy and mocking her distress. Tamora gets her comeuppance. Titus murders her two sons and serves them to her baked in a pie. After unwittingly eating the pie Tamora is stabbed to death.

1.6.1 Angelo in *Measure for Measure*:

Angelo appears quite unlike any of Shakespeare's other villains. He is a puritanical moral crusader whose righteousness seems almost otherworldly. He appears immune to sins of the flesh. However, the upright Angelo is not as virtuous as he first seems. As temporary leader of Vienna, Angelo proves harsh and unforgiving. He takes a malevolent delight in dishing out severe justice. Angelo asserts his authority is by cracking down on the city's sexual immorality, sentencing the young Claudio to death for impregnating his lover. But when Claudio's virtuous sister Isabella comes to beg for mercy for her brother, Angelo's intense hypocrisy is revealed. Revelations from Angelo's past highlight further his cruel nature. He abandoned his fiancée when her

dowry was lost in a shipwreck. However, Angelo is not entirely incorrigible. He is willing to confess his sins and expresses guilt. None of his immoral plans come to fruition; Isabella is not seduced and Claudio is not executed. Despite his corrupt lust and serious hypocrisy, he is one of Shakespeare‘s few villains to be granted forgiveness. The Duke of Vienna pardons his crimes and repeals his death sentence, on the condition that he marries the mistress he abandoned.

1.6.2 Richard III in *Richard III*

Shakespeare has depicted Richard III as a Machiavellian villain. He had a physical deformity, lusted after his niece and lost his kingdom for a horse‖. He has had real sticking power. He is a malicious, deceptive and bitter usurper. He seizes England‘s throne by nefarious means. He takes delight in his own villainy. He is unabashed in his evil motives. However, Richard is also an undeniably charming and complex figure who sucks in the audience with his immoral logic and dazzling wordplay. Richard‘s sins come back to haunt him. Shakespeare provides us a long list of Richard‘s murder victims, in a roll call of ghosts that visit him on the last night of his life.

1.6.3 Goneril and Regan in *King Lear*

Goneril and Regan are described by their own father as —unnatural hags‖. They are two grasping, self-interested and power-hungry daughters of King Lear. Their willingness to betray their father and their honest sister Cordelia causes the collapse of a kingdom and ultimately leads to Lear‘s descent into madness. In the opening scene the elderly Lear declares his intention to step down as king and divide his realm between his three daughters. In response to this, Goneril and Regan cleverly charm their father, hoping to grasp all they can from his inheritance.

Goneril and Regan‘s feigned loyalty dissolves rapidly and their willingness to betray their father quickly becomes clear. The sisters‘ruthless political maneuverings have descended into outright violence. Regan tortures her father‘s supporter Gloucester, plucking out his eyes and turning him out to wander blindly in the wild.

Goneril and Regan‘s malevolence eventually turns inwards and rips them apart. Fuelled by jealousy at her sister‘s supposed relationship with Edmund Goneril poisons Regan and then kills herself.

1.6.4 Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*:

Lady Macbeth is undoubtedly one of Shakespeare‘s most fascinating female characters. Driven towards evil by a deep ambition and a ruthless appetite for power, she uses her sexuality and powers of manipulation to exert a corrosive influence over her husband, Macbeth. She is a more compelling character than her husband. She is the driving force behind Macbeth‘s lust for power. She persuades him to pursue the Scottish throne by violent and deceptive means. After Macbeth murders King Duncan, she reassures him that —what‘s done, is done. Like many of Shakespeare‘s villains, Lady Macbeth is eventually consumed by her guilty conscience and driven mad by her murderous actions. She is plagued by episodes of sleepwalking. She wanders through the castle, unable to rid the image of her bloodstained hands from her mind. Finally, she becomes disappointingly absent, eventually committing suicide offstage. Claudius in Hamlet: Claudius is Denmark‘s usurper king and Hamlet‘s uncle in Hamlet. He is a crafty politician determined to maintain his grasp over his kingdom. He is guilty of the ultimate sin – fratricide. He has secretly murdered his brother, the king (Hamlet‘s father), pouring poison into his ear as he slept, in order to claim his throne and steal his wife. He is plagued by the vengeful ghost of his victim. Shakespeare has crafted Claudius by giving him a conscience. Unlike Iago, Tamora or Richard III, Claudius takes no pleasure in his wrongdoing. He ultimately falls victim to his own conniving nature, as his wife, Gertrude accidentally drinks from a poisoned chalice Claudius had intended for Hamlet. Claudius, too, meets his bitter end in classic Shakespearean form. Hamlet stabs Claudius with a poisoned sword before forcing him to drink from the poisoned chalice.

1.6.5 Iago in *Othello*

Many scholars see Iago as the most inherently evil of all Shakespeare‘s villains. He relentlessly plots Othello‘s downfall. He accomplishes this by planting the seed of jealousy in Othello‘s mind. He plots to to turn him against his wife, Desdemona. He constructs a web of lies to make Othello believe in Desdemona‘s sexual infidelity.

Let Us Sum Up

Enraged by jealousy, Othello eventually murders Desdemona and then kills himself. Iago‘s schemes are eventually revealed and he is sentenced to execution.

Check Your Progress

1. Who is the villain in Shakespeare's play "Othello"?

a) Iago

b) Othello

c) Cassio

d) Roderigo

2. Which villain says "So wise so young, they say, do never live long" in Shakespeare's play "Richard III"?

a) Richard III

b) Clarence

c) King Edward

d) Buckingham

3. Who is the main antagonist in Shakespeare's play "The Tempest"?

a) Prospero

b) Caliban

c) Antonio

d) Alonso

4. Which villain is responsible for the death of King Duncan in Shakespeare's play "Macbeth"?

a) Macbeth

b) Lady Macbeth

c) Macduff

d) Malcolm

5. Who is the villainous character in Shakespeare's play "A Midsummer Night's Dream"?

a) Oberon

b) Titania

c) Puck

d) None of the Above

SECTION 1.7 WOMEN IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Ruskin's statement that "Shakespeare has no heroes, but only heroines" is an extreme view. But nobody can deny that women form an indispensable part of the world of the Shakespeare.

1.7.1 Classification of women characters

Shakespeare's portrayal of women in his plays is renowned for its depth, complexity, and variety, prompting critics to suggest that he has captured the full spectrum of female characters. His heroines, in particular, are often celebrated for their

multifaceted personalities and compelling narratives. One common classification of Shakespeare's heroines divides them into distinct groups based on their characteristics and roles within the plays. At the forefront are the clever and assertive women, exemplified by characters such as Portia in "The Merchant of Venice," Beatrice in "Much Ado About Nothing," and Rosalind in "As You Like It." These women are known for their wit, intelligence, and ability to take charge of their own destinies.

In the next group are the loving and fanciful heroines, including Juliet, Helena, Viola, Ophelia, and Miranda. These characters often navigate themes of romance, passion, and longing, portraying a range of emotions and experiences associated with love and desire. The tragic heroines form another distinct category, featuring characters like Desdemona, Cordelia, and Hermione. These women grapple with profound adversity and often meet tragic ends, their stories serving as poignant reflections on fate, loyalty, and sacrifice.

Lastly, there are the aggressive and dominant women, represented by figures such as Lady Macbeth, Goneril, Regan, and Cleopatra. These characters wield power and influence, sometimes resorting to manipulation and violence to achieve their goals. In Shakespeare's comedies, women often take center stage, outshining their male counterparts with their wit and resilience. While the men may appear shallow or sentimental, the women emerge as clever and assertive individuals who navigate the comedic conflicts with grace and intelligence.

Shakespeare's heroines, including Viola, Beatrice, and Rosalind, often display a practical genius when men falter. In moments of crisis, it is the women who rise to the occasion, demonstrating resilience and resourcefulness. For instance, in "The Merchant of Venice," it is Portia who takes decisive action to save Antonio's life, while her husband remains paralyzed by despair. Similarly, Viola in "Twelfth Night" succeeds where male messengers fail, using her wit and charm to achieve her goals.

1.7.2: Women in Shakespeare Comedies

In Shakespeare's comedies, the women are known for their unwavering devotion to their lovers. Rosalind teases Orlando playfully but is deeply concerned when she learns of his danger. Viola's love for Orsino is so profound that she is willing to make any sacrifice for his sake, even disguising herself as a man to serve him. These women embody self-effacing love, expressing their affection with modesty and sincerity.

However, in the history plays, the portrayal of women is less prominent, as the focus is primarily on themes of war and political strife. Women in these plays often suffer silently, bereft of agency or influence. The courting scenes, such as Henry V's pursuit of the French princess Katharine, lack passion and are overshadowed by the larger political context. In the tragedies, women can be divided into two categories: innocent victims and malevolent figures. Characters like Cordelia, Ophelia, and Desdemona are portrayed as innocent and uncomplaining, while others, such as Goneril, Regan, Lady Macbeth, and Cressida, are depicted as manipulative and destructive.

Helena in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" exemplifies the archetype of a passive and sentimental woman. Despite Demetrius's rejection and disdain, Helena remains devoted to him, declaring her love even when faced with his contempt. She demonstrates a self-effacing devotion, likening herself to a loyal spaniel who remains steadfast in her affection.

On the other hand, Juliet in "Romeo and Juliet" embodies passionate, constant, and self-sacrificing love. Her commitment to Romeo transcends societal expectations and familial conflicts, leading her to make the ultimate sacrifice for their love. Despite the physical aspect of their relationship, Juliet's love is portrayed as pure and modest, reflecting her unwavering devotion.

Similarly, Portia in "The Merchant of Venice" exhibits a willingness to surrender herself, her wealth, and her autonomy to Bassanio, whom she accepts as her lord and

master. Even in "Julius Caesar," Portia, the wife of Brutus, asserts her right to share her husband's burdens and concerns, demonstrating a deep emotional connection. Her tragic end, marked by her suicide, underscores the intensity of her love and her inability to bear separation from Brutus.

These passionate and self-sacrificing women characters in Shakespeare's works showcase the complexities of love and devotion, often transcending societal norms and expectations. Their actions reflect the depth of their emotions and their willingness to make profound sacrifices for the ones they love. Ophelia in "Hamlet" and Hero in "Much Ado About Nothing" are depicted as passive in love and helpless in their situations. Ophelia's tragic demise and Hero's unjust public shaming evoke sympathy from the audience, highlighting their vulnerability and victimization.

Miranda in "The Tempest" exhibits a loving and fanciful nature but remains a passive character in the play, often overshadowed by the dominant male figures. Despite her affectionate disposition, Miranda's agency is limited, emphasizing her role as a pawn in her father's schemes.

1.7.3 Tragic heroines in Shakespeare’s plays

Among Shakespeare's tragic heroines, Desdemona from "Othello" stands out as a character who evokes deep sympathy. Desdemona's extraordinary innocence and unwavering love for Othello paint her as a figure of purity and devotion. Her passive submission to Othello's brutality, even in the face of public humiliation, underscores the extent of her love and the tragedy of her fate. Desdemona's final moments, where she absolves her husband of blame and bids farewell to her "kind lord," epitomize her selflessness and devotion.

Contrasting with the passive portrayal of Desdemona is Cordelia from "King Lear," who embodies strength and pride. Cordelia's unwavering integrity and refusal to flatter her father demonstrate her resilience and moral fortitude. Despite facing exile and betrayal, Cordelia remains steadfast in her principles, asserting her independence and

inner strength. In contrast, Shakespeare also portrays evil and scheming female characters, such as Goneril and Regan from "King Lear." These characters manipulate and betray their family for personal gain, embodying treachery and deceit. Their actions contribute to the tragic downfall of their father and ultimately lead to their own demise. Through these varied portrayals, Shakespeare explores the complexities of female characters, ranging from innocence and vulnerability to strength and malevolence, showcasing the diversity of women's experiences and roles in society.

Shakespeare's portrayal of Lady Macbeth as an aggressive and evil woman stands out among his female characters. She possesses a strong will and determination, which ultimately leads to her downfall. Despite her intelligence and self-reliance, Lady Macbeth exhibits moments of hesitation and compassion, such as her reluctance to kill Duncan and her concern for Macbeth. This contrasts with characters like Goneril and Regan, who are portrayed as remorseless and cruel.

Goneril and Regan, in contrast, are depicted as incorrigibly wicked individuals who lack remorse for their actions. Goneril is portrayed as a schemer, while Regan delights in inflicting pain. Despite their differences, both sisters are characterized by their monstrous cruelty, especially in their pursuit of their illicit love for Edmund. Lastly, Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemy, represents a woman of infinite variety in Shakespeare's works. Her ability to attract and captivate men like Pompey, Julius Caesar, and Antony is attributed to her wit and feminine charm. Cleopatra's character is dynamic and multifaceted, with Enobarbus noting that "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety." Through these diverse portrayals, Shakespeare explores the complexity of female characters, depicting them as strong and determined like Lady Macbeth, remorseless and cruel like Goneril and Regan, and captivating and multifaceted like Cleopatra.

Let Us Sum Up

Shakespeare's enduring legacy in literature and drama is marked not only by his brilliant plays but also by the dynamic interplay between his works, the theatrical environment of his time, and the diverse characters he created. Central to understanding Shakespeare's genius is recognising the symbiotic relationship between his stage, his audience, and the rich tapestry of characters he brought to life.

Shakespeare's theatre was not merely a physical space but a vibrant arena for creativity, innovation, and collaboration. His stage served as a platform for exploring timeless themes, complex characters, and the human condition. From the raucous energy of the Elizabethan stage to the enduring allure of live performance, Shakespeare's theatre captivated audiences and continues to do so today.

Check Your Progress

1. Which Shakespeare comedy features a strong-willed female character named Beatrice?

a) A Midsummer Night's Dream

b) Twelfth Night

c) Much Ado About Nothing

d) As You Like It

2. Who is the tragic heroine in Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet"?

a) Juliet Capulet

b) Lady Macbeth

c) Ophelia

d) Desdemona

3. Which Shakespeare tragedy features a female character who goes mad, Ophelia?

a) Hamlet

b) Macbeth

c) Othello

d) King Lear

4. In Shakespeare's play "The Taming of the Shrew", what is the name of the strong-willed female character?

a) Katherine

b) Bianca

c) Petruchio

d) Lucentio

5. Which Shakespeare comedy features a female character who disguises herself as a man, Viola?

a) Twelfth Night

b) As You Like It

c) A Midsummer Night's Dream

d) The Merchant of Venice

Unit Summary

Integral to Shakespearean drama are the comedic elements, often embodied by fools and clowns. These characters, though often underestimated, play significant roles in providing comic relief, offering insightful commentary, and engaging with the audience on multiple levels. Shakespeare's fools are not merely jesters but often the wisest characters in the play, offering truths that others dare not speak. In contrast to the comedic elements, Shakespeare penned some of the most iconic villains in English literature. From the power-hungry backstabbers to the scheming sinners, Shakespeare's villains are complex, multifaceted characters who challenge conventional notions of morality and virtue. Through their actions and motivations,

Shakespeare explores themes of ambition, betrayal, and the corrupting influence of power.

Finally, Shakespeare's portrayal of women in his plays is as diverse and multifaceted as his male characters. From the clever and assertive heroines to the passive and sentimental, Shakespeare's women characters defy easy classification. They exhibit strength, intelligence, and resilience, navigating the complexities of love, power, and societal expectations.

In summary, Shakespeare's stage, theatre, audience, fools, clowns, villains, and women all contribute to the rich tapestry of his works. Through his exploration of these elements, Shakespeare continues to captivate and resonate with audiences worldwide, centuries after his time.

Check Your Progress

1. Which character type is known for their witty remarks and often serves as a companion or advisor to the main characters?

a) Audience

b) Fools

c) Women

d) Villains

2. Which character says “To be or not to be, that is the question)”?

a) Hamlet

b) Macbeth

c) Othello

d) King Lear

3. In Shakespeare's plays, which character type is often associated with slapstick humor and physical comedy?

a) Audience

b) Fools

c) Clowns

d) Villains

1.9 Self-Assessment Questions

Short Answers: (5 Marks)

1. When and where was William Shakespeare baptized?

2. Who was Anne Hathaway?

3. What is the significance of the period 1594 to 1600, in Shakespeare's literary life?

4. Where did Shakespeare's plays predominantly perform?

5. Who were often referred to as "groundlings" in Shakespeare's time?

6. Extend character archetype in Shakespeare's plays

7. Infer slapstick humor and physical comedy

8. Rephrase the primary antagonist in Shakespeare's plays

9. Show the diverse roles and perspectives of females in Shakespeare's plays

10. What was the name of the acting company that Shakespeare was associated with?

Long Answers (8 marks):

1. Explain the four stages of Shakespeare's works.

2. Distinguish Shakespeare's works and their relevance in the society through decades

3. Analyze the role of women in Shakespeare's plays, focusing on the portrayal of female characters across different genres and their impact on the plot and themes.

4. Dissect the significance of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in the performance and reception of his plays.

5. Examine the theme of power and ambition in Shakespeare's tragedies, comparing and contrasting the motivations and actions of characters.

6. Interpret the function of comic relief in Shakespeare's plays, analyzing the roles and characteristics of fools, clowns.

7. Estimate the portrayal of villains in Shakespeare's plays, examining the motivations, actions, and consequences of characters like Iago, Richard III, and Lady Macbeth.

8. Discuss the significance of language and rhetoric in Shakespeare's works, analyzing how characters use dialogue, soliloquies, and poetic devices to convey meaning, emotion, and dramatic tension.

9. Elaborate the theme of identity and disguise in Shakespeare's plays, considering how characters like Rosalind, Viola, and Portia navigate gender roles, social expectations, and personal authenticity.

10. Investigate the role of fate and destiny in Shakespeare's tragedies.

Glossary:

1. **Groundlings:** The lower-class spectators who stood in the pit (the "yard") of the theatre.
2. **Tiring House:** The part of the stage where actors would change costumes and prepare for their entrances.
3. **Trapdoor:** A hidden door in the stage floor used for dramatic entrances, exits, and special effects.
4. **Heavens:** The part of the stage roof that represented the sky and where celestial beings could appear.
5. **Gentlemen :** Wealthier spectators who could afford seating in the galleries.
6. **Nobility:** Members of the aristocracy who sometimes attended performances as patrons of the arts.

7. **Comic Relief :** Humorous characters or scenes that provide a break from the main action and tension of the play.
8. **Wit :** Cleverness and quick thinking displayed by characters, often used by fools to entertain and comment on events.
9. **Wisdom in Folly:** The idea that fools in Shakespeare's plays often possess insight and wisdom despite their outward foolishness.
10. **Physical Comedy:** Humor based on exaggerated gestures, slapstick, and visual gags.
11. **Masks:** Sometimes worn by clowns or fools to amplify their comedic effect or disguise their identities.
12. **Jester:** A professional entertainer employed to amuse a ruler or noble household, often skilled in comedy and wit.
13. **Machiavellian:** Describing characters who are cunning, manipulative, and willing to use deceit and manipulation to achieve their goals.
14. **Tragic Flaw:** The character trait or defect that leads to the downfall of a tragic hero or villain.
15. **Complex Motivations:** Villains in Shakespeare's plays often have multifaceted reasons for their actions, including jealousy, ambition, and revenge.
16. **Gender Roles:** The societal expectations and norms that dictate the behavior and roles of men and women.
17. **Cross-Dressing:** The act of characters, often women, disguising themselves as the opposite gender for various reasons, such as gaining freedom or pursuing love.
18. **Agency:** The degree to which female characters in Shakespeare's plays have control over their own destinies and actions**.**
19. **Applause:** The expression of approval or appreciation from the audience, often signaled by clapping.

20. **Booing:** The expression of disapproval or dissatisfaction from the audience, often signaled by jeering or booing.
21. **Ovation:** A sustained and enthusiastic show of appreciation from the audience, often resulting in standing ovations.
22. **Pun**: A play on words that exploits multiple meanings or sounds of a word for humorous effect.
23. **Satire:** A literary technique used to ridicule or criticize societal norms, often employed by fools to comment on social issues.
24. **Parody**: A humorous imitation of a literary work or style, often used by fools to mock conventions and tropes.
25. **Slapstick**: Comedy involving exaggerated physical violence or mishaps, often accompanied by sound effects.
26. **Buffoonery**: Clownish behavior characterized by silliness, absurdity, and lack of sophistication.
27. **Juggling:** A form of entertainment involving the manipulation of objects, such as balls or knives, often performed by clowns.
28. **Antagonist** : The character or force that opposes the protagonist in a story, often embodying evil or conflict.
29. **Hubris:** Excessive pride or arrogance that leads to a character's downfall, a common trait of tragic villains.
30. **Foreshadowing:** The use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future events, often used to build suspense around a villain's actions.
31. **Subversion:** The act of challenging or overturning traditional gender roles and expectations, often seen in Shakespeare's portrayal of women.
32. **Empowerment:** The process of gaining power, agency, and confidence, often depicted in Shakespeare's female characters.

1.10 Answers for Check Your Progress

Modules	S.No.	Answers
Module 1	1.	A)1564
	2.	C) Stratford-upon-Avon
	3.	A)1599
	4.	C0 37
	5.	A)15th and 16th century
Module 2	1.	D) Timon of Athens
	2.	A) The Globe
	3.	A) Romeo and Juliet
	4.	C) It influenced his themes of mortality and disease
	5.	C) 1603
Module 3	1.	A) A collection of his plays and poems
	2.	B) 162
	3.	C) His friends, Heminges and Condell
	4.	C) 36
	5.	C) Some were previously published, while others were not
Module 4	1.	A) The Lord Chamberlain's Men
	2.	A) The Globe in London
	3.	A) The Pit
	4.	B) To create a sense of height and grandeur
	5.	B) Fly
Module 5	1.	A) The Pit
	2.	A) As You Like It
	3.	D) The Fool

	4.	B) To offer wise counsel
	5.	A) Hamlet
Module 6	1.	A) Iago
	2.	A) Richard III
	3.	B) Caliban
	4.	A) Macbeth
	5.	D) None of above
Module 7	1.	A. Fools
	2.	C. Hamlet
	3.	C. clowns

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7. Shakespeare, William. The Merchant of Venice. Ed. John Drakakis, Arden Shakespeare, 2010.
8. Shakespeare, William. Much Ado About Nothing. Ed. Claire McEachern, Arden Shakespeare, 2006.
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Self Assessment Questions:

Two Marks

1. What is the name of Shakespeare’s acting company, which was later known as the King’s Men?
   Shakespeare’s acting company was originally called the Lord Chamberlain’s Men.

2. Label the Shakespeare's plays is often considered his first play?
   "Henry VI, Part 1" is often considered one of Shakespeare's earliest plays.

3. Name the theater in London associated with Shakespeare's plays.
   The Globe Theatre is the most famous theater associated with Shakespeare.

4. List the names of Shakespeare's four major tragedies.
   The four major tragedies are "Hamlet," "Othello," "King Lear," and "Macbeth."

5. Identify the Shakespeare play is set in the Italian city of Venice and involves a pound of flesh.
   "The Merchant of Venice" is set in Venice and features the pound of flesh as a central plot point.

6. What is the name of Shakespeare's longest play?
   "Hamlet" is Shakespeare's longest play.

7. Explain how does Shakespeare use the character of the Fool to highlight themes of wisdom and folly in his plays?

   Shakespeare uses the Fool to juxtapose perceived foolishness with profound wisdom, as seen in characters like Feste in "Twelfth Night" and the Fool in "King Lear," who often provide insightful commentary on the actions of other characters.

8. Explain Shakespeare's female characters challenge traditional gender roles in his plays.

Shakespeare's female characters, such as Portia in "The Merchant of Venice" and Rosalind in "As You Like It," often challenge traditional gender roles by disguising themselves as men and taking on roles that question societal norms.

9. Organize the Shakespeare's female characters respond to the presence of clowns and fools in their narratives.

   Shakespeare's female characters often engage with clowns and fools in ways that reveal their own traits and challenges, such as Beatrice's witty banter with the Fool in "Much Ado About Nothing" that highlights her intelligence and independence.

10. Classify the themes of power and control manifest in the interactions between Shakespearean villains and fools or clowns.

    Themes of power and control are often highlighted in the interactions between villains and fools or clowns, with villains exerting control and manipulation while fools provide a form of resistance or commentary that undermines the villain's power, as seen with Iago's manipulation in "Othello."

Five Marks

1) **Examine about Shakespeare uses fools and clowns to provide social commentary in his plays. How do these characters reveal deeper truths about the society they inhabit?**
2) **Discover the significance of the villains in Shakespeare's plays.**
3) **Classify the roles of women in Shakespeare's plays reflect the societal attitudes of his time. How do these roles both conform to and challenge contemporary views on gender?**

4) **Analyse the impact of a fool's or clown's interaction with other characters in Shakespeare's plays. How do these interactions serve to advance the plot or develop character relationships?**
5) **Dissect how Shakespeare's depiction of villains enhances the psychological complexity of his plays. How do these characters contribute to the exploration of themes such as morality and human nature?**
6) **Discuss the presence of fools and a clown affects the tone and mood of Shakespeare's plays. In what ways do they influence the audience's perception of the play's themes?**
7) **Evaluate the role of women in facilitating or obstructing the development of the plot in Shakespeare's plays. How do their actions influence the outcomes of the central conflicts?**
8) **Assess how Shakespeare contrasts fools and villains to highlight key thematic elements in his plays. How does this contrast deepen the audience's understanding of the central issues?**
9) **Deliberate how Shakespeare's portrayal of female characters challenges or reinforces traditional gender roles. What impact does this have on the play's broader social commentary?**
10) **Estimate the fool's role in Shakespeare's plays can reveal truths about other characters and the broader narrative. How does the fool's perspective contribute to the audience's understanding of the play?**

8 Marks:

1. How did the limitations of the Elizabethan stage influence Shakespeare's dramatic choices and audience engagement?
2. Formulate the way Shakespeare craft his plays to appeal to both the educated elite and the common groundlings in the audience.
3. Justify the characters like Iago, Macbeth, and Richard III complicate traditional notions of villainy in Shakespeare's plays.
4. How does Shakespeare portray women as both powerful agents and passive victims in plays like *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Hamlet*?

5. Criticize Shakespeare's plays reflect and shape the political, social, and cultural concerns of Elizabethan England.
6. How does Shakespeare elicit both disgust and sympathy for villains like Shylock and Edmund through the use of language and soliloquies?
7. Evaluate the female characters in Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies differ in terms of their autonomy and relationship to power.
8. What makes Shakespeare's villains psychologically complex, and how do they reflect larger societal concerns?
9. Examine the historical fact that female roles were played by men in Shakespeare's time affect our interpretation of characters like Juliet and Cleopatra.
10. What makes Shakespeare's villains, such as Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* or Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*, captivating despite their malice?

Unit II

Othello

UNIT- II

UNIT OBJECTIVES

When studying Othello, students will understand the plot, including the main events and character relationships. They also analyze the themes of jealousy, love, and betrayal, and how they are developed throughout the play. Additionally, students examine the characters' motivations and actions, including Othello's tragic flaw and Iago's manipulative tactics. The symbolism of the handkerchief and the theme of racism is also be considered. Students will be able to identify and analyze Shakespeare's use of language, imagery, and metaphor, as well as the play's structure and pacing. Furthermore, students will able to evaluate the characters' motivations and actions, and consider alternative interpretations and perspectives. Finally, students will able to communicate their understanding of the play through concise writing and discussion.

Section 2.1 Othello- The Moor of Venice

2.1.1 Othello- An Introduction

The story of an African general in the Venetian army who is tricked into suspecting his wife of adultery, Othello is a tragedy of sexual jealousy. First performed around 1604, the play is also a pioneering exploration of racial prejudice.

Othello by William Shakespeare, written around 1603, is a tragic play that delves into themes of jealousy, betrayal, and racism. Set in the Venetian Republic, the play follows Othello, a Moorish general in the Venetian army, and his ensign and antagonist, Iago. Othello’s marriage to Desdemona, a Venetian woman, becomes a focal point for Iago's manipulative schemes. Exploiting Othello’s insecurities about his race and his marriage, Iago sows seeds of doubt in Othello’s mind, leading to tragic consequences. The play investigates the harmful effects of jealousy and the vulnerability of trust in relationships.

In the broader context of Shakespeare’s works, Othello is often regarded as one of his four great tragedies, alongside Hamlet, King Lear, and Macbeth. It stands out for its exploration of racial and cultural issues, offering a nuanced portrayal of a protagonist who is an outsider in a predominantly white society. The play delves into

the complexities of human nature, exposing the fragility of love and the destructive nature of unfounded suspicions.

Numerous film adaptations have brought Othello to the screen, with Laurence Olivier's 1965 version and Oliver Parker's 1995 adaptation being notable examples. These films showcase the enduring relevance of Othello and its exploration of timeless themes that resonate across different cultures and time periods.

2.1.2 Characters

1. Othello: The Moorish general of the Venetian army, who becomes the victim of Iago's jealousy and deceit.

2. Iago: Othello's ensign and a manipulative, jealous, and vengeful character who drives the plot of the play.

3. Desdemona: Othello's wife and a kind, innocent, and faithful character who becomes the victim of Othello's jealousy.

4. Cassio: Othello's lieutenant and a young, inexperienced, and charming character who is manipulated by Iago.

5. Emilia: Iago's wife and Desdemona's attendant, who ultimately discovers her husband's deceit and exposes the truth.

6. Roderigo: A wealthy and foolish nobleman who is manipulated by Iago and provides comic relief.

7. Brabantio: Desdemona's father and a Venetian senator who opposes Othello and Desdemona's marriage.

8. Duke of Venice: The ruler of Venice who supports Othello and resolves the conflict.

9. Montano: The governor of Cyprus who is wounded in a fight and replaced by Cassio.

10. Lodovico: A Venetian nobleman who serves as a messenger and witness to the tragic events.

11. Gratiano: Brabantio's brother and a wise and loyal character who tries to calm the situation.

12. Bianca: Cassio's mistress and a courtesan who provides comic relief.

2.1.3 Themes

1. Jealousy: The destructive power of jealousy is a central theme, as seen in Othello's downfall.

2. Love: The play explores various forms of love, including romantic love (Othello and Desdemona), platonic love (Cassio and Bianca), and twisted love (Iago's obsession with Othello).

3. Deception: Iago's manipulation and deception drive the plot, highlighting the dangers of dishonesty.

4. Appearance vs. Reality: Characters like Iago and Cassio appear to be one way but are actually another, illustrating the discrepancy between appearance and reality.

5. Racism: Othello's Moorish heritage is a significant aspect of the play, exploring themes of prejudice and racism.

6. Trust: The play demonstrates the importance of trust in relationships, as Othello's failure to trust Desdemona leads to tragic consequences.

7. Power Dynamics: The relationships between characters like Othello and Iago, and Cassio and Bianca, illustrate the complexities of power and manipulation.

8. Guilt and Shame: Characters like Othello, Iago, and Emilia grapple with guilt and shame, highlighting the consequences of their actions.

9. Reputation: The play shows how reputation can be both a source of pride and a fragile construct, as seen in Othello's downfall.

10. Tragedy and Fate: The play explores the inevitability of tragedy and the role of fate in human lives.

Let Us Sum Up

Shakespeare's Othello is a timeless masterpiece that explores the destructive nature of jealousy, racism, and deception. The play's significance lies in its thought-provoking portrayal of human flaws, revealing how easily trust and love can be manipulated and destroyed. Othello's tragic downfall serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked emotions and the devastating consequences of prejudice. The play's exploration of complex themes and its well-crafted characters continue to resonate with audiences today, making it a work of enduring relevance and literary significance. Its impact extends beyond literature, influencing art, film, and culture.

Check Your Progress

1. Which theme is central to the play Othello?
a) Love and relationships
b) Jealousy and possessiveness
c) Power and ambition
d) Appearance vs. reality

2. What is a significant aspect of the theme of love in Othello?
a) The redemptive power of love
b) The destructive power of love
c) The complexity of romantic love
d) The absence of love

3. How does the play Othello portray the theme of racism?

a) As a minor issue

b) As a justification for Othello's actions

c) As a significant factor in Othello's downfall

d) As a non-existent issue

4. What is a key aspect of the theme of deception in Othello?

a) Iago's honesty

b) Othello's trustworthiness

c) The destructive power of lies

d) The ease of forgiveness

5. Which theme is closely tied to the character of Iago?

a) Love and relationships

b) Jealousy and possessiveness

c) Power and ambition

d) Appearance vs. reality

Section 2.2 Act I

2.2.1.1 Act I Scene I

Othello begins on a street in Venice, in the midst of an argument between Roderigo and Iago. The rich Roderigo has been paying Iago to help him win Desdemona's hand in marriage, but he has seen no progress, and he has just learned that Desdemona has married Othello, a general whom Iago serves as ensign. Iago reassures Roderigo that he hates Othello. Chief among Iago's reasons for this hatred is Othello's recent promotion of Michael Cassio to the post of lieutenant. In spite of Iago's service in battle and the recommendation of three "great ones" of the city, Othello chose to give the position to a man with no experience leading men in battle. As he waits for an opportunity to further his own self-interest, Iago only pretends to serve Othello.

Iago advises Roderigo to spoil some of Othello's pleasure in his marriage by rousing Desdemona's family against the general. The two men come to the street

outside the house of Desdemona's father, Brabantio, and cry out that he has been robbed by "thieves." Brabantio, who is a Venetian senator, comes to the window. At first, he doesn't believe what he hears, because he has told Roderigo to stay away from his daughter before and thinks Roderigo is merely scheming once again in order to see Desdemona.

Iago speaks in inflammatory terms, vulgarly telling the senator that his daughter and Othello are having sex by saying that they are "making the beast with two backs" (I.i.118). Brabanzio begins to take what he hears seriously and decides to search for his daughter. Seeing the success of his plan, Iago leaves Roderigo alone and goes to attend on Othello. Like Brabanzio, Othello has no idea of Iago's role in Roderigo's accusations. As Iago departs, Brabanzio comes out of his house, furious that his daughter has left him. Declaring that his daughter has been stolen from him by magic "charms," Brabanzio and his men follow Roderigo to Othello.

2.2.1.2 Act I Scene II

Iago arrives at Othello's lodgings, where he warns the general that Brabanzio will not hesitate to attempt to force a divorce between Othello and Desdemona. Othello sees a party of men approaching, and Iago, thinking that Brabanzio and his followers have arrived, counsels Othello to retreat indoors. Othello stands his ground, but the party turns out to be Cassio and officers from the Venetian court. They bring Othello the message that he is wanted by the duke of Venice about a matter concerning Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea controlled by Venice.

As Cassio and his men prepare to leave, Iago mentions that Othello is married, but before he can say any more, Brabanzio, Roderigo, and Brabanzio's men arrive to accost Othello. Brabanzio orders his men to attack and subdue Othello. A struggle between Brabanzio's and Othello's followers seems imminent, but Othello brings the confrontation to a halt by calmly and authoritatively telling both sides to put up their swords. Hearing that the duke has summoned Othello to the court, Brabanzio decides to bring his cause before the duke himself.

2.2.1.3 Act I Scene III

The duke's meeting with his senators about the imminent Turkish invasion of Cyprus takes an unexpected turn when a sailor arrives and announces that the Turks seem to have turned toward Rhodes, another island controlled by Venice. One

of the senators guesses that the Turks' change of course is intended to mislead the Venetians, because Cyprus is more important to the Turks and far more vulnerable than Rhodes. This guess proves to be correct, as another messenger arrives to report that the Turks have joined with more forces and are heading back toward Cyprus.

This military meeting is interrupted by the arrival of Brabantio, Othello, Cassio, Iago, Roderigo, and officers. Brabanzio demands that all state business be put aside to address his own grievance—his daughter has been stolen from him by spells and potions purchased from charlatans. The duke is initially eager to take Brabanzio's side, but he becomes more skeptical when he learns that Othello is the man accused. The duke gives Othello the chance to speak for himself. Othello admits that he married Desdemona, but he denies having used magic to woo her and claims that Desdemona will support his story. He explains that Brabanzio frequently invited him to his house and questioned him about his remarkable life story, full of harrowing battles, travels outside the civilized world, and dramatic reversals of fortune. Desdemona overheard parts of the story and found a convenient time to ask Othello to retell it to her. Desdemona was moved to love Othello by his story.

The duke is persuaded by Othello's tale, dismissing Brabanzio's claim by remarking that the story probably would win his own daughter. Desdemona enters, and Brabanzio asks her to tell those present to whom she owes the most obedience. Brabanzio clearly expects her to say her father. Desdemona, however, confirms that she married Othello of her own free will and that, like her own mother before her, she must shift her primary loyalty from father to husband. Brabanzio reluctantly resigns himself to her decision and allows the court to return to state affairs.

The duke decides that Othello must go to Cyprus to defend the island from the Turks. Othello is willing and ready to go, and he asks that appropriate accommodations be provided for his wife. The duke suggests that she stay with her father, but neither Desdemona nor Brabanzio nor Othello will accept this, and Desdemona asks to be allowed to go with Othello. The couple then leaves to prepare for the night's voyage.

Let Us Sum Up

The stage is cleared, leaving only Roderigo and Iago. Once again, Roderigo feels that his hopes of winning Desdemona have been dashed, but Iago insists that all will be well. Iago mocks Roderigo for threatening to drown himself, and Roderigo protests that he can't help being tormented by love. Iago contradicts him, asserting that people can choose at will what they want to be. "Put but money in thy purse," Iago tells Roderigo repeatedly in the paragraph that spans lines 329–351, urging him to follow him to Cyprus. Iago promises to work everything out from there. When Roderigo leaves, Iago delivers his first soliloquy, declaring his hatred for Othello and his suspicion that Othello has slept with his wife, Emilia. He lays out his plan to cheat Roderigo out of his money, to convince Othello that Cassio has slept with Desdemona, and to use Othello's honest and unsuspecting nature to bring him to his demise.

Check Your Progress

1. Who is the first character to speak in Act 1, Scene 1 of Othello?

a) Iago

b) Roderigo

c) Brabantio

d) Othello

2. What is the reason for Iago's anger towards Othello in Act 1?

a) Othello promoted Cassio to lieutenant over Iago

b) Othello stole Iago's girlfriend

c) Othello refused to invite Iago to his wedding

d) Othello accused Iago of theft

3. Who does Brabantio accuse of stealing his daughter Desdemona in Act 1, Scene 1?

a) Othello

b) Cassio

c) Roderigo

d) Iago

4. What is the outcome of the meeting between Brabantio, Othello, and the Duke in Act 1, Scene 3?

a) Othello is arrested and charged with witchcraft

b) Brabantio is punished for accusing Othello falsely

c) Othello is cleared of all charges and allowed to keep Desdemona

D) Desdemona is returned to her fatherd

5. Who is sent to Cyprus as the new governor in Act 1, Scene 3?

a) Othello

b) Cassio

c) Iago

d) Montano

2.2.2 Act II

2.2.2.1 Act II Scene I

On the shores of Cyprus, Montano, the island's governor, watches a storm with two gentlemen. Just as Montano says that the Turkish fleet of ships could not survive the storm, a third gentlemen comes to confirm his prediction: as his ship traveled from Venice, Cassio witnessed that the Turks lost most of their fleet in the tempest. It is still uncertain whether Othello's ship has been able to survive the storm. Hope lifts as voices offstage announce the sighting of a sail offshore, but the new ship turns out to be carrying Iago, Emilia, Desdemona, and Roderigo. Desdemona disembarks, and no sooner does Cassio tell her that Othello has yet to arrive than a friendly shot announces the arrival of a third ship.

While the company waits for the ship, Cassio and Desdemona tease Emilia about being a chatterbox, but Iago quickly takes the opportunity to criticize women in general as deceptive and hypocritical, saying they are lazy in all matters except sex: "You rise to play and go to bed to work" (II.i.118). Desdemona plays along, laughing as Iago belittles women, whether beautiful or ugly, intelligent or stupid, as equally despicable. Cassio takes Desdemona away to speak with her privately about Othello's arrival. Iago notices that Cassio takes Desdemona's hand as he talks to her, and, in an aside, Iago plots to use Cassio's hand-holding to frame him so that he loses his newly gained promotion to lieutenant. "With as little a web as this I will ensnare as great a fly as Cassio," he asserts (II.i.169).

Othello arrives safely and greets Desdemona, expressing his devotion to her and giving her a kiss. He then thanks the Cypriots for their welcome and hospitality, and orders Iago to unload the ship. All but Roderigo and Iago head to the castle to celebrate the drowning of the Turks. Iago tells the despondent Roderigo that Desdemona will soon grow tired of being with Othello and will long for a more well-mannered and handsome man. But, Iago continues, the obvious first choice for Desdemona will be Cassio, whom Iago characterizes over and over again as a "knave" (II.i.231–239). Roderigo tries to argue that Cassio was merely being polite by taking Desdemona's hand, but Iago convinces him of Cassio's ill intentions and convinces Roderigo to start a quarrel with Cassio that evening. He posits that the uproar the quarrel will cause in the still tense city will make Cassio fall out of favor with Othello.

Left alone onstage again, Iago explains his actions to the audience in a soliloquy. He secretly lusts after Desdemona, partially because he suspects that Othello has slept with Emilia, and he wants to get even with the Moor "wife for wife" (II.i.286). But, Iago continues, if he is unable to get his revenge by sleeping with Desdemona, Roderigo's accusation of Cassio will make Othello suspect his lieutenant of sleeping with his wife and torture Othello to madness.

2.2.2.2 Act II Scene II

A herald announces that Othello plans revelry for the evening in celebration of Cyprus's safety from the Turks, and also in celebration of his marriage to Desdemona.

2.2.2.3 Act II Scene III

Othello leaves Cassio on guard during the revels, reminding him to practice self-restraint during the celebration. Othello and Desdemona leave to consummate their marriage. Once Othello is gone, Iago enters and joins Cassio on guard. He tells Cassio that he suspects Desdemona to be a temptress, but Cassio maintains that she is modest. Then, despite Cassio's protestations, Iago persuades Cassio to take a drink and to invite some revelers to join them.

Once Cassio leaves to fetch the revelers, Iago tells the audience his plan: Roderigo and three other Cypriots, all of whom are drunk, will join Iago and Cassio on guard duty. Amidst all the drunkards, Iago will lead Cassio into committing an

action that will disgrace him. Cassio returns, already drinking, with Montano and his attendants. It is not long before he becomes intoxicated and wanders offstage, assuring his friends that he isn't drunk. Once Cassio leaves, Iago tells Montano that while Cassio is a wonderful soldier, he fears that Cassio may have too much responsibility for someone with such a serious drinking problem.

Roderigo enters, and Iago points him in Cassio's direction. As Montano continues to suggest that something be said to Othello of Cassio's drinking problem, Cassio chases Roderigo across the stage, threatening to beat him. Montano steps in to prevent the fight and is attacked by Cassio. Iago orders Roderigo to leave and "cry a mutiny" (II.iii.140). As Montano and others attempt to hold Cassio down, Cassio stabs Montano. An alarm bell is rung, and Othello arrives with armed attendants.

Immediately taking control of the situation, Othello demands to know what happened, but both Iago and Cassio claim to have forgotten how the struggle began. Montano insists that he is in too much pain to speak and insists that Iago tell the story. At first Iago feigns reluctance to incriminate Cassio, emphasizing the fact that he was chasing after Roderigo (to whom Iago does not refer by name) when the fight between Cassio and Montano began, and suggesting that the unknown man must have done something to upset Cassio. Othello falls into Iago's trap, stating that he can tell that Iago softened the story out of honest affection for Cassio. Othello dismisses Cassio from his service.

Desdemona has been awakened by the commotion, and Othello leads her back to bed, saying that he will look to Montano's wound. Iago and Cassio remain behind, and Cassio laments the permanent damage now done to his reputation by a quarrel whose cause he cannot even remember. Iago suggests that Cassio appeal to Desdemona, because she commands Othello's attention and goodwill. Iago argues that Desdemona's kindheartedness will prompt her to help Cassio if Cassio entreats her, and that she will persuade Othello to give Cassio back his lieutenantship.

When Cassio leaves, Iago jokes about the irony of the fact that his so-called villainy involves counseling Cassio to a course of action that would actually help him. He repeats what he told Cassio about Desdemona's generosity and Othello's devotion to her. However, as Iago reminds the audience, he does the most evil when he seems to do good. Now that Cassio will be spending time with Desdemona, Iago

will find it all the easier to convince Othello that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio, thus turning Desdemona's virtue to "pitch" (II.iii.234).

Let Us Sum Up

At the end of this act, Roderigo enters, upset that he has been beaten and angry because Iago has taken all his money and left Roderigo nothing to show for it. Iago counsels him to be patient and not to return to Venice, reminding him that they have to work by their wits. He assures Roderigo that everything is going according to plan. After telling Roderigo to go, Iago finishes telling the audience the plot that is to come: he will convince Emilia to speak to Desdemona on Cassio's behalf, and he will arrange for Othello to witness Cassio's attempts to woo Desdemona.

Check Your Progress

1. Where is the setting of Act 2 of Othello?

a) Venice

b) Cyprus

c) Turkey

d) Greece

2. What is the reason for Iago's plan to get Cassio drunk in Act 2, Scene 2?

a) To make Cassio look foolish in front of Othello

b) To make Cassio confess his love for Desdemona

c) To get Cassio into trouble and undermine his position

d) To celebrate Cassio's promotion

3. Who is injured in the fight caused by Cassio's drunkenness in Act 2, Scene 3?

a) Montano

b) Iago

c) Roderigo

d) Othello

4. What is the outcome of Othello's investigation into the fight in Act 2, Scene 3?

a) Cassio is promoted to governor

b) Iago is punished for causing the fight

c) Cassio is stripped of his rank and position

d) Roderigo is arrested for starting the fight

5. What is Iago's plan to further manipulate Othello in Act 2, Scene 3?

a) To convince Othello that Desdemona is in love with Cassio

b) To tell Othello that Iago is in love with Desdemona

c) To make Othello think that Cassio is plotting against him

d) To convince Othello that Desdemona is cheating on him with Roderigo

2.2.3 Act III

2.2.3.1 Act III Scene I

In an effort to win Othello's good graces, Cassio sends musicians to play music beneath the general's window. Othello sends his servant, a clown, to tell the musicians to go away. Cassio asks the clown to entreat Emilia to come speak with him, so that he can ask her for access to Desdemona. When the clown leaves, Iago enters and tells Cassio that he will send for Emilia straightaway and figure out a way to take Othello aside so that Cassio and Desdemona can confer privately. After Iago exits, Emilia enters and tells Cassio that Othello and Desdemona have been discussing his case. Desdemona has pleaded for Cassio, but Othello worries that Montano's influence and popularity in Cyprus would make Cassio's reappointment impractical, no matter how much Othello cares for his former lieutenant. Emilia allows Cassio to come in and tells him to wait for Desdemona.

2.2.3.2 Act III Scene II

Iago, Othello, and a gentleman walk together at the citadel. Othello gives Iago some letters to deliver and decides to take a look at the town's fortification.

2.2.3.3 Act III Scene III

Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia enter mid-conversation. Desdemona has just vowed to do everything she can on Cassio's behalf when Othello and Iago enter. Cassio quickly departs, protesting to Desdemona that he feels too uneasy to do himself any good. Othello asks whether it was Cassio he saw leaving the room, and Iago responds that surely Cassio would not behave like a guilty man at Othello's approach.

Desdemona entreats Othello to forgive Cassio and reinstate him as lieutenant. Othello assures her that he will speak to Cassio, but he answers evasively when she tries to set a meeting time. She criticizes Othello for responding to her request so grudgingly and hesitantly, and he tells her that he will deny her nothing but wishes to be left to himself for a little while.

Alone with Othello, Iago begins his insinuations of an affair between Cassio and Desdemona by reminding Othello that Cassio served as Othello and Desdemona's go-between during their courtship. Othello asks Iago whether he believes Cassio to be honest, and Iago feigns reluctance to answer. Iago plants in Othello's mind thoughts of adultery, cuckoldry, and hypocrisy, until Othello screams at the ensign to speak his mind. Iago suggests that Othello observe his wife closely when she is with Cassio.

Othello tells Iago to have Emilia watch Desdemona when she is with Cassio. Iago appears to retreat from his accusations and suggests that Othello leave the matter alone. But he has already made his point. By himself, Othello muses that his wife no longer loves him, probably because he is too old for her, because he is black, and because he doesn't have the manners of a courtier. "She's gone," he laments (III.iii.271).

Desdemona and Emilia enter to inform Othello that he is expected at dinner. Othello says that he has a pain in his forehead, and Desdemona offers to bind his head with her handkerchief. Othello pushes her handkerchief away, telling her that it is too small. The handkerchief drops to the floor, where it remains as Othello and Desdemona exit. Emilia, staying behind, picks up the handkerchief, remarking that her husband has asked her to steal it at least a hundred times. Iago enters, and Emilia teases him with the promise of a surprise. He is ecstatic when she gives it to him, and sends her away.

As Iago gleefully plots to plant the handkerchief in Cassio's room, Othello enters and flies into a rage at him. Othello declares that his soul is in torment, and that it would be better to be deceived completely than to suspect without proof. He demands that Iago bring him visual evidence that Desdemona is a whore. Iago protests that it would be impossible to actually witness Desdemona and Cassio having sex, even if the two were as lustful as animals. He promises that he can provide circumstantial evidence, however.

First, he tells Othello that while Cassio and Iago were sharing a bed, Cassio called out Desdemona's name in his sleep, wrung Iago's hand, kissed him hard on the lips, and threw his leg over Iago's thigh. This story enrages Othello, and Iago reminds him that it was only Cassio's dream. Iago then claims to have witnessed Cassio wiping his beard with the handkerchief Othello gave Desdemona as her first gift. Furious, Othello cries out for blood. He kneels and vows to heaven that he will take his revenge on Desdemona and Cassio, and Iago kneels with him, vowing to help execute his master's vengeance. Othello promotes Iago to lieutenant.

2.2.3.4 Act III Scene IV

Desdemona orders the clown to find Cassio and bring him the message that she has made her suit to Othello. As the clown departs, Desdemona wonders to Emilia where her handkerchief might be. Othello enters and tells Desdemona to give him her hand. She does so, and he chastises her for her hand's moistness, which suggests sexual promiscuity. He then asks her to lend him her handkerchief. When Desdemona cannot produce the handkerchief he wants to see, Othello explains the handkerchief's history.

An Egyptian sorceress gave it to his mother and told her that it would make her desirable and keep Othello's father loyal, but if she lost it or gave it away, Othello's father would leave her. Othello's mother gave him the magic handkerchief on her deathbed, instructing him to give it to the woman he desired to marry. Desdemona is unsettled by the story and says that she has the handkerchief, but not with her. Othello does not believe her. As he accuses her, demanding "The handkerchief!" with increasing vehemence, she entreats for Cassio as a way of changing the subject.

After Othello storms off, Emilia laments the fickleness of men. Cassio and Iago enter, and Cassio immediately continues with his suit to Desdemona for help. Desdemona tells Cassio that his timing is unfortunate, as Othello is in a bad humor, and Iago promises to go soothe his master. Emilia speculates that Othello is jealous, but Desdemona maintains her conviction that Othello is upset by some political matter. She tells Cassio to wait while she goes to find Othello and bring him to talk with his former lieutenant.

Let Us Sum Up

While Cassio waits, Bianca, a prostitute, enters. She reprimands him for not visiting her more frequently, and he apologizes, saying that he is under stress. He asks her to copy the embroidery of a handkerchief he recently found in his room onto another handkerchief. Bianca accuses him of making her copy the embroidery of a love gift from some other woman, but Cassio tells her she is being silly. They make a plan to meet later that evening.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the significance of the handkerchief in Act 3, Scene 3 of Othello?
a) It is a gift from Othello to Desdemona
b) It is a symbol of Othello's love for Desdemona
c) It is evidence of Desdemona's infidelity
d) It is a token of Iago's loyalty to Othello

2. Who finds the handkerchief and gives it to Iago in Act 3, Scene 3?
a) Emilia
b) Desdemona
c) Cassio
d) Bianca

3. What is Iago's plan to further manipulate Othello in Act 3, Scene 3?
a) To convince Othello that Desdemona is pregnant with Cassio's child
b) To make Othello think that Cassio is plotting against him
c) To convince Othello that Desdemona is in love with Cassio
d) To tell Othello that Iago has seen Desdemona and Cassio together

4. How does Othello react to Iago's suggestions of Desdemona's infidelity in Act 3, Scene 3?
a) He becomes calm and rational
b) He becomes angry and violent
c) He becomes sad and melancholic

d) He becomes jealous and possessive

5. What is the outcome of Othello's confrontation with Desdemona in Act 3, Scene 4?

a) Desdemona confesses her love for Cassio

b) Othello apologizes for his behavior

c) Desdemona denies any wrongdoing

d) Othello strikes Desdemona

2.2.4 Act IV

2.2.4.1 Act IV Scene

Othello and Iago enter in mid-conversation. Iago goads Othello by arguing that it is no crime for a woman to be naked with a man, if nothing happens. Iago then remarks that if he were to give his wife a handkerchief, it would be hers to do as she wished with it. These persistent insinuations of Desdemona's unfaithfulness work Othello into an incoherent frenzy. He focuses obsessively on the handkerchief and keeps pumping Iago for information about Cassio's comments to Iago. Finally, Iago says that Cassio has told him he has lain with Desdemona, and Othello "[f]alls down in a trance" (IV.i.41 stage direction).

Cassio enters, and Iago mentions that Othello has fallen into his second fit of epilepsy in two days. He warns Cassio to stay out of the way but tells him that he would like to speak once Othello has gone. Othello comes out of his trance, and Iago explains that Cassio stopped by and that he has arranged to speak with the ex-lieutenant. Iago orders Othello to hide nearby and observe Cassio's face during their conversation.

Iago explains that he will make Cassio retell the story of where, when, how, and how often he has slept with Desdemona, and when he intends to do so again. When Othello withdraws, Iago informs the audience of his actual intention. He will joke with Cassio about the prostitute Bianca, so that Cassio will laugh as he tells the story of Bianca's pursuit of him. Othello will be driven mad, thinking that Cassio is joking with Iago about Desdemona.

The plan works: Cassio laughs uproariously as he tells Iago the details of Bianca's love for him, and even makes gestures in an attempt to depict her sexual advances. Just as Cassio says that he no longer wishes to see Bianca, she herself enters with the handkerchief and again accuses Cassio of giving her a love token given to him by another woman. Bianca tells Cassio that if he doesn't show up for supper with her that evening, he will never be welcome to come back again.

Othello has recognized his handkerchief and, coming out of hiding when Cassio and Bianca are gone, wonders how he should murder his former lieutenant. Othello goes on to lament his hardheartedness and love for Desdemona, but Iago reminds him of his purpose. Othello has trouble reconciling his wife's delicacy, class, beauty, and allure with her adulterous actions. He suggests that he will poison his wife, but Iago advises him to strangle her in the bed that she contaminated through her infidelity. Iago also promises to arrange Cassio's death.

Desdemona enters with Lodovico, who has come from Venice with a message from the duke. Lodovico irritates Othello by inquiring about Cassio, and Desdemona irritates Othello by answering Lodovico's inquiries. The contents of the letter also upset Othello—he has been called back to Venice, with orders to leave Cassio as his replacement in Cyprus. When Desdemona hears the news that she will be leaving Cyprus, she expresses her happiness, whereupon Othello strikes her.

Lodovico is horrified by Othello's loss of self-control, and asks Othello to call back Desdemona, who has left the stage. Othello does so, only to accuse her of being a false and promiscuous woman. He tells Lodovico that he will obey the duke's orders, commands Desdemona to leave, and storms off. Lodovico cannot believe that the Othello he has just seen is the same self-controlled man he once knew. He wonders whether Othello is mad, but Iago refuses to answer Lodovico's questions, telling him that he must see for himself.

2.2.4.2 Act IV Scene II

Othello interrogates Emilia about Desdemona's behavior, but Emilia insists that Desdemona has done nothing suspicious. Othello tells Emilia to summon Desdemona, implying while Emilia is gone that she is a "bawd," or female pimp (IV.ii.21). When Emilia returns with Desdemona, Othello sends Emilia to guard the door. Alone with Desdemona, Othello weeps and proclaims that he could have borne

any affliction other than the pollution of the “fountain” from which his future children are to flow (IV.ii.61).

When Desdemona fervently denies being unfaithful, Othello sarcastically replies that he begs her pardon: he took her for the “cunning whore of Venice” who married Othello (IV.ii.93). Othello storms out of the room, and Emilia comes in to comfort her mistress. Desdemona tells Emilia to lay her wedding sheets on the bed for that night.

At Desdemona’s request, Emilia brings in Iago, and Desdemona tries to find out from him why Othello has been treating her as if she's been unfaithful. Emilia says to her husband that Othello must have been deceived by some villain, the same sort of villain who made Iago suspect Emilia of sleeping with Othello. Iago assures Desdemona that Othello is merely upset by some official business, and a trumpet flourish calls Emilia and Desdemona away to dinner with the Venetian emissaries.

Roderigo enters, furious that he is still frustrated in his love, and ready to make himself known in his suit to Desdemona so that she might return all of the jewels that Iago was supposed to have given her from him. Iago tells Roderigo that Cassio is being assigned to Othello’s place. Iago also lies, saying that Othello is being sent to Mauritania, in Africa, although he is really being sent back to Venice. He tells Roderigo that the only way to prevent Othello from taking Desdemona away to Africa with him would be to get rid of Cassio. He sets about persuading Roderigo that he is just the man for “knocking out [Cassio’s] brains” (IV.ii.229).

2.2.4.3 Act IV Scene III

After dinner, Othello proposes to walk with Lodovico, and sends Desdemona to bed, telling her that he will be with her shortly and that she should dismiss Emilia. Desdemona seems aware of her imminent fate as she prepares for bed. She says that if she dies before Emilia, Emilia should use one of the wedding sheets for her shroud. As Emilia helps her mistress to undress, Desdemona sings a song called “Willow” about a woman whose love forsook her. She says she learned the song from her mother’s maid, Barbary, who died singing the song after she had been deserted by her lover.

Let Us Sum Up

Finally,The song makes Desdemona think about adultery, and she asks Emilia whether she would cheat on her husband “for all the world” (IV.iii.62). Emilia says that she would not deceive her husband for jewels or rich clothes, but that the whole world is a huge prize and would outweigh the offense. This leads Emilia to speak about the fact that women have appetites for sex and infidelity just as men do, and that men who deceive their wives have only themselves to blame if their wives cheat on them. Desdemona replies that she prefers to answer bad deeds with good deeds rather than with more bad deeds. She readies herself for bed.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the significance of Bianca's appearance in Act 4, Scene 1 of Othello?
a) She reveals Iago's plan to Othello
b) She provides comic relief
c) She serves as a foil to Desdemona
d) She accuses Cassio of cheating on her

2. What is the outcome of Othello's conversation with Iago in Act 4, Scene 1?
a) Othello decides to trust Desdemona again
b) Othello becomes more convinced of Desdemona's guilt
c) Iago reveals his true intentions to Othello
d) Othello decides to kill Iago

3. Who is beaten by Iago in Act 4, Scene 1?
a) Cassio
b) Roderigo
c) Emilia
d) Bianca

4. What is Emilia's role in Act 4, Scene 2 of Othello?
a) She serves as a messenger for Iago
b) She provides comic relief
c) She reveals Iago's plan to Desdemona
d) She defends Desdemona's honor

5. What is the outcome of Othello's confrontation with Desdemona in Act 4, Scene 2?

a) Desdemona confesses her love for Cassio

b) Othello apologizes for his behavior

c) Desdemona denies any wrongdoing

d) Othello smothers Desdemona with a pillow

2.2.5 Act V

2.2.5.1 Act V Scene I

Iago and Roderigo wait outside the brothel where Cassio visits Bianca. Iago positions Roderigo with a rapier (a type of sword) in a place where he will be able to ambush Cassio. Iago then leaves, although Roderigo asks him not to go too far in case he needs help killing Cassio. Cassio enters, and Roderigo stabs at him but fails to pierce Cassio's armor. Cassio stabs and wounds Roderigo. Iago darts out in the commotion, stabs Cassio in the leg, and exits. Not knowing who has stabbed him, Cassio falls. At this moment, Othello enters. Hearing Cassio's cries of murder, Othello believes that Iago has killed him. Inspired by what he believes to be Iago's successful vengeance, Othello returns to his bedroom to kill Desdemona.

Lodovico and Graziano enter and hear Cassio's and Roderigo's cries. They can see nothing because of the darkness, and they are wary of helping the crying men in case it is a trap. Iago enters carrying a light. He first pretends to discover Cassio, who begs him for help, and then stumbles upon Cassio's assailant, Roderigo, whom Iago stabs without hesitation. Graziano and Lodovico are still unable to see Iago, and they are unaware of what he is doing. Finally, the three men come face-to-face, and they question Cassio about his injuries.

Bianca enters and begins to cry out when she sees the wounded Cassio. Iago questions Cassio about his assailant, but Cassio can provide no explanation for what has happened. Iago suggests that Roderigo is to blame. Cassio says that he does not know Roderigo. Attendants carry off Cassio and Roderigo's corpse. Emilia enters, and Iago tells her what has happened, adding the explanation, "This is the fruits of whoring" (V.i.118). He and Emilia chastise Bianca, at whose house Cassio had dined that evening. Iago takes Bianca under arrest, and sends Emilia to tell Othello and Desdemona what has happened. Iago ends the scene with an aside:

"This is the night / That either makes me or fordoes [undoes] me quite" (V.i.130–131).

2.2.5.2 Act V Scene II

Holding a candle, Othello stands over the sleeping Desdemona and prepares to kill her. He bends down to kiss her once before he does the deed, she wakes, and he tells her to prepare to die. Growing frightened, Desdemona asks her husband why he means to kill her, and Othello responds that she has been unfaithful to him with Cassio—he has seen the proof in the handkerchief. Othello refuses to believe Desdemona's denial of the charge, saying that Cassio has confessed but will speak no more, since he has been killed by Iago.

Desdemona begins to weep for Cassio, which only drives Othello into a greater rage. Wrestling with her as she begs to be allowed to live just a little longer, Othello finally succeeds in smothering his wife. Emilia calls from outside the door, and Othello, apparently delirious, confuses her cries with his wife's and concludes that Desdemona is not yet dead. Thinking himself to be merciful, and not wanting to have his wife linger in pain, he smothers her again.

Othello draws the bed curtains and lets Emilia in. Emilia informs Othello that Cassio has killed Roderigo. Othello asks if Cassio has been killed as well, and Emilia informs him that Cassio is alive. As Othello begins to realize that his plans have gone awry, Desdemona cries out that she has been murdered. She stays alive long enough to recant this statement, telling Emilia that she was not murdered but killed herself. She dies. Othello triumphantly admits to Emilia that he killed Desdemona, and when she asks him why, Othello tells her that Iago opened his eyes to Desdemona's falsehood. Unfazed by Othello's threat that she "were best" to remain silent, Emilia calls out for help, bringing Montano, Graziano, and Iago to the scene (V.ii.168).

As the truth of Iago's villainy begins to come out through Emilia's accusations, Othello falls weeping upon the bed that contains the body of his dead wife. Almost to himself, Graziano expresses relief that Brabanzio is dead—the first news the audience has heard of this—and has not lived to see his daughter come to such a terrible end. Othello still clings to his belief in Iago's truth and Desdemona's guilt,

mentioning the handkerchief and Cassio's "confession." When Othello mentions the handkerchief, Emilia erupts, and Iago, no longer certain that he can keep his plots hidden, attempts to silence her with his sword.

Graziano stops him and Emilia explains how she found the handkerchief and gave it to Iago. Othello runs at Iago but is disarmed by Montano. In the commotion, Iago is able to stab his wife, who falls, apparently dying. Iago flees and is pursued by Montano and Graziano. Left alone onstage with the bodies of the two women, Othello searches for another sword. Emilia's dying words provide eerie background music, as she sings a snatch of the song "Willow." She tells Othello that Desdemona was chaste and loved him.

Graziano returns to find Othello armed and defiant, mourning the loss of his wife. They are joined shortly by Montano, Lodovico, Cassio, and Iago, who is being held prisoner. Othello stabs Iago, wounding him, and Lodovico orders some soldiers to disarm Othello. Iago sneers that he bleeds but is not killed. He refuses to say anything more about what he has done, but Lodovico produces a letter found in Roderigo's pocket that reveals everything that has happened. Seeking some kind of final reconciliation, Othello asks Cassio how he came by the handkerchief, and Cassio replies that he found it in his chamber.

Lodovico tells Othello that he must come with them back to Venice, and that he will be stripped of his power and command and put on trial. Refusing to be taken away before he has spoken, Othello asks his captors, "When you shall these unlucky deeds relate, / Speak of me as I am" (V.ii.350–351). He reminds them of a time in Aleppo when he served the Venetian state and slew a malignant Turk. "I took by the throat the circumcised dog / And smote him thus," says Othello, pulling a third dagger from hiding and stabbing himself in demonstration (V.ii.364–365). Pledging to "die upon a kiss," Othello falls onto the bed with his wife's body (V.ii.369).

Let Us Sum Up

Lodovico tells Iago to look at the result of his devious efforts, names Graziano as Othello's heir, and puts Montano in charge of Iago's execution. Lodovico prepares to leave for Venice to bear the news from Cyprus to the duke and senate.

Check Your Progress

1. Who kills Roderigo in Act 5, Scene 1 of Othello?

a) Iago
b) Cassio
c) Othello
d) Emilia

2. What is the reason for Emilia's death in Act 5, Scene 2 of Othello?
a) She is killed by Iago for revealing his plan
b) She dies of grief after Desdemona's death
c) She is killed by Othello in a fit of rage
d) She takes her own life in remorse

3. How does Othello die in Act 5, Scene 2 of Othello?
a) He is killed by Iago
b) He takes his own life in remorse
c) He is killed by Cassio
d) He dies of grief after Desdemona's death

4. What is Lodovico's role in Act 5, Scene 2 of Othello?
a) He serves as a witness to Othello's death
b) He kills Iago in revenge for Desdemona's death
c) He becomes the new governor of Cyprus
d) He forgives Othello for his mistakes

5. What is the final outcome of the play Othello?
a) Othello and Desdemona reunite and live happily ever after
b) Iago is punished for his crimes and Othello is forgiven
c) Othello and Desdemona die, and Iago is punished
d) Cassio becomes the new governor of Cyprus and Iago is rewarded

SECTION 2.3 Setting of Othello

Othello is set in Venice, presumably sometime in the latter half of the sixteenth-century. Venice was at war with the Ottoman Empire between 1570 and 1573, so the play's reference to the threat of an attack on Cyprus could reflect a

setting sometime during this period. Venice was well-known as an early example of what might later be called a multicultural city, boasting a much greater diversity of ethnicities and religions amongst its inhabitants than most other European cities could.

Othello is identified in the play's subtitle as a "Moor": a term most typically used in this period to signal someone who was either of African descent, Muslim faith, or both. Whatever the precise details of Othello's racial and religious identity, they are clearly enough to provoke anxiety when Iago torments Brabantio by referring to Othello as "an old black ram" and a "Barbary horse". While Brabantio is outraged that his daughter has married a man marked as an outsider, Othello has also clearly gained a significant amount of prestige and respect in Venice since the Duke trusts him with the crucial military defense of Cyprus. As a setting, Venice serves Shakespeare's needs of a place where a non-European, and potentially non-Christian, man could both hold significant authority but still be distrusted.

A second factor which may have informed Shakespeare's decision to set his play in Venice was the city's reputation as a hub of prostitution. While prostitution existed everywhere, a number of visitors to Venice in the early modern period published accounts of an established courtesan profession. Venetian prostitutes were often well-educated and lived in relative luxury, and as long they obeyed state-determined rules about when and how they practiced their trade, they were relatively free to conduct their business. The Venetian state tolerated prostitution as another feature of the city's bustling commercial life, and the city gained a reputation as a place potentially loaded with sexual innuendo.

Shakespeare's incorporation of the prostitute Bianca, "a huswife that by selling her desires / Buys herself bread and cloth" (4.1.), was likely more plausible to contemporary audiences in a play set in Venice. Moreover, Othello's fears that his bride could rapidly slide into sexual promiscuity seem linked to a belief that the line between virtuous wives and common courtesans is dangerously thin.

Let Us Sum Up

The setting of *Othello* primarily shifts between Venice and Cyprus, reflecting the play's themes of power, isolation, and conflict. Venice, a symbol of civilization, order, and political authority, is where the play opens, focusing on military and social

matters. Cyprus, an isolated island on the edge of Venetian control, becomes the backdrop for the central action, representing vulnerability and chaos. This isolated military outpost heightens Othello's descent into jealousy and mistrust. The contrast between the structured world of Venice and the wildness of Cyprus mirrors the unraveling of Othello's inner turmoil.

Check Your Progress

1. Where does the play *Othello* begin?

   a) Cyprus

   b) Venice

   c) Rome

   d) London

2. What does the city of Venice symbolize in *Othello*?

   a) Isolation and chaos

   b) Love and jealousy

   c) Civilization and order

   d) Betrayal and revenge

3. Where does most of the play's action take place after the first act?

   a) Venice

   b) Cyprus

   c) Italy

   d) Sicily

4. What does Cyprus represent in contrast to Venice?

   a) Harmony and stability

   b) Power and control

   c) Vulnerability and disorder

   d) Peace and reconciliation

5. Why is Cyprus a significant setting for the play's unfolding drama?

   a) It is a peaceful and tranquil island.

   b) It isolates the characters, intensifying the conflict.

c) It is Othello's homeland.

d) It is a place of political stability.

SECTION 2.4 Characters' Traits and Motifs

2.4.1 Othello

Beginning with the opening lines of the play, Othello remains at a distance from much of the action that concerns and affects him. Roderigo and Iago refer ambiguously to a "he" or "him" for much of the first scene. When they begin to specify whom they are talking about, especially once they stand beneath Brabanzio's window, they do so with racial epithets, not names. These include "the Moor" (I.i.57), "the thick-lips" (I.i.66), "an old black ram" (I.i.88), and "a Barbary horse" (I.i.113). Although Othello appears at the beginning of the second scene, we do not hear his name until well into Act I, scene iii (I.iii.48). Later, Othello's will be the last of the three ships to arrive at Cyprus in Act II, scene i; Othello will stand apart while Cassio and Iago supposedly discuss Desdemona in Act IV, scene i; and Othello will assume that Cassio is dead without being present when the fight takes place in Act V, scene i. Othello's status as an outsider may be the reason he is such easy prey for Iago.

Although Othello is a cultural and racial outsider in Venice, his skill as a soldier and leader is nevertheless valuable and necessary to the state, and he is an integral part of Venetian civic society. He is in great demand by the duke and senate, as evidenced by Cassio's comment that the senate "sent about three several quests" to look for Othello (I.ii.46). The Venetian government trusts Othello enough to put him in full martial and political command of Cyprus; indeed, in his dying speech, Othello reminds the Venetians of the "service" he has done their state (V.ii.348).

Those who consider Othello their social and civic peer, such as Desdemona and Brabanzio, nevertheless seem drawn to him because of his exotic qualities. Othello admits as much when he tells the duke about his friendship with Brabanzio. He says, -"[Desdemona's] father loved me, oft invited me, / Still questioned me the story of my life / From year to year" (I.iii.127–129). -Othello is also able to captivate his peers with his speech. The duke's reply to Othello's speech about how he wooed

Desdemona with his tales of adventure is: “I think this tale would win my daughter too” (I.iii.170).

Othello sometimes makes a point of presenting himself as an outsider, whether because he recognizes his exotic appeal or because he is self-conscious of and defensive about his difference from other Venetians. For example, in spite of his obvious eloquence in Act I, scene iii, he protests, “Rude am I in my speech, / And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace” (I.iii.81–82). While Othello is never rude in his speech, he does allow his eloquence to suffer as he is put under increasing strain by Iago’s plots. In the final moments of the play, Othello regains his composure and, once again, seduces both his onstage and offstage audiences with his words. The speech that precedes his suicide is a tale that could woo almost anyone. It is the tension between Othello’s victimization at the hands of a foreign culture and his own willingness to torment himself that makes him a tragic figure rather than simply Iago’s ridiculous puppet.

2.4.2 Iago

Possibly the most heinous villain in Shakespeare, Iago is fascinating for his most terrible characteristic: his utter lack of convincing motivation for his actions. In the first scene, he claims to be angry at Othello for having passed him over for the position of lieutenant (I.i. 7–32). At the end of Act I, scene iii, Iago says he thinks Othello may have slept with his wife, Emilia: “It is thought abroad that ’twixt my sheets / He has done my office” (I.iii.369–370). Iago mentions this suspicion again at the end of Act II, scene i, explaining that he lusts after Desdemona because he wants to get even with Othello “wife for wife” (II.i.286). None of these claims seems to adequately explain Iago’s deep hatred of Othello, and Iago’s lack of motivation—or his inability or unwillingness to express his true motivation—makes his actions all the more terrifying. He is willing to take revenge on anyone—Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, Roderigo, even Emilia—at the slightest provocation and enjoys the pain and damage he causes.

Iago is often funny, especially in his scenes with the foolish Roderigo, which serve as a showcase of Iago's manipulative -abilities. He seems almost to wink at the audience as he revels in his own skill. As entertained spectators, we find ourselves on Iago's side when he is with Roderigo, but the interactions between the two also reveal a streak of cowardice in Iago—a cowardice that becomes manifest in the final scene, when Iago kills his own wife (V.ii.231–242).

Iago's murder of Emilia could also stem from the general hatred of women that he displays. Some readers have suggested that Iago's true, underlying motive for persecuting Othello is his homosexual love for the general. He certainly seems to take great pleasure in preventing Othello from enjoying marital happiness, and he expresses his love for Othello frequently and effusively.

It is Iago's talent for understanding and manipulating the desires of those around him that makes him both a powerful and a compelling figure. Iago is able to take the handkerchief from Emilia and know that he can deflect her questions; he is able to tell Othello of the handkerchief and know that Othello will not doubt him; he is able to tell the audience, "And what's he then that says I play the villain," and know that it will laugh as though he were a clown (II.iii.310). Though the most inveterate liar, Iago inspires all of the play's characters the trait that is most lethal to Othello: trust.

2.4.3 Desdemona

Desdemona is a more plausible, well-rounded figure than much criticism has given her credit for. Arguments that see Desdemona as stereotypically weak and submissive ignore the conviction and authority of her first speech ("My noble father, / I do perceive here a divided duty" [I.iii.179–180]) and her terse fury after Othello strikes her ("I have not deserved this" [IV.i.236]). Similarly, critics who argue that Desdemona's slightly bizarre bawdy jesting with Iago in Act II, scene i, is either an interpolation not written by Shakespeare or a mere vulgarity ignore the fact that Desdemona is young, sexual, and recently married. She later displays the same

chiding, almost mischievous wit in Act III, scene iii, lines 61–84, when she attempts to persuade Othello to forgive Cassio.

Desdemona is at times a submissive character, most notably in her willingness to take credit for her own murder. In response to Emilia's question, "O, who hath done this deed?" Desdemona's final words are, "Nobody, I myself. Farewell. / Commend me to my kind lord. O, farewell" (V.ii.133–134). The play, then, depicts Desdemona contradictorily as a self-effacing, faithful wife and as a bold, independent personality. This contradiction may be intentional, meant to portray the way Desdemona herself feels after defending her choice of marriage to her father in Act I, scene iii, and then almost immediately being put in the position of defending her fidelity to her husband. She begins the play as a supremely independent person, but midway through she must struggle against all odds to convince Othello that she is not too independent. The manner in which Desdemona is murdered—smothered by a pillow in a bed covered in her wedding sheets—is symbolic: she is literally suffocated beneath the demands put on her fidelity. Since her first lines, Desdemona has seemed capable of meeting or even rising above those demands. In the end, Othello stifles the speech that made Desdemona so powerful.

Tragically, Desdemona is apparently aware of her imminent death. She, not Othello, asks Emilia to put her wedding sheets on the bed, and she asks Emilia to bury her in these sheets should she die first. The last time we see Desdemona before she awakens to find Othello standing over her with murder in his eyes, she sings a song she learned from her mother's maid: "She was in love; and he proved mad / And did forsake her. She had a song of willow. / . . . / And she died singing it. That song tonight / Will not go from my mind" (IV.iii.27–30). Like the audience, Desdemona seems able only to watch as her husband is driven insane with jealousy. Though she maintains to the end that she is "guiltless," Desdemona also forgives her husband (V.ii.133). Her forgiveness of Othello may help the audience to forgive him as well.

2.4.4 Emilia

Emilia at first appears to be one of her husband Iago's puppets. When Iago wants to set up the appearance of inappropriate behavior between Cassio and Desdemona, he decides that "my wife must move for Cassio to her mistress" (2.3.) and shortly thereafter Emilia facilitates a meeting between Desdemona and Cassio, and encourages her mistress to advocate on behalf of Cassio. Later, when Desdemona accidentally drops her handkerchief, Emilia seizes the opportunity to pick it up, noting that "my wayward husband hath a hundred times / Wooed me to steal it" (3.3.). She shows only a small amount of suspicion as to what Iago plans to do with it, and accepts his refusal to tell her. These actions suggest that Emilia, at least initially, is at best passive, and at worst complicit in Iago's schemes. He often speaks sharply or rudely to her, as when he quips "It is a common thing… to have a foolish wife" (3.3.) suggesting he doesn't respect her intelligence.

However, as the action progresses, Emilia reveals a sharp-eyed and self-aware perspective on how women are often vulnerable to abuse at the hands of their husbands. She tells Desdemona that "they eat us hungerly, and when they are full / They belch us" (3.4.) and later explains to her mistress that "I do think it is their husbands' faults / If wives do fall" (4.3.). Emilia also shows courage and self-assurance in chastising Othello for doubting his wife's virtue, scolding him "If you think other / Remove your thought" (4.2.). When she realizes Othello has killed Desdemona, Emilia immediately lashes out at him, stating "Thou dost belie her and thou art a devil" (5.2.). Even though she is in a highly dangerous situation, alone with a man who has just proven himself capable of murder and might well kill her in order to conceal his crime, Emilia fearlessly insists on bringing him to justice, explaining "I'll make thee known / Though I lost twenty lives" (5.2.).

As she realizes the role her husband has played in bringing about Desdemona's death, Emilia insists on outing Iago's plot, stating in front of everyone that "your reports have set the murder on" (5.2.184). Iago repeatedly threatens her and tells her to be quiet, but Emilia insists that "I will speak as liberal as the north" (5.2.). Her insistence on speaking out costs her her life when Iago stabs her in desperation. Emilia becomes a parallel to Desdemona, as another woman killed by her husband for insisting on a truth that he did not want to hear. However, while

Desdemona's death reflects the murder of an innocent victim, Emilia dies seeking atonement for her participation in Iago's crimes. Emilia helped Iago persuade Othello of Desdemona's guilt, and while she cannot undo Desdemona's death, she can at least bear witness to the truth of what really happened. Emilia dies hoping that her final bravery will redeem her previous silence and obedience: "So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true" (5.2.), but her death also shows that within the world of the play, there is no promise of a happy fate for a woman.

2.4.5 Cassio

Cassio functions mainly to move the plot forward by inadvertently becoming a pawn in Iago's plan. Cassio's thoughts, feelings, and motivations are rarely revealed, but his character and behavior are significant for creating the conditions under which Iago can enact his plan. Cassio is handsome, charming, and charismatic; as Iago notes when he starts to hatch his devious plan, "He hath a person and a smooth dispose / To be suspected, framed to make women false" (1.3.). If Cassio was not a potentially appealing lover, the idea that Desdemona was having an affair with him would be much less plausible, and Iago's plan would be harder to pull off. In addition to his innate appeal, Cassio's behavior to women unwittingly endangers both himself and Desdemona. He often performs shows of gallantry and courtesy which are open to misinterpretation as flirtation. Watching Cassio touch Desdemona's hand, Iago schemes that "Ay, smile upon her, do! I will gyve thee in thine own courtship" (2.1.).

Cassio's behavior is rooted in a deep sense of honor: when Iago tries to get him to say lewd things about Desdemona, he insists on being respectful, observing "An inviting eye—and yet methinks right modest" (2.3.). Cassio is also horrified when his drunken behavior results in public shame, lamenting "Oh, I have lost my reputation!" (2.3.). Perhaps because Cassio is a Florentine, and not a Venetian, or because he seems to lack the military experience of some of the other male characters, he is rather naïve and trusting. Cassio's innocence and trust that other people will see his virtue makes him a parallel character to Desdemona. However, unlike Desdemona, Cassio evolves as a character. By the end of the play, he has realized that Iago is responsible for Desdemona's death, and he helps Othello understand Iago's treachery. Cassio ends the play in a position of significant

authority and responsibility: Ludovico commands that “Cassio rules in Cyprus” (5.2.) and entrusts him with punishing Iago. The impact of the shocking betrayals and violence shown by other characters has presumably changed Cassio into a man who will be much more cautious, but possibly a better leader as a result.

2.4.6 Roderigo

Foolish Roderigo is an instrumental tool in Iago’s plan to bring Othello to ruin. Throughout the play, we see Roderigo characterized primarily by his weakness. Iago easily riles up his anger by reminding him that Othello, a Moor and therefore an outsider in Venetian society, is set to marry Desdemona. That this mutual hatred of Othello is enough to win Roderigo’s trust suggests that Roderigo is shallow and foolish. Furthermore, a major component of Roderigo’s frustration over losing Desdemona appears to be that he believes it is unfair that Othello, being a Moor, should get to marry Desdemona, which reveals him to be xenophobic and racist. Once under Iago’s sway, Roderigo readily agrees to Iago’s direction, even at times exiting the stage on Iago’s command. When Iago suggests the murder of Cassio as part of a convoluted plan to keep Othello and Desdemona in Cyprus, Roderigo agrees despite stating that he has “no devotion to the deed.” That he is willing to kill someone so half-heartedly and unnecessarily shows a very dangerous sort of childish and self-absorbed weakness.

As a rejected suitor for Desdemona’s affections, Roderigo also serves as a point of comparison to Othello. Despite the firm rejection by both Desdemona and Brabantio, Roderigo continues to obsess over Desdemona, showing a disregard for her desires and boundaries. While Othello woos Desdemona with his heroic deeds, Roderigo attempts to win her over with money and jewels. Othello’s heroism on the battlefield also contrasts strongly with Roderigo inciting Cassio to cause a disturbance at the military camp in Cyprus, jeopardizing the stability of the camp over his lust for Desdemona. Roderigo’s complete weakness of mind and morals only serve to highlight Othello’s strength. Nevertheless, just like Roderigo, Othello is taken in by Iago’s manipulation, and enraged to violence by jealousy. In this sense, we can pity Roderigo. If Iago’s manipulation can fool Othello, we can see how a man like Roderigo so quickly became a puppet in his hands.

Let Us Sum Up

Othello features several major characters, each playing a key role in the tragedy. Othell*, the Moorish general of the Venetian army, is noble but vulnerable to jealousy. His marriage to Desdemona, a young and virtuous Venetian woman, triggers the central conflict. Iago, Othello's ensign, is the play's villain, driven by ambition and resentment; he manipulates Othello into believing Desdemona is unfaithful. Cassio, Othello's loyal lieutenant, becomes an unwitting pawn in Iago's schemes. Emilia, Iago's wife, and Roderigo, a foolish suitor of Desdemona, also play critical roles in the tragic unfolding of events.

Check Your Progress

1. Who is the protagonist of the play *Othello*?

   a) Iago

   b) Cassio

   c) Othello

   d) Roderigo

2. What motivates Iago's villainous actions throughout the play?

   a) Love for Desdemona

   b) Ambition and resentment

   c) Desire for wealth

   d) Loyalty to Othello

3. Which character is Othello's wife?

   a) Emilia

   b) Bianca

   c) Desdemona

   d) Ophelia

4. Who is manipulated into believing that Desdemona is unfaithful?

   a) Cassio

b) Othello

c) Roderigo

d) Brabantio

5. Which character exposes Iago's deceit at the end of the play?

a) Cassio

b) Roderigo

c) Desdemona

d) Emilia

SECTION 2.5 Major Themes

2.5.1 The Incompatibility of Military Heroism & Love

Before and above all else, Othello is a soldier. From the earliest moments in the play, his career affects his married life. Asking "fit disposition" for his wife after being ordered to Cyprus (I.iii.234), Othello notes that "the tyrant custom . . . / Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war / My thrice-driven bed of down" (I.iii.227–229). While Desdemona is used to better "accommodation," she nevertheless accompanies her husband to Cyprus (I.iii.236). Moreover, she is unperturbed by the tempest or Turks that threatened their crossing, and genuinely curious rather than irate when she is roused from bed by the drunken brawl in Act II, scene iii. She is, indeed, Othello's "fair warrior," and he is happiest when he has her by his side in the midst of military conflict or business (II.i.179).

The military also provides Othello with a means to gain acceptance in Venetian society. While the Venetians in the play are generally fearful of the prospect of Othello's social entrance into white society through his marriage to Desdemona, all Venetians respect and honor him as a soldier. Mercenary Moors were, in fact, commonplace at the time. Othello predicates his success in love on his success as a soldier, wooing Desdemona with tales of his military travels and battles. Once the Turks are drowned—by natural rather than military might—Othello

is left without anything to do: the last act of military administration we see him perform is the viewing of fortifications in the extremely short second scene of Act III.

No longer having a means of proving his manhood or honor in a public setting such as the court or the battlefield, Othello begins to feel uneasy with his footing in a private setting, the bedroom. Iago capitalizes on this uneasiness, calling Othello's epileptic fit in Act IV, scene i, "[a] passion most unsuiting such a man." In other words, Iago is calling Othello unsoldierly. Iago also takes care to mention that Cassio, whom Othello believes to be his competitor, saw him in his emasculating trance (IV.i.75). Desperate to cling to the security of his former identity as a soldier while his current identity as a lover crumbles, Othello begins to confuse the one with the other. His expression of his jealousy quickly devolves from the conventional—"Farewell the tranquil mind"—to the absurd:One might well say that Othello is saying farewell to the wrong things—he is entirely preoccupied with his identity as a soldier. But his way of thinking is somewhat justified by its seductiveness to the audience as well. Critics and audiences alike find comfort and nobility in Othello's final speech and the anecdote of the "malignant and . . . turbaned Turk" (V.ii.362), even though in that speech, as in his speech in Act III, scene iii, Othello depends on his identity as a soldier to glorify himself in the public's memory, and to try to make his audience forget his and Desdemona's disastrous marital experiment.

2.5.2 The Danger of Isolation

The action of Othello moves from the metropolis of Venice to the island of Cyprus. Protected by military fortifications as well as by the forces of nature, Cyprus faces little threat from external forces. Once Othello, Iago, Desdemona, Emilia, and Roderigo have come to Cyprus, they have nothing to do but prey upon one another. Isolation enables many of the play's most important effects: Iago frequently speaks in soliloquies; Othello stands apart while Iago talks with Cassio in Act IV, scene i, and is left alone onstage with the bodies of Emilia and Desdemona for a few moments in Act V, scene ii; Roderigo seems attached to no one in the play except Iago. And, most prominently, Othello is visibly isolated from the other characters by his physical stature and the color of his skin.

Iago is an expert at manipulating the distance between characters, isolating his victims so that they fall prey to their own obsessions. At the same time, Iago, of necessity always standing apart, falls prey to his own obsession with revenge. The characters cannot be islands, the play seems to say: self-isolation as an act of self-preservation leads ultimately to self-destruction. Such self-isolation leads to the deaths of Roderigo, Iago, Othello, and even Emilia.

2.5.3 Jealousy

Jealousy motivates the central conflicts of Othello: Iago's resentment of Othello, and Othello's suspicion of Desdemona. Iago is immediately revealed as a jealous character: in the first scene, he complains that Cassio has been promoted instead of him even though "I am worth no worse a place" (1.1.). He also later implies that his hatred of Othello is rooted in jealousy, since there are rumors of Othello having slept with Emilia. As Iago explains, even the hint of this possibility enrages him: "I know not if't be true / But I for mere suspicion in that kind / Will do as if for surety" (1.3.). It seems that his jealousy is so intense that he does not need proof of this infidelity before punishing Othello for it. Appropriately, Iago decides to seek revenge by using jealousy as a weapon against Othello, "practicing upon his peace and quiet / Even to madness" (2.1.). Iago knows, perhaps from his own experience, that jealousy is a form of psychological torture which will constantly torment Othello. By making Othello feel the torments of jealousy towards Desdemona and her supposed lover, Iago causes Othello to suffer as much as he does.

2.5.4 Deception and Treachery

In Othello, Othello simultaneously believes he is being deceived by characters who are honest while failing to see the deceit and treachery of characters who are tricking him. Othello refers to Iago as "honest" multiple times, showing that he is totally blind to the way Iago is tricking and manipulating him. Othello is so deceived by Iago, he believes Iago is actually incapable of lying: "I know thou'rt full of love and honesty / And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath" (3.3.).

While Othello is naively unable to see that Iago is deceiving him every step of the way, he is also stubbornly convinced that Desdemona is deceiving him even when she is being totally honest. Once Othello makes up his mind that Desdemona is guilty, all her claims of innocence only enrage him further because he is convinced that “this is a subtle whore / A closet lock and key of villainous secrets” (4.2.). Everything Desdemona does to prove her innocence comes across to Othello as further proof of her guilt. Othello’s inability to correctly identify who is and is not deceiving him makes him act rashly and ultimately lead to violence and tragedy.

2.5.5 Justice

In Othello, characters justify their actions on the basis of deserving justice. The first character we see seeking justice is Brabantio, who is outraged that his daughter has married a man of a different race, and decides that Othello must have bewitched her. Brabantio asserts “I therefore apprehend and do attach thee” (1.2.77), seeking legal restitution for the perceived violation to himself and his honor. However, Brabantio’s apparent demand for justice is rooted in his racial prejudice against Othello, and his sense that he is owed obedience from his daughter. He only feels entitled to justice because social structures have placed him in a position of racial superiority to Othello and gender superiority to Desdemona. What Brabantio envisions as justice is the reassertion of his racial and gendered dominance and power over others.

As Othello becomes increasingly convinced that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him, he also feels entitled to seek a form of bloody, self-administered justice. As he tells Iago, “my bloody thoughts with violent pace / Shall ne’er look back, ne’er ebb to humble love / Till that a capable and wide revenge / Swallow them up” (3.3.). While there would have been legal procedures in place at this time for bringing charges of adultery against a spouse, Othello is not interested in seeking official forms of justice. He wants to punish his wife himself, and feels entitled to do so. When Iago suggests that Othello strangle Desdemona rather than poisoning her, Othello notes “Good, good—the justice of it pleases!”(4.1.). Othello’s violent plan to

achieve justice is rooted in his sense that he has complete ownership and control over his wife, and that he can literally decide whether she lives or dies. Othello's notion of justice depends on a system that is fundamentally unjust toward women, leaving them vulnerable to false accusation and violent actions. *Othello* explores several key themes, with jealousy being the most prominent. Othello's descent into destructive jealousy, fueled by Iago's manipulation, drives the tragic outcome. The theme of racial prejudice is also central, as Othello, a Moor, faces subtle and overt discrimination despite his military rank. Trust and betrayal are intricately linked, as characters place faith in others, only to be deceived, particularly Othello's trust in Iago over Desdemona. Gender roles and the treatment of women are examined through the relationships of Desdemona, Emilia, and Bianca. Finally, appearance versus reality underpins much of the deception and misunderstandings in the play.

SECTION 2.6 Symbols

2.6.1The Handkerchief

The handkerchief symbolizes different things to different characters. Since the handkerchief was the first gift Desdemona received from Othello, she keeps it about her constantly as a symbol of Othello's love. Iago manipulates the handkerchief so that Othello comes to see it as a symbol of Desdemona herself—her faith and chastity. By taking possession of it, he is able to convert it into evidence of her infidelity. But the handkerchief's importance to Iago and Desdemona derives from its importance to Othello himself. He tells Desdemona that it was woven by a 200-year-old sibyl, or female prophet, using silk from sacred worms and dye extracted from the hearts of mummified virgins. Othello claims that his mother used it to keep his father faithful to her, so, to him, the handkerchief represents marital fidelity. The pattern of strawberries (dyed with virgins' blood) on a white background strongly suggests the bloodstains left on the sheets on a virgin's wedding night, so the handkerchief implicitly suggests a guarantee of virginity as well as fidelity.

2.6.2 The Song "Willow"

As she prepares for bed in Act V, Desdemona sings a song about a woman who is betrayed by her lover. She was taught the song by her mother's maid, Barbary, who suffered a misfortune similar to that of the woman in the song; she even died singing "Willow." The song's lyrics suggest that both men and women are unfaithful to one

another. To Desdemona, the song seems to represent a melancholy and resigned acceptance of her alienation from Othello's affections, and singing it leads her to question Emilia about the nature and practice of infidelity.

2.6.3 The Candle

Just before murdering Desdemona, Othello ponders the candle he has brought with him, comparing it symbolically to Desdemona's life. He states that he will extinguish it before extinguishing Desdemona's "light," or in other words, killing her. Comparing the murder to snuffing out a candle highlights how fragile Desdemona's life is at this moment, and how easily lost. However, Othello acknowledges that while he could always light the candle again if he regrets extinguishing it, nothing will be able to revive Desdemona once he kills her. Some scholars read additional meaning into Othello deciding to blow out the candle before murdering Desdemona. Light often signifies truth and wisdom, and so extinguishing it emphasizes Othello's unwillingness to see the reality of Desdemona's innocence. Related to this reading, putting out the candle brings to mind Iago's influence. Throughout the play, Iago and his terrible deeds have been associated with darkness, as in his "play the villain" soliloquy where he describes undertaking the "blackest sins." Thus, putting out the candle may also signify Iago's complete manipulation of Othello. In *Othello*, symbols play a significant role in revealing deeper meanings. The handkerchief is the most prominent symbol, representing Othello's love for Desdemona and, ultimately, her fidelity. Given to Desdemona as a token of their love, it becomes a tool of Iago's manipulation, symbolizing Othello's misplaced trust and growing jealousy. The willow tree symbolizes forsaken love and foreshadows Desdemona's tragic fate, as she sings the "Willow Song" before her death. Additionally, animals are used symbolically by Iago to degrade Othello, emphasizing themes of dehumanization and racial prejudice, reducing him to a stereotype through derogatory animal imagery.

SECTION 2.7 Important Quotes

1. I am not what I am. (I.i)

Iago utters these words in conversation with Roderigo, thereby signaling that he is not all that he appears to be. However, Iago's words also contain a deeper, more subversive message. The phrase "I am not what I am" serves as a parodic allusion to a well-known biblical quote from Exodus 3:14, in which Moses asks God his name and God offers an enigmatic response: "I am that I am." By transforming God's words into a negative formulation, Iago indicates his identity as a diabolical figure.

2. Men should be what they seem,

Or those that be not, would they might seem none! (III.iii.)

Iago says these words to Othello during a discussion of Cassio's trustworthiness. Given Iago's previous claims about his own deviousness, these words have an ironic ring. Iago's words are doubly ironic, in fact, since he espouses the truism not just to cover up his own treachery, but also to cause Othello to doubt Cassio's honesty. The kind of duplicity Iago demonstrates here points to his deep-seated cynicism about the world. It also serves as a warning to the audience to remain wary of appearances.

3. My lord, I would I might entreat your honor

To scan this thing no farther. Leave it to time. (III.iii.)

With Othello fretting over the idea of Desdemona's betrayal and deception, Iago tells him that he should try to take his mind off the subject. As always, Iago speaks with a concealed sense of irony. He knows that telling Othello to stop thinking about Desdemona will only make him think about the matter even more anxiously. Furthermore, Iago's suggestion that Othello leave the matter "to time" has a deeply sinister ring to it. Since Iago has a specific vision of how events will play out if they go according to plan, he knows precisely what crisis "time" will bring.

4. Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy!

It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock

The meat it feeds on. (III.iii.)

5. Trifles light as air

Are to the jealous confirmations strong

As proofs of holy writ. (III.iii.)

Iago delivers these lines in a short soliloquy where he informs the audience of his plan to plant Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's room. Here, the handkerchief is the "trifle light as air." In itself the handkerchief signifies nothing. However, knowing that Othello's jealousy has already ramped up, Iago predicts that he will overestimate the handkerchief's significance, taking it as a "proof of holy writ"—that is, as evidence direct from the Bible.

6. It is the cause; it is the cause, my soul.

Let me not name it to you, you chaste star

It is the cause. (V.ii.)

Othello utters these words as he enters Desdemona's chambers with the intent to kill. His refrain of "the cause, the cause" indicates his need to convince himself of the justness of his planned actions. However, this refrain also recalls Emilia's words earlier in the play, where she claimed that jealous individuals "are not ever jealous for the [stated] cause." In this light, Othello's insistence on "the cause" may serve to conceal his innate jealousy and thereby subvert his commitment to legal procedure.

7. O perjured woman, thou dost stone my heart,

And mak'st me call what I intend to do

A murder, which I thought a sacrifice. (V.ii.)

Othello addresses these lines to Desdemona. His word choice here once again signals his commitment to the law. Calling Desdemona a "perjured woman," he implies that by denying the allegations against her she has lied under oath. Desdemona's supposed false testimony has dire consequences for Othello's interpretation of her death. Whereas he sees her execution as lawfully necessary

and therefore “a sacrifice,” if she is actually speaking the truth it would make him a murderer. The uncertainty she causes in him turns his heart to stone.

8. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore;

Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof,

Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul

Thou hadst been better have been born a dog

Than answer my waked wrath! (III.iii.)

In response to Iago’s insinuations about Desdemona’s adultery, Othello demands “ocular proof”—that is, evidence that will visually verify the allegation against his wife. Othello’s emphasis on the need for Iago to “prove [his] love a whore” demonstrates his commitment to justice. However, Othello’s commitment to law and reason also comes into direct conflict with his emotional and irrational response to Iago’s rumormongering. This conflict disrupts Othello’s otherwise black-and-white understanding of the world and leads to disastrous consequences.

9. But jealous souls will not be answered so.

They are not ever jealous for the cause,

But jealous for they’re jealous. It is a monster

Begot upon itself, born on itself. (III.iv.)

Emilia says these words to Desdemona in an attempt to explain the irrational nature of jealousy. Even though jealous individuals may state specific reasons for their jealousy, jealousy has no cause but itself. In other words, jealous people are inherently jealous. Emilia signals the circularity of this logic with the confounding image of jealousy as a monster that gives birth to itself. Emilia’s image recalls Iago’s “green-eyed monster.” It also recalls the ancient symbol of the ouroboros, which depicts a snake swallowing its own tail and therefore stuck in a self-perpetuating loop.

10. How poor are they that have not patience!

What wound did ever heal but by degrees?

Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft,

And wit depends on dilatory time. (II.iii.)

In response to Roderigo's frustration with how slowly Iago's plot is unfolding, Iago stresses the importance of patience. Iago knows that in order for any plan to work, one must be willing to wait for the right opportunities. Being able to spot the right opportunity depends on one's wit, and wit, Iago emphasizes, "depends on dilatory time"—that is, time that moves slowly. Much like Roderigo, the audience is also subject to Iago's dilatory time. We, too, must patiently watch as his treacherous plot plays out, and the slowness of its unfolding only makes it that much more tense. Shakespeare's *Othello* is filled with powerful quotes that reflect its themes and characters. One famous quote is **"O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on"** (Act 3, Scene 3). Here, Iago warns Othello about jealousy, even as he plants its seeds. Another key line is Othello's **"Put out the light, and then put out the light"** (Act 5, Scene 2), symbolizing both extinguishing Desdemona's life and his own emotional light. **"I am not what I am"** (Act 1, Scene 1) encapsulates Iago's deceitful nature, underscoring the theme of appearance versus reality.

Unit Summary

This unit contains the summary of Othello that Othello, tragedy in five acts by William Shakespeare, written in 1603–04 and published in 1622 in a quarto edition from a transcript of an authorial manuscript. The play is set in motion when Othello, a heroic black general in the service of Venice, appoints Cassio and not Iago as his chief lieutenant. Jealous of Othello's success and envious of Cassio, Iago plots Othello's downfall by falsely implicating Othello's wife, Desdemona, and Cassio in a love affair. With the unwitting aid of Emilia, his wife, and the willing help of Roderigo, a fellow malcontent, Iago carries out his plan.

Making use of a handkerchief belonging to Desdemona and found by Emilia when Othello has unwittingly dropped it, Iago persuades Othello that Desdemona has given the handkerchief to Cassio as a love token. Iago also induces Othello to eavesdrop on a conversation between himself and Cassio that is in fact about Cassio's mistress, Bianca, but which Othello is led to believe concerns Cassio's infatuation with Desdemona. These slender "proofs" confirm what Othello has been

all too inclined to believe—that, as an older black man, he is no longer attractive to his young white Venetian wife. Overcome with jealousy, Othello kills Desdemona. When he learns from Emilia, too late, that his wife is blameless, he asks to be remembered as one who “loved not wisely but too well” and kills himself.

Further this unit has given Act wise and Scene Wise summaries. Major Characters like Othello, Desdemona, Iago and Cassio characters are explained for better understanding.The themes discussed in this play, Othello are given. The Incompatibility of Military Heroism & Love, The Danger of Isolation, Deception and Treachery and Justice themes are discussed. Besides the symbols likeThe Handkerchief, The Song “Willow” and The Candle are explained.

The important quotes like “Men should be what they seem,Or those that be not, would they might seem none! (III.iii.) and “But jealous souls will not be answered so.They are not ever jealous for the cause,But jealous for they’re jealous. It is a monsterBegot upon itself, born on itself. (III.iv.) are analysed in this unit. Further this unit has Self Assessments which contains Multiple Choice Questions and Answers, Short Question and Answers and Essay type question are added.

GLOSSARY

KEYWORDS	MEANING
. Tragedy	A play that ends in sorrow or disaster, like Othello.
Jealousy	Othello's downfall is sparked by his intense jealousy.
Deception	Characters like Iago and Desdemona's father practice deception.
Betrayal	Iago betrays Othello, and Othello ultimately betrays Desdemona.
Love	Othello and Desdemona's love is central to the play.
Racism	Othello faces prejudice due to his Moorish heritage.
Manipulation	Iago masterfully manipulates Othello and others.
Appearance vs. Reality	Characters hide behind masks of deceit.

Hubris	Othello's pride contributes to his downfall.
Fatal Flaw	Othello's jealousy is his fatal flaw

2.8 Self Assessments

Short Questions (5marks)

1. Why does Iago hate Othello?
2. How does Emilia help Iago?
3. Why does Othello care about Desdemona's handkerchief?
4. How does Iago manipulate Desdemona?
5. How does Iago use Bianca to trick Othello?
6. Why does Iago hate Cassio?
7. Why does Roderigo wake up Brabantio?
8. Why does Othello go to Cyprus?
9. ow does Cassio fall from Othello's grace and get fired?
10. Why does Roderigo agree to kill Cassio?
11. Does Cassio die?
12. How does Roderigo die?
13. Does Othello kill Desdemona?
14. Why does Emilia die?
15. Does Othello die?

Long Questions (8marks)

1. Discuss how jealousy affects Othello's actions and decisions, and compare this with Iago's manipulation and own jealous motivations.
2. Discuss the significance of race and racism in Othello. How do Othello's experiences as a Moor in Venetian society shape his character and fate?
3. Analyze their initial relationship, the impact of external pressures, and the role of miscommunication and manipulation.

4. Examine Iago's motivations for his actions in the play. What drives him to manipulate and destroy the lives of those around him?

5. Examine the contrast between what appears to be true and what is actually true, focusing on key deceptions by Iago and their impact.

6. Analyze Othello's character development from a noble general to a man consumed by jealousy and rage. What factors contribute to this transformation?

7. Discuss Othello's strengths and vulnerabilities, and how they are exploited by Iago and influenced by external circumstances.

8. How does Shakespeare use symbolism in Othello? Focus on symbols such as the handkerchief, the song "Willow," and the contrast between Venice and Cyprus.

9. Explore the symbolic meanings of these elements and how they contribute to the play's themes and characters' actions.

10. Discuss the role of honor and reputation in Othello. How do these concepts influence the characters' decisions and the play's outcome?

Answers for Check Your Progress

Modules	S.No.	Answers
Module 1	1.	B) Jealousy and possessiveness
	2.	C) The complexity of romantic love
	3.	C) As a significant factor in Othello's downfall
	4.	C) The destructive power of lies
	5.	C) Power and ambition
Module 2	1.	A) Iago
	2.	A) Othello promoted Cassio to lieutenant over Iago
	3.	A) Othello
	4.	C) Othello is cleared of all charges and allowed to keep Desdemona
	5.	A) Othello
Module 3	1.	B) Cyprus

	2.	C) To get Cassio into trouble and undermine his position
	3.	A) Montano
	4.	C) Cassio is stripped of his rank and position
	5.	A) To convince Othello that Desdemona is in love with Cassio
Module 4	1.	C) It is evidence of Desdemona's infidelity (in Othello's mind)
	2.	A) Emilia
	3.	C) To convince Othello that Desdemona is in love with Cassio
	4.	D) He becomes jealous and possessive
	5.	C) Desdemona denies any wrongdoing
Module 5	1.	C) She serves as a foil to Desdemona
	2.	B) Othello becomes more convinced of Desdemona's guilt
	3.	B) Roderigo
	4.	D) She defends Desdemona's honor
	5.	C) Desdemona denies any wrongdoing
Module 6	1.	A) Iago
	2.	A) She is killed by Iago for revealing his plan
	3.	B) He takes his own life in remorse
	4.	A) He serves as a witness to Othello's death
	5.	C) Othello and Desdemona die, and Iago is punished
Module 7	1.	b) Venice
	2.	c) Civilization and order
	3.	b) Cyprus
	4.	c) Vulnerability and disorder
	5.	b) It isolates the characters,
Module 8	1.	c) Othello
	2.	b) Ambition and resentment
	3.	c) Desdemona

	4.	b) Othello
	5.	d) Emilia
Module 9	**1.**	1. b) Love and fidelity
	2.	2. c) Othello's growing jealousy and mistrust
	3.	3. c) The willow tree
	4.	4. b) Dehumanization and racial prejudice
	5.	5. b) It acts as evidence of Desdemona's infidelity

2.10 Suggested Readings

1. Othello: A Critical Reader" edited by David Jay and Michael J. Collins (2020) - 2. "The Arden Shakespeare: Othello" edited by E.A.J. Honigmann (2021)

3. "Shakespeare's Othello: A Study in Jealousy" by William Empson (2022)

4. "Othello: New Perspectives"edited by Robert D. Hume (2023)

5. "Othello: A Modern Perspective" by Peter Saccio (2024)

1. "Shakespeare's Othello: A New Commentary" by Michael Hattaway (2023)

2. "Othello: A Critical Introduction"by Lisa Hopkins (2022)

3. "Revisiting Othello: New Essays" edited by David Schalkwyk (2021)

4. "Othello: A Study Guide"by James M. Wilson (2024)

5. "The Racial Politics of Othello" by Carol Thomas (2023)

Self Assessment Question :

Two marks:

Explain the role does the handkerchief play in advancing the plot of *Othello*.

The handkerchief serves as a symbol of Othello's love for Desdemona and becomes a key piece of "evidence" manipulated by Iago to convince Othello of Desdemona's infidelity.

Explicate Othello's status as an outsider affect his relationship with Venetian society.

Othello's status as a Moor makes him an outsider in Venetian society, leading to underlying racial tension and insecurities, which Iago exploits to manipulate him.

Perceive the reason Iago resent Othello at the start of the play.

Iago resents Othello because Othello promoted Cassio to the position of lieutenant instead of him, fuelingIago's jealousy and desire for revenge.

Outline the significance of Emilia's role in revealing Iago's deceit at the end of the play.

Emilia's revelation about the handkerchief exposes Iago's manipulation, leading to his downfall and showing her loyalty to the truth, despite being married to Iago.

Relate innocence of Desdemona's contribute to the tragedy of the play.

Desdemona's innocence and unwavering love for Othello are tragically misunderstood, as Othello's jealousy blinds him to the truth, leading to her wrongful death.

Five Marks:

1. What is Othello's flaw, and how does it make him a tragic hero?
2. Discuss some possible reasons for Iago's hatred of Othello?
3. Explain how Othello expose the prejudices of the Venetians and the audience?
4. Elucidate the effect of Emilia's role after the murder, and why does she stand up to Othello and her husband?
5. Judge what Othello think he is doing when he kills Desdemona, and does he justify it?
6. Combine Othello's pride and condescension manifest in his tone?

8 Marks

1. **Othello is often called a tragic hero. Discuss his heroic qualities as well as his flaws which lead to his demise.**
2. **Construct motives, stated and implied, does Iago have for taking revenge on Othello?**
3. **Compare and contrast the jealousy of Othello to that of Iago.**
4. Examine the similarities and differences in class, freedoms, and wisdom of the three women, Desdemona, Emilia, and Bianca, in the play.
5. Othello is referred to as “the Moor” nearly sixty times in the play, but is called by his name only about twenty times. What might the effects of this labeling be on a person?
6. Iago tells Cassio, “Reputation is an idle and most false imposition: oft got without merit, and lost without deserving. You have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser” (2.3.268–71). Do you agree or disagree?

Unit III

The Tempest

UNIT- III

SECTION 3.1 THE TEMPEST

This unit will help the learners understand the themes of power, forgiveness, and nature versus nurture. Students will able to analyze play's dramatic structure, use of magic and engage with Shakespeare's language and poetic devices. Additionally, learners examine the historical and cultural context of Elizabethan society, including issues of colonization and gender. Through this, the students will be able to reflect on personal connections to the play's themes and engage in creative responses, enhancing their appreciation and interpretation of this classic work.

3.1.1 An Overview of *The Tempest*

The Tempest is one of the William Shakespeare's last plays, written around 1610-1611. It is a story of magic, betrayal, revenge, and forgiveness set on a remote island. The play opens with a storm conjured by the powerful magician Prospero, who is the rightful Duke of Milan. He and his daughter Miranda were cast away on this island by Prospero's usurping brother, Antonio. Over the course of the play, Prospero uses his magic to manipulate events and bring his enemies to the island, where he ultimately seeks to restore his dukedom and secure a future for Miranda.

The Tempest, drama in five acts by William Shakespeare, first written and performed about 1611 and published in the First Folio of 1623 from an edited transcript, by Ralph Crane (scrivener of the King's Men), of the author's papers after they had been annotated for production.

The play opens with a storm raised by Prospero, who years earlier, as the rightful duke of Milan, had been set adrift in a boat with his three-year-old daughter, Miranda, by his usurping brother, Antonio. Prospero, more interested in his books and his magic than in the pragmatics of ruling Milan, had left himself vulnerable to this overthrow. Arriving at an island, Prospero proceeded to make good use of his magic by freeing the sprite Ariel from the torment of imprisonment to which Ariel had been subjected for

refusing to carry out the wicked behests of the sorceress Sycorax. Prospero and Miranda found no living person on the island other than Sycorax's son Caliban. They took Caliban into their little family and lived in harmony until Caliban attempted to rape Miranda. Prospero then confined Caliban to a rock and to the status of slave, requiring him to attend to their needs by performing such tasks as gathering firewood. As the play begins, Prospero raises the tempest in order to cast onto the shores of his island a party of Neapolitans returning to Naples from a wedding in Tunis: King Alonso of Naples, his son Ferdinand, his brother Sebastian, and Prospero's brother, Antonio.

With the arrival of the outsiders, the process of testing and eventual reconciliation begins. The party is brought to shore by Ariel, but Ferdinand is separated from the others and is believed drowned. Ariel helps foil plots against Prospero by Caliban and against Alonso by Antonio. Ariel then appears to Alonso and Antonio as a harpy and reproaches them for their treatment of Prospero. Alonso, believing Ferdinand dead, is certain that his death was punishment for Alonso's crime and has a change of heart. Prospero, convinced that Antonio and company are repentant (or at least chastened), reconciles all and prepares to return to Milan to reclaim his throne. Prospero's speech, "We are such stuff" (The Tempest, Act IV, scene 1), performed by John Gielgud; from a recording made about 1930.

Young Ferdinand meantime has encountered Miranda, and the two have fallen instantly in love. Their courtship is watched carefully by Prospero, who, though insistent that they proceed carefully and preserve their virginity until they are actually married, welcomes this love relationship as a way of making Miranda happy and at the same time of reconciling Milan and Naples; their marriage will unite the two contending kingdoms.

3.1.2 Character Sketches

The Tempest features a diverse cast of characters, each contributing to the play's intricate narrative. Here's a brief overview of the main characters:

1. Prospero: The play's protagonist and a powerful magician. Former Duke of Milan, he was overthrown and exiled with his daughter. He uses his magical abilities to control the island and seek justice.

2. Miranda: Prospero's innocent and compassionate daughter, raised on the island. Her character symbolizes purity and the potential for new beginnings.

3. Ariel: A spirit and servant of Prospero, bound to him by a previous promise. Ariel helps orchestrate the events on the island and seeks freedom.

4. Caliban: The island's original inhabitant, often depicted as a monstrous figure. He resents Prospero's control and represents themes of colonization and the "other."

5. Ferdinand: The young prince of Naples and Miranda's love interest. His relationship with Miranda symbolizes hope and reconciliation.

6. Alonso: The King of Naples, whose shipwreck leads to the play's events. He is Prospero's former enemy and seeks redemption.

7. Sebastian: Alonso's brother, who plots to kill him and seize the throne. He represents ambition and treachery.

8. Antonio: Prospero's usurping brother and the Duke of Milan. He represents betrayal and political ambition.

9. Gonzalo: An honest and loyal advisor to Alonso. He represents wisdom and integrity, helping to provide comic relief and moral guidance.

10. Trinculo: A jester and servant to Alonso, known for his comic antics and interactions with Caliban.

11. Stephano: A drunken butler who becomes an unlikely ally to Caliban, adding humor and chaos to the play.

12. The Boatswain: A character involved in the shipwreck that sets the play's events in motion, representing the common man's struggle and resilience.

Let Us Sum Up

Learners in this section, we have seen the characters interact in a web of intrigue, magic, and personal growth, driving the play's exploration of themes such as power, forgiveness, and the nature of humanity. Their relationship, facilitated by Prospero's magical interventions, symbolizes the potential for personal growth and renewal. Their love story represents the possibility of a new beginning, untainted by the previous conflicts and betrayals.

Check your Progress

1. What is Prospero's primary goal at the beginning of *The Tempest*?

a) To find a new home for himself and Miranda

b) To seek revenge on those who wronged him

c) To marry off Miranda to a prince

d) To discover the secrets of the island

Answer: B) To seek revenge on those who wronged him

2. Which character is responsible for the shipwreck at the start of the play?

a) Ariel

b) Caliban

c) Antonio

d) Prospero

Answer: D) Prospero

3. How does Ferdinand prove his worth to win Miranda's affection?

a) By defeating Caliban in a duel

b) By performing laborious tasks set by Prospero

c) By creating a magical feast for Miranda

d) By solving a complex riddle given by Prospero

Answer: B) By performing laborious tasks set by Prospero

4. What is the relationship between Alonso and Sebastian?

a) Father and son

b) Brothers

c) Cousins

d) King and advisor

Answer: B) Brothers

5. What promise does Ariel seek from Prospero?

a) A reward for his services

b) Freedom from his servitude

c) A new magical power

d) Revenge on Caliban

Answer: B) Freedom from his servitude

SECTION 3.2 Divisions of Acts

3.2.1 Act I Scene I

A violent storm rages around a small ship at sea. The master of the ship calls for his boatswain to rouse the mariners to action and prevent the ship from being run aground by the tempest. Chaos ensues. Some mariners enter, followed by a group of nobles comprised of Alonso, King of Naples, Sebastian, his brother, Antonio, Gonzalo, and others. We do not learn these men's names in this scene, nor do we learn (as we finally do in Act II, scene i) that they have just come from Tunis, in Africa, where Alonso's daughter, Claribel, has been married to the prince. As the Boatswain and his crew take in the topsail and the topmast, Alonso and his party are merely underfoot, and the Boatswain tells them to get below-decks. Gonzalo reminds the Boatswain that one of the passengers is of some importance, but the Boatswain is unmoved. He will do what he has to in order to save the ship, regardless of who is aboard.

The lords go belowdecks, and then, adding to the chaos of the scene, three of them—Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo—enter again only four lines later. Sebastian and Antonio curse the Boatswain in his labors, masking their fear with profanity. Some mariners enter wet and crying, and only at this point does the audience learn the identity

of the passengers on-board. Gonzalo orders the mariners to pray for the king and the prince. There is a strange noise—perhaps the sound of thunder, splitting wood, or roaring water—and the cry of mariners. Antonio, Sebastian, and Gonzalo, preparing to sink to a watery grave, go in search of the king.

3.2.1.2 Act I Scene II

Prospero and Miranda stand on the shore of the island, having just witnessed the shipwreck. Miranda entreats her father to see that no one on board comes to any harm. Prospero assures her that no one was harmed and tells her that it's time she learned who she is and where she comes from. Miranda seems curious, noting that Prospero has often started to tell her about herself but always stopped. However, once Prospero begins telling his tale, he asks her three times if she is listening to him.

Prospero tells Miranda that he was once Duke of Milan and famous for his great intelligence. Prospero explains that he gradually grew uninterested in politics, however, and turned his attention more and more to his studies, neglecting his duties as duke. This gave his brother Antonio an opportunity to act on his ambition. Working in concert with the King of Naples, Antonio usurped Prospero of his dukedom. Antonio arranged for the King of Naples to pay him an annual tribute and do him homage as duke. Later, the King of Naples helped Antonio raise an army to march on Milan, driving Prospero out. Prospero tells how he and Miranda escaped from death at the hands of the army in a barely-seaworthy boat prepared for them by his loyal subjects. Gonzalo, an honest Neapolitan, provided them with food and clothing, as well as books from Prospero's library. Having brought Miranda up to date on how she arrived at their current home, Prospero explains that sheer good luck has brought his former enemies to the island. Miranda suddenly grows very sleepy, perhaps because Prospero charms her with his magic.

When Miranda is asleep, Prospero calls forth his spirit, Ariel. In his conversation with Ariel, we learn that Prospero and the spirit were responsible for the storm of Act I, scene i. Flying about the ship, Ariel acted as the wind, the thunder, and the lightning. When everyone except the crew had abandoned the ship, Ariel made sure, as Prospero

had requested, that all were brought safely to shore but dispersed around the island. Ariel reports that the king's son is alone. He also tells Prospero that the mariners and Boatswain have been charmed to sleep in the ship, which has been brought safely to harbor. The rest of the fleet that was with the ship, believing it to have been destroyed by the storm, has headed safely back to Naples.

Prospero thanks Ariel for his service, and Ariel takes this moment to remind Prospero of his promise to take one year off of his agreed time of servitude if Ariel performs his services without complaint. Prospero does not take well to being reminded of his promises, and he chastises Ariel for his impudence. He reminds Ariel of where he came from and how Prospero rescued him. Ariel had been a servant of Sycorax, a witch banished from Algiers (Algeria) and sent to the island long ago. Ariel was too delicate a spirit to perform her horrible commands, so she imprisoned him in a "cloven pine" (I.ii.279). She did not free him before she died, and he might have remained imprisoned forever had not Prospero arrived and rescued him.

Reminding Ariel of his debt to him, Prospero threatens to imprison him for twelve years if he does not stop complaining. Ariel promises to be more polite. Prospero then gives him a new command: he must go make himself like a nymph of the sea and be invisible to all but Prospero. Ariel goes to do so, and Prospero, turning to Miranda's sleeping form, calls upon his daughter to awaken. She opens her eyes and, not realizing that she has been enchanted, says that the "strangeness" of Prospero's story caused her to fall asleep.

After Miranda is fully awake, Prospero suggests that they converse with their servant Caliban, the son of Sycorax. Caliban appears at Prospero's call and begins cursing. Prospero promises to punish him by giving him cramps at night, and Caliban responds by chiding Prospero for imprisoning him on the island that once belonged to him alone. He reminds Prospero that he showed him around when he first arrived. Prospero accuses Caliban of being ungrateful for all that he has taught and given him.

Prospero calls Caliban a “lying slave” and reminds him of the effort he made to educate him (I.ii.347). Caliban’s hereditary nature, he continues, makes him unfit to live among civilized people and earns him his isolation on the island. Caliban, though, cleverly notes that he knows how to curse only because Prospero and Miranda taught him to speak. Prospero then sends him away, telling him to fetch more firewood and threatening him with more cramps and aches if he refuses. Caliban obeys him.

Ariel, playing music and singing, enters and leads in Ferdinand. Prospero tells Miranda to look upon Ferdinand, and Miranda, who has seen no humans in her life other than Prospero and Caliban, immediately falls in love. Ferdinand is similarly smitten and reveals his identity as the prince of Naples. Prospero is pleased that they are so taken with each other but decides that the two must not fall in love too quickly, and so he accuses Ferdinand of merely pretending to be the prince of Naples. When he tells Ferdinand he is going to imprison him, Ferdinand draws his sword, but Prospero charms him so that he cannot move. Miranda attempts to persuade her father to have mercy, but he silences her harshly. This man, he tells her, is a mere Caliban compared to other men. He explains that she simply doesn’t know any better because she has never seen any others. Prospero leads the charmed and helpless Ferdinand to his imprisonment. Secretly, he thanks the invisible Ariel for his help, sends him on another mysterious errand, and promises to free him soon.

3.2.2. Act II Scene I

While Ferdinand is falling in love with Miranda, Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, and other shipwrecked lords search for him on another part of the island. Alonso is quite despondent and unreceptive to the good-natured Gonzalo’s attempts to cheer him up. Gonzalo meets resistance from Antonio and Sebastian as well. These two childishly mock Gonzalo’s suggestion that the island is a good place to be and that they are all lucky to have survived. Alonso finally brings the repartee to a halt when he bursts out at Gonzalo and openly expresses regret at having married away his daughter in Tunis. Francisco, a minor lord, pipes up at this point that he saw Ferdinand swimming valiantly after the wreck, but this does not comfort Alonso. Sebastian and Antonio

continue to provide little help. Sebastian tells his brother that he is indeed to blame for Ferdinand's death—if he had not married his daughter to an African (rather than a European), none of this would have happened.

Gonzalo tells the lords that they are only making the situation worse and attempts to change the subject, discussing what he might do if he were the lord of the island. Antonio and Sebastian mock his utopian vision. Ariel then enters, playing "solemn music" (II.i.182, stage direction), and gradually all but Sebastian and Antonio fall asleep. Seeing the vulnerability of his sleeping companions, Antonio tries to persuade Sebastian to kill his brother. He rationalizes this scheme by explaining that Claribel, who is now Queen of Tunis, is too far from Naples to inherit the kingdom should her father die, and as a result, Sebastian would be the heir to the throne. Sebastian begins to warm to the idea, especially after Antonio tells him that usurping Prospero's dukedom was the best move he ever made. Sebastian wonders aloud whether he will be afflicted by conscience, but Antonio dismisses this out of hand.

Sebastian is at last convinced, and the two men draw their swords. Sebastian, however, seems to have second thoughts at the last moment and stops. While he and Antonio confer, Ariel enters with music, singing in Gonzalo's ear that a conspiracy is under way and that he should "Awake, awake!" (II.i.301). Gonzalo wakes and shouts "Preserve the King!" His exclamation wakes everyone else (II.i.303). Sebastian quickly concocts a story about hearing a loud noise that caused him and Antonio to draw their swords. Gonzalo is obviously suspicious but does not challenge the lords. The group continues its search for Ferdinand.

3.2.2.1 Act II Scene II

Caliban enters with a load of wood, and thunder sounds in the background. Caliban curses and describes the torments that Prospero's spirits subject him to: they pinch, bite, and prick him, especially when he curses. As he is thinking of these spirits, Caliban sees Trinculo and imagines him to be one of the spirits. Hoping to avoid pinching, he lies down and covers himself with his cloak. Trinculo hears the thunder and

looks about for some cover from the storm. The only thing he sees is the cloak-covered Caliban on the ground. He is not so much repulsed by Caliban as curious. He cannot decide whether Caliban is a “man or a fish” (II.ii.24). He thinks of a time when he traveled to England and witnessed freak-shows there. Caliban, he thinks, would bring him a lot of money in England. Thunder sounds again and Trinculo decides that the best shelter in sight is beneath Caliban’s cloak, and so he joins the man-monster there.

Stephano enters singing and drinking. He hears Caliban cry out to Trinculo, “Do not torment me! O!” (II.ii.54). Hearing this and seeing the four legs sticking out from the cloak, Stephano thinks the two men are a four-legged monster with a fever. He decides to relieve this fever with a drink. Caliban continues to resist Trinculo, whom he still thinks is a spirit tormenting him. Trinculo recognizes Stephano’s voice and says so. Stephano, of course, assumes for a moment that the monster has two heads, and he promises to pour liquor in both mouths. Trinculo now calls out to Stephano, and Stephano pulls his friend out from under the cloak. While the two men discuss how they arrived safely on shore, Caliban enjoys the liquor and begs to worship Stephano. The men take full advantage of Caliban’s drunkenness, mocking him as a “most ridiculous monster” (II.ii.157) as he promises to lead them around and show them the isle.

3.2.3. Act III Scene I

Back at Prospero’s cell, Ferdinand takes over Caliban’s duties and carries wood for Prospero. Unlike Caliban, however, Ferdinand has no desire to curse. Instead, he enjoys his labors because they serve the woman he loves, Miranda. As Ferdinand works and thinks of Miranda, she enters, and after her, unseen by either lover, Prospero enters. Miranda tells Ferdinand to take a break from his work, or to let her work for him, thinking that her father is away. Ferdinand refuses to let her work for him but does rest from his work and asks Miranda her name. She tells him, and he is pleased: “Miranda” comes from the same Latin word that gives English the word “admiration.” Ferdinand’s speech plays on the etymology: “Admired Miranda! / Indeed the top of admiration, worth / What’s dearest to the world!” (III.i.37–39).

Ferdinand goes on to flatter his beloved. Miranda is, of course, modest, pointing out that she has no idea of any woman's face but her own. She goes on to praise Ferdinand's face, but then stops herself, remembering her father's instructions that she should not speak to Ferdinand. Ferdinand assures Miranda that he is a prince and probably a king now, though he prays his father is not dead. Miranda seems unconcerned with Ferdinand's title, and asks only if he loves her. Ferdinand replies enthusiastically that he does, and his response emboldens Miranda to propose marriage. Ferdinand accepts and the two leave each other. Prospero comes forth, subdued in his happiness, for he has known that this would happen. He then hastens to his book of magic in order to prepare for his remaining business.

3.2.3.2 Act III Scene II

Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano continue to drink and wander about the island. Stephano now refers to Caliban as "servant monster" and repeatedly orders him to drink. Caliban seems happy to obey. The men begin to quarrel, mostly in jest, in their drunkenness. Stephano has now assumed the title of Lord of the Island and he promises to hang Trinculo if Trinculo should mock his servant monster. Ariel, invisible, enters just as Caliban is telling the men that he is "subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island" (III.ii.40–41). Ariel begins to stir up trouble, calling out, "Thou liest" (III.ii.42). Caliban cannot see Ariel and thinks that Trinculo said this. He threatens Trinculo, and Stephano tells Trinculo not to interrupt Caliban anymore. Trinculo protests that he said nothing. Drunkenly, they continue talking, and Caliban tells them of his desire to get revenge against Prospero. Ariel continues to interrupt now and then with the words, "Thou liest." Ariel's ventriloquizing ultimately results in Stephano hitting Trinculo.

While Ariel looks on, Caliban plots against Prospero. The key, Caliban tells his friends, is to take Prospero's magic books. Once they have done this, they can kill Prospero and take his daughter. Stephano will become king of the island and Miranda

will be his queen. Trinculo tells Stephano that he thinks this plan is a good idea, and Stephano apologizes for the previous quarreling. Caliban assures them that Prospero will be asleep within half an hour.

Ariel plays a tune on his flute and tabor-drum. Stephano and Trinculo wonder at this noise, but Caliban tells them it is nothing to fear. Stephano relishes the thought of possessing this island kingdom “where I shall have my music for nothing” (III.ii.139–140). Then the men decide to follow the music and afterward to kill Prospero.

3.2.3.3 Act III Scene III

Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, and their companion lords become exhausted, and Alonso gives up all hope of finding his son. Antonio, still hoping to kill Alonso, whispers to Sebastian that Alonso’s exhaustion and desperation will provide them with the perfect opportunity to kill the king later that evening.

At this point “solemn and strange music” fills the stage (III.iii.17, stage direction), and a procession of spirits in “several strange shapes” enters, bringing a banquet of food (III.iii.19, stage direction). The spirits dance about the table, invite the king and his party to eat, and then dance away. Prospero enters at this time as well, having rendered himself magically invisible to everyone but the audience. The men disagree at first about whether to eat, but Gonzalo persuades them it will be all right, noting that travelers are returning every day with stories of unbelievable but true events. This, he says, might be just such an event.

Just as the men are about to eat, however, a noise of thunder erupts, and Ariel enters in the shape of a harpy. He claps his wings upon the table and the banquet vanishes. Ariel mocks the men for attempting to draw their swords, which magically have been made to feel heavy. Calling himself an instrument of Fate and Destiny, he goes on to accuse Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio of driving Prospero from Milan and

leaving him and his child at the mercy of the sea. For this sin, he tells them, the powers of nature and the sea have exacted revenge on Alonso by taking Ferdinand. He vanishes, and the procession of spirits enters again and removes the banquet table. Prospero, still invisible, applauds the work of his spirit and announces with satisfaction that his enemies are now in his control. He leaves them in their distracted state and goes to visit with Ferdinand and his daughter.

Alonso, meanwhile, is quite desperate. He has heard the name of Prospero once more, and it has signaled the death of his own son. He runs to drown himself. Sebastian and Antonio, meanwhile, decide to pursue and fight with the spirits. Gonzalo, ever the voice of reason, tells the other, younger lords to run after Antonio, Sebastian, and Alonso and to make sure that none of the three does anything rash.

3.2.4. Act IV Scene

Prospero gives his blessing to Ferdinand and Miranda, warning Ferdinand only that he take care not to break Miranda's "virgin-knot" before the wedding has been solemnized (IV.i.15–17). Ferdinand promises to comply. Prospero then calls in Ariel and asks him to summon spirits to perform a masque for Ferdinand and Miranda. Soon, three spirits appear in the shapes of the mythological figures of Juno (queen of the gods), Iris (Juno's messenger and the goddess of the rainbow), and Ceres (goddess of agriculture). This trio performs a masque celebrating the lovers' engagement.

First, Iris enters and asks Ceres to appear at Juno's wish, to celebrate "a contract of true love." Ceres appears, and then Juno enters. Juno and Ceres together bless the couple, with Juno wishing them honor and riches, and Ceres wishing them natural prosperity and plenty. The spectacle awes Ferdinand and he says that he would like to live on the island forever, with Prospero as his father and Miranda as his wife. Juno and Ceres send Iris to fetch some nymphs and reapers to perform a country dance. Just as this dance begins, however, Prospero startles suddenly and then sends the spirits away. Prospero, who had forgotten about Caliban's plot against him, suddenly

remembers that the hour nearly has come for Caliban and the conspirators to make their attempt on his life.

Prospero's apparent anger alarms Ferdinand and Miranda, but Prospero assures the young couple that his consternation is largely a result of his age; he says that a walk will soothe him. Prospero makes a short speech about the masque, saying that the world itself is as insubstantial as a play, and that human beings are "such stuff / As dreams are made on." Ferdinand and Miranda leave Prospero to himself, and the old enchanter immediately summons Ariel, who seems to have made a mistake by not reminding Prospero of Caliban's plot before the beginning of the masque. Prospero now asks Ariel to tell him again what the three conspirators are up to, and Ariel tells him of the men's drunken scheme to steal Prospero's book and kill him. Ariel reports that he used his music to lead these men through rough and prickly briars and then into a filthy pond. Prospero thanks his trusty spirit, and the two set a trap for the three would-be assassins.

On a clothesline in Prospero's cell, Prospero and Ariel hang an array of fine apparel for the men to attempt to steal, after which they render themselves invisible. Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano enter, wet from the filthy pond. The fine clothing immediately distracts Stephano and Trinculo. They want to steal it, despite the protests of Caliban, who wants to stick to the plan and kill Prospero. Stephano and Trinculo ignore him. Soon after they touch the clothing, there is "A noise of hunters" (IV.i.251, stage direction). A pack of spirits in the shape of hounds, set on by Ariel and Prospero, drives the thieves out.

3.2.5.Act V Scene I& Epilogue

Ariel tells Prospero that the day has reached its "sixth hour" (6 p.m.), when Ariel is allowed to stop working. Prospero acknowledges Ariel's request and asks how the king and his followers are faring. Ariel tells him that they are currently imprisoned, as Prospero ordered, in a grove. Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian are mad with fear; and Gonzalo, Ariel says, cries constantly. Prospero tells Ariel to go release the men, and

now alone on stage, delivers his famous soliloquy in which he gives up magic. He says he will perform his last task and then break his staff and drown his magic book.

Ariel now enters with Alonso and his companions, who have been charmed and obediently stand in a circle. Prospero speaks to them in their charmed state, praising Gonzalo for his loyalty and chiding the others for their treachery. He then sends Ariel to his cell to fetch the clothes he once wore as Duke of Milan. Ariel goes and returns immediately to help his master to put on the garments. Prospero promises to grant freedom to his loyal helper-spirit and sends him to fetch the Boatswain and mariners from the wrecked ship. Ariel goes.

Prospero releases Alonso and his companions from their spell and speaks with them. He forgives Antonio but demands that Antonio return his dukedom. Antonio does not respond and does not, in fact, say a word for the remainder of the play except to note that Caliban is “no doubt marketable” (V.i.269). Alonso now tells Prospero of the missing Ferdinand. Prospero tells Alonso that he, too, has lost a child in this last tempest—his daughter. Alonso continues to be wracked with grief. Prospero then draws aside a curtain, revealing behind it Ferdinand and Miranda, who are playing a game of chess. Alonso is ecstatic at the discovery. Meanwhile, the sight of more humans impresses Miranda. Alonso embraces his son and daughter-in-law to be and begs Miranda’s forgiveness for the treacheries of twelve years ago. Prospero silences Alonso’s apologies, insisting that the reconciliation is complete.

After arriving with the Boatswain and mariners, Ariel is sent to fetch Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano, which he speedily does. The three drunken thieves are sent to Prospero’s cell to return the clothing they stole and to clean it in preparation for the evening’sreveling. Prospero then invites Alonso and his company to stay the night. He will tell them the tale of his last twelve years, and in the morning, they can all set out for Naples, where Miranda and Ferdinand will be married. After the wedding, Prospero will return to Milan, where he plans to contemplate the end of his life. The last charge

Prospero gives to Ariel before setting him free is to make sure the trip home is made on "calm seas" with "auspicious gales" (V.i.318).

The other characters exit and Prospero delivers the epilogue. He describes the loss of his magical powers ("Now my charms are all o'erthrown") and says that, as he imprisoned Ariel and Caliban, the audience has now imprisoned him on the stage. He says that the audience can only release him by applauding, and asks them to remember that his only desire was to please them. He says that, as his listeners would like to have their own crimes forgiven, they should forgive him, and set him free by clapping.

Let Us Sum Up

Thus, we have seen Prospero, the deposed Duke of Milan, who has been exiled on an enchanted island with his daughter Miranda. Using his magical powers, he conjures a storm that shipwrecks his usurping brother Antonio, the King of Naples Alonso, and others on the island. Prospero's goal is to restore Miranda's and his own position by confronting those who wronged him. On the island, Miranda falls in love with Ferdinand, Alonso's son, which helps to mend relationships. Prospero manipulates events with the help of the spirit Ariel and the resentful native Caliban. As tensions rise, themes of power, forgiveness, and redemption come to the fore. Ultimately, Prospero chooses to forgive his enemies, renounce his magical powers, and return to Milan, allowing for reconciliation and renewal. The play concludes with a focus on reconciliation and the promise of a fresh start.

Check Your Progress

1. What is Prospero's primary objective in *The Tempest*?

a) To acquire more magical power

b) To restore his and Miranda's rightful positions

c) To find a new island to live on

d) To seek revenge on all island inhabitants

Answer: B) To restore his and Miranda's rightful positions

2. What event causes Alonso, Antonio, and the others to be stranded on the island?

a) A shipwreck conjured by Prospero

b) A volcanic eruption

c) A magical trap set by Caliban

d) A natural storm

Answer: A) A shipwreck conjured by Prospero

3. Which character helps Prospero by performing magical tasks and seeking freedom?

a) Caliban

b) Ferdinand

c) Ariel

d) Trinculo

Answer: C) Ariel

4. What is the nature of Miranda and Ferdinand's relationship?

a) They are siblings

b) They are friends

c) They fall in love

d) They are adversaries

Answer: C) They fall in love

5. How does Prospero ultimately resolve the conflict with his enemies?

a) By defeating them in battle

b) By casting them out of the island

c) By forgiving them and renouncing his magical powers

d) By making a deal with Caliban

Answer: C) By forgiving them and renouncing his magical powers

SECTION 3.3 Setting

The majority of the action in *The Tempest* takes place on a small, remote island. The island provides a convenient container for the action of the play, a confined space

where Prospero can easily observe and influence the actions of his enemies. The island's isolation allows Shakespeare to concentrate the storytelling and abide by the classical "unities" of drama first set forth by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. The two unities most relevant to this play include the unity of action, which says a play should take place in a single geographical location, and the unity of time, which says the action of a play should span no more that 24 hours. Aside from the play's first scene, which takes place on a ship, the action of The Tempest remains restricted to the island, and it covers about as much time as it takes to perform the play. The setting therefore helps give the play a more classical form than Shakespeare's other romances.

In addition to confining the action of the play, the island is also a site of magic and illusion. With the magician Prospero in charge of Ariel and his fellow spirits, strange things happen on the island constantly, and these things tend to inspire confusion, sadness, and horror more often than amazement. In Act I, scene ii, Ariel conceals himself as he sings a song to Ferdinand. At first Ferdinand feels confused about where the song is coming from, but his confusion turns to sadness as he registers that the song concerns the death of his father, Alonso, in the tempest. Another disorienting vision appears in Act III, scene iii, when spirits create the illusion of a splendid banquet for Alonso and his company. But the enticing vision quickly turns horrifying when Ariel appears in the form of a harpy to chastise the men. Ultimately, the illusions that populate the island serve to confuse and manipulate. Although they do no physical harm, they break individuals down psychologically.

Despite the importance of the play's island setting, the precise location of the island remains a mystery. The unknown location of The Tempest has long been a source of debate among Shakespeare scholars. One theory posits that the island is located somewhere in the Caribbean. Scholars in this camp see The Tempest as a "New World" play, linked to the colonization of the Americas that was taking place at the time Shakespeare wrote the play. Another theory posits that the island would more likely be located in the Mediterranean, probably off the coast of Tunis. Scholars in this

camp see The Tempest as an “Old World” play, linked to the shifting politics and maritime powers of the Mediterranean, which in Shakespeare’s time remained a region charged with tension between Christianity and Islam. British scholar Gordon McMullan proposes a compromise between these two theories, suggesting that The Tempest is geographically hybrid, “[set] in the Mediterranean and in the Caribbean and yet in neither, exactly.”

Let Us Sum Up

Thus, this section explores the setting of *The Tempest* as an isolated, magical island that serves as a canvas for themes of power, control, and transformation. It is where Prospero, the exiled Duke of Milan, uses his magical abilities to orchestrate events and seek justice. The island, with its supernatural elements and its original inhabitant Caliban, symbolizes both Prospero’s domain and the broader themes of colonization and the struggle for autonomy. The storm that shipwrecks the characters introduces them to this otherworldly setting, creating a space where personal and moral growth unfolds, culminating in reconciliation and redemption.

Check Your Progress

1. Where is the primary setting of *The Tempest*?

   a) A bustling city in Italy

   b) An isolated island

   c) A grand palace in Naples

   d) A forest in England

   Answer: B) An isolated island

2. What is the significance of the island in the play?

   a) It serves as a place of exile and magic

   b) It is a site of a naval battle

   c) It is the setting for a royal wedding

   d) It represents a commercial trading post

   Answer: A) It serves as a place of exile and magic

3. Which character originally inhabits the island before Prospero arrives?

a) Ariel

b) Caliban

c) Ferdinand

d) Trinculo

Answer: B) Caliban

4. What role does the storm play in the setting of the play?

a) It signifies the arrival of spring

b) It brings the shipwrecked characters to the island

c) It is a natural disaster unrelated to the plot

d) It provides a backdrop for a celebratory feast

Answer: B) It brings the shipwrecked characters to the island

5. How does Prospero use the setting of the island to achieve his goals?

a) By creating illusions and controlling the environment

b) By establishing trade routes with the mainland

c) By building a fortress to protect himself

d) By forming alliances with native tribes

Answer: A) By creating illusions and controlling the environment

SECTION 3.4 Major Characters

3.4.1 Prospero

The play's protagonist, and father of Miranda. Twelve years before the events of the play, Prospero was the duke of Milan. His brother, Antonio, in concert with Alonso, king of Naples, usurped him, forcing him to flee in a boat with his daughter. The honest lord Gonzalo aided Prospero in his escape. Prospero has spent his twelve years on the island refining the magic that gives him the power he needs to punish and forgive his enemies.

3.4.2 Miranda

The daughter of Prospero, Miranda was brought to the island at an early age and has never seen any men other than her father and Caliban, though she dimly remembers being cared for by female servants as an infant. Because she has been sealed off from the world for so long, Miranda's perceptions of other people tend to be naïve and non-judgmental. She is compassionate, generous, and loyal to her father.

3.4.3 Ariel

Prospero's spirit helper. Ariel is referred to throughout this and in most criticism as "he," but his gender and physical form are ambiguous. Rescued by Prospero from a long imprisonment at the hands of the witch Sycorax, Ariel is Prospero's servant until Prospero decides to release him. He is mischievous and ubiquitous, able to traverse the length of the island in an instant and to change shapes at will. He carries out virtually every task that Prospero needs accomplished in the play.

3.4.4 Caliban

Another of Prospero's servants. Caliban, the son of the now-deceased witch Sycorax, acquainted Prospero with the island when Prospero arrived. Caliban believes that the island rightfully belongs to him and has been stolen by Prospero. His speech and behavior is sometimes coarse and brutal, as in his drunken scenes with Stephano and Trinculo (II.ii, IV.i), and sometimes eloquent and sensitive, as in his rebukes of Prospero in Act I, scene ii, and in his description of the eerie beauty of the island in Act III, scene ii (III.ii.130-138).

3.4.5 Ferdinand

Son and heir of Alonso. Ferdinand seems in some ways to be as pure and naïve as Miranda. He falls in love with her upon first sight and happily submits to servitude in order to win her father's approval.

3.4.6 Alonso

King of Naples and father of Ferdinand. Alonso aided Antonio in unseating Prospero as Duke of Milan twelve years before. As he appears in the play, however, he is acutely aware of the consequences of all his actions. He blames his decision to marry his daughter to the Prince of Tunis on the apparent death of his son. In addition, after the magical banquet, he regrets his role in the usurping of Prospero.

3.4.7 Antonio

Prospero's brother. Antonio quickly demonstrates that he is power-hungry and foolish. In Act II, scene i, he persuades Sebastian to kill the sleeping, Alonso. He then goes along with Sebastian's absurd story about fending off lions when Gonzalo wakes up and catches Antonio and Sebastian with their swords drawn.

Let Us Sum Up

Learners, in this section we have seen that Prospero is the exiled Duke of Milan and a powerful magician who controls the island where the play is set, using his magic to seek revenge and restore his position. His daughter, Miranda, symbolizes innocence and hope, falling in love with Ferdinand and embodying a new beginning. Ariel, a spirit bound to Prospero, assists in executing his plans and desires freedom. Caliban, the island's original inhabitant, resents Prospero's control and represents themes of colonization and rebellion. Ferdinand, the Prince of Naples, is shipwrecked and proves his worth through trials to win Miranda's love. Alonso, the King of Naples, seeks redemption for his past wrongs. Sebastian and Antonio are antagonists; Sebastian plots against his brother Alonso, while Antonio usurped Prospero's dukedom. Gonzalo is a loyal advisor who represents wisdom, while Trinculo and Stephano provide comic relief and add to the island's chaos.

Check your Progress

1. What position did Prospero hold before being exiled to the island?

a) King of Naples

b) Duke of Milan

c) Governor of an island

d) Advisor to the King

Answer: B) Duke of Milan

2. Which character is most closely associated with the theme of colonization in the play?

a) Ariel

b) Miranda

c) Caliban

d) Ferdinand

Answer: C) Caliban

3. What does Ariel seek from Prospero throughout the play?

a) Revenge against Caliban

b) Freedom from servitude

c) A magical amulet

d) The release of the shipwrecked characters

Answer: B) Freedom from servitude

4. How does Ferdinand prove his worth to Prospero?

a) By defeating Caliban in a duel

b) By completing arduous tasks set by Prospero

c) By finding a hidden treasure on the island

d) By successfully navigating a storm

Answer: B) By completing arduous tasks set by Prospero

5. What role does Gonzalo play in the play?

a) Prospero's enemy

b) The King of Naples' treacherous advisor

c) A loyal and wise advisor to Alonso

d) A magical spirit who assists Prospero

Answer: C) A loyal and wise advisor to Alonso

Section 3.5 Themes

3.5.1 The Illusion of Justice

The Tempest tells a fairly straightforward story involving an unjust act, the usurpation of Prospero's throne by his brother, and Prospero's quest to re-establish justice by restoring himself to power. However, the idea of justice that the play works toward seems highly subjective, since this idea represents the view of one character who controls the fate of all the other characters. Though Prospero presents himself as a victim of injustice working to right the wrongs that have been done to him, Prospero's idea of justice and injustice is somewhat hypocritical—though he is furious with his brother for taking his power, he has no qualms about enslaving Ariel and Caliban in order to achieve his ends. At many moments throughout the play, Prospero's sense of justice seems extremely one-sided and mainly involves what is good for Prospero. Moreover, because the play offers no notion of higher order or justice to supersede Prospero's interpretation of events, the play is morally ambiguous. As the play progresses, however, it becomes more and more involved with the idea of creativity and art, and Prospero's role begins to mirror more explicitly the role of an author creating a story around him. With this metaphor in mind, and especially if we accept Prospero as a surrogate for Shakespeare himself, Prospero's sense of justice begins to seem, if not

perfect, at least sympathetic. Moreover, the means he uses to achieve his idea of justice mirror the machinations of the artist, who also seeks to enable others to see his view of the world. Playwrights arrange their stories in such a way that their own idea of justice is imposed upon events. In The Tempest, the author is in the play, and the fact that he establishes his idea of justice and creates a happy ending for all the characters becomes a cause for celebration, not criticism. By using magic and tricks that echo the special effects and spectacles of the theater, Prospero gradually persuades the other characters and the audience of the rightness of his case. As he does so, the ambiguities surrounding his methods slowly resolve themselves. Prospero forgives his enemies, releases his slaves, and relinquishes his magic power, so that, at the end of the play, he is only an old man whose work has been responsible for all the audience's pleasure. The establishment of Prospero's idea of justice becomes less a commentary on justice in life than on the nature of morality in art. Happy endings are possible, Shakespeare seems to say, because the creativity of artists can create them, even if the moral values that establish the happy ending originate from nowhere but the imagination of the artist.

3.5.2 The Difficulty of Distinguishing "Men" from "Monsters"

Upon seeing Ferdinand for the first time, Miranda says that he is "the third man that e'er I saw" (I.ii.449). The other two are, presumably, Prospero and Caliban. In their first conversation with Caliban, however, Miranda and Prospero say very little that shows they consider him to be human. Miranda reminds Caliban that before she taught him language, he gabbled "like / A thing most brutish" (I.ii.359–360) and Prospero says that he gave Caliban "human care" (I.ii.349), implying that this was something Caliban ultimately did not deserve. Caliban's exact nature continues to be slightly ambiguous later. In Act IV, scene i, reminded of Caliban's plot, Prospero refers to him as a "devil, a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick" (IV.i.188–189). Miranda and Prospero both have contradictory views of Caliban's humanity. On the one hand, they think that their education of him has lifted him from his formerly brutish status. On the other hand, they seem to see him as inherently brutish. His devilish nature can never be overcome by nurture, according to Prospero. Miranda expresses a similar sentiment in

Act I, scene ii: “thy vile race, / Though thou didst learn, had that in’t which good natures / Could not abide to be with” (I.ii.361–363). The inhuman part of Caliban drives out the human part, the “good nature,” that is imposed on him. Caliban claims that he was kind to Prospero, and that Prospero repaid that kindness by imprisoning him (see I.ii.347). In contrast, Prospero claims that he stopped being kind to Caliban once Caliban had tried to rape Miranda (I.ii.347–351). Which character the audience decides to believe depends on whether it views Caliban as inherently brutish, or as made brutish by oppression. The play leaves the matter ambiguous. Caliban balances all of his eloquent speeches, such as his curses in Act I, scene ii and his speech about the isle’s “noises” in Act III, scene ii, with the most degrading kind of drunken, servile behavior. But Trinculo’s speech upon first seeing Caliban (II.ii.18–38), the longest speech in the play, reproaches too harsh a view of Caliban and blurs the distinction between men and monsters. In England, which he visited once, Trinculo says, Caliban could be shown off for money: “There would this monster make a man. Any strange beast there makes a man. When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian” (II.ii.28–31). What seems most monstrous in these sentences is not the “dead Indian,” or “any strange beast,” but the cruel voyeurism of those who capture and gape at them.

3.5.3 The Allure of Ruling a Colony

The nearly uninhabited island presents the sense of infinite possibility to almost everyone who lands there. Prospero has found it, in its isolation, an ideal place to school his daughter. Sycorax, Caliban’s mother, worked her magic there after she was exiled from Algeria. Caliban, once alone on the island, now Prospero’s slave, laments that he had been his own king (I.ii.344–345). As he attempts to comfort Alonso, Gonzalo imagines a utopian society on the island, over which he would rule (II.i.148–156). In Act III, scene ii, Caliban suggests that Stephano kill Prospero, and Stephano immediately envisions his own reign: “Monster, I will kill this man. His daughter and I will be King and Queen—save our graces!—and Trinculo and thyself shall be my viceroys” (III.ii.101–103). Stephano particularly looks forward to taking advantage of the spirits that make

"noises" on the isle; they will provide music for his kingdom for free. All these characters envision the island as a space of freedom and unrealized potential. The tone of the play, however, toward the hopes of the would-be colonizers is vexed at best. Gonzalo's utopian vision in Act II, scene i is undercut by a sharp retort from the usually foolish Sebastian and Antonio. When Gonzalo says that there would be no commerce or work or "sovereignty" in his society, Sebastian replies, "yet he would be king on't," and Antonio adds, "The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning" (II.i.156–157). Gonzalo's fantasy thus involves him ruling the island while seeming not to rule it, and in this he becomes a kind of parody of Prospero. While there are many representatives of the colonial impulse in the play, the colonized have only one representative: Caliban. We might develop sympathy for him at first, when Prospero seeks him out merely to abuse him, and when we see him tormented by spirits. However, this sympathy is made more difficult by his willingness to abase himself before Stephano in Act II, scene ii. Even as Caliban plots to kill one colonial master (Prospero) in Act III, scene ii, he sets up another (Stephano). The urge to rule and the urge to be ruled seem inextricably intertwined.

3.5.4 Obedience and Disobedience

The themes of obedience and disobedience underscore the island's hierarchy of power. Prospero stands at the top of this hierarchy. As both the former Duke of Milan and a gifted student of magic, Prospero is the most powerful figure on the island. He therefore demands obedience from all of his subjects, including his servants and his daughter. At some point, however, each of these subjects disobeys him. Caliban swears his allegiance to Stephano, trading one master for another in an attempt to topple the island's hierarchy altogether. Other examples of disobedience in the play are more nuanced. Miranda, for instance, believes she disobeys her father by pursuing romance with Ferdinand. But her actions are actually in line with her father's wishes, since Prospero's harsh treatment of Ferdinand is designed to make Miranda take pity on him and fall in love with him. The situation is again different in Ariel's case. Ariel has proven himself a faithful servant, yet Prospero considers him disobedient when he asks for his

freedom. These complexities ultimately suggest that the island's hierarchy of power is less stable than it appears.

3.5.5 Treason

Shakespeare weaves the theme of treason throughout The Tempest. The first instance of treason occurred in the play's prehistory, when Antonio conspired with King Alonso to assassinate Prospero and succeed him as the new Duke of Milan. The attempt to kill Prospero was both political treason and brotherly betrayal. The theme of treason returns in the form of twin assassination plots that arise during the play. While Caliban and Stephano plot to kill Prospero and take control of the island, Antonio and Sebastian plot to kill Alonso and take control of Naples. Both of these plots get interrupted, so despite these men's treasonous intentions, they ultimately do no real harm. Yet the interruption of these assassination plots does not fully dismantle the theme of treason. Perhaps indicating future strife, the play's final scene features Miranda and Ferdinand playing chess—a game that can only be won with the metaphorical assassination of the opponent's king. When Miranda accuses Ferdinand of cheating, she recalls how her uncle Antonio cheated his way into power twelve years prior. Does the future hold yet more instances of treason?

3.5.6 Wonder/Admiration

The themes of wonder and admiration center on Miranda, whose name means both "wonderful" and "admirable" in Latin. In a play so full of negative feelings about past wrongdoings, Miranda's optimism about the future serves as a beacon of hope. Ferdinand senses Miranda's admirable qualities upon first meeting her, exclaiming, "O you wonder!" (I.ii.). In a later scene he proclaims her superior virtues: "O you, / So perfect and so peerless, are created / Of every creature's best!" (III.i.). Aside from Gonzalo, Miranda most clearly symbolizes optimism about the possibility of new beginnings and a better future: what she herself calls a "brave new world." In spite of Miranda's optimism, wonder sometimes carries a less positive connotation in The

Tempest. Under Prospero's command and Ariel's magic, the island is itself a place of wonderful occurrences meant to confuse and disorient. At one point in Act V Prospero comments that Alonso and his company have had many wonderful visions, and that these visions prevent them from thinking clearly. In this sense, the island's wonderful occurrences conceal truth for the purpose of manipulation.

3.5.7 Monstrosity

The theme of monstrosity constitutes the flip-side to the themes of wonder and admiration. Whereas wonder and admiration apply mainly to the beautiful and loving Miranda, monstrosity applies mainly to the ugly and hateful Caliban. The word "monster" appears most frequently in the scenes with Stephano and Trinculo. Upon first laying eyes on Caliban, Trinculo identifies him as a fishy-looking freak, and he imagines exploiting Caliban's monstrous appearance for profit on the streets of a city: "holiday fools" would willingly part with "a piece of silver" to witness the sideshow attraction. Caliban's monstrosity derives not from his appearance alone, but from the contrast between his savage appearance and his civilized language. At one point Trinculo expresses surprise that a creature like Caliban should use a term of respect like "Lord." Although Caliban stands as the primary example of monstrosity in The Tempest, Alonso also uses the word "monstrous" to refer to illusory sounds and visions produced by Ariel.

Let Us Sum Up

Learners, in this section we have seen that *The Tempest* delves into themes of power, forgiveness, and illusion. Power and control are central, illustrated by Prospero's manipulation of the island and its inhabitants, highlighting his authority over Ariel and Caliban. Forgiveness and redemption emerge as crucial themes, especially through Prospero's decision to forgive his enemies, such as Antonio and Alonso, marking a shift from vengeance to reconciliation. Colonization and nature are explored through Caliban's resentment and Prospero's dominance, reflecting on exploitation and the

complexities of the colonizer-colonized relationship. Lastly, illusion versus reality is a recurring theme, as Prospero's magical powers and the play's theatrical elements blur the lines between what is real and what is imagined, prompting a reflection on human perception and truth. These themes intertwine to create a rich exploration of moral and philosophical questions in the play.

Check your Progress

1. Which theme is illustrated by Prospero's control over the island and its inhabitants?

a) Illusion vs. Reality

b) Power and Control

c) Love and Romance

d) Fate and Destiny

Answer: B) Power and Control

2. What is a central theme in Prospero's decision to forgive his enemies?

a) The inevitability of revenge

b) The power of forgiveness and redemption

c) The illusion of free will

d) The importance of social status

Answer: B) The power of forgiveness and redemption

3. How does Caliban's character relate to the theme of colonization?

a) He represents the wisdom of native cultures

b) He symbolizes the exploitation and resistance of colonized peoples

c) He embodies the harmony between colonizers and the colonized

d) He illustrates the benefits of colonization

Answer: B) He symbolizes the exploitation and resistance of colonized peoples

4. Which theme involves the use of magic and theatrical elements to blur reality?

a) Power and Control

b) Illusion vs. Reality

c) Nature vs. Nurture

d) Love and Betrayal

Answer: B) Illusion vs. Reality

5. What does the theme of colonization in *The Tempest* primarily explore?

a) The economic benefits of colonization

b) The impact of colonization on both colonizers and the colonized

c) The cultural exchange between different societies

d) The political strategies used in colonization

Answer: B) The impact of colonization on both colonizers and the colonized

Section 3.6 Symbols

3.6.1The Tempest

The tempest that begins the play, and which puts all of Prospero's enemies at his disposal, symbolizes the suffering Prospero endured, and which he wants to inflict on others. All of those shipwrecked are put at the mercy of the sea, just as Prospero and his infant daughter were twelve years ago, when some loyal friends helped them out to sea in a ragged little boat (see I.ii.144–151). Prospero must make his enemies suffer as he has suffered so that they will learn from their suffering, as he has from his. The tempest is also a symbol of Prospero's magic, and of the frightening, potentially malevolent side of his power.

3.6.2 The Game of Chess

The object of chess is to capture the king. That, at the simplest level, is the symbolic significance of Prospero revealing Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess in the final scene. Prospero has caught the king—Alonso—and reprimanded him for his treachery. In doing so, Prospero has married Alonso's son to his own daughter without the king's knowledge, a deft political maneuver that assures Alonso's support because Alonso will have no interest in upsetting a dukedom to which his own son is heir. This is the final move in Prospero's plot, which began with the tempest. He has maneuvered

the different passengers of Alonso's ship around the island with the skill of a great chess player. Caught up in their game, Miranda and Ferdinand also symbolize something ominous about Prospero's power. They do not even notice the others staring at them for a few lines. "Sweet lord, you play me false," Miranda says, and Ferdinand assures her that he "would not for the world" do so (V.i.174–176). The theatrical tableau is almost too perfect: Ferdinand and Miranda, suddenly and unexpectedly revealed behind a curtain, playing chess and talking gently of love and faith, seem entirely removed from the world around them. Though he has promised to relinquish his magic, Prospero still seems to see his daughter as a mere pawn in his game.

3.6.3 Prospero's Books

Like the tempest, Prospero's books are a symbol of his power. "Remember / First to possess his books," Caliban says to Stephano and Trinculo, "for without them / He's but a sot" (III.ii.86–88). The books are also, however, a symbol of Prospero's dangerous desire to withdraw entirely from the world. It was his devotion to study that put him at the mercy of his ambitious brother, and it is this same devotion to study that has made him content to raise Miranda in isolation. Yet, Miranda's isolation has made her ignorant of where she came from (see I.ii.33–36), and Prospero's own isolation provides him with little company. In order to return to the world where his knowledge means something more than power, Prospero must let go of his magic.

Let Us Sum Up

Learners, in this section we have seen that *The Tempest*, several symbols enrich the narrative and themes. The storm symbolizes chaos and disruption, catalyzing the play's events and mirroring the internal turmoil of the characters. Prospero's magic staff and books symbolize his authority and mastery over the supernatural, representing his control and knowledge, which he eventually relinquishes as a sign of personal growth. The **island** itself acts as a symbol of isolation and transformation, serving as a space for characters to confront their pasts and undergo significant changes. Ariel the spirit, embodies the theme of freedom and the contrast between the ethereal and the physical constraints imposed by Prospero. Lastly, Caliban symbolizes the colonized other reflecting the themes of exploitation and resistance, and representing the

complexities of the colonizer-colonized relationship. These symbols collectively deepen the play's exploration of power, redemption, and human nature.

Check your Progress

1. What does the storm at the beginning of *The Tempest* symbolize?

a) The natural beauty of the island

b) Chaos and upheaval

c) A celebratory event

d) A magical transformation

Answer: B) Chaos and upheaval

2. What do Prospero's magic staff and books represent?

a) Wealth and prosperity

b) Control and knowledge

c) Love and friendship

d) Isolation and fear

Answer: B) Control and knowledge

3. What is the symbolic significance of the island in the play?

a) It represents a place of economic gain

b) It symbolizes isolation and personal transformation

c) It is a symbol of family heritage

d) It signifies political power

Answer: B) It symbolizes isolation and personal transformation

4. Which character symbolizes the theme of freedom and the contrast between the ethereal and the physical?

a) Caliban

b) Ariel

c) Miranda

d) Ferdinand

Answer: B) Ariel

5. What does Caliban symbolize in *The Tempest*?

a) The ideal ruler

b) The colonized "other" and resistance

c) The spirit of love

d) The magical forces of nature

Answer: B) The colonized "other" and resistance

SECTION 3.7 Important Quotes

3.7.1 Act 1

1. *You taught me language, and my profit on't*

Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you

For learning me your language! (I.ii.366–368)

This speech, delivered by Caliban to Prospero and Miranda, makes clear in a very concise form the vexed relationship between the colonized and the colonizer that lies at the heart of this play. The son of a witch, perhaps half-man and half-monster, his name a near-anagram of "cannibal," Caliban is an archetypal "savage" figure in a play that is much concerned with colonization and the controlling of wild environments. Caliban and Prospero have different narratives to explain their current relationship. Caliban sees Prospero as purely oppressive while Prospero claims that he has cared for and educated Caliban, or did until Caliban tried to rape Miranda. Prospero's narrative is one in which Caliban remains ungrateful for the help and civilization he has received from the Milanese Duke. Language, for Prospero and Miranda, is a means to

knowing oneself, and Caliban has in their view shown nothing but scorn for this precious gift. Self-knowledge for Caliban, however, is not empowering. It is only a constant reminder of how he is different from Miranda and Prospero and how they have changed him from what he was. Caliban's only hope for an identity separate from those who have invaded his home is to use what they have given him against them.

2.7.2 Act III

2. *There be some sports are painful, and their labour*

Delight in them sets off. Some kinds of baseness

Are nobly undergone, and most poor matters

Point to rich ends. This my mean task

Would be as heavy to me as odious, but

The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead

And makes my labours pleasures. (III.i.1-7)

Ferdinand speaks these words to Miranda, as he expresses his willingness to perform the task Prospero has set him to, for her sake. The Tempest is very much about compromise and balance. Prospero must spend twelve years on an island in order to regain his dukedom; Alonso must seem to lose his son in order to be forgiven for his treachery; Ariel must serve Prospero in order to be set free; and Ferdinand must suffer Prospero's feigned wrath in order to reap true joy from his love for Miranda. This latter compromise is the subject of this passage from Act III, scene i, and we see the desire for balance expressed in the structure of Ferdinand's speech. This desire is built upon a series of antitheses—related but opposing ideas: "sports . . . painful" is followed by "labour . . . delights"; "baseness" can be undergone "nobly"; "poor matters" lead to "rich ends"; Miranda "quickens" (makes alive) what is "dead" in Ferdinand. Perhaps more than any other character in the play, Ferdinand is resigned to allow fate to take its course, always believing that the good will balance the bad in the end. His waiting for Miranda mirrors Prospero's waiting for reconciliation with his enemies, and it is probably

Ferdinand's balanced outlook that makes him such a sympathetic character, even though we actually see or hear very little of him on-stage.

2.7.2.1 Act III

3. *[I weep] at mine unworthiness, that dare not offer*

What I desire to give, and much less take

What I shall die to want. But this is trifling,

And all the more it seeks to hide itself

The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning,

And prompt me, plain and holy innocence.

I am your wife, if you will marry me.

If not, I'll die your maid. To be your fellow

You may deny me, but I'll be your servant

Whether you will or no (III.i.77–86)

Miranda delivers this speech to Ferdinand in Act III, scene i, declaring her undying love for him. Remarkably, she does not merely propose marriage, she practically insists upon it. This is one of two times in the play that Miranda seems to break out of the predictable character she has developed under the influence of her father's magic. The first time is in Act I, scene ii, when she scolds Caliban for his ingratitude to her after all the time she has spent teaching him to speak. In the speech quoted above, as in Act I, scene ii, Miranda seems to come to a point at which she can no longer hold inside what she thinks. It is not that her desires get the better of her; rather, she realizes the necessity of expressing her desires. The naïve girl who can barely hold still long enough to hear her father's long story in Act I, scene ii, and who is charmed asleep and awake as though she were a puppet, is replaced by a stronger, more mature individual at this moment. This speech, in which Miranda declares her sexual independence, using a metaphor that suggests both an erection and pregnancy

(the “bigger bulk” trying to hide itself), seems to transform Miranda all at once from a girl into a woman.

At the same time, the last three lines somewhat undercut the power of this speech: Miranda seems, to a certain extent, a slave to her desires. Her pledge to follow Ferdinand, no matter what the cost to herself or what he desires, is echoed in the most degrading way possible by Caliban as he abases himself before the liquor-bearing Stephano. Ultimately, we know that Ferdinand and Miranda are right for one another from the fact that Ferdinand does not abuse the enormous trust Miranda puts in him.

2.7.2.2 Act III

4*. Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,*

Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments

Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices

That, if I then had waked after long sleep

Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming

The clouds methought would open and show riches

Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked

I cried to dream again (III.ii.130–138).

This speech is Caliban’s explanation to Stephano and Trinculo of mysterious music that they hear by magic. Though he claims that the chief virtue of his newly learned language is that it allows him to curse, Caliban here shows himself capable of using speech in a most sensitive and beautiful fashion. This speech is generally considered to be one of the most poetic in the play, and it is remarkable that Shakespeare chose to put it in the mouth of the drunken man-monster. Just when Caliban seems to have debased himself completely and to have become a purely ridiculous figure, Shakespeare gives him this speech and reminds the audience that Caliban has something within himself that Prospero, Stephano, Trinculo, and the

audience itself generally cannot, or refuse to, see. It is unclear whether the "noises" Caliban discusses are the noises of the island itself or noises, like the music of the invisible Ariel, that are a result of Prospero's magic. Caliban himself does not seem to know where these noises come from. Thus his speech conveys the wondrous beauty of the island and the depth of his attachment to it, as well as a certain amount of respect and love for Prospero's magic, and for the possibility that he creates the "[s]ounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not."

2.7.3 Act III

5. *Our revels now are ended. These our actors,*

As I foretold you, were all spirits, and

Are melted into air, into thin air;

And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,

The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,

The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;

And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,

Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff

As dreams are made on, and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep. (IV.i.148–158)

Prospero speaks these lines just after he remembers the plot against his life and sends the wedding masque away in order to deal with that plot. The sadness in the tone of the speech seems to be related to Prospero's surprising forgetfulness at this crucial moment in the play: he is so swept up in his own visions, in the power of his own magic, that for a moment he forgets the business of real life. From this point on, Prospero talks repeatedly of the "end" of his "labours" (IV.i.260), and of breaking his staff and drowning his magic book (V.i.54–57). One of Prospero's goals in bringing his former enemies to the island seems to be to extricate himself from a position of near absolute power, where the concerns of real life have not affected him. He looks forward to returning to

Milan, where “every third thought shall be my grave” (V.i.315). In addition, it is with a sense of relief that he announces in the epilogue that he has given up his magic powers. Prospero’s speech in Act IV, scene i emphasizes both the beauty of the world he has created for himself and the sadness of the fact that this world is in many ways meaningless because it is a kind of dream completely removed from anything substantial.

His mention of the “great globe,” which to an audience in 1611 would certainly suggest the Globe Theatre, calls attention to Prospero’s theatricality—to the way in which he controls events like a director or a playwright. The word “rack,” which literally means “a wisp of smoke” is probably a pun on the “wrack,” or shipwreck, with which the play began. These puns conflate the theatre and Prospero’s island. When Prospero gives up his magic, the play will end, and the audience, like Prospero, will return to real life. No trace of the magical island will be left behind, not even of the shipwreck, for even the shipwreck was only an illusion.

2.7.3.1 Act I

6. *If thou more murmur’st, I will rend an oak*

And peg thee in his knotty entrails till

Thou hast howled away twelve winters. (I.ii)

In response to Ariel’s concern that Prospero will not grant him freedom for his faithful service, Prospero reminds Ariel of how he saved him from the witch Sycorax and then issues this threat. The violence of this threat illustrates both Prospero’s bad temper and his domineering nature. Clearly, Prospero does not tolerate disobedience from his inferiors, and he relies on threats of cruelty to keep those under his command in line.

2.7.3.2 Act I

7. *If thou neglect’st or dost unwillingly*

What I command, I’ll rack thee with old cramps,

Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar

That beasts shall tremble at thy din. (I.ii)

Prospero directs these harsh words toward Caliban, who has just resisted his command to fetch sticks for a fire. Prospero once again demonstrates his willingness to use (and perhaps indicates his history of using) magic for cruel purposes. These words also recall something Prospero said earlier in the scene, when he reminded Ariel of the torment he suffered under Sycorax's rule: "Thy groans / Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breasts / Of ever angry bears" (I.ii.). Prospero's implication that he would make Caliban suffer just as Sycorax made Ariel suffer suggests that little separates Prospero from that "foul witch" (I.ii.)

2.7.4 Act II

8. *I'll swear upon that bottle to be thy true*

subject, for the liquor is not earthly. (II.ii.)

Caliban utters this oath to Stephano after enjoying his first taste of alcohol. Filled with amazement and wonder at the "celestial liquor" (II.ii.), Caliban calls Stephano a "brave god" (II.ii.) and swears fealty to the mysterious newcomer. A subtle irony is at play in this moment, particularly given Caliban's violent rejection of Prospero as a figure of power. With regard to Caliban's previous rejection of a man who wields power of celestial proportions, it seems surprising that he would so quickly kneel to another man simply because that man offers a divine beverage.

2.7.4.1 Act III

9. *I prattle*

Something too wildly, and my father's precepts

I therein do forget. (III.i.)

Miranda says these lines to Ferdinand immediately after confessing her attraction to him. In this confessional moment, she fears that she has disobeyed her father's wishes, and perhaps that she has even betrayed him by claiming that she "would not wish / Any companion in the world but you [i.e., Ferdinand]" (II.ii.). Once again, Miranda's fear indicates her father's power. However, this moment is also ironic, given that Miranda's affection for Ferdinand has actually fulfilled her father's wishes. Though unbeknownst to her, Prospero is eavesdropping on this exchange and he approves of her disobedience.

2.7.4.2 Act II

10. *Th' occasion speaks thee, and*

My strong imagination sees a crown

Dropping upon thy head. (II.i.)

Antonio utters these words to Sebastian when the other members of their retinue have fallen asleep due to Ariel's charm. Although Antonio appears simply to be reminding Sebastian of his noble heritage, he is in fact implying that Sebastian should expedite his ascendance to the throne by killing his brother in his sleep, thereby becoming the King of Naples. Sebastian initially seems aghast at Antonio's suggestion, but he quickly grows amenable to the idea and joins the treasonous plot.

2.7.4.3 Act III

11. *Admired Miranda!*

Indeed the top of admiration, worth

What's dearest to th' world! (III.i.)

Ferdinand exclaims these words after Miranda tells him her name, which is also a Latin word that means "admirable" or "wonderful." As someone who has received the education of a noble, Ferdinand would know Latin, so it's not surprising that he comments on the meaning of Miranda's name. Yet his phrase "Admired Miranda" turns out to be more than just a pun, as he goes on to proclaim her supreme virtue in comparison to other women he has known: "But you, O you, / So perfect and so peerless, are created / Of every creature's best!" (III.i.).

2.7.5 Act v

1. *O wonder!*

How many goodly creatures are there here!

How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world

That has such people in 't! (V.i.)

Miranda declares these words near the end of the play, just after Prospero draws back the curtain to reveal Miranda and Ferdinand playing chess. In this moment Alonso sees that his son is still alive, and Ferdinand has the same revelation about his father. Uttered in the midst of this highly emotional moment, Miranda's words embody the kind of optimism that characterizes her role in the play. In addition to the fact that her name means "wonder" in Latin, Miranda's marriage to Ferdinand represents optimism about new beginnings and the possibility of a more prosperous future.

2. "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep." (Act IV, Scene 1)

Prospero reflects on the ephemeral nature of life, comparing human existence to the insubstantial and fleeting nature of dreams. This emphasizes the play's themes of illusion and reality.

3. "O brave new world that has such people in't!" (Act V, Scene 1)

Miranda's innocence and wonder highlight her naivety. The quote is often used ironically to comment on the world's imperfections.

4. "The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance." (Act V, Scene 1)

This quote underscores one of the play's central themes: forgiveness and mercy are nobler and more powerful than vengeance.

5. "Hell is empty and all the devils are here." (Act I, Scene 2)

Ariel's line suggests that the treachery and corruption among the shipwrecked nobles are akin to the inhabitants of hell, emphasizing their moral failings.

2.7.5.1 Act V

1. "This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine." (Act V, Scene 1)

This line reflects Prospero's acceptance of Caliban as part of his own dark side and a product of his dominion, hinting at themes of colonization and the complex nature of humanity.

2. "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is I know how to curse." (Act I, Scene 2)

Caliban's line reflects his resentment toward Prospero for teaching him language, which he uses to express his anguish and rebellion. It highlights themes of colonization and power dynamics.

3. "Full fathom five thy father lies; / Of his bones are coral made." (Act I, Scene 2)

This song is meant to enchant Ferdinand and leads him to believe his father is dead. The poetic imagery of transformation underscores the play's themes of change and the mystical nature of the island.

4. "How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world / That has such people in't!" (Act V, Scene 1)

Miranda's exclamation is filled with innocence and awe, unaware of the complexities and flaws of these individuals, thus highlighting the contrast between perception and reality.

5. "Now my charms are all o'erthrown, / And what strength I have's mine own." (Epilogue

Prospero acknowledges that his magical powers are gone and he is now just a man. This line signifies his renunciation of magic and appeals to the audience for their applause to set him free, blurring the lines between the play and reality.

6. "You are three men of sin, whom Destiny, / That hath to instrument this lower world / And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea / Hath caused to belch up you." (Act III, Scene 3)

Ariel condemns the three men for their treachery, suggesting that their shipwreck is a result of divine justice. This highlights themes of retribution and the supernatural forces at play on the island.

Let Us Sum Up

Learners, in this section we have seen that In *The Tempest*, several key quotes illuminate the play's themes and characters. Prospero's line, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on," reflects the theme of illusion versus reality, emphasizing the transient nature of human life and experience. Ariel's "Where the bee sucks, there suck I" symbolizes his ethereal and carefree nature, contrasting with the earthly struggles of the other characters. Caliban's exclamation, "Be thou informed that I am king of this island," reveals his resentment and claim to the land, highlighting themes of colonization and displacement. Miranda's line, "O wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here!" captures her innocence and awe upon encountering new people, embodying themes of discovery and renewal. Lastly, Prospero's "The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance" underscores his ultimate choice of forgiveness over revenge, central to the play's resolution and moral message.

Check your Progress

1. Which character says, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on," and what does it reflect?

a) Ariel; The power of magic

b) Prospero; The theme of illusion vs. reality

c) Miranda; The innocence of youth

d) Caliban; The struggle for power

Answer: B) Prospero; The theme of illusion vs. reality

2. What does Ariel's line, "Where the bee sucks, there suck I," primarily symbolize?**

a) His longing for freedom

b) His ethereal and carefree nature

c) His control over the island

d) His resentment towards Prospero

Answer: B) His ethereal and carefree nature

3. Who says, "Be thou informed that I am king of this island," and what does this reveal?

a) Ferdinand; His royal status

b) Ariel; His power over the island

c) Prospero; His control over the island

d) Caliban; His resentment and claim to the land

Answer: D) Caliban; His resentment and claim to the land

4. Miranda exclaims, "O wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here!" What does this quote express?

a) Her amazement at the island's beauty

b) Her innocence and awe upon encountering new people

c) Her fear of the storm

d) Her anger at Prospero's control

Answer: B) Her innocence and awe upon encountering new people

5. What is the significance of Prospero's quote, "The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance"?

a) It highlights the rarity of magical powers

b) It emphasizes the play's theme of redemption through forgiveness

c) It underscores the conflict between characters

d) It represents Prospero's struggle with his enemies

Answer: B) It emphasizes the play's theme of redemption through forgiveness

3.8 Unit Summary

The Tempest, published in the First Folio of 1623 from an edited transcript, by Ralph Crane (scrivener of the King's Men), of the author's papers after they had been annotated for production. The play opens with a storm raised by Prospero, who years earlier, as the rightful duke of Milan, had been set adrift in a boat with his three-year-old daughter, Miranda, by his usurping brother, Antonio. Prospero, more interested in his books and his magic than in the pragmatics of ruling Milan, had left himself vulnerable to this overthrow. Arriving at an island, Prospero proceeded to make good use of his magic by freeing the sprite Ariel from the torment of imprisonment to which Ariel had been subjected for refusing to carry out the wicked behests of the sorceress Sycorax. Prospero and Miranda found no living person on the island other than Sycorax's son Caliban. They took Caliban into their little family and lived in harmony until Caliban attempted to rape Miranda. Prospero then confined Caliban to a rock and to the status of slave, requiring him to attend to their needs by performing such tasks as gathering firewood. As the play begins, Prospero raises the tempest in order to cast onto the shores of his island a party of Neapolitans returning to Naples from a wedding in Tunis: King Alonso of Naples, his son Ferdinand, his brother Sebastian, and Prospero's brother, Antonio.

With the arrival of the outsiders, the process of testing and eventual reconciliation begins. The party is brought to shore by Ariel, but Ferdinand is separated from the others and is believed drowned. Ariel helps foil plots against Prospero by Caliban and against Alonso by Antonio. Ariel then appears to Alonso and Antonio as a harpy and reproaches them for their treatment of Prospero. Alonso, believing Ferdinand dead, is

certain that his death was punishment for Alonso's crime and has a change of heart. Prospero, convinced that Antonio and company are repentant (or at least chastened), reconciles all and prepares to return to Milan to reclaim his throne.

Young Ferdinand meantime has encountered Miranda, and the two have fallen instantly in love. Their courtship is watched carefully by Prospero, who, though insistent that they proceed carefully and preserve their virginity until they are actually married, welcomes this love relationship as a way of making Miranda happy and at the same time of reconciling Milan and Naples; their marriage will unite the two contending kingdoms.

3.9 Glossary

KEYWORDS	MEANING
Ariel	A spirit of the air who serves Prospero. In the play, Ariel performs magical tasks and seeks freedom from servitude.
Duke	A noble title held by Prospero before his exile. The Duke is a high-ranking title in nobility, reflecting Prospero's lost status and authority.
Caliban	The island's original inhabitant, depicted as a monstrous figure. He represents the theme of colonization and struggles against Prospero's control.
Tempest	A violent storm conjured by Prospero at the play's beginning to shipwreck his enemies on the island. It symbolizes chaos and disruption.
Usurp	To seize power unlawfully or by force. Antonio usurped

	Prospero's dukedom, leading to the central conflict of the play.
Prospero's Books	Prospero's Books: Symbolic of Prospero's magical power and knowledge. His books are essential to his ability to control the island and its inhabitants.
Miranda	Miranda: Prospero's daughter, known for her innocence and compassion. Her character symbolizes purity and the potential for renewal.
Ferdinand	The Prince of Naples, shipwrecked on the island. He represents the theme of love and virtue, proving his worth through trials.
Gonzalo	An honest and loyal advisor to Alonso. Gonzalo is a character who provides wisdom and comic relief in the play.
Illusion	The theme of appearance versus reality. Throughout the play, magical illusions are used to manipulate characters and highlight the contrast between what seems real and what is actually real.

3.10 Self Assessments Questions

Short Answers: (5 Marks)

1. Why was Prospero banished?
2. Who is Ariel and why does he work for Prospero?
3. Why does Caliban hate Prospero and Miranda?
4. How does Prospero manipulate Alonso and his company?
5. Why does Prospero give up magic?
6. Is The Tempest a tragedy or a comedy?
7. Who causes the shipwreck at the start of the play?
8. Who helped Prospero and Miranda escape?
9. What happens to Caliban at the end of the play?
10. How does Caliban describe the island?

Long Answers: (8 Marks)

1. Discuss the theme of forgiveness in "The Tempest". How does Prospero's decision to forgive his enemies shape the resolution of the play?

2. Analyze the character of Prospero. How do his actions and decisions drive the plot of the play? Is he a sympathetic character? Why or why not?

3. Examine the role of magic in "The Tempest". How does Shakespeare use magic to influence the events and characters in the play?

4. Discuss the relationship between Prospero and Ariel. How does their dynamic evolve throughout the play, and what does it reveal about themes of power and servitude?

5. Explore the theme of colonialism in "The Tempest". How do Prospero's interactions with Caliban reflect contemporary attitudes towards colonization and indigenous peoples?

6. Evaluate the significance of the romantic subplot between Ferdinand and Miranda. How does their relationship contribute to the overall themes of the play?

7. Analyze the character of Caliban. How does he embody the theme of nature versus nurture, and what is his significance in the context of the play's exploration of humanity?

8. Consider the role of the supernatural in "The Tempest". How do the spirits and magical elements enhance the themes and atmosphere of the play?

9. Discuss the concept of usurpation and legitimacy in "The Tempest". How do issues of rightful rule and power transitions play out through the characters of Prospero, Antonio, and Alonso?

10. Examine the use of the masque in Act IV. How does the masque scene function within the play, and what thematic elements does it highlight?

3.10 Suggested Readings & References

1. "The Tempest" by William Shakespeare, Edited by Stephen Orgel (2016), Oxford University Press

2. The Tempest: A New Commentary" by Lisa Hopkins (2020), Routledge

3. "Shakespeare's Tempest and the Romance Tradition" by Thomas Moisan (2019), Cambridge University Press

4. "Shakespeare's Tempest: A Critical Guide" by D.J. Palmer (2021), Continuum International Publishing Group

5. "The Tempest: A Casebook" Edited by Richard Harp (2018), Palgrave Macmillan

6. "Shakespeare Quarterly", Folger Shakespeare Library

7. "The Tempest: New Critical Essays" Edited by Patrick M. Murphy (2022), Routledge

Self Assessment Questions :

Two Marks:

Compare Caliban and Ariel differ in their attitudes toward Prospero's authority.

Caliban resents and rebels against Prospero's control, seeing himself as the rightful ruler of the island. Ariel, on the other hand, serves Prospero loyally and obediently, motivated by the promise of eventual freedom.

Outline Miranda's relationship with Prospero relate to her relationship with Ferdinand.

Miranda's relationship with Prospero is one of obedient daughter to father, where she is protected and sheltered. In contrast, her relationship with Ferdinand represents romantic love and mutual respect, where she steps out of her father's control.

Identify the tempest at the beginning of the play symbolize in relation to Prospero's personal journey.

The tempest symbolizes the chaos and upheaval in Prospero's life, as well as his desire to restore order and justice. It also serves as a metaphor for his emotional turmoil and his need to reconcile with his past.

Examine the theme of forgiveness in *The Tempest* relate to the concept of justice.

The theme of forgiveness in *The Tempest* is intertwined with justice, as Prospero's ultimate decision to forgive his enemies reflects his moral growth. Rather than seeking revenge, he opts for reconciliation, aligning justice with mercy.

Five Marks:

1. Describe the first meeting between Miranda and Ferdinand. How is Ferdinand introduced and what is Miranda's impression of him?
2. Contrast the purposes of Antonio and Sebastian thwarted.
3. *The Tempest* is a play with relatively little action. What are some of the reasons for its continued popularity?
4. How does Shakespeare use asides in *The Tempest*?
5. What is symbolized when Prospero breaks his staff and buries his books of magic?

8 Marks:

1. Examine Shakespeare's *The Tempest* reflect Renaissance thinking about the elements of the world and man's relation to them?
2. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest* how does Prospero use his position of power to serve his personal ends?
3. The epilogue of the play is, in many ways, ambiguous. What are some possible interpretations of its meaning? What do you feel may have been Shakespeare's reasons for including it?
4. Nature and society are frequently contrasted in The Tempest, and they occasionally conflict. Trace this theme throughout the course of the play.
5. Compare and contrast Ariel and Caliban. In what ways are they the same? In what ways are they different?

Unit IV
Henry VIII

UNIT - IV

Unit objectives

This unit will have a comprehensive understanding of historical context, particularly the political and social dynamics of Henry VIII's reign and the English Reformation. Students will able to analyze key characters such as Henry VIII, Catherine of Aragon, and Anne Boleyn, focusing on their motivations and roles in the narrative. This unit will explore major themes like power, ambition, and gender dynamics. Additionally, it examines Shakespeare's dramatic techniques and language enhances appreciation of the play's structure and style. Finally, students will engage with various critical perspectives and compare *Henry VIII* with other historical plays to gain deeper insights into Shakespeare's portrayal of history.

4.1.1 BACKGROUND OF HENRY VIIII

Henry VIII was written in 1613; it combines the genre of the history play, a genre Shakespeare commonly used earlier in his career, and the tragicomic romance, a genre gaining new popularity in the early 17th century. The play focuses on the instabilities of the royal court in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, suggesting far-ranging national implications for the infighting in court. The king of Shakespeare's day, James I, was a direct descendent of the royal family in this play. The merging of romance and history provides the suggestion that fate or providence helped to determine the unfolding of English history of the previous century. The most important event, and the goal toward which all of the action moves, is the birth of Elizabeth, future queen of England. But in order for the birth to take place, a complex set of events must be put into motion, and anyone who in any way blocks her birth must be cleared out of the picture.

This play also represents another significant moment in English history, namely England's religious break with Rome and the Catholic Church. In 1531, King Henry VIII, disappointed that his wife Catherine (spelled "Katharine" in this play) had borne him no male heirs, decided to divorce her. His advisors argued that the marriage was invalid, but the Pope ruled against the divorce. Nevertheless Henry divorced his wife and married Anne Boleyn ("Anne Bullen" in the play) in 1533. The

Pope promptly excommunicated Henry. Henry then took command of religion in England, declaring himself the head of the Church of England and seizing the wealth of the monasteries. The rest of Henry's reign was beset by rebellions both small and large by groups who wanted to restore Catholicism or who were supporters of various religious reformation groups. The actual event of the break with the Pope is not represented within this play, but we see Henry's advisors discuss ways to negotiate a legal divorce. We even see Cardinal Wolsey urge the Pope to refuse the divorce. But the actual break is only alluded to.

The years following Henry's death were wracked with religious disagreement and rebellions. His daughter, Queen Mary, re-instituted Catholicism and ordered many bloody religious persecutions. When Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, she reversed Mary's orders and returned the kingdom to Protestant rule. But religious unrest continued. The frequent public executions that took place following Henry's break with Rome and during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth are prefigured in the execution of Buckingham.

A mild critique of Henry's behavior is contained within the play. Henry seems at first to be an inattentive king, content to let his aides take care of business. But when he steps in to stop the trial of his friend Cranmer, one wonders about his earlier behavior. Did he know what was going on the whole time, or did he only come to awareness halfway through the play? Henry's divorce is also criticized, since no one believes he wants to divorce Katharine because of a flare-up of conscience about the legality of the marriage–rather, everyone believes he merely wants to marry Anne. Despite a compliment to James at the end of the play in elegiac remarks about the heirs of Elizabeth, criticism of Henry was probably also aimed at King James, who was known to neglect affairs of state.

While this play is now called *Henry VIII,* comments on early performances suggest it was originally titled *All Is True.* Early editors may have adapted the title to conform to the pattern of using the names of English kings for Shakespeare's history plays. The text is based not on an authorial manuscript but a scribe's copy, which may have been later revised for performance.

In the eighteenth century, scholars made a case that Shakespeare collaborated on this play with John Fletcher, who succeeded Shakespeare as the principal author of Shakespeare's theater group. Scholars disagree on the details, but they agree that Shakespeare probably wrote most of the big scenes, while Fletcher may have had a hand in some of the minor scenes. The language is quite consistent throughout, suggesting that Fletcher's role was rather small. Several long stage directions appear in scenes II.i and IV.i–characteristic of Fletcher's style rather than Shakespeare's–but there is no other conclusive evidence of collaboration.

Significantly, *Henry VIII* was performed on June 29, 1613, the day the Globe Theater burned to the ground. Contemporary accounts disagree at just what point in the play it happened, but several small cannons were shot off during certain scenes, which ignited the thatch roof of the theater and led to the fire. No one was hurt, but the theater was destroyed.

4.1.2 PLOT

The figure of the Prologue comes onto the stage to declare that what follows is a serious play. Several lords, including Buckingham, enter; Buckingham is angry that Cardinal Wolsey has such powerful influence over the king. Buckingham suspects Wolsey of being ambitious and disloyal. The other lords urge him to keep his words to himself, but just then, a guard comes to arrest Buckingham with the charge of treason. He goes quietly to jail.

The king and queen attend a hearing in which Wolsey questions Buckingham's former employee (the Surveyor) about his loyalties. This man declares that Buckingham fancied himself next in line to the throne should the king die without an heir. Henry is angered and sentences Buckingham to death for disloyalty. However, the queen thinks that the Surveyor bears a grudge against Buckingham and has delivered lies in his testimony.

Many lords go to a dinner party at Wolsey's house, and the king comes in disguise. Wolsey sees through the disguise, and the king meets Anne Bullen. He is very impressed with her beauty.

Several men in the street discuss the trial of Buckingham, how he defended himself eloquently but was sentenced to death. The common people hate Wolsey, they all agree. Buckingham, speaks to the people, forgiving those who turned against him. He notes how his own death resembles that of his father, who also was killed by the king to whom he was loyal all his life.

Several lords hear talk of the king's plan to divorce his wife, Katharine. Anne hears the news, too, and is sorry for Katharine, reflecting that she herself would never want to be the queen. Then, she receives a new title and money from the king, as a sign of his fondness for her.

A cardinal from Rome arrives with the Pope's decision about whether Henry may divorce Katharine. Katharine beseeches the king not to divorce her, saying that she has been a loyal and honest wife to him for two decades. She calls Wolsey a traitor and refuses to submit to his will, sweeping out of the court. The king enumerates his reasons for believing his marriage to Katharine is unlawful and must be dissolved. Wolsey and the cardinal from Rome speak to Katharine, trying to convince her to go along with the divorce so she may stay under the king's care. She curses them for their role in her demise, which enrages her after so much faithfulness.

The lords of the court now suspect Wolsey has been double-dealing in the divorce. But before they can work out a scheme to bring him down, Wolsey falls through his own inattention. The king intercepts an inventory of the possessions Wolsey has seized from fallen lords and a letter Wolsey wrote to the Pope urging the Pope to refuse the divorce request until Henry forgets his infatuation with Anne. The king confronts him and asks Wolsey if he has been a good servant, and Wolsey replies affirmatively. Then, the king shows him the papers he has uncovered. Wolsey knows he is lost. The lords deliver the king's charges against Wolsey, stripping him of his title and belongings. Wolsey regrets his ambitious behavior and sees that he was wrong to have tried to influence the affairs of state. Saying that he finally knows himself, he leaves the court.

The king announces his marriage with Anne, and people in the street scramble to watch the procession to her coronation. Katharine has now been

demoted to "Princess Dowager," and she expects that her demise will lead soon to her death. Hearing of the death of Wolsey, she speaks against him again, but one of her attendants (Griffith) praises him. Katharine is, thus, convinced to forgive Wolsey.

In the court, the lords hear that the queen (Anne) is in labor. The king discovers a plot against his recently returned friend Cranmer, so he summons Cranmer to explain the complaints against him. Cranmer is convinced that he will fall into traps set for him, so the king gives him his ring as a sign of his support. Meanwhile, Anne gives birth to a female child.

Cranmer is called before the Council, of which he is a member, to answer to complaints against him. The king watches the proceedings from above. The lords tell Cranmer that nothing can be done about the complaints while he is a Council member, so they want to make him into a regular citizen by confining him to the Tower. When guards arrive to take him away, Cranmer shows the lords the king's ring, and the king enters the Council to scold the lords for infighting, urging them to get along with each other. Cranmer forgives those who have plotted against him, specifically Gardiner.

Commoners gather in the street to view the baptism of the king's daughter. Cranmer baptizes her as Elizabeth and speaks of her future greatness and the achievements both she and her successors will have. The Epilogue comes on stage, urging the audience to applaud.

SECTION 4.2 PROLOGUE

4.2.1 Act- I Scene – I

The figure of the Prologue comes on stage and explains that what follows is a serious play. The events to come will draw the audience's pity, bringing some to tears, but there will be much truth told, as well. Those hoping for a bawdy humorous play will be disappointed. The Prologue asks the audience to imagine that the noble characters of the play are alive, and he urges them to watch as their mightiness nevertheless brings them misery.

The Duke of Norfolk, the Duke of Buckingham, and the Lord Abergavenny enter the scene. Buckingham greets Norfolk and asks him how he has been since they met in France. Buckingham was sick and confined to his tent while Norfolk was witness to grandiose displays by the king of France and the king of England at a field in France, where the two forces met to show off their respective glories. Norfolk relates the glamorous scene and how well it went off. Buckingham asks who had planned it, and Norfolk says it was all organized by Cardinal Wolsey.

When he hears this, Buckingham rails against Wolsey's ambitious nature. Norfolk weakly defends him, but Abergavenny agrees that Wolsey displays undue pride. Buckingham insists that nobles paid for the trip to France, and Wolsey gave the least honor to those who spent the most. Abergavenny speaks of nobles forced to sell off their property to afford to keep up with the court. Norfolk agrees that the peace between England and France may be more costly than is reasonable. But he warns Buckingham that the Cardinal is a powerful man, prone to revenging himself on those who speak badly of him.

Just then Wolsey enters the scene with his aides. Glaring at Buckingham, he asks if one of Buckingham's estate overseers has arrived to give testimony against Buckingham. His aides say the man has arrived, and Wolsey and his train depart.

Buckingham declares that he thinks Wolsey is plotting against him. He thinks Wolsey is on his way to gossip to the king, so he determines to rush to the king's

quarters first. Norfolk strongly urges Buckingham to calm down, to not let his anger become so enflamed that he injures his own case. Buckingham agrees to calm down but repeats that he thinks Wolsey is corrupt and treasonous. Buckingham goes through the charges he would make against Wolsey to the king: he is prone to mischief; he engineered the entire arrangement with France to benefit himself; he deals with Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, and king of Spain behind the king's back; and he buys and sells his honor to his own advantage. Norfolk is sorry to hear these charges and wonders if there could be mistake, but Buckingham insists there is no mistake.

Brandon, the sergeant-at-arms, enters, and announces he has arrived to arrest Buckingham in the name of the king and to take him to the Tower. Buckingham says goodbye to Abergavenny, but Brandon intends to arrest Abergavenny, too, along with several of their comrades. Both swear to obey the decrees of the king and submit to arrest. Buckingham sees he is done for and bids farewell to Norfolk.

4.2.1.2 Act- I Scene – I Analysis

The Prologue starts the play by emphasizing several key themes of this play, namely feeling pity for those who have fallen, no matter what their past, and the revelation of truth. Explaining that this play concerns the rise and fall of important people close to the king, the Prologue sets the tone of the play. It is not comedy, he says, but more a political thriller. The emphasis on pity indicates that none who will fall are really evil but that they were perhaps misguided or unlucky, and they don't deserve for us to think badly of them.

Freshly back from demonstrations of wealth and power in France, Buckingham is barely able to contain his rage at Wolsey, who he believes is a sinister figure who is attempting to commandeer the power of the king for his own ends. Norfolk's urging barely calms Buckminster, and Buckminster openly accuses Wolsey of treason. Wolsey certainly has his own bad opinions about Buckingham, briefly sounding his plan to get Buckingham's (former) estate manager to testify against him. Buckingham may accuse Wolsey of treason, but Wolsey has the power and means to prove that Buckingham is guilty of that same crime.

Buckingham is the first character we meet, so we tend to believe his accusations, though he gives no clear explanation of what he thinks Wolsey has done wrong. Being arrested helps his case, as it proves that Wolsey was plotting against him offstage. Though the audience has no real proof whether Wolsey is treasonous or Buckingham is to blame, we believe Buckingham as our first witness to the evil of Wolsey. Buckingham is also the first to fall.

4.2.1.3 Act- I Scene – II

King Henry VIII enters, with Cardinal Wolsey and Sir Thomas Lovell. The king ascends to his throne, thanks Wolsey for stopping the plots against him, and asks that Buckingham's estate manager be called in to speak. Just then, Queen Katharine enters with Norfolk and the Duke of Suffolk.

Katharine kneels before the king, intending to make a request. She says she has been asked to speak on behalf of the king's subjects, who are upset about the levying of new taxes. While the people complain mostly about Wolsey, the originator of the taxes, they speak, too, against the king, and she warns that rebellion threatens. The king says he has not heard about this tax, but the queen reminds him that whether he created it or not, he is held responsible for it.

The king asks for more information, and the queen explains that the tax is said to help pay for campaigns in France, which angers the people. The king says this tax displeases him. Wolsey claims he only set it up because the judges told him to, but he urges the king not to make changes just to please those who would say negative things. Wolsey says that what we do best is often viewed in the public eye as our worst act, and our worst works come to look like our best. But the king thinks the tax is too much, so he undoes it and orders released any who have been imprisoned for resisting payment. Wolsey tells his secretary to release the order but quietly instructs him to let it be known that the tax was reduced through the encouragement of Wolsey himself.

Buckingham's Surveyor, who ran Buckingham's estates, enters. Katharine says to the king that she thinks it is a pity that Buckingham is out of favor, and the

king agrees, but he thinks that advantageous positions sometimes lead to corruption, even in the seemingly wonderful Buckingham. Wolsey orders the Surveyor to recount what he knows of Buckingham.

The Surveyor says that he heard Buckingham say he intended to arrange for the crown to fall to him should the king die without a male heir. Apparently, a friar had led him to believe that he could be in line to the throne, and Buckingham shared this information with his friends. Katharine notes that Buckingham fired the Surveyor because of complaints from the tenants; thus, the Surveyor's commentary may be an effort to get revenge on Buckingham. But the king urges the Surveyor to continue.

The Surveyor says Buckingham declared he would have Wolsey and Lovell killed if the king died and then gain the throne himself. Further, he quotes Buckingham speaking of the role his father played in Richard III's struggle for the throne. Where his father could have stabbed Richard III to death, but was restrained by loyalty, Buckingham intends to appear loyal yet kill the king. The king now believes Buckingham is a traitor who intends to assassinate him. The king calls for a trial.

4.2.1.4 Act- I Scene – II Analysis

Katharine's request to eliminate the new tax shows more harmony between the upper and lower classes than is usually present in Shakespeare. The queen wants Henry to be more generous and to not make the people pay for the campaigns in France. She doesn't ask merely out of a soft heart but because she has wisely foreseen unrest and rebellion in the people if otherwise. The king shows himself to be an inattentive leader, yet one who is content to seem generous in reducing taxes– though his actions are really reducing the more serious danger of revolution.

This scene shows that Wolsey has taken over some of the king's authority, as Buckingham charged in the previous scene, by creating a tax without consulting the king. Wolsey's underhandedness is first proven in his own words when he tells his secretary to let the people believe the tax was reduced due to Wolsey's own effort. Then, he introduces Buckingham's former employee, the Surveyor, a man who

clearly has a grudge, to speak against Buckingham. Despite the queen's astute observations about the Surveyor's intentions, no one listens to her.

The reference to Richard III refers to Shakespeare's earlier play by that name, where Buckingham's father, also the Duke of Buckingham, was Richard's right hand man in his bloody struggle for the throne. After helping Richard dispatch several royal family members who preceded Richard in line to the throne, the elder Buckingham began to doubt Richard. When Richard got the throne, Buckingham asked for lands that Richard had promised him, but Richard, seeing Buckingham's doubt, executed him. The Surveyor suggests that the younger Buckingham would himself reverse this situation–rather than being punished for being loyal like his father, the younger Buckingham would rather strike first, using the pretense of loyalty to get to the king.

The queen twice shows herself to be the most generous, kind, and wise person in the scene, first asking for the people's tax to be reduced and second by noting that the Surveyor is not giving impartial evidence. All the evidence we have on her so far is of a generous person, seemingly more aware of the dangerous intentions of others than even is the king. Yet she will be the next to fall.

4.2.1.5 Act- I Scene – III Analysis

` Lord Chamberlain and Lord Sands discuss the oddity of the nobles' behavior since they returned from the trip to France. New continental fashions taken up by these returning men from the French seem ridiculous, and the two lords make fun of their dandyish clothes and manners. Lovell enters, relating proposed reformations urging the returned nobles to give up French-influenced styles. The three agree that such reformations are the right idea.

Lovell says he is on his way to a great dinner celebration at Wolsey's house, to which the Lords Chamberlain and Sands are also invited. They agree that Wolsey is generous, and they set out on their way to his home.

Guildford says a dedication at the beginning of the events at Wolsey's house, welcoming the guests. Lord Chamberlain, Lovell, and Sands arrive, and Sands is

seated at a table next to Anne Bullen. Sands flirts with Anne, and Wolsey enters the party.

Hearing cannon fire, Wolsey discovers that new guests have arrived. Lord Chamberlain discovers that the strangers are shepherds apparently arrived from France, who had heard talk of Wolsey's party and were so impressed with the tales that they had to attend. Wolsey invites them in. The shepherds are in fact King Henry VIII and some of his men in disguise. The shepherds dance with the ladies, Henry with Anne. He is very taken by her beauty.

Wolsey tells the shepherds that if one of them has a higher position than himself, then he will surrender his place. Wolsey strolls among the shepherds and sees through the king's disguise, unmasking him. Henry then asks Lord Chamberlain about Anne. Telling her it is bad manners to dance with her without kissing her, he kisses her. Then, he goes to a private banquet room with his men, promising Anne that he won't forget her.

4.2.1.4 Act- I Scene – IIV Analysis

Lord Chamberlain and Sands mock and scorn French fashions (people of Shakespeare's day did make fun of continental styles, which they thought were effeminate and bizarre). A certain critique of the nobles of Shakespeare's day is implicit in this exchange.

Henry meets Anne Bullen, his next wife and mother of the future Queen Elizabeth, at Wolsey's party. Anne is quite talkative with Sands but exchanges nearly no words with Henry. Many parts of Anne's role appear offstage; she decides to marry Henry, actually marries him, is crowned, and gives birth to Elizabeth all offstage. Unlike Katharine, who speaks many impassioned lines, Anne's role in this play is minimal, with little to give her a sense of personality and hardly any lines to speak.

In many ways, the goal of this play is for Queen Elizabeth to be born. Wolsey stands in the way of that goal because he schemes for Henry's next wife to be the French king's sister; only by accident does he allow Henry and Anne to meet.

Wolsey's downfall comes from his perceived treason; but in the grander arc of this play, he must fall because he does not encourage ties between Henry and Anne, which will lead to the birth of Elizabeth and ultimately the rule of the king contemporary in Shakespeare's time, James I.

SECTION 4.2. ACT – II

4.2.1 Scene I

In the streets of London, a first gentleman meets a second gentleman. One asks the other where he is rushing; the second is on his way to the trial of the Duke of Buckingham. But the first gentleman has seen it, and the trial is already over. Buckingham has been found guilty and sentenced to death. The first gentleman tells how Buckingham pleaded not guilty to the charges against him and spoke eloquently in his own defense, but the court pronounced him guilty all the same.

The gentlemen agree that Cardinal Wolsey is behind the fall of Buckingham and has been busy sending any Lords favored by the king to distant parts or to jail. Apparently, "All the commons/ Hate [Wolsey] perniciously and, o' my conscience, /Wish him ten fathom deep" (II.1.50-1).

Buckingham enters, guarded by soldiers and accompanied by Lovell, Sands, Vaux, and a crowd of commoners. The two gentlemen stand aside to hear what he says. Buckingham addresses the people, saying he has been condemned by a traitor's judgment, but he bears the law no ill will. He forgives those who have done him wrong and asks those who have loved him to weep for his death, then forget him. Lovell asks Buckingham to forgive him, which he does.

Vaux must accompany Buckingham to the river, where a barge awaits to take him to his end. He offers to have the barge fit for a duke, but Buckingham stops him. Buckingham came to the court with a high position and now leaves it as a poor man stripped of titles, but he has seen the truth. Buckingham speaks of his father, who was loyal to Richard III and then killed by that same king. King Henry VIII's father, who came to the throne after deposing Richard III, pitied Buckingham and restored his title and nobility, but now that king's son has taken it all back. Buckingham repeats the fall of his father, both brought down by men they served and to whom they were loyal–though at least Buckingham the younger had a trial.

Buckingham counsels the audience to be careful with their loyalty and love: "those you make friends/ And give your hearts to, when they perceive/ The least rub in your fortunes, fall away/ Like water from ye, never found again/ But where they mean to sink ye" (II.ii.128-32). Then, he is led away.

The gentlemen agree that the turn of events for Buckingham is very sad. But they have heard talk of another person tumbling from the king's grace, brought about by more pernicious scheming. They have heard that the king wishes to separate from Queen Katharine. They suspect Wolsey has urged the king to this path, perhaps wanting the king to marry someone else. Cardinal Campeius has arrived from Rome to discuss the matter, proving the rumor true. The gentlemen speculate

that Wolsey has engineering this in order to get back at Katharine's father, the Holy Roman Emperor and king of Spain, for having not given him a post in the past.

4.2.2 Act – II Scene I Analysis

The two gentlemen appear in this scene to give a sense of the popular opinion of the events at the court. First, we find that they are very aware of all of the passing events, and they hold strong opinions. These are not Shakespeare's charming commoners, too distant from the court to comment on it; rather, these characters believe the king has made mistakes and is held too much under the influence of Wolsey. Showing the greater link between the nobles and the people in this play, the gentlemen are very interested in and moved by the fall of Buckingham.

Like many of Shakespeare's characters, Buckingham has learned much from his unfortunate fate. Buckingham delivers a dying man's oration, urging the crowd to learn what he has, that even when you are loyal to your friends, sometimes they turn against you without provocation. He now understands the truth and yet can forgive his accusers. Buckingham steers clear of accusing Wolsey of being the traitor or influencing the king, unlike his earlier railing against Wolsey. Perhaps he understands that his previous criticism of Wolsey led to his present circumstances; yet on the way to his death, he refuses to name names.

Buckingham will not go to the grave in anger, yet he does recognize the terrible irony of his fate. Like his father's death, Buckingham's downfall comes not through disloyalty but rather through too much loyalty to men who turned on them. The gentlemen suspect that Wolsey is behind Buckingham's downfall, but Buckingham's stance of forgiveness means that Wolsey gets away with it.

Buckingham is the first to be brought down and to make his speech of forgiveness; Katharine follows. It appears that Buckingham had to fall because he imagined he had a claim to the throne. Whether this claim was really in Buckingham's mind or merely an accusation by Wolsey is unclear. Either way the result is the same; none who even imagine a future without Henry's issue on the throne are doomed to fall. Again, this play is directed inexorably to the birth of Elizabeth, and no character in the way can live.

4.2.3 Act – II Scene II Analysis

Lord Chamberlain enters, reading a letter from one of his employees that tells how Cardinal Wolsey's men seized several of Lord Chamberlain's horses, claiming that they must be given to the king. Lord Chamberlain says he thinks Wolsey will end up taking everything from all the nobles.

Norfolk and Suffolk enter, asking after the king. Lord Chamberlain notes that the king is brooding about his marriage to Katharine, perhaps worrying that it was an illegal marriage. Suffolk suggests it is more likely that Henry is thinking about another lady. Norfolk says Wolsey planted the idea that the king's marriage could be annulled. Norfolk is astonished that Wolsey has, thus, managed to engineer a break with the king of Spain and convinced Henry to cast off his loyal wife of 20 years. Lord Chamberlain agrees with these words but hopes that one day the king's eyes may be opened to the machinations of Wolsey.

Lord Chamberlain exits, and Suffolk and Norfolk go to speak to the king. The king is not pleased to see them and ignores them as soon as Wolsey and Cardinal Campeius enter. The king dismisses Suffolk and Norfolk, who mutter on the way out that they do not trust Campeius, this envoy from the Pope.

Wolsey says that no one could be angry with the king for leaving Katharine because the Pope has been asked to arbitrate the king's decision. The Pope's envoy, Campeius, embraces the king and gives him papers elaborating his judgment of the situation. The king sends for his new secretary, Gardiner, to plan for a reading of the decision. Gardiner was formerly Wolsey's secretary, which Wolsey reminds him as he enters, and Gardiner whispers back that his first loyalties are still to Wolsey. The king and Gardiner go off to talk, and the two cardinals discuss the downfall of the previous secretary.

The king announces that they will go to Blackfriars to make the announcement about his decision to leave Katharine. He is grieved to leave such a good wife, but he says his conscience demands it, and he must.

Norfolk, who previously had urged Buckingham to quiet his anger at Wolsey, seems now convinced that Wolsey is untrustworthy. In discussion with the Lord Chamberlain and Suffolk, the three men vent their displeasure at Wolsey for taking the wealth of the nobles and for convincing the King to drop Katharine. The threat of divorcing Katharine has brought about a break in the treaty with the king of Spain, and Katharine's father and the nobles do not approve of such policies. But all they can do is hope that the king will see how he is being led by Wolsey.

The two cardinals arrive in the king's chamber to deliver the decision from Rome, but it is some time before that decision is revealed. It has been suggested that the king has had a crisis of conscience because Katharine was first married to his dead brother, and he now thinks his marriage to her may have been unlawful. Wolsey convinced the king of this possibility because he wants Henry to marry the sister of the king of France--but Henry actually wants to marry Anne Bullen.

We know that Henry was responsible for the religious break with Rome leading to the birth of the Church of England, allegedly spurred on by the Pope's refusal to grant him a divorce from Katharine. Yet little is made of this break in this play. Campeius' judgment is not nearly as important as the decision Henry seems to have already made about leaving Katharine.

We see another small example of Wolsey's actual scheming in this scene, when he reminds Gardiner that Gardiner was Wolsey's secretary first, and Gardiner assures Wolsey that he is still working more for him than for the king. It seems Wolsey does have undue influence over the king–or at least he wants to be sure he has access to all information first. But it is unclear if the placement of Gardiner proves Wolsey's inherent rottenness or not.

4.2.4 Act – II Scene III Analysis

Anne Bullen and her attendant, (who is an) Old Lady, discuss the downfall of Queen Katharine outside the queen's quarters. Anne is saddened that Katharine lived for so long without reproach and knew of no plots against her, yet is nonetheless about to fall from grace. Anne thinks Katharine's demise will be all the

more bitter because Katharine has known such heights, and she suggests it may be better to have been born poor yet be happy than to be rich and miserable.

Feeling so sorry for Katharine, Anne declares that she herself would never want to be a queen. The Old Lady assures her that she would, since Anne has a woman's heart and, therefore, necessarily desires wealth, eminence, and sovereignty. The Old Lady says she would consent to be a queen for mere pocket change, while Anne insists that nothing could convince her.

The Lord Chamberlain enters, with a message from the king, who has such a high opinion of Anne that he wants to honor her with a new title and an increased annual income. Anne says the only thing she can give in return is thanks, and she prays for the well being of the king. On his way out, Lord Chamberlain notes to himself that Anne has such a wonderful mix of beauty and honor that she can't help but have attracted the king's eye, and he suspects that "from this lady may proceed a gem/ To lighten all this isle" (II.iii.78-9).

The Old Lady exclaims that she has been working at the court for 16 years and has had no improvement in her situation, where Anne has received these blessings almost without trying. Anne's new title, given merely as a sign of respect and without requiring any obligation, promises more future gifts, in the Old Lady's opinion.

Anne quiets the Old Lady and worries what will happen next. But she asks the Old Lady not to mention her new title to Katharine before returning to comfort the queen.

4.2.5 Act – II Scene III Analysis

Anne's voice is heard for the first and last time in this play, as she insists that she wouldn't want to be a queen, seeing what terrible misfortune is coming to Katharine. Yet several scenes later, she becomes the queen. What could have changed her mind? Perhaps gifts from the king, like the new title and income offered in this scene, were sufficient, but we never find out.

The Old Lady reasons that Anne would surely want to be a queen since she is a woman, and women want power and money. Apparently no great fondness for Henry is required, as the Old Lady says she would become queen for a few farthings. Clearly the Old Lady has no great opinion of the forces driving women, though having worked in the court for so long may have given her a skewed sense of what those forces are.

Lord Chamberlain's assessment of Anne is simply that he thinks she may help bring a "gem" to England, referring again to the birth to come of the future Queen Elizabeth, the point toward which the whole play drives.

4.2.6 Act – II SCENE – IV

Many official types enter a hall at Blackfriars, including bishops, dukes, scribes, then Cardinal Wolsey, Cardinal Campeius, and the king and queen. Wolsey calls for silence while the report from Rome is read, but Henry says it has already been read; there is no need to read it again. Queen Katharine kneels at Henry's feet and speaks:

She asks him to have pity on her, now that she is a stranger in a foreign kingdom. She asks how she has offended Henry, what she has done to make him want to cast her off. She says she has been a true and loyal wife, always obeying him in every matter for 20 years, and had many children with him. She says she is willing to have God punish her if she has ever done anything against Henry, but she has not. She reminds him that Henry's father and her father, the king of Spain, were wise men, who conferred and agreed that their marriage was lawful. She begs the king to allow her time to receive counsel from Spain before submitting to a trial.

Wolsey declares that many learned men are on hand, yet they cannot sway the king from his course, so there is no point in delaying proceedings. Campeius agrees that they should proceed. The queen then addresses Wolsey and says she believes he is her enemy, but she will not allow him to be her judge. She believes that he has caused this divorce, and she repeats that she will not let him judge her.

Wolsey says that she sounds unlike herself, and she does him wrong. He claims to have nothing against her and that the case against her has been discussed by many others besides him. He denies having stirred up trouble in the marriage, and he notes that he is speaking before the king, who he hopes will defend him against Katharine's assault.

Katharine says that she is unable to defend herself against Wolsey's cunning. She accuses him of being arrogant and proud and of having gone above the power of his office to influence the king. She repeats that she will not be judged by him, and she tries to depart. Campeius and the king call her back, but she insists that she will not make an appearance during the rest of the proceeding and leaves.

Henry lets her go, saying that no man has had a better wife than her. He speaks further of her noble and obedient nature. Wolsey asks the king to declare whether he has influenced him unduly with regards to Katharine, and the king consents to clear Wolsey's name, excusing him from Katharine's accusations.

The king then relates how he came to doubt his marriage to Katharine. He tells how an ambassador from France came to negotiate for the hand of the king's daughter and asked if she were legitimate, which set the king thinking. He thought he must not be doing right in the eyes of heaven, since every child born to Katharine was either born dead or died soon thereafter or was a girl. Believing this was a sign that Katharine was unfit to be queen, he started the divorce process, despite his feelings for her. The king says he first spoke to some of his nobles about his plans, later asking the opinion of all his men. Therefore, it was not out of dislike for the queen that he chose to divorce her but out of a universal belief that the marriage had been unlawful.

Campeius says they must adjourn until another day when the queen is present to complete the divorce. Henry notes to himself that he does not like the tricks of these cardinals, and he has no respect for Rome. He looks forward to the return of Cranmer, his trustworthy religious advisor.

Like Buckingham's day in court, the queen must be tried before she can be cast off. But the "trial" seems a mere formality, since Henry is not concerned with the words from Rome so much as his own decision that he must be done with Katharine. Katharine begs him to have pity on her, but he does not reply to her. Rather, the cardinals respond. So, Katharine speaks of her clear-headed suspicions about Wolsey, presented first in the hearing of Buckingham's Surveyor–suspicions that the king still does not have. Wolsey claims that he did not influence the king against Katharine, and the king assents–but only after Katharine has left the scene. He seems unable to speak directly to his cast-off queen, though he speaks of her good nature as soon as she leaves the room.

The king explains at length how he came to decide he must divorce Katharine. He claims that he began to wonder if it was lawful for him to have married his brother's widow, and the fact that she never gave birth to live male children made a case for the unlawfulness of their union. While it is true that Henry would have wanted a male heir, Henry's explanation sounds like a weak excuse. If Wolsey planted the idea of divorce in the king's mind, he did it to forge new alliances through a marriage between Henry and the sister of the king of France. But Henry seems to have another woman in mind. The divorce from Katharine conveniently is explained as a response to a flare-up of Henry's conscience about the lawfulness of the marriage and a desire for male heirs, but perhaps the real goal is merely another liaison with a different woman–i.e., Anne Bullen.

Wolsey has continued to wield strong influence over the king through both the fall of Buckingham and that of Katharine, but he will not last much longer. It is remarkable that the king has so far not become aware of prevailing opinions against Wolsey, but now is the end of Wolsey's run of power; Wolsey is the next to fall.

SECTION 4.3. Act- III

4.3.1 Scene – I

The queen is in her apartment when the arrival of Cardinal Wolsey and Cardinal Campeius is announced. The cardinals request that they speak in a private

room, but the queen's conscience is clear, so she is content to converse in a public room. Wolsey says he has not come to accuse her but to learn her thoughts on the dissolution of her marriage and to offer advice. Katharine does not believe that they are on an honorable errand, but she nevertheless voices thanks for their efforts. Katharine declares that she is a woman alone, without friends or hope. Wolsey insists that she does have friends in England, but she disagrees. Campeius advises Katharine to put her hope in the king and to believe that he will yet protect her when they are divorced. Katharine accuses them of being corrupt, and she reminds them that there is still a higher force to judge them, God.

Katharine tells the cardinals that she thought they were holy men, and she is shocked to see their apparent pleasure in making her life wretched. She cannot believe they would advise her to put her future in the hands of one who has already rejected her. The cardinals tell her she is mistaken. But the queen speaks of how obedient and honorable a wife she had been, yet rewarded only with dishonorable divorce. Thus, she says, even being a constant woman and a good wife cannot save a marriage. Katharine says only death will take the title of queen from her. She wishes she had never come to England, a world of flattery and untruth.

Wolsey breaks in to insist that their ends are honorable, that they want to cure her sorrow, and she misunderstands them in thinking evil of them. As peacemakers, they suggest that she not aggravate the break with the king, but try to stay in his good favor. Campeius assures her that the king loves her, and he promises they will try to help her. But Katharine tells them to do whatever they want, declaring sarcastically that if she has misunderstood their intentions, it is because she is a woman, lacking understanding.

4.3.2 Act- III Scene – I Analysis

Katharine, unlike Buckingham, will not go quietly into the future maliciously created for her by the cardinals' scheming. Faced with the cardinals in her chamber, the queen accuses them of mistreating her for sport and of falsely claiming they can aid her. She voices her anger at her lost position, and she forcibly declares that she will not give up her title while she lives. While Buckingham forgave those who turned

on him, the queen does not. Yet she withholds critique of her husband, who was so clearly swayed by the cardinals' influence. She reserves all her wrath for those who have done her wrong--namely, Wolsey.

Yet never do the cardinals waver and admit any part in bringing her down. Do they believe that what they have done is the right thing? What can be the real intention of the cardinals in visiting the queen? Do they genuinely want to help her because they truly believe that the divorce was an advisable move, if upsetting for Katharine? That conclusion seems plausible in that they hold up under her attack, insisting that they do want to help her, that the king will continue to aid her, and that he still loves her. Are they speaking the truth? Perhaps, but Katharine certainly is, too; she can't rely on the support of the king after their divorce, nor can she rely on anyone else's support. She is truly adrift in a land where she formerly reigned.

Katharine is neither doomed to death like Buckingham, nor has she been charged with any treason. She may live, but as a woman in Elizabethan England, being unmarried in a foreign country without any protectors may have been tantamount to an unpleasant imprisonment. Her name may be clear of wrongdoing, but having been divorced will stigmatize her thereafter.

Katharine has been tried and punished not for any errors or faults but for having been the wrong person for the job. Henry's dissatisfaction that Katharine never gave birth to male heirs, plus his attraction to Anne and Wolsey's urgings toward divorce all together bring about her fall. Of course, Wolsey wants Henry to marry French royalty and forge political ties, but Henry's choice of Anne eventually brings about the birth of the future Queen Elizabeth. Katharine's real fault was not being the future mother of Elizabeth; thus, she had to go.

4.3.3 Act- III Scene – II

Norfolk, Suffolk, Lord Chamberlain, and Surrey enter. Norfolk urges for them to combine their complaints against Cardinal Wolsey, for Wolsey wouldn't be able to resist a united front. Lord Chamberlain says the only way to get at Wolsey is to bar his access to the king, but Norfolk says that the king has already become displeased

with Wolsey. Norfolk tells that Wolsey's double-dealing in the divorce proceedings has come to light, and Suffolk explains: Wolsey's letters to the Pope were intercepted by the king, who discovered that Wolsey urged the Pope to deny Henry the right to divorce until Henry had gotten over his infatuation with Anne Bullen. In fact, the king has already married Anne, reveals Lord Chamberlain. Suffolk compliments Anne, who he thinks will bring blessings to the land. According to Suffolk, Cranmer returns soon from his trip to the famous colleges of Christendom, and thereafter the new marriage will be published, and Katharine will be renamed "Princess Dowager."

Wolsey and Cromwell enter, and the other lords stand aside to observe them. Wolsey asks about the delivery of his letters, and when Cromwell leaves, Wolsey comments to himself that the king shall marry the French king's sister, not Anne Bullen. Wolsey suggests that he objects to Anne on religious grounds, since she is a Lutheran. And he speaks against Cranmer, who is now in favor with the king. The lords cannot hear him speak, but they observe that Wolsey seems ill at ease.

The king enters with Lovell, muttering to himself about the wealth Wolsey has accumulated. He asks the lords if they have seen Wolsey, and they reply that he is nearby but strangely upset. The king says it may be because of misdelivered papers the king just encountered, including a surprisingly large inventory of Wolsey's holdings. Lovell summons Wolsey, who confronts the king.

Henry comments to Wolsey that he must be too busy contemplating spiritual matters to consider the earthly world, but Wolsey says he has time for both. Henry reminds Wolsey that Henry's father gave him his post, and Wolsey has been a right-hand man throughout Henry's own reign. Drawing him out, the king asks Wolsey to admit that he had been made the principal aide to Henry. Wolsey says that the praises showered on him by the king have been more than enough reward for his efforts and that all his work has been aimed at the good of the king and the profit of the country. Wolsey declares his loyalty, and the king observes that his speech makes him sound like a loyal servant–though he clearly doubts it. He comments that the reward for loyalty and obedience is honor, as the reward for disloyalty and

corruption are their own punishment, bringing dishonor. Wolsey repeats that he has always worked for good and honorable ends.

Then, the king gives Wolsey the papers he has intercepted and exits with the nobles. Wolsey wonders how he has caused such annoyance in the king, then examines the paper. Immediately he sees that his career is over. The first paper is the inventory of the wealth Wolsey has gained for his own ends. He opens the second paper, which is his letter to the Pope. Wolsey knows there is nothing he can do; he has reached the highest point in his career and now must fall. Norfolk, Suffolk, Surrey, and Lord Chamberlain re-enter and announce the king's order for Wolsey to give over the seal of his office, which Wolsey carries, and confine himself to his house. Wolsey is unwilling to step down before these lesser lords, and he accuses them of envy. He charges the lords with being too eager to view Wolsey's disgrace and his fall, and he says he prefers to give the seal directly to the king.

Surrey accuses Wolsey of being ambitious and heartless in bringing about the death of Surrey's father-in-law, Buckingham, and sending Surrey away to Ireland from where he could not protest the death. Wolsey says he was innocent of holding any private malice toward Buckingham, and he reminds Surrey that a jury sent Buckingham to his death. Surrey, angered at Wolsey's arrogant speech, reminds Wolsey of his efforts to take the lands and holdings of other nobles and the scheme he had been cooking up with the Pope against the king. Norfolk tells Wolsey that he holds a set of articles enumerating the faults of Wolsey, written in the king's hand, but Wolsey says his innocence will be found when the king knows of his loyalty.

The lords begin to read the articles against Wolsey, accusing him first of scheming to become a papal representative without the king's assent or knowledge. Then, he accuses Wolsey of writing to the Pope himself without the king's knowledge or permission. Wolsey is declared guilty of other, smaller political schemes, not the least of which was bribes he sent to the Pope. Lord Chamberlain stops the proceedings, saying that they should not push Wolsey too much when he is already down. Surrey says he forgives Wolsey, and Suffolk finishes the king's articles with the announcement that all Wolsey's goods shall be forfeited and he shall be cast out

of the king's protection. The lords depart to tell the king of Wolsey's refusal to give up the seal.

Alone, Wolsey considers the fate of men. First, one sprouts like a tender plant, then blooms, then a frost comes and brings about one's demise just when one was on the verge of ripening into greatness. "I have ventured," he says, "far beyond my depth" (III.ii.359, 362). His pride was not enough to support him, and now he must fall prey to the mercy of currents of opinion. He curses the pomp and glory of the world and his own efforts to win the favors of the king. Between the smile of favor and the destructive punishment of a king is a great fall, Wolsey thinks.

Cromwell enters and weeps at Wolsey's misfortunes. Wolsey tells him not to weep; Wolsey knows himself now and is at peace. He has been cured by the king, and he says he is glad to be unburdened. Now, he says, he can bear more misfortunes than his enemies could bear.

Cromwell relates the news, that the king has appointed Sir Thomas More to Wolsey's position, Cranmer has returned, and Anne has been announced as the new queen. Wolsey comments that his sun has set and sends Cromwell to the king, whose sun he prays will never go down. He assures Cromwell that the king will promote him. Cromwell is saddened and says that while the king may have his service, Cromwell's prayers will stay with Wolsey. Wolsey weeps and tells Cromwell, after Wolsey has been forgotten, to remind the world that Wolsey had taught Cromwell how to avoid the pitfalls of honor and dishonor. He advises Cromwell to forget his ambition, to love himself last, and to cherish those who hate him. "Corruption wins not more than honesty" (III.ii.445), he says, and urges Cromwell to be just. Above all, Wolsey exhorts Cromwell to serve the king.

4.3.4 Act- III Scene – II Analysis

This act marks the fall of Wolsey, who until now had successfully influenced the king to do what he wanted without being suspected. Throughout the play thus far we have only heard characters speak badly of Wolsey, particularly Buckingham, Katharine, and Norfolk, but in this scene we finally hear Wolsey speak for himself. As

the trial in Act 1 put Buckingham's innocence in doubt, so Wolsey's trial makes Wolsey seem less unambiguously evil.

Speaking alone on the stage after the nobles announce the king's punishment, we see a changed man. Wolsey is guilty of ambition and pride, of scheming toward his own ends and plotting against other nobles. Yet, in the manner of many of Shakespeare's heroes, he learns something from his downfall. He knows himself now, he says. Self-knowledge is the hardest-won but most worthy achievement in Shakespeare's world.

That Wolsey has learned something is important, but *what* has he learned? On one hand, he learned that he was wrong to be ambitious and prideful. But on the other hand, the main lesson of his downfall seems to be that he was out of his depth in the court. It seems a strange and unclear lesson. Does it mean that he was insufficiently noble to move among the lords of the court? Does it mean that he should not have toyed with the fate of nations, as only kings can breathe in that thin air? Or does it mean that he just wasn't smart enough to be a clever schemer and get away with it?

Buckingham's and Katharine's punishments seemed to have been pulled out of thin air merely for convenience's sake, to get them out of the picture. We know Wolsey is not an honorable man, since it was at his behest that Buckingham and Katharine met their fate, yet in his downfall we do not see a wholly corrupt man. In his speeches Wolsey sounds regretful; he sounds like he has seen his actions were wrong, he counsels Cromwell to live without ambition and tells him that honorable behavior will get him just as far as corruption. And in the end, we feel sorry for Wolsey. He acted callously and arrogantly, he schemed against the king, but perhaps he thought he was doing the right thing. Even if he did not, he later admits his failures. Is that enough to exonerate him?

While we might feel sympathy for Wolsey, we do see him dealing out a number of lies in this scene. First, when the king asks him about his service, Wolsey declares that being honorable and serving the king has always been its own reward– a false statement, coupled with the proof of the holdings he has seized from other

nobles. Later, he assures the nobles that the king will forgive him when his loyalty is known, a strange statement considering he had just proclaimed his loyalty to the king, who then served him the accusatory articles. And when Surrey charges him with the death of Buckingham, Wolsey insists the jury was at fault more than himself, which is the same line he took when discussing the unfair taxes in Act 1. Wolsey seems hard-wired to deflect blame whenever he can, and he continues to make boastful and false comments to the nobles when he has already acknowledged that his own demise is imminent.

As with Buckingham and Katharine, whether Wolsey did bad things or was falsely accused seems not to matter so much as the fact that he must be removed from the scene for the inexorable flow of history to take place. Wolsey does not support the king's marriage with Anne, who will be the mother of Queen Elizabeth--and that may be his greatest crime, in this play.

Interestingly, we learn that Wolsey had urged the Pope to deny the king's request for divorce: he wanted Henry to get a divorce later, when Henry was no longer interested in Anne and would thereby marry a royal heir of France. Thus, the break with Rome that followed Henry's decision to go ahead with the divorce and marriage to Anne is explained as a bad side effect of Wolsey's political schemes. Perhaps the Pope would have been happy to grant a divorce, but Wolsey's intervention changed things. The play lays the blame for Henry's break with Rome at Wolsey's feet.

SECTION.4.4 Act- IV

4.4.1 SCENE – I & II

One gentleman meets another in the city street, where they wait to see Anne, now queen, pass on the way to her coronation. The last time they met in the street was for the sad event of Buckingham's trial, so they are glad for a return to the more usual pomp of the royalty. They discuss a list of those who are to be promoted today, including Suffolk and Norfolk, and they note that Katharine has been renamed "Princess Dowager" after the divorce.

The coronation passes with Suffolk, Norfolk, Anne, Surrey, and other important state officials. The gentlemen comment on who holds which decoration of state and how impressed they are with Anne. A third gentleman arrives, having just seen the coronation ceremony. He relates it to the other two.

He tells how everyone filed into the Abbey and that the people were so impressed with the beauty of Anne. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer, performed the ceremony making her queen, the choir performed, and the procession passed out of the church to the court for celebrations. The third gentlemen notes that Gardiner was there and is not fond of Cranmer. But the gentlemen agree that nothing can come of this rivalry, as Cranmer has one friend who will not abandon him–namely Cromwell, who is in favor with the king and just got a promotion. The gentlemen depart.

In Katharine's apartments, she asks her attendants to tell her about the death of Cardinal Wolsey. Apparently, after his arrest Wolsey grew ill and died a broken man. Katharine says she will speak of him with charity but goes on to mention how his enormous ambition shackled the kingdom; he used bribes for ecclesiastical favors, he said lies and was duplicitous in words and actions, and he was generally a bad example for the clergy.

But her attendant Griffith speaks well of Wolsey, noting that he was a good scholar, kind and generous to his friends, and a patron of education. Upon his demise he discovered humility and found himself and died fearing God. Katharine listens to Griffith's speech and says she hopes Griffith will eulogize her when she dies, since he speaks so well. Griffith's words have made her want to honor the man who she hated most. She wishes Wolsey peace in death.

Katharine goes to sleep with her attendants by her. She sees a vision of six people in white robes with garlands around their heads. They dance around Katharine, offering her a garland, and then dance away. Katharine wakes and calls to her attendants, asking if they have seen anything. She tells about the vision, saying it promised her eternal happiness. The attendants note to each other that they think she has not yet long to live if she is seeing such visions.

A messenger enters, announcing the arrival of Capucius, an ambassador from Katharine's father, Charles V of Spain. Capucius says he has been sent by Henry to ask after her health, but Katharine says he is too late, since she is already dying. She gives Capucius a letter for the king, in which she asks Henry to care for their daughter and to provide for her servants, who have all been faithful during Katharine's life. Katharine asks Capucius to tell the king of her in all humility, saying that she will soon die and not be a trouble to him. Calling to her servants, she prepares for bed.

4.4.2 Act- IV SCENE – I & II ANALYSIS

As in the street scenes after Buckingham's trial, we see that the citizens of Henry's reign are very interested in the events of the court and anxious to be on hand to witness pivotal events. Seeing the coronation is very exciting for them. They seem very impressed with Anne and pity Katharine; they seem to hold judgment of the king's actions.

Katharine, meanwhile, hears of Wolsey's death and foresees her own. She is able to forgive Wolsey's bad treatment of her because of the good words Griffith speaks on his behalf, explaining how Wolsey came to be a humble man in the end. Later Katharine stresses her own humility to the king, through Capucius. Humility and forgiveness come to all those cast off by the king in the end; even Katharine, who held her wrath for Wolsey the longest, can forgive him. Yet neither she nor Wolsey is able to live long after being exiled from the court.

These two scenes have unusually long stage directions during the procession and Katharine's vision. Many critics believe Shakespeare co-wrote *Henry VIII* with John Fletcher, the man who followed Shakespeare as chief playwright at the Globe, though proof is inconclusive. At the very least, these long stage directions are uncharacteristic of Shakespeare's usual style and may have been added by someone else, whether or not it was Fletcher.

SECTION:4.5. Act- V

4.5.1 SCENE- I

Late at night, Gardiner and Lovell meet. Lovell is in a rush, and Gardiner asks why. Lovell reports that the queen (Anne) is in labor. Gardiner says he wishes her well, but he thinks she may not be of the best stock to be the mother of the heir to the throne. Gardiner thinks the kingdom will not be safe until she is dead, along with Cranmer and Cromwell. Lovell reminds him that those two men are in the highest favor with the king. But Gardiner says that he has already denounced Cranmer as a heretic, and Cranmer will be called before a Council in the morning to be examined. They must root out bad weeds, Gardiner declares, and departs.

Henry and Suffolk enter and ask Lovell for his report of the queen's labor. Henry says he has to think and sends Suffolk away. Denny enters, with the Archbishop Cranmer. The king sends away Lovell and Denny. The king strolls with Cranmer, while the king tells how he has heard many bad complaints about Cranmer, which shall bring him before the Council the next morning. The king knows that Cranmer cannot be freed after that without proof in his favor, so he may be temporarily imprisoned while the complaints are investigated, and the king asks him to be patient. Cranmer thanks the king for his warning, saying he knows how he is subject to many bad rumors. Cranmer says he fears nothing that can be said against him, but the king reminds Cranmer that he has many enemies. He asks if corrupt men may be convinced to testify against Cranmer, which would ruin his case for innocence. Cranmer thinks he will inevitably fall into a trap set for him.

The king promises Cranmer that if the council decides to imprison Cranmer, he should use his best persuasions against such action. The king gives Cranmer his ring and tells him to show it to the council should they try to cart him away, and then the king himself will be authorized to hear Cranmer's appeal. Cranmer weeps in thanks, and the king says Cranmer is the best soul in his kingdom. Cranmer departs.

The Old Lady and Lovell enter to tell Henry of the birth of his child. He demands that she tell him it is a boy, so she tells him it is indeed a boy–though it is

actually a girl. The Old Lady says how the much the baby resembles him, and Lovell and the king rush out to see it.

4.5.2 Act- V SCENE- I Analysis

At the beginning of the scene, we see how swiftly public opinion can be swayed, as Gardiner denounces Cranmer for no particular reason except Gardiner's remaining loyalties to the dead Cardinal Wolsey. Cranmer is set up to be the character to fall in this act.

Yet for the first time we see an active king. Never before has the king seemed to understand the plots churning behind the scenes that place people in and out of his favor. But this time he knows that Gardiner wants Cranmer out, and he will not merely sit by and let it happen. He warns Cranmer and gives him his ring, putting him under the king's protection during the next day's hearings.

Why has the king chosen to protect Cranmer, while he let Buckingham, his wife, Katharine, and his right-hand man Wolsey go to their ends? Perhaps Cranmer's apparent innocence that people are plotting against him is a sign that Cranmer really is a good man, not a player in the royal power game. The king may be finally energized to save one of his men from the mysterious ups and downs of the court for the simple reason that this time that man is genuinely good.

Elizabeth is born in this scene--yet another female born to one of Henry's wives. The Old Lady says that the baby is a boy at first merely because the king demands it. But saying Elizabeth is a boy child also refers historically to her eventual role of leader of England, which she held as firmly and wisely as any man.

4.5.3 Act- V SCENE- II

Cranmer enters, hoping he is not late for the Council meeting. The doorkeeper says he must wait until he is called. Doctor Butts crosses the stage, noting that malice is afoot if the Council members are requiring Cranmer, himself a member, to wait outside. Cranmer sees Butts and hopes he will be kind to him. The

king and Butts enter at a window above the scene, and Butts tells the king how Cranmer has been forced to wait at the door. Henry is surprised that the Council would be so rude, and he says that there is one above them who will yet judge them–either himself or God. The two stand aside as they watch the Council enter.

Lord Chancellor enters with Suffolk, Norfolk, Surrey, Lord Chamberlain, Gardiner, and Cromwell. They allow Cranmer to enter. The Lord Chancellor says he is disappointed to have heard complaints that Cranmer has been teaching new opinions and ideas around the kingdom, ideas that they deem to be heresies. Gardiner speaks more harshly, saying that they must swiftly deal with such bad behavior or the whole kingdom will become ill and the state will fall.

Cranmer says that he has always taught correct teachings, and he has never tried to disturb the public peace. He says he would like to hear what his alleged accusers have to say. But because Cranmer is a Council member himself, no one can bring complaints against him. So, Gardiner explains that they want to imprison Cranmer in the Tower, thus, returning him to the status of a common man, so those who would accuse him can do it openly and the Council can investigate. Cranmer responds kindly to Gardiner, saying that love and humility serve churchmen more than ambition. Cranmer doubts that Gardiner acts ethically, but he will submit. Gardiner accuses Cranmer of being a Protestant, but Cromwell tells Gardiner to hold his tongue, for he is being too sharp. Gardiner lashes out against Cromwell and accuses him of favoring Protestants. The two men argue viciously until Lord Chancellor stops them.

Lord Chancellor tells Cranmer that he will be conveyed to the Tower, and Cranmer asks if there is not another alternative. A guard enters to take him away, so Cranmer reveals that he wears the king's ring. The members of the Council see they have chosen badly to target Cranmer, not having realized how much he was in favor with the king. The king and Butts exit the window above and come down to the Council.

Gardiner addresses the king and gives thanks for having a king who so makes the church the chief aim of his rule. The king notes how Gardiner is a master

flatterer–but he isn't interested in flattery now, and he believes Gardiner has bloody plots in mind. Henry tells the council that he thought they were men of understanding and wisdom, but he sees they are not. It was cruel, he says, to make Cranmer wait outside the Council door, since he is their equal. He had given them the authority to try Cranmer, but some would simply send him to the Tower to rot. The Lord Chancellor disagrees, saying they really did intend imprisonment in the Tower to allow for full investigation of charges against him. The king urges them to trust Cranmer, since he himself does, and tells them all to embrace and be friends.

The king then asks the Council to baptize his young daughter. Gardiner is slow to embrace Cranmer, so the king urges him again. Cranmer weeps, and the king remarks on an old saying–that even if one does malice to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he will still be your friend.

4.5.4 Act- V SCENE- II Analysis

Finally the pattern of false accusations comes to a halt in the failed sentencing of Cranmer. In each preceding act (except Act IV), a character has met his or her demise and is ejected from the court. Cranmer escapes this seeming predestined fate, so it is important to explore the differences in his case.

With each previous fallen character, we see that they may actually have done something wrong (Buckingham may have had designs on the throne, Wolsey seemed to be plotting with Rome about the fate of Henry's marriage and was stealing property) or they may merely have been unlucky (Katharine did not give birth to male children or to Elizabeth). But Cranmer seems to be without possible blame. During all the previous acts, he was offstage traveling from college to college to ask scholars about the legality of Henry's divorce, so he had no role in any schemes. And more importantly, he is in no way positioned to block the birth and eventual coronation of Elizabeth, which has been the background reason for the downfall of all the other characters in this play.

Charity and forgiveness, too, are themes evoked in Cranmer's trial. The king chooses to be charitable to Cranmer and to disbelieve the vicious rumors against him, while Cranmer forgives Gardiner for having desired to bring him down.

Most importantly, we see the king take a genuinely active role in changing the turn of events. When Buckingham fell, the king barely seemed to have been involved; when Katharine was ousted, the king seemed sad but convinced that his advisors were right. With Wolsey, the king reacted against Wolsey's betrayal but was absent for his actual sentencing. But in this scene, the king not only watches from above as events unfold, he has already engineered their conclusion by giving Cranmer his ring to show to the Councilors when they try to take him to the Tower. Thus, the king is brought into the trial and tells the lords to be friends and stop trying to take each other down.

It would seem, then, that the terrible circle of rises and falls in the community of the court has been brought to a close, and now that Elizabeth has been born, the nation can return to calm. Yet Shakespeare's audience would have known that both Cranmer and Cromwell, as well as Sir Thomas More (Wolsey's historical replacement, only mentioned in the play), were executed not long after the events portrayed in *Henry VIII.*

4.5.5 SCENE- II Epilogue

A porter and a large group of men enter the scene. The crowd has arrived to see Elizabeth's christening. One man and the porter converse about how to keep the rabble from blocking the entrance to the palace yard. The porter thinks the crowd is made up of the same louts who go to public executions or who cheer loudest at the playhouse. The Lord Chamberlain enters and yells at the porter for letting the crowd block so much space, for soon royal ladies will need to pass. Lord Chamberlain suspects that the crowd is made up of folks from the suburbs, and he tells the porter to take care of them. Finally, the royals arrive, and the porter shouts to the crowd to make way.

Cranmer, Norfolk, Suffolk, and other noblemen enter the scene, with the child Elizabeth. Then, Henry enters. Cranmer baptizes Elizabeth and makes a speech about her future greatness. He says the infant holds great promise for England, and few now can imagine the great things she shall accomplish. She will know truth, she will be loved and feared, and she will be a great ruler. When she dies, she will be reborn like a phoenix in her heir, and all her good attributes will carry on in the next ruler. The king is amazed at the wonders of which Cranmer speaks. Cranmer goes on to announce that Elizabeth will bring happiness to England, and when she dies a virgin, the world will mourn her.

Henry is pleased with Cranmer's words and says that with this child he finally feels he has accomplished something great. He looks forward to seeing what she will do from his future post in heaven.

The character of the Epilogue enters, saying it is likely that the play did not please its audience. Some may have come to doze for a few acts but were woken by the trumpets. Others came to hear the court made fun of but were disappointed. The only praise the Epilogue anticipates must come from good women, who will have been pleased with the portrayal of one in Katharine. And, if the ladies clap, then their men must surely follow.

4.5.6 Act- V SCENE- II Epilogue

Once again the common people enthusiastically try to attend a major event of the court. They crowd around the church, hoping to see the baptism of Elizabeth. For the first time we see characters who speak in prose instead of verse, which probably causes the Lord Chamberlain to accuse them of being from the suburbs, a region much mocked by the urbane city dwellers. The Globe Theater was located in the suburbs, so Lord Chamberlain is actually speaking lines making fun of the audience.

When Elizabeth is baptized, Cranmer makes a speech about her future greatness. He says that all Elizabeth's good traits will be carried on in her heir, James I, the king of England at the time when *Henry VIII* was written. Thus, Shakespeare is complimenting the present king through complimenting Elizabeth, his predecessor, presumably putting himself in good standing with the ruler.

SECTION: 4.6. CHARACTERS

4.6.1 King Henry VIII

Henry VIII, the play's namesake. Henry begins the play under the powerful influence of Cardinal Wolsey and is easily persuaded to do away with Buckingham. Wolsey then convinces him that his marriage to the queen is illegal, since Katharine was his brother's widow. So, Henry divorces Katharine, intending to marry the beautiful Anne Bullen (the historical Anne Boleyn). He finally realizes that Wolsey is manipulating him when he intercepts letters between Wolsey and the Pope discussing his divorce. Angered, Henry strips Wolsey of his title and wealth, then marries Anne and announces it to the kingdom. Henry gains a more active role finally when his friend Cranmer is threatened by negative rumors. Giving his ring to Cranmer, the king watches the trial and intervenes to save Cranmer and to scold the lords of their court for their constant infighting. Father to the child (who will grow up to become the great Queen Elizabeth), Henry concludes the play at her baptism, believing that bringing her into the world is the best thing he has done.

Cardinal Wolsey

The king's right-hand man, Wolsey is quite a schemer. He engineers a truce with France before the play begins, then a break with Spain when the king divorces Katharine, who is the daughter of the king of Spain. He plants the idea in Henry's mind that his marriage to Katharine is illegal because he wants Henry to marry the daughter of the king of France, thus, solidifying the treaty he engineered. But he inadvertently introduces Anne Bullen to the king at a dinner, and Henry is smitten. In a letter, Wolsey tries to convince the Pope to deny Henry a divorce until Henry gets over his infatuation with Anne. But Henry intercepts the letter, along with an inventory of all the lands and holdings Wolsey has slowly been acquiring from fallen lords. Henry, enraged at Wolsey's betrayal, fires him, removes his royal protection, and takes his possessions. Wolsey finally understands that he was wrong to have so much arrogance and realizes that he was out of his depth to be plotting the future of the kingdom as he saw fit. Finally understanding humility and honor to be the correct path, Wolsey sees the truth of his wrongdoing. Humbly, he leaves the court and dies soon after in a monastery.

Queen Katharine

Married to King Henry VIII's brother before marrying Henry, Queen Katharine is present at the trial of Buckingham, and she is the only one who suspects any wrongdoing in the trial. When Cardinal Wolsey convinces the king to divorce her, she rails against Wolsey and accuses him of being her enemy. She refuses to let him judge her, and she will not submit to the divorce. When Wolsey comes to her, speaking kindly, she charges him with being a traitor and plotting to bring her down. She speaks at length of her loyal nature as a wife for more than 20 years, and she cannot believe she is being punished for it. If anything, she is being cast out for not giving birth to a male heir, nor to the future Queen Elizabeth. When Katharine is finally divorced, she is made "Princess Dowager." After hearing her attendants speak well of Wolsey, she forgives him and has a vision of her own imminent death.

Buckingham

Buckingham has just returned from France, where he has developed a grudge against Cardinal Wolsey. He rails against Wolsey and complains that Wolsey unfairly influences the king. Wolsey orders him arrested. At his trial, Buckingham is accused of having plotted to gain the throne (having been informed that he had a tenuous link to it should the king die without an heir). Buckingham is executed.

Anne Bullen

Anne Bullen (the historical Anne Boleyn) is an unmarried lady when the king meets her at Cardinal Wolsey's dinner party. He is much impressed with her and apparently has her in mind throughout his divorce proceedings. Anne, speaking with one of her attendants about Katharine's misery during the divorce, declares that she would never want to be the queen. Yet she marries Henry, though the Pope has not consented to Henry and Katherine's divorce. Later, she gives birth to the child Elizabeth, but remains offstage for the remainder of the play, having hardly anything to do after her marriage but to join in official processions and impress people with her beauty.

Cranmer

Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer spends the first acts of the play offstage, traveling to colleges to ask scholars about the legality of the king's divorce. As he travels, Gardiner spreads rumors about him and plots his demise. The king discovers this and gives Cranmer the king's own ring, so that he can appeal to the king in his trial. Cranmer is innocent of any wrongdoing and seems not to understand why others would have it in for him. When the king saves him from the Council, Cranmer forgives Gardiner for plotting against him. He baptizes the child Elizabeth.

Cardinal Campeius

An emissary from the Pope, Campeius has come to assess the situation of Henry's divorce and give his decision about its legality. He carries papers from Rome that apparently grant the divorce, since Henry plans to carry it out. He and Cardinal Wolsey speak to Katharine to convince her to take part in the divorce proceedings, and they tell her that Henry still loves her and plans to protect her. She curses them both. Later, Campeius flees to Rome after Wolsey's correspondence with the Pope urging against granting the divorce is discovered. It is not clear whether Campeius supports or opposes the divorce or whether he was a pawn of the Pope or of Wolsey.

Norfolk

A lord of the court. At first, he does not believe Buckingham's criticism of Cardinal Wolsey and urges Buckingham to hold his tongue. After Buckingham's fall, Norfolk and other lords meet to scheme against Wolsey. When Wolsey falls into disgrace, Norfolk takes part in reading charges against Wolsey. After Wolsey's demise, Norfolk is promoted. He takes part in a trial to bring down Cranmer, but the king saves Cranmer. Norfolk is in attendance at the baptism at the end of the play.

Suffolk

A lord of the court, Suffolk is present at many court scenes. After the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, Suffolk gets a promotion. He is a member of the Council that tries Cranmer.

Lord Chamberlain

A lord of the court, Lord Chamberlain is present at many court scenes. He is a member of the Council that tries Cranmer.

Lord Chancellor

A lord of the court, Lord Chancellor is present in many court scenes and presides over the Council that tries Cranmer.

Cromwell

Friend of Cardinal Wolsey, Cromwell is devastated by Wolsey's demise. Yet Wolsey encourages him to go back to the king and continue serving the state. Wolsey tells Cromwell to be honorable and humble, to not have ambition or do what Wolsey has done. Cromwell follows through soon thereafter, as one of Cranmer's only supporters.

Sands

A lord of the court, Sands is present in many court scenes. Sands flirts with Anne Bullen at Wolsey's dinner party before the king meets and marries her.

Lovell

A lord of the court, Lovell is present in many court scenes.

Gardiner

Formerly Cardinal Wolsey's secretary, Wolsey assigns Gardiner to the king with the understanding that he will remain loyal to Wolsey. When Wolsey falls from grace, Gardiner is given a promotion and becomes a member of the Council. Gardiner has particular hatred for Cranmer, and, out of lingering loyalty to Wolsey, tries to bring Cranmer down. Yet the king intervenes and tells Gardiner to embrace Cranmer and be friends.

Guildford

A lord of the court, Guildford announces the beginning of Wolsey's dinner party.

Vaux

A lord of the court, Vaux escorts Buckingham to his death.

Surrey

Son-in-law of Buckingham, Surrey is a lord of the court. Because of Buckingham's demise, Surrey is angry at Cardinal Wolsey and wants to engineer his fall.

Abergavenny

Buckingham's friend, taken to the Tower at the same time Buckingham is arrested.

Brandon

Sergeant at arms, Brandon is sent to arrest Buckingham.

Denny

A lord of the court, Denny brings Cranmer to speak to the king.

Butts

The king's doctor, Butts sees the Council is up to no good when they refuse Cranmer entrance to the Council of which he is a member. He watches the trial of Cranmer unobserved from above with the king.

Buckingham's Surveyor

The Surveyor is brought in by Cardinal Wolsey to speak against Buckingham at Buckingham's trial. The Surveyor managed Buckingham's lands but was recently

fired by Buckingham because of complaints against him from tenants. Hence, the Surveyor holds a grudge against Buckingham.

Old Lady

Anne Bullen's attendant. When Anne speaks about how much she doesn't want to be the queen, the Old Lady tells her she's wrong--any woman should want to be the queen.

Griffith

Queen Katharine's attendant, Griffith speaks kindly of Cardinal Wolsey, thus, convincing Katharine to cease hating him. Griffith's kind elegy is filled with the kind of forgiveness and pity encouraged in this play.

Capucius

An ambassador from the king of Spain in the English court, the king sends Capucius to talk to Katharine, the daughter of the king of Spain. Katharine gives Capucius a letter asking the king to care for their child and her servants.

The child

The offspring of Henry and Anne, christened Elizabeth, who will later become Queen Elizabeth.

Prologue

This allegorical figure enters the scene at the beginning of the play to make a short introduction to the play to the audience.

Epilogue

This allegorical figure enters the scene at the end of the play to make a short conclusion to the play, commenting on whether or not the audience liked what it saw.

4.7.Unit Summary

King Henry VIII listens to Cardinal Wolsey too much and gives him power, which the Cardinal uses to convict a duke of treason. Henry meets Anne Boleyn, divorces his wife Katharine, and marries Anne. Anne gives birth to Princess Elizabeth who the Archbishop prophesies will become great. A Prologue introduces the play as a story of real events. The Duke of Buckingham, along with some other nobles, discuss the meeting between King Henry and the French King. They discuss the peace agreement made between them and how it has already been broken. Buckingham expresses his concerns (and criticisms) about the amount of power held by Cardinal Wolsey, the Lord Chancellor of England. During this same discussion, Buckingham is unexpectedly arrested (kind of proving his point). He goes to jail for treason.

At court, King Henry makes policy decisions about the woollen trade, along with his wife, Queen Katherine. Wolsey takes the credit for the King's decisions. Katherine questions his motives. While Henry agrees to this criticism, when the Queen also speaks on behalf of Buckingham, the King refuses to hear it and orders his trial.

Wolsey holds a feast in his palace at Hampton, which many lords and nobles attend, including Lady Anne Boleyn. The feast continues as the King and his friends, disguised as ‘shepherds’, arrive. Wolsey recognises the King, who chooses Anne as his partner during a dance.

Act II

Back in London, Buckingham is condemned by false witnesses. He powerfully addresses the crowds before being executed. At court, a rumour spreads that Wolsey’s power is growing, and he is behind a probable separation between the King and Queen Katharine. King Henry, Wolsey, and other religious leaders discuss the validity of his marriage to Katharine. They discuss the possibility of divorce. Anne Boleyn hears the rumours and feels sorry for the Queen. When word arrives that the

King has given her a title, her companion persuades her to welcome the King's favours.

My drops of tears I'll turn to sparks of fire.

— HENRY VIII, ACT 2 SCENE 4

During a trial set up for the divorce, Queen Katharine asks to be allowed advisers from Spain (her native country). When Wolsey refuses, she accuses him of being responsible for Henry's desire for divorce. She leaves the trial, ending it. Henry blames the French for first questioning the validity of his marriage to his dead brother's widow.

Act III

Katharine seeks solace with her ladies and music. Wolsey and Campeus, another religious leader, interrupt her and try to persuade her to submit to the King's wishes. She refuses but the divorce is finalised anyway. Soon, Henry's secret marriage to Anne Boleyn is the talk of the court. King Henry finds Wolsey has been secretly writing to the Pope opposing the divorce. He confronts Wolsey. Some of the lords demand that Wolsey gives up his position of Lord Chancellor, as Thomas More has been chosen to succeed him. Wolsey steps down, advising his secretary Cromwell to leave. He hopes that Cromwell will not get wrapped up in his own fall.

Act IV

Queen Anne is crowned, and everyone remarks at the splendour of the ceremony at court. In retirement, Katharine hears of Wolsey's death. She dreams of her own death and asks her servants to see that she is buried with due recognition as a Queen.

We all are men, in our own natures frail, and capable of our flesh; few are angels.

— HENRY VIII, ACT 5 SCENE 3

Act V

Court gossip rages about changes such as Queen Anne's new baby daughter. Court gossip also includes charges against Cranmer, the new Archbishop. After a struggle between Cranmer and his enemies (which involves condemning him to the Tower of London), the King defends Cranmer and names him the godfather of the baby Princess Elizabeth. As he baptises Elizabeth, Cranmer prophesies that she will become great and bring peace and plenty to England. An Epilogue briefly requests the approval of the audience for the play that has told the history of their Queen's birth.

4.7 Self-Assessment Questions

Short Answers: (5 Marks)

1. What year did Henry VIII ascend to the throne of England?
2. How many wives did Henry VIII have?
3. Which of Henry VIII's wives gave birth to his only male heir?
4. What was the name of the Act that declared Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England?
5. Who was Henry VIII's first wife?
6. What was the name of Henry VIII's flagship that sank in 1545?
7. Who was Henry VIII's chief minister responsible for the dissolution of the monasteries?
8. Which of Henry VIII's wives was executed on charges of treason?
9. What was the name of the war fought between England and France during Henry VIII's reign?
10. Who succeeded Henry VIII to the English throne?

Long Answers: (8 Marks)

1. Discuss the idea of loyalty in this play as it relates to the downfall of Buckingham, Katharine, Wolsey, Cranmer. Are the characters punished for being loyal or for not being loyal enough? How does their loyalty contribute to their downfall?

2. Discuss the idea of forgiveness in this play, paying particular attention to speeches of Buckingham, Katharine, Wolsey, and Cranmer. Consider forgiveness in terms of the implied religious struggles of this play's era.
3. How does the idea of pity, first mentioned in the Prologue, appear throughout the play? Trace uses of the word and consider how it applies to the events in the play or the speeches of characters.
4. The play is named for the character of Henry VIII; yet is the king the main character? Why or why not?
5. Does anyone in this play truly deserve his or her punishment? Buckingham and Wolsey particularly may have had faults, but do their speeches after punishment make them seem more sympathetic? What about Katharine, who may not be at all to blame for the divorce. Is she a wholly sympathetic character or not?
6. Consider the fragile line between history and literature. The events portrayed in *Henry VIII* actually took place about 80 years before Shakespeare wrote the play, and his audience would have known the story. How do you think seeing this play would make an audience understand these events, still relatively close to their time, differently?
7. Consider the role of the common people in the play, especially in relation to the discussion of taxation in Act I and the scenes before the baptism in Act V, when Lord Chamberlain mocks them. Are the commoners wholly supportive of the royalty or do they pose a threat of any kind?

GLOSSARY

- **Tudor Dynasty**: The royal house to which Henry VIII belonged, ruling England from 1485 to 1603.
- **Reformation**: The religious movement in the 16th century that led to the establishment of Protestantism as a separate branch of Christianity, including Henry VIII's break with the Roman Catholic Church.
- **Act of Supremacy**: Legislation passed in 1534 that declared Henry VIII as the supreme head of the Church of England.
- **Dissolution of the Monasteries**: The process initiated by Henry VIII to dismantle monastic communities in England and confiscate their assets.

- **Anne Boleyn**: Henry VIII's second wife, executed on charges of treason, and mother of Queen Elizabeth I.
- **Catherine of Aragon**: Henry VIII's first wife, whose marriage to him was annulled, leading to the break with the Catholic Church.
- **Jane Seymour**: Henry VIII's third wife, who gave birth to his only male heir, Edward VI.
- **Thomas Cromwell**: Henry VIII's chief minister, instrumental in the dissolution of the monasteries and the administration of government during Henry's reign.
- **Mary I**: Henry VIII's daughter with Catherine of Aragon, who later became Queen of England and earned the nickname "Bloody Mary" for her persecution of Protestants.
- **Edward VI**: Henry VIII's son with Jane Seymour, who succeeded him to the throne at a young age but ruled only for a short time before his death.
- **Catherine Parr**: Henry VIII's sixth and final wife, known for her influence on Henry's children and for her role in the English Reformation.
- **Church of England**: The national church established by Henry VIII after his break with the Roman Catholic Church, also known as the Anglican Church.
- **Pilgrimage of Grace**: A rebellion in northern England in 1536, primarily against Henry VIII's religious reforms and the dissolution of the monasteries.
- **The Great Bible**: The first authorized edition of the Bible in English, commissioned by Henry VIII for use in the Church of England.
- **Cardinal Wolsey**: Henry VIII's chief minister in the early years of his reign, who fell from favor after failing to secure an annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon.

Suggested Readings & References

1. Henry VIII: A New Commentary" by Michael Dobson (2021),Cambridge University Press

.

2. The Arden Shakespeare: Henry VIII" Edited by Richard Knowles (2020), Bloomsbury Publishing

3. "Shakespeare's Henry VIII: A Critical Guide" by Richard Harp (2022),Routledge

4. "Shakespeare's History Plays: Richard II to Henry VIII" by Andrew Hadfield(2021), Routledge

5. Henry VIII: A Casebook" Edited by Patrick M. Murphy (2019),Palgrave Macmillan

Self Assessment Questions :

Two Marks:

What was Henry VIII's nickname?

Henry's nickname was Old Coppernose because he devalued the English currency by covering copper coins in a thin layer of silver. On the coins, the copper would wear off on Henry's nose first.

Discuss the political impact of Henry VIII's reign on Europe.

Henry VIII's reign had a significant political impact on Europe, with his religious reforms isolating England from Catholic powers. His foreign policies and marital alliances, including his conflicts with France and Spain, reshaped England's role in European politics.

Create a timeline of key events in Henry VIII's reign.

Organize key events: 1509 (ascension to the throne), 1533 (marriage to Anne Boleyn), 1534 (Act of Supremacy), 1536 (execution of Anne Boleyn), 1547 (death). These events reflect Henry's evolving rule, centered on his marriages and religious reform.

Explain the role of Henry VIII in the English Reformation.

Henry VIII played a crucial role in initiating the English Reformation by separating from the Roman Catholic Church. His desire for an annulment from Catherine of Aragon and a male heir led to religious reforms that shaped England's Protestant future.

When did Henry VIII die?

Henry VIII died on 28th January 1547.

How long did Henry VIII rule England?

Henry VIII ruled England for 38 years.

What church did Henry become head of in 1534?

Henry became head of the Church of England in 1534.

What was the name of the battle that Henry VIII's first wife won on his behalf in 1513?

Henry's first wife won the Battle of Floden on his behalf as his regent in 1513.

Five Marks:

1. How successful were Henry VIII's wars with France and Scotland in the period from 1540- 1547?
2. Assess the condition of the Church in England in 1529.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of Henry VIII's government in dealing with opposition to the religious changes from 1529-1547.
4. Develop the journey of Henry VIII in achieving his aims in foreign policy in the period from 1509 to 1529?
5. Compile Cromwell's reforms change Tudor government and administration by 1547?

8 Marks:

1. Discuss the idea of forgiveness in this play, paying particular attention to speeches of Buckingham, Katharine, Wolsey, and Cranmer. Consider forgiveness in terms of the implied religious struggles of this play's era.

2. Consider the role of the common people in the play, especially in relation to the discussion of taxation in Act I and the scenes before the baptism in Act V, when Lord Chamberlain mocks them. Are the commoners wholly supportive of the royalty or do they pose a threat of any kind?
3. 'The most important reason for Wolsey's fall from power was his failure to obtain a divorce for Henry VIII'. How far do you agree?
4. Illuminate why the Pilgrimage of Grace failed in 1536.
5. The main reason for Henry's campaign against the Pope and the Catholic Church was his wish to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon'. How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

Unit IV

Henry VIII

UNIT - V

UNIT OBJECTIVES

This unit will offer valuable insights into Shakespeare's craft and thematic concerns. Through "The Comedy of Errors", students will understand Shakespeare's use of farce and slapstick comedy, analyze themes of identity, mistaken identity, and deception, and examine the impact of misunderstandings and miscommunication. Additionally, they appreciate Shakespeare's linguistic mastery and wordplay, and recognize the play's commentary on social class and relationships. Shakespeare's Sonnets provide a deeper understanding of poetic structures and devices, explore themes of love, beauty, mortality, and the passage of time, and examine human emotions and relationships. These works enrich students' critical thinking, close reading skills, and appreciation for Shakespeare's literary legacy and influence on poetry.

5.1 THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

5.1.1 The Comedy of Errors Background & Summary

This comedy is probably Shakespeare's earliest work. The play was first performed at Gray's Inn on December 28, 1594, as part of the Christmas festivities. The plot was not original, of course. Shakespeare, like most other playwrights and authors of that time, based his work on another, earlier work. In Shakespeare's case, he chose one of Plautus's most highly respected comedies, the *Menaechmi.* Significantly, he did not rely exclusively on rhymed couplets for his comedy; in fact, half the play is in blank verse, an exceptional accomplishment for a beginning playwright.

The plot was well known to the public of the time. The use of mistaken identities, as well as the confusion of twins, had long been popular in the Western

theater tradition. While Plautus had only one set of twins, Shakespeare has two; thus, in his comedy, he increases to a great extent the possibility of confusion. The comedy was a huge success then, and it has continued to be popular. Indeed, even Broadway audiences were ecstatic over a spectacular musical adaptation of *Comedy of Errors* in 1938, entitled *The Boys from Syracuse.*

To begin with, the plot situation seems hopeless (a melodramatic and romantic touch): a father has lost a son and a wife, and his remaining son has gone in search of his long-lost twin brother, and the desolate father has not heard from his remaining son for a long time; thus, he sets out in search of his son and, by accident, arrives in a city that is a sworn enemy to his own city. Accordingly, he faces almost certain death; yet, by the close of the play, the entire family — servants included — are reunited, and marriages are in the offing.

In addition, Shakespeare introduces the character of Luciana, a foil-sister of the fiercely jealous Adriana. She, in turn, furnishes the love interest for Antipholus of Syracuse. As a result, even in this, Shakespeare's first attempt at satisfying the seasoned Elizabethan theater-goers with a sparkling comedy, is a vivid demonstration of both a high degree of genius and creativity in this young playwright.

He combines adventure, the comedy of human folly, romance, and suspense in a play that while not one of his masterpieces can be said to be both clever and original and still popular today

A merchant of Syracuse, Egeon, suffered a shipwreck some years ago in which he was separated from his wife, Emilia, from one of his twin sons, later Antipholus of Ephesus, and the son's slave, Dromio of Ephesus. The other slave's

twin, Dromio of Syracuse and Egeon's remaining son, Antipholus of Syracuse, remained with Egeon. When he came of age, Antipholus of Syracuse was allowed to go in search of his lost brother. After a period of time, Egeon then set out after his remaining son, and the play begins as we learn of Egeon's capture and his condemnation to death by Duke Solinus in the hostile city of Ephesus. The details of Egeon's story move Solinus to pity, and he grants a reprieve until nightfall, by which time a ransom of a thousand marks must be raised.

The twists of plot arise when Antipholus of Syracuse arrives with his slave in Ephesus, where Antipholus's twin brother, together with his wife Adriana and their twin slave reside. Confusion mounts upon confusion: Antipholus of Syracuse abuses Dromio of Ephesus for nagging him to go home for dinner; Adriana locks her real husband out of their home because she takes the Syracusan twin for the Ephesian: it is the other Dromio's turn now to be beaten; Antipholus of Ephesus refuses to pay for a gold chain he had ordered (it was delivered to his brother) and so is arrested. As the situation grows more and more bewildering with everyone certain that everyone else is totally mad, the moment for Egeon's execution is quickly approaching. Antipholus of Ephesus demands that the Duke intercede for him. Egeon sees his son as a last minute savior, but is of course not recognized by him. In the end, the Syracusan twins emerge from an abbey where they had taken refuge, and the complications are resolved. The Abbess, who turns out to be Egeon's long-lost wife Emilia, invites them all at the end to discuss this "one day's error" and "make full satisfaction."

5.1.2 Analysis

Act 1: Scene 1

The play opens in the city of Ephesus, with Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus, leading a merchant named Egeon to be executed. Egeon converses with the Duke, and we learn that he is a native of Syracuse, Ephesus' great commercial rival. Because of strife between the two cities, any Syracusan caught in Ephesus must pay an indemnity of a thousand marks, a price that Egeon is unable to meet, or face execution. He seems resigned to his death and declares that the execution will bring an end to his "woes." Curious, the Duke asks him to relate how he came to travel to Ephesus, and Egeon complies.

The merchant describes how he was born in Syracuse, and a wife, and prospered through trade with the neighboring city of Epidamnum. Eventually, however, his representative in Epidamnum died, leaving the business in disarray, and Egeon was forced to travel there to set his affairs in order. His pregnant wife went with him and gave birth to identical twin sons. At the same time, a poor woman staying in the same inn also gave birth to identical boys, and Egeon bought her newborns, intending to bring them up as slaves for his sons.

Unfortunately, on their return journey to Ephesus, Egeon recounts, their ship was broken apart by a storm, and the sailors abandoned them on the wreckage. His wife tied herself, with one son and one slave, to one of the masts, and he tied himself, the other son, and the other slave to a mast at the other end of the wreck. They floated for a time, while the sea grew calm, and then they saw two ships coming toward them--one from Corinth and one from Epidaurus. Before the ships reached them, however, they ran into a rock that split the wreckage in two, carrying Egeon in one direction and his wife in the other. Eventually, the Corinthian ship rescued Egeon and the one twin whom he was with, but they were unable to catch up to the Epidaurian ship, which had picked up his wife and his other son and carried them away.

When the son who remained with him had grown up, Egeon relates, the young man took his slave and set off into the world to find his brother and mother. Egeon himself followed suit, and his wanderings eventually led him to Ephesus, where he was willing to brave arrest and execution in the hopes of finding the missing half of his family.

The Duke, hearing this story, is deeply moved, and although he cannot violate his city's laws, he offers Egeon a day of liberty to find someone to ransom his life. Egeon's despair does not lift, however, since the task seems hopeless. Nevertheless, he sets about canvassing the city, searching for assistance.

Analysis: Act 1: Scene 1

These opening speeches, first by the Duke and then by Egeon, serve to locate the play both in a specific time and place and in relation to past events. The

time and place is ancient Greece, with its rival city-states of Ephesus, Syracuse, Corinth, and Epidamnum; but it is an Elizabethan version of the Greek world, in which Christian references abound and English debt-officers co-exist with ancient practices of slavery. In other words, it is one of Shakespeare's imagined places, like the pre-Christian England of *King Lear* and *Cymbeline.*

More important than the setting, from the audience's perspective, is the background information: the conflict between Syracuse and Ephesus that threatens Egeon's life and Egeon's tragic and fantastic family history. The story of the two pairs of twins, who the audience will quickly identify as the Antipholi and Dromios, grants the viewers information that is unavailable to the characters, who grope ignorantly through the mists of mistaken identity that fill the play. We laugh, knowing that there are *two* masters and *two* slaves and, thus, understanding how the various mix-ups come to be. But for the unfortunate participants in the farce, there is only confusion at what seem to be supernatural events.

This contrast between the audience, who know they are watching a comedy, and the characters, who have no such privileged information, hints at a deeper understanding of the nature of comedy. While *The Comedy of Errors* is clearly a slapstick affair, in which nearly every scene is played for laughs, the grim opening and later confusion reminds us of the threat of tragedy that often hangs over Shakespeare's comic plays. Certainly, as Egeon catalogues the fantastic woes that have befallen him, he does not see himself as a player in a farce. The threat of his impending execution provides the play with a dark undercurrent to the comic scenes that follow. But while a tragedy moves from order into disorder, from life into death, a comedy reverses the order. So, the play begins with Egeon's grim statement, "proceed, Solinus, to procure my fall, / And by the doom of death end woes and all (I.i.1-2)," but moves toward an ending in which the forces of disorder and destruction are overcome by the forces of reconciliation and renewal.

Act 1: Scene 2

Egeon's son, Antipholus of Syracuse, is also in Ephesus, although neither he nor his father is aware of the other's presence. A friendly Merchant warns Antipholus about the law concerning Syracusans and advises him to pretend to be from another city in order to avoid arrest. Antipholus thanks him and sends his servant, Dromio of Syracuse, to the Centaur Inn with their money (a thousand gold marks) and luggage.

Left alone, he muses on his unhappiness, caused by his fruitless quest for his brother and mother. Unknown to anyone, however, his missing brother is actually a prosperous citizen of Ephesus, served by his own Dromio of Ephesus. Antipholus of Ephesus is married to a woman named Adriana, and he is a great favorite of Duke Solinus.

As Antipholus of Syracuse muses, Dromio of Ephesus appears and demands that his "master" come home to dinner. He has mistaken this Antipholus for Antipholus of Ephesus, and Antipholus S., in turn, mistakes this Dromio for his own servant. Their misunderstanding leads to an argument--Dromio E. insists that Antipholus S. return to their house because his wife is impatient with him, while Antipholus S. demands to know what has become of their money and belongings. Eventually, the master slaps the slave, and Dromio E. flees, leaving his master to remark that Ephesus is reportedly full of sorcerers and that one must have bewitched his man. Fearing for the safety of his possessions, he hurries off in the direction of the Centaur Inn.

Act 2: Scene 1

The scene now shifts to a conversation between Adriana, the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, and her sister Luciana. Adriana is anxiously awaiting the return of her husband--and his slave, who she sent out after him. Luciana rebukes her for being impatient, saying that a dutiful wife should be a docile servant to her husband. Adriana retorts that Luciana speaks without experience--that once she is married, she will have a different point of view. As they debate, Dromio of Ephesus returns and reports the bizarre behavior of his master (or rather, the man he mistook for his master), saying that Antipholus is mad and will talk of nothing but his gold.

Furious, Adriana threatens to beat him unless he brings her husband back, and Dromio reluctantly goes out again. Once he is gone, Adriana tells her sister that Antipholus must have taken a lover--that is the only explanation for his absence and peculiar behavior.

Analysis: Act 1: Scene 2 & Act 2: Scene 1

Antipholus of Syracuse is a stronger, more interesting character than his brother, if only because Shakespeare allows him emotions larger than the confusion and anger that Antipholus of Ephesus expresses. Here, we see Antipholus S. experiencing a kind of angst or spiritual incompleteness brought on by the absence of his twin and mother--"I to the world am like a drop of water," he says, "that in the ocean seeks another drop, / Who falling there to find his fellow forth, / Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself. / So I, to find a mother and a brother, / In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself"(I.ii.35-40). His sense of alienation and loss of self will only increase as the play continues, and he begins to doubt his own identity amid the confusion.

The violence between master and slave when Antipholus strikes his brother's Dromio, believing him to be his own slave, establishes a pattern for the play, as both Dromios (but especially Dromio of Ephesus) complain of the heavy hands of the master--and mistress, since Adriana also is not averse to slapping Dromio around. These beatings are usually played for laughs, however, and it is significant that in a play filled with ropes, drawn swords, and threats no one really gets hurt.

Meanwhile, the description that Antipholus gives of Ephesus as "a town full of cozenage: / As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye, / Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind, / soul-killing witches that deform the body / ...And many such-like liberties of sin" (I.ii.97-102), would have resonated with an Elizabethan audience well-versed in the Bible; in the New Testament, the apostle Paul travels to Ephesus and finds the city full of witchcraft. This theme of enchantment, which, far from being benign, is directly associated with "sin," will be returned to throughout the play, since magic seems to be the only sensible explanation for the peculiar events.

The argument between Adriana and Luciana establishes their chief character traits: Adriana is clearly a jealous, shrewish wife in the tradition of Shakespeare's own *The Taming of the Shrew,* but despite her faults, she is a more sympathetic character than the docile, preachy Luciana, whose advice to women (like that offered by the Abbess later in the play) is to practice patience and subservience. While Luciana offers the conventional wisdom of Shakespeare's day, the playwright undermines these notions; the problems between husband and wife in *The Comedy of Errors* stem not from Adriana's jealousy or lack of obedience but from the fact that for a time, at least, she seems to have *two* husbands. Indeed, her behavior seems appropriate to the mixed-up situation; obedience is all very well, but to which man must she be obedient?

Act 2: Scene 2

Antipholus of Syracuse goes to the inn and finds that his slave did, in fact, bring his money and luggage safely there. Confused, he wanders the city until he encounters Dromio of Syracuse--*his* Dromio--who, of course, has no memory of telling him to come home to dinner or anything else from Antipholus' earlier conversation with Dromio of Ephesus. Antipholus grows angry with him, but the slave manages to defuse his anger through a long, involved joke about baldness.

While the master and slave converse and jest, Adriana and Luciana come upon them, mistaking them for Antipholus of Ephesus and *his* Dromio. Adriana immediately accuses the man she believes to be her husband of infidelity and rebukes him for violating his own promise of love and their marriage bed. Antipholus, confused, says that he has never met her, which only makes Adriana more furious. She insists on dragging her perplexed "husband" home to dinner, bringing Dromio with them, and the confused Antipholus decides to play along until he understands the situation better. They go into Antipholus of Ephesus' house, and Dromio is left below to guard the door during dinner.

Act 3: Scene 1

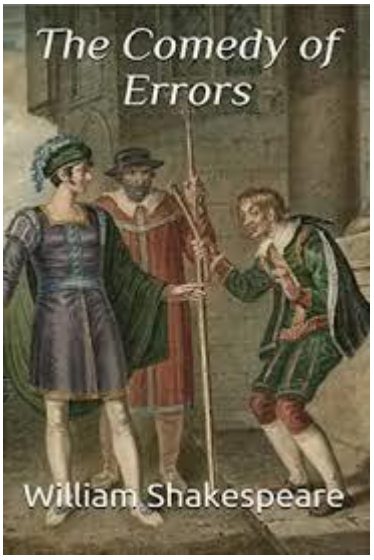
While his double is upstairs eating, Antipholus of Ephesus returns from the marketplace, accompanied by Dromio of Ephesus, Angelo the goldsmith, and Balthasar the merchant. He asks his fellow businessmen to give Adriana an excuse for his tardiness and then mentions that his slave is behaving oddly. When he knocks at the gate, however, Dromio of Syracuse refuses to let the company in. Antipholus pounds and shouts furiously, bringing Luce, his maid to the door, and

then Adriana--but since both believe that Antipholus is already inside, they refuse to admit him. In a rage, Antipholus is about to break down the door when Balthasar dissuades him, telling him that doing so will reflect badly on his wife's honor and that Adriana must have a good reason for keeping him out. Still seething, Antipholus leads his friends away, resolving to dine with a Courtesan at her house, the Porpentine. He asks Angelo to go fetch a gold chain, recently made, that he had promised to his wife; Antipholus now plans to present it to the Courtesan instead.

Analysis: Act 2: Scene 2 & Act 3: Scene 1

The conversation between the Syracusan Antipholus and his Dromio is illustrative of their relationship--what begins with anger and threatened blows is quickly turned to laughter by Dromio's artful sense of humor. This will contrast sharply with the behavior of the other Antipholus, who comes across as a humorless, angry master, unlikely to joke around with his slave. (In the Ephesian Antipholus' defense, however, it must be pointed out that he suffers most during the comedy: The confusing events are beneficial to Antipholus of Syracuse, providing him with a wife (Adriana), a new love (Luciana), and a valuable gold chain, while the unlucky brother is locked out of his house, accused of being mad, and eventually imprisoned, none of which are conducive to good humor.)

The sympathy that the audience feels for Antipholus of Syracuse is further enhanced by his willingness to go along with what seems to him to be nonsense--namely, Adriana's demand that he return to "their home" for dinner. ("Dinner," in Elizabethan parlance, is the midday meal.) Despite his earlier, somewhat fearful reference to Ephesus' reputation for witchcraft, he willingly takes up the peculiar adventure offered by the women, declaring that "I'll entertain the offered fallacy" (II.ii.185), and later "I'll say as they say, and persevere so, / and in this mist at all adventures go (II.ii.214-215)." This openness to adventure is characteristic of a comic hero, and it will be amply rewarded at the play's end.



The exchange across the barred door between Antipholus of Ephesus and those inside his house is played for laughs, of course, but it can be argued that there is more going on than simple confusion. Antipholus of Syracuse may be only given dinner by his "wife," but there are hints of a sexual element in the confusion--that Adriana may offer her "husband" more than food. Balthasar urges Antipholus of Ephesus not to break down the door because that would lead to gossip and ruin the reputation of his wife, but the Ephesian Antipholus seems to assume that there is something sexual going on inside, and his quick decision to dine at the house of the Courtesan (an expensive prostitute) suggests that he plans to revenge what he perceives as his wife's infidelity with an infidelity of his own. Whether his jealousy is justified is a matter for interpretation--most critics see Adriana as innocent of adultery with her husband's twin, but others believe that Shakespeare is implying a strong sexual element in the dinner. (However, the subsequent scene, in which Antipholus is already wooing Luciana, suggests that nothing is going on between him and Adriana.)

Act 3: Scene 2

Inside the house, Luciana and Antipholus of Syracuse are alone together. Luciana rebukes the man she believes to be her brother-in-law for not treating Adriana well; if he must betray his wife, she pleads, he should at least do it secretly. Antipholus S., meanwhile, insists that he is *not* Adriana's husband and then professes his love for Luciana. Appalled, she flees to find her sister.

Dromio of Syracuse joins his master and recounts how the kitchen maid, Nell, mistook him for her husband (who is, in fact, Dromio of Ephesus). Nell, as the Syracusan Dromio tells it, is a prodigiously fat, ugly, and fearsome woman, and he and his master have a good laugh at her expense. Then, Antipholus S. tells his slave that he intends to depart from Ephesus immediately and sends him to the harbor to book passage. Once Dromio is gone, his master ponders the beauty of Luciana but resolves not to be tempted to remain in the city, since "none but witches do inhabit here"(III, ii, 154). As he stands in thought, Angelo the goldsmith comes in and, mistaking him for Antipholus of Ephesus, gives him the gold chain that the Ephesian Antipholus had ordered, promising to stop by later to collect payment.

Act 4: Scene 1

Angelo, we learn, is in debt to a Second Merchant, who threatens to arrest him unless the money is paid. The goldsmith promises to collect the sum from Antipholus of Ephesus, who he sees walking down the street with Dromio of Ephesus. Antipholus E. sends his slave off to buy rope, with which he plans to beat his wife and servants for locking him out of the house at the last meal. Next, he greets Angelo, who asks to be paid for his gold chain. Antipholus, of course, never received the chain, and refuses to pay, so Angelo has him arrested. At that moment, Dromio of Syracuse returns from the harbor, and mistaking Antipholus E. for his master, tells him which ships are ready to sail. Cursing, Antipholus orders him to be silent and sends him to Adriana to fetch a purse of money with which to pay his way out of jail.

Act 4: Scene 2

Luciana tells Adriana about how her "husband" declared his love for her and pledges her innocence of any illicit behavior. Adriana curses Antipholus furiously but admits to still feeling some love for him. Dromio of Syracuse dashes in to report that Antipholus has been arrested and needs money; Adriana sends Luciana to fetch it and then orders Dromio to hurry and save her husband from prison.

Analysis: Act 3: Scene 2 & Act 4: Scenes 1 & 2

Her encounter with Antipholus of Syracuse provides an occasion for Luciana to expound again on her philosophy of marriage. She rebukes him for not being

faithful and then says, "If you like elsewhere, do it by stealth; / Muffle your false love with some show of blindness (II.ii.7-8)." In other words, cheat if you must but at least pretend that you still love her, and don't get caught philandering. This assumption that men *will* have affairs, and that it is better not to know about them, fits in well with Luciana's world of docile women and dominating men, but it has unsettling implications in this case, since Antipholus is professing his love for *her.* By suggesting that her brother-in-law can commit adultery as long as he is not caught, one might argue, she implicitly suggests her own openness to his entreaties.

For his part, Antipholus' speech declaring his love for her has a touching desperation to it. The language, which promises his submission to her ("teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak [III.ii.33])," suggests a relationship that reverses Luciana's professed ideal of feminine obedience. In a sense, Antipholus seems to be using his infatuation to achieve what his search for his brother has not granted him--namely, a sense of self. "Transform me then," he entreats her, "and to your power I'll yield (III.ii.40)." If the enchantments of Ephesus threaten to strip him of his identity, then his love for Luciana offers it back to him through the re-creative powers of love.

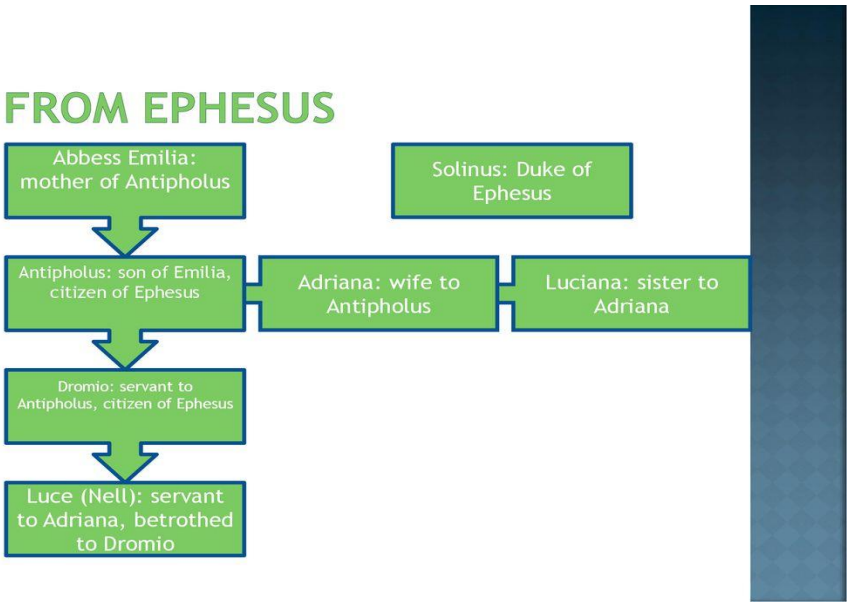
From this revealing scene, we shift immediately to the uproariously funny exchange between Antipholus and his Dromio, in which Dromio uses geographical references to describe the ugliness of Nell (the name is interchangeable with Luce), who has mistaken him for her husband. "In what part of her body stands Ireland?" his master asks. "Marry, sir, in her buttocks," the slave replies. "I found it out by the bogs." "Where Scotland?" Antipholus continues and gets the reply: "I found it by the barrenness; hard in the palm of her hand" (II.ii.117-121). The dialogue continues through France, England, Spain, and the Indies, culminating in Antipholus' question: "Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands?" and his man's reply: "O, sir! I did not look so low (III.ii.137- 38)." This is Dromio S. in his finest form, telling raunchy jokes with obvious glee.

What follows is pure plot, as the playwright contrives to entangle his characters in a bewildering web of errors culminating (but hardly concluding) with the arrest of Antipholus of Ephesus. Adriana's response to the news is telling--having just been told that her husband tried to commit adultery with her own sister, she nevertheless reaffirms her love for him and sends money to free him immediately.

The transience of her jealousy is appropriate to the play, since all negative emotions in a comedy must be transient in order to prepare for the happy ending.

Act 4: Scene 3

Antipholus of Syracuse, exploring the city, remarks that people he has never met are continually greeting him, thanking him for favors, showing him goods he has ordered, and so on. Dromio of Syracuse dashes up to him, carrying the gold that Adriana sent to free Antipholus of Ephesus from jail. This Antipholus, of course, has no idea why his servant is bringing him money and immediately asks Dromio whether there are ships in the harbor on which they can book passage out of Ephesus.



As master and slave converse, the Courtesan, at whose home Antipholus of Ephesus ate dinner, comes upon them and asks Antipholus S. for a ring that he borrowed from her during the meal. He and Dromio decide that she is a witch and flee, leaving the Courtesan convinced that he is mad. She resolves to go to Adriana's home, tell her that her husband has stolen the ring, and demand repayment.

Act 4: Scene 4

Dromio of Ephesus encounters Antipholus of Ephesus in an officer's custody. His master demands to know where the money is to pay his way out of jail; Dromio, baffled, replies that he has brought the rope's end that Antipholus had earlier sent

him to buy. Antipholus flies into a rage and tries to assault his slave, halting only at the sudden appearance of Adriana, Luciana, the Courtesan, and a would-be sorcerer named Doctor Pinch. The women plan to have the doctor use exorcism to cure Antipholus' supposed madness. Antipholus protests, and he argues with Adriana: she claims that he dined at home, while her husband (supported by Dromio's testimony) tells her that he was shut out of his own house. Pinch declares that both master and slave are mad, and they are bound and taken to Adriana's house; Adriana promises the officer to make good all her husband's debts. He tells her that Antipholus owes money to Angelo the goldsmith for a gold chain, and the Courtesan says that she saw Antipholus with the item; Adriana, of course, has never seen the chain. As they talk, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse rush in with drawn swords, and everyone else flees, mistaking them for Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus, who, they assume, have escaped from Pinch. Remarking that even witches are afraid of swords, the Syracusan Antipholus orders his slave to take their belongings onboard a ship.

Analysis: Act 4: Scenes 3 & 4

The portrait of Ephesus as a place of enchantments continues through these scenes. Antipholus of Ephesus' bafflement at being hailed on the street by complete strangers leads him to comment that "sure, these are but imaginary wiles, / and Lapland sorcerers inhabit here (IV.ii.10-11)." His decision to blame "Lapland sorcerers," however, seems to mask a deeper insecurity, since his reference to "imaginary wiles" (which, in modern parlance, means "tricks of the imagination") suggests that he may be beginning to doubt his own sanity. As his sense of self erodes, his hysteria mounts and his panic at the Courtesan's rather innocuous words and subsequent decision to run around with a drawn sword suggests a man teetering on the brink of panic.

But, as the confusing events multiply and the conflicting stories offered by Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana come into conflict (with Antipholus E.'s bad temper both obvious and understandable), even the Ephesians themselves become convinced that magic is afoot—or, rather, madness that can be cured by magic. The magic is absurd rather than sinister, however: Antipholus of Syracuse's forebodings about sorcerers and witches are realized only in the ludicrous mountebank Doctor

Pinch, whose incantation ("I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man, / to yield possession to my holy prayers" [IV.iv.55-56]) reminds the audience of the blurred lines that define the setting--he offers a Christian prayer in a supposedly pre-Christian city. The character of the Doctor--who is described, somewhat oddly, as a schoolmaster and a conjurer--defines the comic tone of the play. In Shakespeare's tragedies (e.g., *Macbeth,* with the Weird Sisters), magic is a destructive force; here, sorcery is a hobby of schoolteachers and, ultimately, a sham.

Act 5: Scene 1

Angelo the goldsmith and the Second Merchant are discussing how Antipholus of Ephesus claimed to have never received the gold chain from Angelo, when they encounter Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse. Angelo sees the gold chain hanging from Antipholus' neck, and they exchange harsh words that lead to drawn swords. Just then Adriana, Luciana, and the Courtesan come in, and Antipholus and Dromio flee into a nearby abbey. The Abbess comes out and demands to know what is going on. Adriana describes her husband's madness, but after hearing the story, the Abbess blames Adriana's jealousy for driving Antipholus mad and denies everyone entry into her house, saying that she will cure the man herself.

It is now five o'clock, and Duke Solinus appears, leading Egeon to his execution. Adriana, seeing the Duke, appeals to him for aid in removing her husband from the abbey, describing his madness and their attempts to control him. The Duke, remembering promises that he made to Adriana when she married Antipholus, agrees to mediate—but just then a messenger comes in, with news that Antipholus and Dromio (of Ephesus) have escaped from Pinch's clutches. Adriana calls him a liar, saying that her husband is in the abbey, but then Antipholus himself rushes in, accompanied by his slave and demanding that the Duke grant *him* justice against his wife, who has locked him out of the house, allowed him to be arrested, and then placed him in the hands of Pinch. There is a flurry of charges and countercharges, and the Duke summons the Abbess, hoping that she can untangle the mess.

Egeon, meanwhile, goes up to Antipholus of Ephesus and, mistaking him for the son he brought up, and greets him happily. Antipholus E. is confused and says that he never saw his father in his life, and that he has always been a citizen of Ephesus. Then, mercifully, the Abbess enters, bringing with her Antipholus and Dromio of

Syracuse, which causes general consternation. The Abbess greets Egeon and declares that she is his wife, Emilia, long separated from him, and that the identical Antipholi are their twin sons. The rest of the tangle is quickly explained: The ring is returned to the Courtesan, the gold chain is paid for, and the Duke refuses an offer of payment for Egeon's life, declaring that the old man is pardoned. Then, the entire company retires inside the Abbey for a celebratory feast, with the two Dromios going last, hand in hand, "like brother and brother (V.i.427)."

Analysis: Act 5: Scene 1

The final act consists of a mounting confusion that is finally ended by the intervention of the Abbess, Emilia. Her character appears for the first time here and acts as a kind of *deus ex machina* to untangle the web of errors in which the other characters are trapped. Her social status within the city, however, is a matter of debate: some critics see her as a priestess of Diana, the pagan protectress of Ephesus, while others see her as a Catholic nun. Making her a Catholic would be an interesting choice for a playwright surrounded by the fervent Protestantism of Elizabethan England; there are other references to Catholic practices in the text, especially from the two Dromios, who repeatedly refer to their "beads" (rosary beads) and cross themselves—both of which would have been immediately recognized as Catholic behavior by the religiously aware audience of Shakespeare's time.

Regardless of her religious affiliation, Emilia's appearance and explanation erase what was quickly turning into an ugly scene, as even the sensible Duke had begun to lean toward witchcraft as an explanation. "I think you have all drunk of Circe's cup (V.i.271)," he says, referring to a mythological Greek sorceress; and when the two pairs of twins are on stage together for the first time, he demands to know "of these, which is the natural man, and which the spirit? Who deciphers them?"(V.i.335-6). The decipherer, of course, is Emilia, and her quick explanation is such a relief that the audience may gloss over the peculiar question of why she spent 20 years in Ephesus without ever revealing herself to the son who was living there, let alone telling him about the missing half of his family. This is a farce, so we accept a little improbability--after all, the fact that both Antipholus brothers (along

with their servants) are wearing the same clothes on the day that they meet in Ephesus is coincidence enough to make all others pale in comparison.

Let Us Sum Up

So all ends happily, and even the Duke, previously a model of legalism, is willing to waive the requirements of his city's law in the face of such general happiness. It is worth noting, however, that the Antipholus brothers seem less than enthusiastic to finally meet one another. The Ephesian twin is anxious to get back to his wife and his role as a solid citizen and tradesman, while the Syracusan seems to have overcome his earlier angst and spiritual incompleteness and wants to get down to the important business of pursuing Luciana. Significantly, it is their slaves, the comic centers of a comic play, who are most affected by the reunion. "I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth (V.i.421)," Dromio of Ephesus says, and then they walk offstage arm in arm, as two happy clowns should.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the main plot device used in "The Comedy of Errors"?

a) Love triangle

b) Mistaken identity

c) Revenge tragedy

d) Redemption arc

2. Which two cities are the main settings for the play?

a) Ephesus and Syracuse

b) Athens and Corinth

c) Rome and Venice

d) Milan and Naples

3. What is the name of the twin brothers in the play?

a) Antipholus and Antipholus

b) Dromio and Dromio

c) Antipholus and Dromio

d) Angelo and Angelo

4. Who is the character that is mistaken for her husband's mistress?

a) Adriana

b) Luciana

c) Luce

d) Courtesan

5. What is the outcome of the play's confusion and misunderstandings?

a) Tragedy and death

b) Comedy and reconciliation

c) Romance and marriage

d) Farce and separation

SECTION 5.2 Character List

Solinus, Duke of Ephesus Because of the enmity between his city and Syracuse, Solinus arrests Egeon and condemns him to death at the start of the play. Moved to pity at hearing the Syracusan merchants story, however, he grants a stay of execution. Solinus functions mainly as a sympathetic ear, allowing Egeon's story to be told to set the background for the farce.

Egeon, A Merchant of Syracuse Egeon's bad luck generates the action of the play. A shipwreck split up his family in the distant past, and the present dramatic action shows the incredible events in the one-day process of reunion. Egeon's deepest despair at the loss of his family, and possibly his own life, reverses itself in the waning moments of the play.

Antipholus of Ephesus The first "lost" son of Egeon; this Antipholus witnesses his secure home ground dissolve around him when, unbeknownst to him, his twin brother arrives in Ephesus. Even his wife seems part of a conspiracy to drive him mad.

Antipholus of Syracuse The second twin, the "lost" son; he arrives in Ephesus in his quest to recover his scattered family only to find himself spellbound, as he sees it, in a city of witchcraft and trickery.

The Two Drornios Exact look-alikes and slaves to the respective twin Antipholuses; the Dromios parallel exactly their masters! dilemmas and take regular beatings when the confusion of events bears too hard upon them.

Adriana The attractive wife of Antipholus of Ephesus; she mistakenly welcomes his twin brother as her husband, much to her husband's dismay and the visitor's amazement.

Emilia The long-lost wife of Egeon; she has become an Abbess at Ephesus. She offers refuge to her Syracusan son without knowing who he is, then at the end of the play, she invites the entire cast of characters to feast and discuss the day's events.

Angelo An Ephesian goldsmith; he is drawn into the complications when he delivers a gold chain — ordered by one of the twins — to the other twin, and when he tries to collect payment from the first one.

Doctor Pinch This quack proto-psychiatrist, called a "schoolmaster" by Shakespeare in his List of Characters, administers to Antipholus of Ephesus by suggesting that he and his slave be bound and laid in some dark room to exorcise the "fiend" within them, He is the only one of the characters left out of the happy resolution at the end of the play.

Luciana Adriana's sister; she tries her best to calm Adriana at points of stress in the plot, but she too gets caught up in the enveloping madness. Shakespeare neatly pairs her off with Antipholus of Syracuse at the end of the play.

Balthazar A merchant.

Luce Adriana's servant.

Let Us Sum Up

The characters in "The Comedy of Errors" experience a number of false identities and ridiculous misunderstandings, which frequently lead to resentment and conflict. The play's conclusion, however, shows that forgiveness prevails over rage and hatred.

Check Your Progress

1. Who is the father of the twin brothers Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse?

a) Aegeon

b) Dromio

c) Egeon

d) Emilius

2. Which character is the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus?

a) Adriana

b) Luciana

c) Luce

d) Courtesan

3. Who is the twin brother of Dromio of Ephesus?

a) Dromio of Syracuse

b) Antipholus of Syracuse

c) Antipholus of Ephesus

d) Angelo

4. Which character is a goldsmith who is owed money by Antipholus of Ephesus?

a) Angelo

b) Balthazar

c) Pinch

d) Courtesan

5. Who is the Abbess of the priory where the twins' mother is living?

a) Emilia

b) Adriana

c) Luciana

d) Luce

SECTION 5.3 Literary Element, Motifs, Symbols and Imagery

Symbols, Allegory and Motifs

Water

Water is a symbol of separation and isolation in the play. Starting at the beginning, when Egeon recounts the tale about how his family was destroyed by the storm at sea, water plays a pivotal role in keeping characters apart from one another. Characters make frequent reference to bodies of water that prevent them from knowing others or even themselves, suggesting that water os an emblem of both literal and figurative distance.

The Necklace

The necklace that Antipholus of Ephesus initially purchases for Adriana is a symbol of mistaken identity. The necklace passes through multiple hands in the play, as Antipholus of Syracuse cannot understand why it was delivered to him but nonetheless wears it as if it is his own. The necklace, which was initially intended to appease Adriana, becomes, ironically, a reason for further conflict between husband and wife.

Money

Money is a significant motif in the play, whose very plot is framed by the trial of Egeon in which he is told he must raise 1,000 marks in order to secure his freedom. Ephesus is a bustling town of commerce, and buying and selling of goods is central to its culture. Thus, money becomes a means of raising the stakes for what is otherwise a straightforward comedy: Egeon's very life depends on his ability to acquire money, and Antipholus is eventually jailed because of his inability to pay for the necklace. When the play resolves in Act Five with the pardoning of Egeon, it is a testament to the power of familial bonds over monetary gain.

Travel

Both Egeon and his son, Antipholus of Syracuse, have traveled extensively in search of their family. Egeon has also traveled around the world as a successful

merchant. Their travels are depicted, however, in disparate ways: Egeon arrives in Ephesus and is immediately dealt a death sentence. Antipholus of Syracuse, by contrast, arrives in town and is immediately greeted with dinner invitations, a wife, and the potential for a whole new life. Thus, the play uses these two characters' experiences to showcase how travel is both an eye-opening but dangerous endeavor.

The Priory

In the final act of the play, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse seek refuge in priory, or a small monastery that is governed by a prior or prioress. It is then revealed at the end of the play that the abbess in question is Emilia, Egeon's lost wife. In this way, the priory becomes a symbol of safety and comfort, both for the fleeing Syracusians and for the distraught Emilia, who turned to the priory as a source of her own refuge when she thought she had lost her family in the storm.

Drops of Water

When Antipholus of Syracuse explains why he has come to Ephesus, he says, "I to the world am like a drop of water / That in the ocean seeks another drop, / Who, falling there to find his fellow forth, / Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself" (1.2). Here, Antipholus of Syracuse uses a simile to compare himself to a drop of water in a vast ocean, suggesting that he is isolated not only from the family he seeks but also from himself.

Football

In the first half of the play, Dromio of Ephesus receives a number of beatings from his master(s). He inquires about this behavior eventually, saying, "Am I so round with you, as you with me, / That like a football you do spurn me thus?" (2.1). Here, Dromio uses a simile to compare himself unfavorably to a football that gets tossed around, showing how his approach to this abuse is relatively lighthearted and playful.

Old Age

At the end of the play, when Antipholus of Ephesus appears before his father, Egeon, he does not recognize him. Egeon mourns this reaction, questioning whether

his old age has really changed his appearance in the seven years that Antipholus of Syracuse has been gone. He says, "Though now this grainèd face of mine be hid / In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow..." (5.1). Here, Egeon uses a metaphor to compare his white hair to a face buried in the snow, emphasizing what he thinks is the old age that prevents his son from recognizing him.

Lamps

In the same speech in which Egeon admits his old age, he expresses hope that he is not yet dead and that his family might recognize him after all. He says, "Yet hath my night of life some memory, / My wasting lamps some fading glimmer left" (5.1). Here, Egeon uses a metaphor to compare his mind to a lamp that still has fire left in it, suggesting that he is still capable of memory and a reunion with his son(s).

Adriana's Ruins

When Adriana expresses her self-doubt over whether her husband has been unfaithful, she rails against Antipholus of Ephesus and blames him for any aspects of her character that he may find undesirable. She says, "What ruins are in me that can be found / By him not ruin'd?" (2.1). Here, Adriana uses a metaphor to compare herself to ancient, dilapidated ruins that were made that way by her husband. She suggests that any signs of age, weathering, or disrepair are his own fault.

Imagery

Water

As mentioned earlier, water plays an important role in the play as an emblem of isolation. Water imagery is used to describe the separation of family members and even the isolation that Antipholus of Syracuse feels from himself. Early on in the play, Egeon recalls in elaborate detail how water from a storm at sea destroyed his family and separated them for what has now been more than two decades.

Commerce

Ephesus is a site of trade and commerce, with merchants traversing the streets and a number of monetary deals occurring throughout the play. This background of a busy town rife with economic prosperity contributes to the chaos

that underlies the entire play, while also raising the narrative stakes for the characters who are bound by financial obligation.

Sameness

While the play presents numerous images of isolation, it also relies on imagery of sameness, doubling, and twinning throughout. The Antipholus brothers and the Dromio brothers are identical in appearance, of course, and this sameness is what spurs most of the conflict in the play. At the end, the Dromio brothers exist hand-in-hand, an image that represents the fated reunion of like with like.

The World

While he is awaiting his execution, Egeon recounts how he has traveled the world as a successful merchant. He sees the world as both a vast landscape of difference and one composed of the same towns over and over again. Egeon's worldly perspective is what leads him to believe he can find his sons anywhere. However, it is also what leads him to believe that he can also die anywhere, as all towns are ultimately the same.

Let Us Sum Up

Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors" is a masterful play that leverages a wide array of literary devices to craft a hilarious and thought-provoking narrative. The playwright's skillful employment of irony, imagery, metaphor, wordplay, allusion, farce, slapstick, symbolism, and repetition creates a rich tapestry of meaning and comedy.

Check Your Progress

1. What literary device is used by Shakespeare to create comedic effect through the mistaken identities of the twins?

a) Irony

b) Metaphor

c) Farce

d) Allusion

2. Which motif is explored through the character of Adriana, who is mistaken for her husband's mistress?

a) Love vs. Lust

b) Identity vs. Confusion

c) Appearance vs. Reality

d) Jealousy vs. Trust

3. What symbolizes the chaos and confusion caused by the mistaken identities in the play?

a) The rope that binds Antipholus of Ephesus

b) The gold chain given to Antipholus of Syracuse

c) The ship that brings Antipholus of Syracuse to Ephesus

d) The priory where Emilia resides

4. Which image is used to describe the relationship between the twin brothers?

a) "Two peas in a pod"

b) "Two branches of the same tree"

c) "Two drops of water"

d) "Two sides of the same coin"

5. What literary element is used by Shakespeare to create a sense of urgency and time constraint in the play?

a) Soliloquy

b) Aside

c) Dramatic irony

d) Clock imagery

5.1.4 Sonnet 28

How can I then return in happy plight
That am debarred the benefit of rest,
When day's oppression is not eased by night,
4But day by night and night by day oppressed;
And each, though enemies to either's reign,

Do in consent shake hands to torture me,
The one by toil, the other to complain
8How far I toil, still farther off from thee?
I tell the day to please him thou art bright
And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven;
So flatter I the swart complexioned night,
12When sparkling stars twire not, thou ⌜gild'st ⌝the even.
But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
And night doth nightly make grief's length seem stronger.

Images of absence, continued from the previous sonnet, show the poet at the point of emotional exhaustion and frustration due to his sleepless nights spent thinking about the young man. However, even though faced with the young man's disinterest, the poet still refuses to break away from the youth. He even continues to praise the youth, telling day and night how fortunate they are to be graced by the youth's presence. The poet's continued devotion to the young man is not so startling as it might first appear: Writing sonnets of absolute devotion in Elizabethan times was a duty to the source of the poet's inspiration. Sonnet 28, therefore, offers the poet's verse as a duty-offering, a supreme expression of selfless love for an undeserving friend. The opposition between day and night dominates the sonnet. For the poet, neither time alleviates his suffering: "And each, though enemies to either's reign, / Do in consent shake hands to torture me" with hard work and no sleep. Trying to please the oppressive day and night, the poet tells day that the youth shines brightly even when the sun is hidden; to night, the poet compares the youth to the brightest stars, except that the youth shines even when the stars do not. However, day and night still torment the poet and make "grief's strength seem stronger." The poet sinks even further into despair.

In summary, Sonnet 28 focuses on Shakespeare's inability to get any rest, either during the day or at night. How can he be happy during waking hours when he can't get any rest when he goes to bed of a night? A sleepless night makes the day hell, and a hellish day keeps him awake at night. It's a game of 'mutual oppression', if you will. The phrase 'happy plight' seems oxymoronic, but 'plight' in Shakespeare's

time didn't have the negative connotations it now has – it could simply mean 'state' or 'condition'.

What's more, although night and day are typically seen as 'enemies' or opposites, they are happy to shake hands and broker peace between themselves in order that they may conspire to make the poor Bard's life a misery. Day makes life hard because he has to 'toil' or work all day, and night makes things worse because he is plagued by the unpleasant thought that no matter how hard he works, he seems further and further away from his love.

From line 9, Shakespeare says that he tries to rid himself of this wretched state by telling the day that the Youth is bright and so takes some of the pressure off the day, since the young man can also make the day bright, even when the sky is filled with clouds. Similarly, he says that he tells the night that when it's completely dark and the stars don't twinkle ('twire' is an old word for 'twinkle'), the brightness provided by the Fair Youth makes the evening light and golden.

Shakespeare concludes by saying that day makes his sorrows greater every day, and night makes the length of his period of grief seem even longer. (Some editions alter 'length' to 'strength' in that last line, but the majority favour 'grief's length'.)

The language of Sonnet 28 is fun to examine and analyse. The night/day dichotomy – they are opposites, but presented here as complements, conspirators in league with each other – allows Shakespeare to flex his rhetorical muscles. In that final couplet, for instance, 'day doth daily' and 'night doth nightly' complement each other, with the strategic placing of these two complementary phrases in the final *couplet* of the poem reinforcing the idea of night and day being a sort of double act, working to undermine the poet's peace of mind.

5.1.5 Sonnet 55

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the Judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.
Shakespeare, William. "Sonnet 55." 1609. Poetry Foundation.

"Sonnet 55" (1609) is an English love sonnet by renowned poet William Shakespeare (1564-1616). The sonnet is part of Shakespeare's Fair Youth sonnet sequence, which makes up the first 126 of his sonnets. This sonnet follows a number of the Fair Youth sonnets in the way it praises the fair youth's beauty and claims his beauty is eternal. In this sonnet specifically, Shakespeare claims that the subject's beauty will outlive all monuments of princes and will live even after the destruction time will bring to the world in the form of war and death. The poem argues that its own existence gives life to the subject, and the poem, by lasting through war and destruction, is the most powerful monument one can erect. However, the poem concludes with the idea that at the end of time, the return of Christ will lead to the resurrection of the fair youth, and that will be when the poem's utility ends. This is one of Shakespeare's most popular sonnets, though not as well-known as the thematically similar Sonnet 18.

Summary

Sonnet 55, one of Shakespeare's most famous verses, asserts the immortality of the poet's sonnets to withstand the forces of decay over time. The sonnet continues this theme from the previous sonnet, in which the poet likened himself to a distiller of truth.

Although the poet's previous pride in writing verse is missing in this sonnet, he still manages to demonstrate a superbly confident spirit: "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments / Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime." He clearly abandons, at least for the time being, his earlier depressing opinion of his verse as "barren rime," for next he contrasts his verses' immortality to "unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time," meaning that the young man will be remembered longer because of the poet's having written about him than if descriptions of his beauty had been chiseled in stone.

The next four lines address the same theme of immortality, but now the poet boasts that not only natural forces but human wars and battles cannot blot out his sonnets, which are a "living record" of the youth. Monuments and statues may be desecrated during war, but not so these rhymes.

In the first seventeen sonnets, the poet worried about death's effect on the youth's beauty and questioned the nature of his sonnets' reputation after both he and the young man died. Now, however, in lines 9 through 12, he boldly asserts that death is impotent in the face of his sonnets' immortality: To the youth he says, "Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity / Shall you pace forth." In fact, he asserts that the young man's name will be remembered until the last survivor on earth perishes: ". . . your praise shall still find room / Even in the eyes of all posterity / That wear this world out to the ending doom." Only then, when no one remains alive, will the youth's beauty fade — but through no fault of the youth or the poet.

This notion of "the ending doom" is the main point in the concluding couplet. The syntax of line 13 — "So, till the judgment that yourself arise" — is confusing; restated, the line says, "Until the Judgment Day when you arise." The poet assures the youth that his beauty will remain immortal as long as one single person still lives to read these sonnets, which themselves will be immortal.

5.1.6 Sonnet 66

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,

As to behold desert a beggar born,

And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,

And purest faith unhappily forsworn,

And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,

And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,

And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,

And strength by limping sway disabled

And art made tongue-tied by authority,

And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,

And simple truth miscalled simplicity,

And captive good attending captain ill:

Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,

Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

In the first four lines of *'Sonnet 66,'* the speaker begins by announcing that he's "Tired with all these". The things that he's referring to are numerous and follow in the next quatrains. The world has truly gotten to him, exhausting his heart and making him long for the peace of death. It is there that he's finally going to find rest.

It's at this point that the speaker turns to list out all of his grievances. This is a very unusual structure for Shakespeare to engage in, especially as the "answer" to all these problems doesn't come until the fourteenth line of the poem. He starts by explaining that he's fed up with good people who are fated to live as beggars when they don't deserve that destiny. He is angry about the opposite side of the spectrum as well, rich people who get to dress up in "jollity" but don't deserve it. The last statement of this quatrain refers to people who break vows that should be sacred.

In lines, five through eight of *'Sonnet 66,'* the literary device known as anaphora is quite obvious through the repetition of "And" at the beginning of all four lines (as well as the next four). He describes how there are too many people who

receive donors that are “shamefully misplaced”. He also speaks on the “maiden” who has lost her virtue and becomes a “strumpet” or a prostitute/whore.

The last two situations that he expresses his exhaustion over are examples of good people “disgraced” through wrong language or slander. Then, he adds on, those who are “disablèd” by the weak governmental organizations or authority figures of some kind.

The same authority that unjustly controls the strong and good also controls the “art” or artist. They are “tongue-tied” or silenced by figures who should have no control over them whatsoever. This same power misbalance is described again in the next line as the speaker suggests that doctors control the sick just like fools control the wise. There is an interesting juxtaposition here between the “fool” and the “skilled” in society and which is to be respected and where the power should reside.

The eleventh line states that the “simple truth” in the world is too often “miscalled simplicity” or simplemindedness. The last statement in this quatrain is that the speaker is tired of the “captive good attending captain ill”. This is a complicated way of saying that the “good” is captive, or in the control of the “ill,” or evil.

Usually, in a Shakespearean sonnet, the final two lines conclude the poem with a solution. In this case, the solution/answer/alternative perspective does not come until the fourteenth line. The line tells the reader that although death is appealing the speaker isn’t going to enter into it yet because that would mean leaving his “love alone”. This is the first time that the Fair Youth is mentioned in this sonnet.

5.1.7 Sonnet 127

In the old age, black was not counted fair,
Or, if it were, it bore not beauty’s name;
But now is black beauty’s successive heir,
4And beauty slandered with a bastard shame.
For since each hand hath put on nature’s power,
Fairing the foul with art’s false borrowed face,

Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
8But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
12Sland'ring creation with a false esteem.
Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says beauty should look so.

Summary

Sonnet 127, which begins the sequence dealing with the poet's relationship to his mistress, the Dark Lady, defends the poet's unfashionable taste in brunettes. In Elizabethan days, so the poet tells us, black was not considered beautiful: "In the old age black was not counted fair, / Or, if it were, it bore not beauty's name." However, what is considered beautiful — at least to the poet — has changed; "now is black beauty's successive heir." This change in what is considered beautiful is the poet's main concern here in Sonnet 127 and in succeeding sonnets.

What most upsets the poet is not that one definition of beauty supersedes another but that women use cosmetics to enhance their natural appearance. This unnatural practice creates artificiality, "Fairing the foul with art's false borrowed face." Even worse, cosmetics devalue the ideal, or standard, of what beauty is, for they allow women to change their appearances on a whim according to what is currently deemed beautiful. Constancy in what is beautiful is sacrificed for fickle, mercurial notions of how a woman should look: "Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower, / But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace."

The degree of emphasis on the Dark Lady's color varies in the sonnets, so sometimes she seems black-haired and other times merely brunette. The poet's appreciation of the Dark Lady's appearance is complex: He is glad that she does not use cosmetics to lighten her appearance, which would be "a bastard shame," but she is not physically attractive to the poet, for all her erotic appeal. However, her black eyes become her so well "That every tongue says beauty should look so."

Black, then, becomes another means for the poet to discredit the use of cosmetics; his mistress' good looks are not "slandered" by unnatural measures.

5.1.8 Sonnet 131

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;
For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
Yet, in good faith, some say that thee behold,
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan;
To say they err I dare not be so bold,
Although I swear it to myself alone.
And to be sure that is not false I swear,
A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face,
One on another's neck, do witness bear
Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.
In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.

In the first lines of *'Sonnet 131,'* the speaker begins accusing the Dark Lady of acting tyrannically. She has a power of him that she's well aware of, and sometimes she likes to use it. Her beauty gives her the ability to control him, just like other women control the men who admire them. He dotes on her, and to him, she is the "fairest and most precious jewel." He has to accept her as she is, in all her cruelty, or he might lose her.

The next four lines explain how other people don't feel exactly the same way about the Dark Lady as the speaker does. He might find her as previous as a gemstone, but others don't think she's quite as beautiful. To others, she doesn't motivate their lust and devotion like other women do. When taking the previous sonnets into consideration, it's likely that the speaker was thinking about the fact that she's "dark." She has a different complexion than most "beautiful" women do during his time.

The speaker also notes in these lines that he doesn't have the strength or willpower to argue against those who speak out against her. He doesn't rebut their statements, be he knows that they are wrong.

In the third and final quatrain, the speaker says that when thinking of the Dark Lady, he "groans" a thousand times. He's filled with love no matter how dark she might be. Her "black is fairest in [his] judgement's place." These lines attempt to prove the speaker's love for the Lady even though she's not traditionally beautiful. He's fascinated by how she looks and doesn't care at all about the "slander" she faces. It's curious that despite his love, he's unwilling to confront those who describe her negatively.

Let Us Sum Up

Shakespeare's sonnets have had a profound influence on literature and poetry, continuing to inspire adaptations and references in popular culture. Their exploration of universal themes ensures their timeless appeal, making them a cornerstone of literary heritage.

Check Your Progress

1. In Sonnet 55, what does the speaker claim will outlast time and decay?

a) Beauty

b) Love

c) Art

d) Marble and monuments

2. Which sonnet explores the theme of beauty's impermanence?

a) Sonnet 28

b) Sonnet 55

c) Sonnet 66

d) Sonnet 131

3. In Sonnet 127, what is the speaker's attitude towards his mistress's dark beauty?

a) He rejects it

b) He accepts it

c) He praises it

d) He ignores it

4. Sonnet 131's speaker describes his mistress as having ___ beauty.

a) Fair

b) Dark

c) False

d) Fading

5. In Sonnet 55, what will "give life" to the beloved's memory?

a) Verse

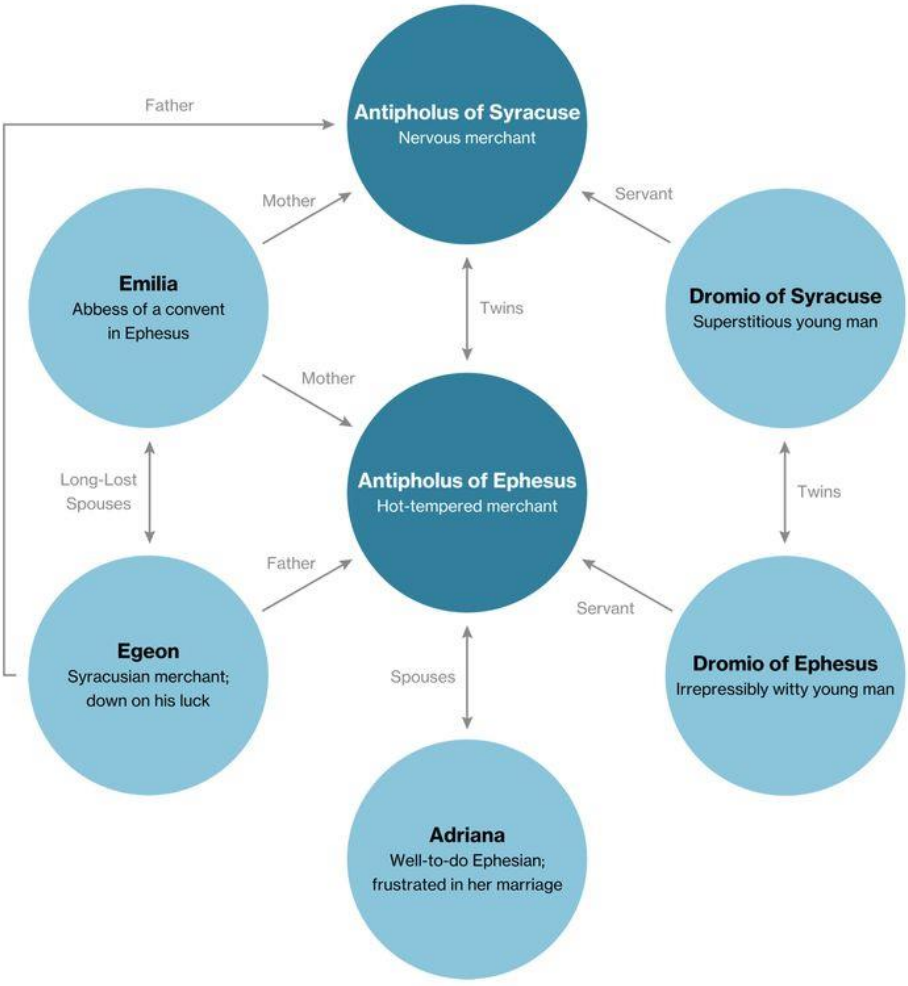
b) Love

c) Time

d) Beauty

5.4 Unit Summary of The Comedy of Errors:

Egeon, a merchant of Syracuse, is condemned to death in Ephesus for violating the ban against travel between the two rival cities. As he is led to his execution, he tells the Ephesian Duke, Solinus, that he has come to Syracuse in search of his wife and one of his twin sons, who were separated from him 25 years ago in a shipwreck. The other twin, who grew up with Egeon, is also traveling the world in search of the missing half of their family. (The twins, we learn, are identical, and each has an identical twin slave named Dromio.) The Duke is so moved by this story that he grants Egeon a day to raise the thousand-mark ransom that would be necessary to save his life.



Meanwhile, unknown to Egeon, his son Antipholus of Syracuse (and Antipholus' slave Dromio) is also visiting Ephesus--where Antipholus' missing twin,

known as Antipholus of Ephesus, is a prosperous citizen of the city. Adriana, Antipholus of Ephesus' wife, mistakes Antipholus of Syracuse for her husband and drags him home for dinner, leaving Dromio of Syracuse to stand guard at the door and admit no one. Shortly thereafter, Antipholus of Ephesus (with *his* slave Dromio of Ephesus) returns home and is refused entry to his own house. Meanwhile, Antipholus of Syracuse has fallen in love with Luciana, Adriana's sister, who is appalled at the behavior of the man she thinks is her brother-in-law.

The confusion increases when a gold chain ordered by the Ephesian Antipholus is given to Antipholus of Syracuse. Antipholus of Ephesus refuses to pay for the chain (unsurprisingly, since he never received it) and is arrested for debt. His wife, seeing his strange behavior, decides he has gone mad and orders him bound and held in a cellar room. Meanwhile, Antipholus of Syracuse and his slave decide to flee the city, which they believe to be enchanted, as soon as possible--only to be menaced by Adriana and the debt officer. They seek refuge in a nearby abbey.

Adriana now begs the Duke to intervene and remove her "husband" from the abbey into her custody. Her real husband, meanwhile, has broken loose and now comes to the Duke and levels charges against his wife. The situation is finally resolved by the Abbess, Emilia, who brings out the set of twins and reveals herself to be Egeon's long-lost wife. Antipholus of Ephesus reconciles with Adriana; Egeon is pardoned by the Duke and reunited with his spouse; Antipholus of Syracuse resumes his romantic pursuit of Luciana, and all ends happily with the two Dromios embracing.

Self Assesment

Short Questions:

1. How does Shakespeare defend his beloved's unconventional beauty?
2. What change in beauty standards does Shakespeare mention?
3. Why is the poet disillusioned with the world?
4. What does Shakespeare say will outlast physical monuments?
5. How does the poet describe his state of mind due to separation?

6. What contrast does Shakespeare draw between his beloved and societal standards of beauty?
7. How does Shakespeare's view on beauty reflect his feelings toward the 'dark lady'?
8. Which corruptions and abuses in society does Shakespeare highlight?
9. How does Shakespeare propose that poetry preserves memory?
10. What metaphors does Shakespeare use to describe his weariness and longing?
11. What are the two enemy states mentioned in the play 'Comedy of Errors'?
12. What would happen if any merchant of Syracuse was seen in Ephesus?
13. Where did Aegeon belong to?
14. Where was Aegeon discovered?
15. Who asked Aegeon to tell the story of his life?

Essay Questions:

1. How does Shakespeare describe his beloved's beauty in Sonnet 131, and what does this reveal about his feelings toward her?
2. What argument does Shakespeare make about traditional standards of beauty in Sonnet 127?
3. What injustices and societal issues does Shakespeare list in Sonnet 66, and how do these affect the poet?
4. How does Shakespeare argue that poetry can achieve immortality in Sonnet 55?
5. What does Shakespeare express about the impact of separation from a loved one in Sonnet 28?
6. How are Luciana and Adriana different from one another? How do they relate to men? How do they react when they confront problems?
7. What is the relationship like between the Dromios and their masters? If you were a servant, what would you do to serve your master?
8. Is the story *The Comedy of Errors* a comedy or a tragedy? Why? What makes it comic and what makes it tragic?
9. Egeon's opening speech is quite tragic. What is such a tragic speech doing in a comedy?

10. Ephesus and Syracuse were two countries in fierce competition with one another. What are some things that make countries compete? Does this help or hinder a country? Does it help Egeon? Create two fictional countries, list their industries. How will they cooperate; how will they compete. Write a brief constitution with laws that they will enact.

Answers for Check Your Progress

Modules	S.No.	Answers
Module 1	1.	b) Mistaken identity
	2.	a) Ephesus and Syracuse
	3.	a) Antipholus and Antipholus
	4.	a) Adriana
	5.	b) Comedy and reconciliation
Module 2	1.	a) Aegeon
	2.	a) Adriana
	3.	a) Dromio of Syracuse
	4.	a) Angelo
	5.	a) Emilia
Module 3	1.	c) Farce
	2.	c) Appearance vs. Reality
	3.	a) The rope that binds Antipholus of Ephesus
	4.	d) "Two sides of the same coin"
	5.	d) Clock imagery
Module 4	1.	d) Marble and monuments
	2.	c) Sonnet 66
	3.	c) He praises it
	4.	b) Dark
	5.	a) Verse

Glossary:

1. **swart-complexioned** dark-complected; swarthy.
2. **twire** peek.
3. **gild'st the even** make the evening bright.
4. **sluttish** untidy.
5. **broils** battles.
6. **guilders** — Dutch coins worth about forty cents (1.1.8)
7. **intestine jars** — internal conflicts (1.1.11)
8. **amain** — with full speed (1.1.92)
9. **disannual** — cancel (1.1.144)
10. **cozenage** — cheating (1.2.97)
11. **keep fair quarter** — keep the peace (2.1.109)
12. **Marry** — mild exclamation (originally an oath, from "by the Virgin Mary") (2.2.50)
13. **tiring** — hairdressing (2.2.98)
14. **course and drift** — general meaning (2.2.210)
15. **Sirrah** — term used in addressing inferiors (2.2.210)
16. **carcenet** — jeweled necklace (3.1.4)
17. **mickle** — much (3.1.99)
18. **stirring passage** — busy traffic (3.1.99)
19. **become disloyalty** — make infidelity seem becoming (3.2.11)
20. **board** — table (3.2.18)
21. **chalky cliffs** — teeth (3.2.12)
22. **ducats** — gold coins of varying origin and value (4.1.29)
23. **waftage** — passage by sea (4.2.38)
24. **heart's meteors tilting** — emotions tossing (4.2.6)
25. **creeks** — winding alleys (4.2.38)
26. **conjure** — solemnly call on (4.3.66)
27. **forswore** — denied an oath (5.1.11)
28. **stand** — prepare to fight (5.1.31)
29. **wot** — know (5.1.148)
30. **wasting lamps** — dimming eyes (5.1.316)

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Self Assessment Questions :

Two Marks:

What was the name of Henry VIII's advisor who was executed?

Thomas More was Henry's advisor who was executed in 1535 for refusing to

recognize Henry as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. More was a renowned scholar and statesman.

Deduct the daughter of Henry VIII became a famous queen.
Elizabeth I, also known as the Virgin Queen, was Henry's daughter who became a renowned queen of England. She ruled from 1558 to 1603 and is often considered one of England's greatest monarchs.

Why did Henry VIII break away from the Roman Catholic Church?
Marriage to Catherine of Aragon. He sought to annul the marriage, which the Pope refused, leading to the English Reformation and the establishment of the Church of England.

How many wives did Henry VIII have during his reign?
Six (Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Catherine Parr).

Define who compared himself like drop of water in the ocean?
Younger Antipholus intended to dine at the Porpentine Inn. He was looking forward to a good meal.

Name the reason why did Younger Antipholus come to Ephesus.
Younger Antipholus came to Ephesus to find his brother. He wanted to reunite with his long-lost sibling.

Explain who was allowed freedom of speech by Younger Antipholus.
Dromio of Syracuse was allowed freedom of speech by Younger Antipholus. He was grateful for the opportunity to speak his mind.

Five Marks

11. Is the story *The Comedy of Errors* a comedy or a tragedy? Why? What makes it comic and what makes it tragic?
12. Egeon’s opening speech is quite tragic. What is such a tragic speech doing in a comedy?

13. Converse the role of setting in the play.
14. Analyze how the threat of tragedy--Egeon's execution--impacts the humor in the play.
15. 'Wolsey's domestic policiesfrom 1515-25 were a failure.'How far do you agree? Explainyour answer
16. Did Henry VIII's reign mark the beginning of the English Reformation or was it a continuation of existing trends?
17. Was Henry VIII a tyrant or a strong leader who strengthened England?

8 Marks:

1. Compare and contrast the characters of the Antipholus brothers.
2. Predict how Luciana and Adriana different from one another? How do they relate to men? How do they react when they confront problems?
3. Elaborate the relationship like between the Dromios and their masters? If you were a servant, what would you do to serve your master?
4. Discuss the part played by material things--money, jewelry--in the action.
5. Analyze the portrayal of authority in the master-slave relationship and in the character of the Duke of Ephesus.
6. Discuss the ending and the resolution of the various "problems" that face the characters.

Sonnets:

Two marks

1. Extend the speaker's attitude towards the beloved's appearance.
   The speaker describes the beloved's appearance as "nothing like the sun" and criticizes their eyes, hair, and breath. However, this critique is a clever ruse to highlight the beloved's inner beauty and the speaker's devotion.

2. Explain the speaker describe the beloved's beauty.
   The speaker describes the beloved's beauty as "cruel" and "unkind" yet irresistible. This paradox highlights the speaker's fascination with the beloved's enigmatic nature and the complex dynamics of their relationship.

3. Identify the speaker's complaint against the world.
   The speaker laments the world's corruption, where vice is rewarded, and virtue is oppressed. This critique serves as a backdrop to highlight the beloved's virtue and the speaker's desire for a better world.

4. Outline the significance of the "dark lady" in this sonnet.
   The "dark lady" represents a mysterious and alluring figure, symbolizing the speaker's desire and fascination. Her dark hair and eyes serve as a foil to the traditional blonde and fair beauty standards.

5. Explicate the speaker describe the world's corruption.
   The speaker laments the world's corruption, where vice is rewarded, and virtue is oppressed. This critique serves as a backdrop to highlight the beloved's virtue and the speaker's desire for a better world.

Five Marks:

1. In what ways do Shakespeare's Sonnets subvert or reinforce traditional notions of beauty and love?
2. Compare the historical contexts of Henry VIII's reign and Shakespeare's Sonnets influence their interpretation?
3. Elaborate the implications of Henry VIII's execution of his wives for our understanding of gender and power?
4. Evaluate the significance of the "dark lady" in the sonnet.
5. Compare the power of art to transcend time.
6. Examine the speaker's determination to immortalize the beloved.
7. What argument does Shakespeare make about traditional standards of beauty in Sonnet 127?
8. Discuss the injustices and societal issues does Shakespeare list in Sonnet 66, and how do these affect the poet?

8 Marks:

1. Compare the speaker's attitude towards beauty in Sonnets 131 and 127.

2. Analyze the use of irony in Sonnets 131 and 66.
3. Assume the speaker's perspective and analyze their fascination with the "dark lady".
4. Examine the role of virtue and vice in Sonnets 66 and 55.
5. Evaluate the power of art to transcend time in Sonnets 55 and 28.
6. Contrast the speaker's description of the beloved's appearance in Sonnets 131 and 28