



DRAMA (M.A. English Sem. I)



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UNIT-2

Abhijnanasakuntalam, famously known as “The Recognition of Sakuntala” (through a token) was the first ever translation made of an Indian play into Western languages. This brilliant tale of romance and emotions attracted William Jones so much that he translated the play in English during the year 1789 and the tradition of translating the work of Kalidasa is continuing even today.

The play was not composed entirely in Sanskrit and contains elements of a Middle Indian dialect known as Maharashtri Prakrit. There is no certainty about the exact timeline or period in which the play of Kalidasa is written. The reason behind this uncertainty is due to the fact that there is no historical evidence about when Kalidasa was born and the period of his lifetime varies from 2nd century B.C to 4th century A.D.

About the play:

The roots of the play are taken from the Indian epic “Mahabharata” and several changes were made to derive dramatic effects and they all worked. As a result, most people consider the version of the origin of Bharata, misfortunes of Sakuntala and the story of Dushyanta by Kalidasa in Abhijnanasakuntalam is authentic. The plot revolves around Sakuntala, the daughter of the great saint Viswamithra and the heavenly damsel Menaka. Viswamithra in order to gain great rewards gets into deep meditation and the lord of heavens, Indra gets worried about his predicament if the saint completes his meditation. To save his position and be worshipped as the one with no equal, Indra sends Menaka to lure Viswamithra out of his contemplation to God.

After many efforts Menaka successfully disturbs the firm mind of the saint and he falls in love with the beauty of the damsel. As a result, Sakuntala (the name is given by the sage Kanva) is born and Viswamithra realizes what he has lost due to the union and rejects to be with Menaka and Sakuntala. Menaka is forbidden to enter Heaven with a human child so she leaves her daughter in a forest knowing well that the forest is under the protection of Kanva and he will take care of her. As expected by Menaka, Kanva finds the baby girl surrounded by birds called Shakunta, thus he names her as Sakuntala as she was seen with the birds who seem to enjoy playing with her. When the play Abhijnanasakuntalam opens, Sakuntala is seen in her youth with graceful mind and body.

Prologue:

The play opens with a benediction to the gods and after the benediction the director and actress are enter the stage. The director introduces the name of the play as Abhijnanasakuntalam and asks to treat the audience with a song about the season summer. She sings so well that the director is spellbound and forgets why he is on the stage until she reminds the purpose of their appearance. The prologue ends with the director mentioning about failing of memory and relates it to the hunting Dushyanta.

Act – I or The Chase (Scene: The forest and then hermitage):

Dushyanta, the king of Hasthinapura tries to capture a deer and is seen on his chariot when a hermit intervenes and warns that the place is under the protection of a hermitage and any animal that enters the place shall not be harmed. The King honours the words of the hermit and withdraws his arrow and puts it back into the quiver. The Hermit blesses the king with a boon to have a noble son and asks him to visit the hermitage of Kanva. Dushyanta is knowledgeable enough to know that a hermitage should be entered with all the modesty; therefore he asks the

charioteer Suta to halt, removes all his jewels and Kingly costumes to appear like a normal individual. As he takes steps forward, he hears the sound of hermit girls and is taken away by the beauty of them. So, he decides to hide behind a tree and observe them.

Sakuntala, Priyamvada and Anasuya converse with each other while a bee troubles Sakuntala and the admiring Dushyanta is comes out from hiding to save her from the foraging thief. At first, Sakuntala gets scared of seeing a man who doesn't belong to the hermitage and runs away. Dushyanta reveals his true identity and is graciously invited to the hermitage. Sakuntala falls in love with the king as his delightful words and his face attract her very much. Dushyanta gives his ring to Sakuntala as a token. The King leaves the serene hermitage as the soldiers approach with loud shouts.

Act – II or Concealment of the telling (Scene: The Forest):

Madhavya, the court-jester and a close companion to Dushyanta is seen complaining about his ill-fate having to wander the forest and eat on everything he could get instead of rejoicing in the palace. He tries to show his frustrations when the king meets him; however, Dushyanta consoles him and makes him to agree to help. They conspire together so that Dushyanta can get as close as possible to the beautiful Sakuntala. Dushyanta is reminded of the fast done by his mother and the oath he took to participate on the last day. At the crossroads, unable to decide whether to fulfil the oath or carry on with his heart's renderings Dushyanta sends Madhavya to the King's palace as his younger brother so that he could get closer to Sakuntala.

Act – III or Love's fruition (Scene: The hermitage of Kanva):

The king couldn't resist himself from returning to the hermitage to see Sakuntala and as he enters speaking of the charm Sakuntala possesses, she and her friends enter talking in a flirtatious manner. He hides and watches them as they speak in that manner and Sakuntala begins to sing of love. Dushyanta comes out of hiding, unable to subdue his heart's cravings due to the influence of the poem. The four of them talk and gradually Priyamvada and Anasuya slip away leaving the pair in solitary independence. As their hearts drizzle with thoughts of lover's flirtations and they get closer with each conversation, from a distance the voice of Gautami is heard calling for Sakuntala. The pair separate with regret and Sakuntala leaves with Gautami whereas Dushyanta leaves to help the ascetics complete the evening prayers.

Act – IV or Sakuntala's departure (Scene: The hermitage of Kanva):

From the conversation of Anasuya and Priyamvada it is revealed that Dushyanta and Sakuntala are married and they talk of the king returning to his capital, perplexity over fulfilling his promise to Sakuntala, Kanva's reaction to the union, etc. However, they conclude that everything will go just right as they hear a voice announcing himself at the hermitage while they're picking flowers. Knowing of the uncertain state of Sakuntala who is know always thinking of Dushyanta hurry back to see if she has properly received the guest.

The guest is Durvasa – a great saint with intense anger. He becomes frustrated to see Sakuntala not receiving him properly and curses her as thus:

As Durvasa is very powerful there is nothing they could do about the curse, instead they plead for consolation. Durvasa says that the token of the king (the ring) would enable him to remember who Sakuntala is and all the lost memories will be restored. The scene shifts and Sakuntala is shown preparing herself to leave to the Royal palace with the hope to restore the

memories of her husband and make him aware of her pregnancy. Gautami helps her, so do Anasuya and Priyamvada; meanwhile, Kanva enters after completing his prayers with grief stricken heart as his daughter leaving. Gautami, Saradvata and Sarngarava are also ordered to go with Sakuntala and ensure she reaches the Palace safely and the reunion is without any trouble. Emotions flow through Kanva and every other individual in the hermitage as she leaves. This act in Abhijnanasakuntalam contains most unexpected events from announcing of the marriage to the curse and acceptance of the marriage by Kanva and Gautami.

Act – V or The Repudiation of Sakuntala (Scene: The Palace):

The King is seen with burdensome schedules and is weary by performing his duties. Madhavya asks to listen to the song and music played by her wife Hamsavati. The song suggests subtly that she is being neglected and Dushyanta feels a yearning in his heart but cannot understand the reason for his heart to behave as such. At this moment, the chamberlain announces the presence of hermits from the hermitage of Kanva and Dushyanta asks for them immediately by inviting them with proper Vedic rites. After the reception, Sarngarava and Gautami remind the king of the secret marriage between him and Sakuntala but he cannot remember anything. Sakuntala understanding the effects of the curse by Durvasa tries to produce the ring on her hand and to her surprise the ring won't be in its place. Sakuntala shattered by the absence of the ring stands in the palace without any proof, while Gautami exclaims that she the ring might have slipped off in the pool while she was washing her face. Dushyanta accuses the hermits and Sakuntala, but the high priest suggests seeing if there is any truth behind the story as the people are from the hermitage of Kanva. Dushyanta agrees to provide facilities in the palace till the child is born so that the child could be examined and determined which of the two parties is speaking the truth. However, heartbroken Sakuntala asks the earth to take her and she is taken away by light to the bewilderment of Dushyanta.

Act – VI or Separation from Sakuntala (Scene: Capital of Dushyanta & The Pleasure Gardens):

Two policemen recognize the royal signet ring in possession of a fisherman. The fisherman pleads that he found the ring in a fish he caught lately. A police chief goes to the king and submits the ring which disturbs him a lot. The fisherman is given leave without any punishment and further given compensation. However, Dushyanta feels horribly sorry for himself and the way he treated Sakuntala. By the time recognition of Sakuntala (Abhijnanasakuntalam) by Dushyanta is fulfilled he has absolutely no idea where she was taken and how to find her.

Misrakesi, an apsara comes to check the situation in the palace as requested by Menaka and she oversees things invisibly. She finds out from maids that the king is in a miserable condition and she relates the same predicament to Sakuntala. Dushyanta expresses his grief to Madhavya and the court-jester tries to console him.

Meanwhile, Chaturika brings the portrait of Sakuntala which intensifies the grief of the king and the same he feels terrible loneliness without his love. As the Queen Vasumati is expected to make her presence in the gardens, Dushyanta hands over the painting of Sakuntala to him and asks to flee.

An attendant comes to Dushyanta and informs the Queen has returned observing a note in his hand. The note is about a wealthy merchant who unfortunately died in a shipwreck and all his property is unclaimed. The King orders to give the property to whichever wife is pregnant, but

decides against it as it is only fair to do justice to everyone depending on the trade of the merchant. So, he orders to share all the properties of the merchant to his family and loved ones.

The thought of a pregnant wife disturbs him as he with blindness turned out the one who was about to produce the heir of his family and the future king of Hasthinapura. As he laments his decision, he hears cries of anguish and finds Madhavya is taken by a demon form. He chases the demon and frees his friend only to find that the demon is Matali who came to take Dushyanta to assist in battle against demon – Kalanemi. It is revealed that Matali intentionally apprehended Madhavya to distract the King from the misery. Both Matali and Dushyanta mount the chariot as the act ends.

Act – VII or Sakuntala’s prosperity (Scene: Celestial regions & Hermitage of Maricha):

Dushyanta along with other warriors of Heaven vanquish all the demons and he is seen returning with Matali. As they travel through the path of Heavens, Dushyanta expresses his desire to pay homage at the hermitage of Maricha. Matali takes him to the hermitage and leaves the king in the serene place. As the King contemplates on the divine presence and tranquillity in the hermitage he hears some voices and turns towards them to find a young boy playing with lion cube, trying to open its mouth so that he could count the number of teeth. He feels so related to the boy that he goes and pampers him and the ascetics are surprised to see that the boy also feels comfortable with the stranger. The ascetic women realize the armlet of the boy is missing and Dushyanta finds it where the boy was wrestling the lion cub previously.

Maricha gives that armlet during the natal rites of the child and it is charmed. Anyone apart from the parents or the boy himself touches the armlet it turns into a snake and bites them. The ascetics immediately recognize the stranger as Dushyanta and the King in joyously confident that the boy is his own and Sakuntala is in the hermitage. Sakuntala and Dushyanta unite in tears and the King explains how his memory got restored once he saw the signet ring found by a fisherman. Maricha, Aditi and Matali enter the scene and Maricha blesses the pair to live in prosperity. Maricha states that their family needs no boon as it includes a Father equal to Indra, Mother born of an Apsara and son who can make demons run. The play *Abhijnanasakuntalam* ends with the blissful reunion and the family is seen to return to the palace of Dushyanta.

This version of *Abhijnanasakuntalam* by Kalidasa is different from the one mentioned in the epic “Mahabharata”; however, apart from the dramatic effects and the dialogues the story reaches to its end in the same way as that described in the epic poem *Mahabharata*. Hence, many consider both the versions as authentic with only difference being the description of characters.

Oedipus Rex or Oedipus the King

Character List

Oedipus

Oedipus is the king of Thebes, married to Jocasta. He is unaware, at the start of the play, that he has murdered his father and slept with his mother. Soon he learns that it was he that put his kingdom at such terrible risk, and blinds himself using a brooch. He has a 'tell-tale limp', a piercing wound in his ankles, made as a child by the father who exposed him. This echoes his name, which roughly translates as 'swollen-feet'. In line with most tragic 'heroes,' Oedipus has a clear hamartia - or tragic flaw - which precipitates his woeful fate. In this case, it's his pride, which allows him to disbelieve the Gods and hunt the source of a plague instead of looking

inside himself. That said, Oedipus' hamartia is not always so clear - since it appears that his prideful sins occurred long before the start of the play. Indeed, Oedipus' greatest sin appears to take place when he kills a man at a roadside in a fit of temper, suggesting that no deed goes unpunished. Ultimately, however, Oedipus must pay the price for dismissing Teiresias' judgment and the Oracle's prophecy, as yet another reminder that the Gods are infinitely more powerful than men.

Jocasta

Jocasta is the wife and mother of Oedipus and queen of Thebes. Before marrying Oedipus, she was married to Laius. She commits suicide at the end of the play, perhaps in guilt that she left Oedipus to die as a baby, thus precipitating his course towards a tragic end for their whole family.

Teiresias

Teiresias is the blind prophet, led by a small boy, who knows the truth about Oedipus's parentage. Oedipus calls on him to find Laius's killer but becomes furious when Teiresias claims that Oedipus himself is the killer. Teiresias's words, however, prove true ultimately, suggesting that he is a mouthpiece for the Gods and an oracle to be trusted far more than the convictions and hopes of man. Teiresias is often represented as being part-male, part-female in classical literature.

Creon

Creon is Jocasta's brother, who shares one third of Thebes's riches with Oedipus and Jocasta. He is a devout follower of the oracle of Apollo, and as the play opens, he is returning from the oracle with the news that Laius's killer must be found. He is a loyal friend to Oedipus, and ultimately remains forgiving and kind to Oedipus even when Oedipus turns on him and suggests he is conspiring against him. He is to take over Thebes after Oedipus' exile. (Creon also takes center stage in Sophocles' play, *Antigone*, which adds another chapter to Oedipus' doomed lineage.

Messenger from Corinth

The Messenger from Corinth arrives to tell Oedipus that his father, Polybus, is dead, and that the people of Corinth wish Oedipus to be their new king. He also reveals to Oedipus, however, that Polybus and Meropé are not his real parents. He says that long ago a stranger from Thebes gave him a baby as a gift to the king and queen of Corinth. This baby was, of course, Oedipus who would grow up to be king himself. The Messenger, then, provides the audience with the first real clue of dramatic irony that suggests that Teiresias' words (and those of the Oracle) are true - long before Oedipus discovers their veracity.

Herdsmen

The Herdsman gives Laius' and Jocasta's baby to the messenger upon their orders - and is also the same man who witnessed Laius's death. When he returns to Thebes and sees that the man who killed Laius is the new king, he asks leave to flee from the city. Oedipus sends for him when the messenger alludes to his intimate knowledge of the crime, in the hopes of discovering the identity of his true parents. He then reveals that the baby he gave to the messenger was Laius and Jocasta's son, adding one of the last pieces to the puzzle that will implicate Oedipus as the source of the kingdom's plague.

Priest

The Priest's followers make sacrifices to the gods at the beginning of the play, hoping that the gods will lift the plague that has struck the city. At this point, the followers believe that the Gods have punished the city for some sin that must be rooted out. Oedipus, then, takes it upon himself to visit the Oracle to determine whose sin it is and for how it might be atoned.

Second Messenger

The Second Messenger is a servant of Oedipus and Jocasta who tells Oedipus and the Chorus of Jocasta's suicide.

Ismene and Antigone

Ismene and Antigone are Oedipus's young daughters who are led out at the end of the play. Oedipus laments the fact that they will never find husbands with such a cursed lineage and begs Creon to take care of them. Antigone, in the *Oedipus at Colonus*, will become her father's guide.

Themes

Light and darkness

Darkness and light are tightly wound up with the theme of sight and blindness in Sophocles' play. Oedipus - and all the other characters, save for Teiresias - is 'in the dark' about his own origins and the murder of Laius. Teiresias, of course, is literally 'in the dark' with his own blindness - and yet manages to have sight over everything that is to follow. After Oedipus finds out what has happened, he bemoans the way everything has indeed "come to light".

Sight and blindness

Teiresias holds the key to the link between sight and blindness - for even though he is blind, he can still see and predict the future (if not the present). At the end of the play, moreover, Oedipus blinds himself, because what he has metaphorically seen (i.e. realized) leaves him unable to face his family or his parents in the afterlife). As with the previous theme, sight/blindness operate both literally and metaphorically within the play. Indeed, literal sight is juxtaposed with 'insight' or 'foresight'.

Origins and children

Oedipus embarks upon a search for his own origins, and - though he does not realize it - for his real parents. As the child of his own wife, and thus father and brother to his children, Sophocles explores various interrelationships between where things began and who fathered who. Similarly, the play itself works backwards towards a revelatory start: the story has, in effect, already happened - and Oedipus is forced to discover his own history.

The One and the Many (also Doubles/Twos)

Throughout the play, a central inconsistency dominates - namely the herdsman and Jocasta both believe Laius to have been killed by several people at the crossroads. The story, however, reveals that Oedipus himself alone killed Laius. How can Laius have been supposedly killed by one person - and also by many people?

Oedipus is searching for Laius' murderer: he is the detective seeking the criminal. Yet in the end, these two roles merge into one person - Oedipus himself. The Oedipus we are left with at the end of the play is similarly both father and brother. Sophocles' play, in fact, abounds with twos and doubles: there are two herdsman, two daughters and two sons, two opposed pairs of king and queen (Laius and Jocasta, and Polybus and Merope), and two cities (Thebes and Corinth). In so many of these cases, Oedipus' realization is that he is either between - or, more

confusingly, some combination of – two things. Thus the conflict between “the one and the many” is central to Sophocles’ play. “What is this news of double meaning?” Jocasta asks (939). Throughout Oedipus, then, it remains a pertinent question.

Plague and health

Thebes at the start of the play is suffering from terrible blight which renders the fields and the women barren. The oracle tells Oedipus at the start of the play that the source of this plague is Laius' murderer (Oedipus himself). Health then, only comes with the end of the play and Oedipus' blindness. Again, 'plague' is both literal and metaphorical. There is a genuine plague, but also, to quote Hamlet, there might be "something rotten" in the moral state of Thebes.

Prophecy, oracles, and predestination

The origins of this play in the Oedipus myth (see 'Oedipus and Myth') create an compelling question about foreknowledge and expectation. The audience who knew the myth would know from the start far more than Oedipus himself - hence a strong example of dramatic irony. Moreover, one of the themes the play considers as a corollary is whether or not you can escape your fate. In trying to murder her son, Jocasta finds him reborn as her husband. Running from Corinth, from his parents, Oedipus murders his father on the way. It seems that running away from one's fate ultimately ensures that one is only running towards it.

Youth and age

'Man' is the answer to the Sphinx's question, and the aging of man is given key significance in the course of the play. Oedipus himself goes from childlike innocence to a blinded man who needs to be led by his children. Oedipus, it might be said, ages with the discovery of his own shortcomings as a man. In learning of his own weaknesses and frailties, he loses his innocence immediately.

Summary

When the play opens, Thebes is suffering a plague which leaves its fields and women barren. Oedipus, the king of Thebes, has sent his brother-in-law, Creon, to the house of Apollo to ask the oracle how to end the plague. Creon returns, bearing good news: once the killer of the previous king, Laius, is found, Thebes will be cured of the plague (Laius was Jocasta's husband before she married Oedipus). Hearing this, Oedipus swears he will find the murderer and banish him. The Chorus (representing the people of Thebes) suggests that Oedipus consult Teiresias, the blind prophet. Oedipus tells them that he has already sent for Teiresias. When Teiresias arrives, he seems reluctant to answer Oedipus's questions, warning him that he does not want to know the answers. Oedipus threatens him with death, and finally Teiresias tells him that Oedipus himself is the killer, and that his marriage is a sinful union. Oedipus takes this as an insult and jumps to the conclusion that Creon paid Teiresias to say these things. Furious, Oedipus dismisses him, and Teiresias goes, repeating as he does, that Laius's killer is right here before him - a man who is his father's killer and his mother's husband, a man who came seeing but will leave in blindness.

Creon enters, asking the people around him if it is true that Oedipus slanderously accused him. The Chorus tries to mediate, but Oedipus appears and charges Creon with treason. Jocasta and the Chorus beg Oedipus to be open-minded: Oedipus unwillingly relents and allows Creon to go. Jocasta asks Oedipus why he is so upset and he tells her what Teiresias prophesied. Jocasta comforts him by telling him that there is no truth in oracles or prophets, and she has proof. Long ago an oracle told Laius that his own son would kill him, and as a result he and Jocasta gave their infant son to a shepherd to leave out on a hillside to die with a pin through its ankles.

Yet Laius was killed by robbers, not by his own son, proof that the oracle was wrong. But something about her story troubles Oedipus; she said that Laius was killed at a place where three roads meet, and this reminds Oedipus of an incident from his past, when he killed a stranger at a place where three roads met. He asks her to describe Laius, and her description matches his memory. Yet Jocasta tells him that the only eyewitness to Laius's death, a herdsman, swore that five robbers killed him. Oedipus summons this witness.

While they wait for the man to arrive, Jocasta asks Oedipus why he seems so troubled. Oedipus tells her the story of his past. Once when he was young, a man he met told him that he was not his father's son. He asked his parents about it, and they denied it. Still it troubled him, and he eventually went to an oracle to determine his true lineage. The oracle then told him that he would kill his father and marry his mother. This prophecy so frightened Oedipus that he left his hometown and never returned. On his journey, he encountered a haughty man at a crossroads - and killed the man after suffering an insult. Oedipus is afraid that the stranger he killed might have been Laius. If this is the case, Oedipus will be forever banished both from Thebes (the punishment he swore for the killer of Laius) and from Corinth, his hometown. If this eyewitness will swear that robbers killed Laius, then Oedipus is exonerated. He prays for the witness to deliver him from guilt and from banishment. Oedipus and Jocasta enter the palace to wait for him.

Jocasta comes back out of the palace, on her way to the holy temples to pray for Oedipus. A messenger arrives from Corinth with the news that Oedipus's father Polybus is dead. Overjoyed, Jocasta sends for Oedipus, glad that she has even more proof in the uselessness of oracles. Oedipus rejoices, but then states that he is still afraid of the rest of the oracle's prophecy: that he will marry his mother. The messenger assures him that he need not fear approaching Corinth - since Merope, his mother, is not really his mother, and moreover, Polybus wasn't his father either. Stunned, Oedipus asks him how he came to know this. The messenger replies that years ago a man gave a baby to him and he delivered this baby to the king and queen of Corinth - a baby that would grow up to be Oedipus the King. The injury to Oedipus's ankles is a testament to the truth of his tale, because the baby's feet had been pierced through the ankles. Oedipus asks the messenger who gave the baby to him, and he replies that it was one of Laius's servants. Oedipus sends his men out to find this servant. The messenger suggests that Jocasta should be able to help identify the servant and help unveil the true story of Oedipus's birth. Suddenly understanding the terrible truth, Jocasta begs Oedipus not to carry through with his investigation. Oedipus replies that he swore to unravel this mystery, and he will follow through on his word. Jocasta exits into the palace.

Oedipus again swears that he will figure out this secret, no matter how vile the answer is. The Chorus senses that something bad is about to happen and join Jocasta's cry in begging the mystery to be left unresolved. Oedipus's men lead in an old shepherd, who is afraid to answer Oedipus's questions. But finally he tells Oedipus the truth. He did in fact give the messenger a baby boy, and that baby boy was Laius's son - the same son that Jocasta and Laius left on a hillside to die because of the oracle's prophecy.

Finally the truth is clear - devastated, Oedipus exits into the palace. A messenger reveals that he grabbed a sword and searched for Jocasta with the intent to kill her. Upon entering her chamber, however, he finds that she has hanged herself. He takes the gold brooches from her dress and gouges his eyes out. He appears onstage again, blood streaming from his now blind eyes. He cries out that he, who has seen and done such vile things, shall never see again. He begs the Chorus to kill him. Creon enters, having heard the entire story, and begs Oedipus to come inside, where he will not be seen. Oedipus begs him to let him leave the city, and Creon

tells him that he must consult Apollo first. Oedipus tells him that banishment was the punishment he declared for Laius's killer, and Creon agrees with him. Before he leaves forever, however, Oedipus asks to see his daughters and begs Creon to take care of them. Oedipus is then led away, while Creon and the girls go back in the palace. The Chorus, alone, laments Oedipus' tragic fate and his doomed lineage.

UNIT-3 Hamlet

Character List

Hamlet

The son of Old Hamlet and Gertrude, thus Prince of Denmark. The ghost of Old Hamlet charges him with the task of killing his uncle, Claudius, for killing him and usurping the throne of Denmark. Hamlet is a moody, theatrical, witty, brilliant young man, perpetually fascinated and tormented by doubts and introspection. It is famously difficult to pin down his true thoughts and feelings -- does he love Ophelia, and does he really intend to kill Claudius? In fact, it often seems as though Hamlet pursues lines of thought and emotion merely for their experimental value, testing this or that idea without any interest in applying his resolutions in the practical world. The variety of his moods, from manic to somber, seems to cover much of the range of human possibility.

Old Hamlet

The former King of Denmark. Old Hamlet appears as a ghost and exhorts his son to kill Claudius, whom he claims has killed him in order to secure the throne and the queen of Denmark. Hamlet fears (or at least says he fears) that the ghost is an imposter, an evil spirit sent to lure him to hell. Old Hamlet's ghost reappears in Act Three of the play when Hamlet goes too far in berating his mother. After this second appearance, we hear and see no more of him.

Claudius

Old Hamlet's brother, Hamlet's uncle, and Gertrude's newlywed husband. He murdered his brother in order to seize the throne and subsequently married Gertrude, his erstwhile sister-in-law. Claudius appears to be a rather dull man who is fond of the pleasures of the flesh, sex and drinking. Only as the play goes on do we become certain that he is indeed guilty of murder and usurpation. Claudius is the only character aside from Hamlet to have a soliloquy in the play. When he is convinced that Hamlet has found him out, Claudius eventually schemes to have his nephew-cum-son murdered.

Gertrude

Old Hamlet's widow and Claudius' wife. She seems unaware that Claudius killed her former husband. Gertrude loves Hamlet tremendously, while Hamlet has very mixed feelings about her for marrying the (in his eyes) inferior Claudius after her first husband's death. Hamlet attributes this need for a husband to her lustiness. Gertrude figures prominently in many of the major scenes in the play, including the killing of Polonius and the death of Ophelia.

Horatio

Hamlet's closest friend. They know each other from the University of Wittenberg, where they are both students. Horatio is presented as a studious, skeptical young man, perhaps more serious and less ingenious than Hamlet but more than capable of trading witticisms with his good friend. In a moving tribute just before the play-within-the-play begins, in Act Two scene two,

Hamlet praises Horatio as his soul's choice and declares that he loves Horatio because he is "not passion's slave" but is rather good-humored and philosophical through all of life's buffets. At the end of the play, Hamlet charges Horatio with the task of explaining the pile of bodies to the confused onlookers in court.

Polonius

The father of Ophelia and Laertes and the chief adviser to the throne of Denmark. Polonius is a windy, pedantic, interfering, suspicious, silly old man, a "rash, intruding fool," in Hamlet's phrase. Polonius is forever fomenting intrigue and hiding behind tapestries to spy. He hatches the theory that Ophelia caused Hamlet to go mad by rejecting him. Polonius' demise is fitting to his flaws. Hamlet accidentally kills the old man while he eavesdrops behind an arras in Gertrude's bedroom. Polonius' death causes his daughter to go mad.

Ophelia

The daughter of Polonius and sister of Laertes. Ophelia has received several tributes of love from Hamlet but rejects him after her father orders her to do so. In general, Ophelia is controlled by the men in her life, moved around like a pawn in their scheme to discover Hamlet's distemper. Moreover, Ophelia is regularly mocked by Hamlet and lectured by her father and brother about her sexuality. She goes mad after Hamlet murders Polonius. She later drowns.

Laertes

Polonius' son and Ophelia's brother. Laertes is an impetuous young man who lives primarily in Paris, France. We see him at the beginning of the play at the celebration of Claudius and Gertrude's wedding. He then returns to Paris, only to return in Act Four with an angry entourage after his father's death at Hamlet's hands. He and Claudius conspire to kill Hamlet in the course of a duel between Laertes and the prince.

Fortinbras

The Prince of Norway. In many ways his story is parallel to Hamlet's: he too has lost his father by violence (Old Hamlet killed Old Fortinbras in single combat); he too is impeded from ascending the throne by an interfering uncle. But despite their biographical similarities, Fortinbras and Hamlet are constitutional opposites. Where Hamlet is pensive and mercurial, Fortinbras is all action. He leads an army through Denmark in order to attack disputed territory in Poland. At the end of the play, and with Hamlet's dying assent, Fortinbras assumes the crown of Denmark.

Osric

The ludicrous, flowery, stupid courtier who invites Hamlet to fence with Laertes, then serves as referee during the contest.

The gravediggers

Two "clowns" (roles played by comic actors), a principal gravedigger and his assistant. They figure only in one scene -- Act Five scene one -- yet never fail to make a big impression on readers and audience members. The primary gravedigger is a very witty man, macabre and intelligent, who is the only character in the play capable of trading barbs with Hamlet. They are the only speaking representatives of the lower classes in the play and their perspective is a remarkable contrast to that of the nobles.

The players

A group of (presumably English) actors who arrive in Denmark. Hamlet knows this company well and listens, enraptured, while the chief player recites a long speech about the death of Priam and the wrath of Hecuba. Hamlet uses the players to stage an adaptation of "The Death of Gonzago" which he calls "The Mousetrap" -- a play that reprises almost perfectly the account of Old Hamlet's death as told by the ghost -- in order to be sure of Claudius' guilt.

A Priest

Charged with performing the rites at Ophelia's funeral. Because of the doubtful circumstances of Ophelia's death, the priest refuses to do more than the bare minimum as she is interred.

Reynaldo

Polonius' servant, sent to check on Laertes in Paris. He receives absurdly detailed instructions in espionage from his master.

Bernardo

A soldier who is among the first to see the ghost of Old Hamlet.

Marcellus

A soldier who is among the first to see the ghost of Old Hamlet.

Summary

Something is amiss in Denmark -- for two successive nights, the midnight guard has witnessed the appearance of the ghost of Old Hamlet, the former King of Denmark who has recently died. The guards bring Horatio, a learned scholar and friend of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, to witness this apparition. Though skeptical at first, Horatio sees the ghost and decides to report its appearance to Hamlet.

Meanwhile, a new king of Denmark has been crowned: Claudius, Old Hamlet's brother. Claudius has taken Old Hamlet's widow, Gertrude, as his wife. We watch their marriage celebration and hear about a threat from the Prince of Norway, Fortinbras, which Claudius manages to avoid by diplomacy. Hamlet is in attendance at this wedding celebration; he is hardly in joyous spirits, however. He is disgusted by his mother's decision to marry Claudius so soon after his father's demise. Horatio tells Hamlet of the appearance of the ghost and Hamlet determines to visit the spirit himself.

Meanwhile, the court adviser, Polonius, sends his son, Laertes, back to Paris, where he is living. Laertes and Polonius both question Ophelia (sister and daughter, respectively) about her relationship with Hamlet. Ophelia admits that Hamlet has been wooing her. They tell her to avoid Hamlet and reject his amorous advances, emphasizing the importance of protecting her chastity. Ophelia agrees to cut off contact.

That night, Hamlet accompanies the watch. The ghost appears once more. Hamlet questions the ghost, who beckons Hamlet away from the others. When they are alone, the ghost reveals that Claudius murdered him in order to steal his crown and his wife. The ghost makes Hamlet promise to take revenge on Claudius. Hamlet appears to concur excitedly. He has Horatio and the guards swear not to reveal what they have seen.

Act Two finds us some indefinite time in the future. Hamlet has been behaving in a most erratic and alarming way. Claudius summons two of Hamlet's school friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in order to discover the meaning of this strange behavior. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's attempts to discover the reason for Hamlet's madness are met with evasion and witticism. Meanwhile, Polonius hatches a theory of his own: he thinks that Hamlet is insane due to Ophelia's rejection of his love. He arranges to test his theory by setting Ophelia on Hamlet when they are apparently alone and then observing the proceedings with Claudius.

Hamlet's only consolation appears to be the coming of a troupe of players from England. Hamlet asks the player's whether they could play a slightly modified version of a tragedy. We

realize that Hamlet plans to put on a play that depicts the death of his father, to see whether Claudius is really guilty, and the ghost is really to be trusted.

In Act Three, Ophelia approaches Hamlet when they are apparently alone; Claudius and Polonius hide behind a tapestry and observe. Hamlet behaves extremely cruelly toward Ophelia. The king decides that Hamlet is not mad for love of her but for some other hidden reason.

Hamlet prepares to put on his play, which he calls "The Mouse Trap." After instructing the players in their parts, Hamlet retires to the audience, where Claudius, Gertrude, Ophelia, and Polonius have gathered, along with many others. In the course of the play, both Gertrude and Claudius become extremely upset, though for different reasons. Gertrude is flustered by Hamlet's veiled accusation that she was inconstant and hypocritical for remarrying after Old Hamlet's death; Claudius is shaken because he is indeed guilty of his brother's murder. Claudius decides that he must get rid of Hamlet by sending him to England.

Following the play, Gertrude calls Hamlet to her room, intending to berate him for his horrible insinuations. Hamlet turns the tables on her, accusing her of a most grotesque lust and claiming that she has insulted her father and herself by stooping to marry Claudius. In the course of their interview, Polonius hides behind a tapestry; at one point, he thinks that Hamlet is going to attack Gertrude and cries for help. Hamlet stabs Polonius through the tapestry, thinking he has killed Claudius. When he finds that he has merely killed a "rash, intruding fool," Hamlet returns to the business of "speaking daggers" to his mother. Just as Gertrude appears convinced by Hamlet's exhortation, the ghost of Old Hamlet reappears and tells Hamlet not to behave so cruelly to his mother, and to remember to carry out revenge on Claudius. Gertrude perceives her son discoursing with nothing but air and is completely convinced of his madness. Hamlet exits her room, dragging the body of Polonius behind him.

After much questioning, Claudius convinces Hamlet to reveal the hiding place of Polonius' body. He then makes arrangements for Hamlet to go to England immediately, accompanied by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Claudius writes a letter to the English court asking them to kill Hamlet immediately upon his arrival and places the letter with his two cronies. On their way to the ship, Hamlet and his entourage pass Fortinbras' Norwegian army en route to a Polish campaign.

Back at Elsinore (the Danish palace), Ophelia has gone mad following her father's death. She sings childish and bawdy songs and speaks nonsensically. Laertes soon returns to Denmark with a mob in tow, demanding an explanation of Polonius' death. Claudius gingerly calms the young man and convinces him that Hamlet was the guilty party.

Letters arrive attesting to a strange turn of fortunes on the sea. Hamlet's ship to England was attacked by pirates, who captured Hamlet and arranged to return him to Denmark for a ransom. Hamlet sends Claudius an aggravating letter announcing his imminent return. Claudius and Laertes decide that Hamlet must be killed. They decide to arrange a duel between Laertes and Hamlet in which Laertes' sword is secretly poisoned so as to guarantee Hamlet's immediate death. As backup, Claudius decides to poison a cup of wine and offer it to Hamlet during the contest.

Just as Act Four comes to a close, more tragic news arrives. Gertrude says that Ophelia has drowned while playing in a willow tree by the river.

Act Five begins at a graveyard. Two gravediggers joke about their morbid occupation. Hamlet and Horatio arrive and converse with them. Soon, Ophelia's funeral begins. Because there are doubts about whether Ophelia died accidentally or committed suicide, her funeral lacks many of the customary religious rites. Laertes bombastically dramatizes his grief, prompting Hamlet to reveal himself and declare his equal grief at the loss of his erstwhile beloved. After a short tussle, Hamlet and Laertes part.

Later, Hamlet explains to Horatio that he discovered Claudius' plot to have him killed in England and forged a new letter arranging for the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. While they are conversing, Osrice, a ridiculous courtier, approaches and proposes the duel between Laertes and Hamlet. Hamlet eventually accepts this challenge.

The duel begins with Osrice as referee. Hamlet wins the first two passes, prompting Claudius to resort to the poisoned drink. Hamlet refuses the drink. In his stead, Gertrude drinks a toast to her son from the poisoned cup. After a third pass also goes to Hamlet, Laertes sneak-attacks the prince and wounds him. A scuffle ensues in which Hamlet ends up with Laertes' sword. He injures Laertes. Just then Gertrude collapses. She declares that she has been poisoned. Laertes, also dying, confesses the whole plot to Hamlet, who finally attacks Claudius, stabbing him with the poisoned sword and then forcing the poisoned drink down his throat. Hamlet too is dying. He asks Horatio to explain the carnage to all onlookers and tell his story. Hamlet dies.

Just then, Fortinbras arrives at the court, accompanying some English ambassadors who bring word of the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. With all the immediate royalty of Denmark dead, Fortinbras asserts his right to the crown. He arranges for Hamlet to receive a soldier's burial.

Twelfth Night

Character List

Orsino, Duke or Count of Illyria

Though his title in the play is disputed, Orsino is the ruler of Illyria, with some naval experience behind him. He is lovesick for the Lady Olivia, who will not return his affections; Viola is taken into his service, as the boy Cesario, and is quickly taken into his confidence and tries to woo Olivia for him. However, Orsino's affections shift by the end of the play; he drops his self-indulgent behavior, and develops affection for Viola.

Curio, Valentine

Two of Orsino's attendants. Valentine is sent to try and woo Olivia, though he is not quite as successful at gaining entrance to Olivia's house as "Cesario" is. Curio accompanies Orsino on his visit to Olivia's in the last act, though he says nothing; their basic purpose is to wait on Orsino as best they can, but they are not as close to him or as important in the action as Viola is.

First Officer, Second Officer

These two recognize Antonio as having committed crimes against Orsino, and arrest him. In the last act, they hold Antonio, as they remind Orsino of the crime that Antonio had committed.

Viola

A young woman who is shipwrecked, having lost her twin brother Sebastian, and lands in Illyria quite by accident; she resolves to make the best of her situation, and be taken into Orsino's service, as a young eunuch named Cesario. Viola is quickly taken into Orsino's confidence, and he tells her all the secrets of his heart; she is entrusted with wooing Olivia, though Olivia herself falls for Viola as Cesario. Viola herself is in love with Orsino, though she cannot admit this; she does succeed in gaining Orsino's affections, however, and gets him to be a more honest, less self-centered person.

A Sea-Captain

He rescues Viola from drowning, and helps her transform herself into Cesario and become Orsino's page. Later, he has supposedly had some issues with Malvolio somehow, and must be found so that Viola may reclaim her female clothes and possessions.

Sebastian

Viola's non-identical twin brother, who nevertheless bears a great resemblance to her. Viola tries to imitate her brother in her disguise as Cesario, as the two are mistaken for each other in many scenes. Sebastian himself is saved by Antonio, and the two become fast friends. Quite by accident, Sebastian comes across Olivia, and is taken for Cesario; she proposes, and they are quickly married, despite Sebastian not knowing who she is.

Antonio

Another sea-captain; he saves Sebastian's life, and appears to be benevolent in his intentions toward Sebastian. However, he has a questionable past, and was involved in some doings at sea that mean he is wanted by Orsino. He stops a duel between Viola and Sir Andrew, mistaking Viola for her brother Sebastian. His relationship with Sebastian has argued to be a little more than friendly< though this can certainly be disputed.

Olivia

A noblewoman, Countess of Illyria. She lost her father, then her brother right before the beginning of the play; she resolves to be in mourning for her brother for seven years, thus thwarting Orsino's attempts to woo her. She becomes enamoured of Viola, who acts as a messenger for Orsino; and though Olivia tries her best to win Viola, Viola does her best to let her down easily, because Viola is not a boy like she pretends to be. Olivia rushes off and marries Sebastian, thinking that he is Viola as Cesario; but everything works out in the end.

Maria

Olivia's gentlewoman-maid, a witty, wily woman who has some affection for Sir Toby. It is she who resolves to get revenge on Malvolio, after he embarrasses the party; she claims to have handwriting like Olivia's, and will use that gift to trick Malvolio. She is actually a good-natured woman, though she loves a good joke, and holds her own with the "boys"< Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Feste.

Sir Toby

Surname Belch, not very complimentary but sadly, accurate. He is Olivia's ill-behaved uncle, and spends most of his time drinking, fooling, and carousing with Sir Andrew. He takes part in the pranks against Malvolio, and arranges the duel between Sir Andrew and Viola as well. He is hot-tempered, and usually unruly, but not a bad fellow either.

Sir Andrew

Surname Aguecheek, also not complimentary, but correctly describing his thin, pale face. He is a complete, very dense fool, who can't help but misconstrue every word his friend Sir Toby says. He hopes to win Olivia's affection, though they have few interactions in the play. Jealous of the attention that Olivia pays to "Cesario," he challenges the young man to a duel, that is never quite completed.

Malvolio

Olivia's steward, a man who is supposedly good at his job, but is stern and hates merrymaking. He rebukes Sir Toby and company very harshly, for which they resolve to get revenge. They play on his vanity and his pride by convincing him that Olivia loves him, and getting him to act foolish in front of her. He is finally locked up in a dark place, and tormented by Feste; in the last act, he comes forward and tells of his ordeal, and swears revenge on everyone involved, having not learned any lessons.

Fabian

A member of Olivia's household with responsibilities that are never explained. He is a sort of mid-play replacement for Feste, taking part in the plots against Malvolio with Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. He doesn't seem to have much of a personality, but is included in the play for the purpose of exposition and he is also good at stating the obvious for the audience.

Feste

A jester and musician who lends his services to Olivia, and to Orsino as well. Feste is quick-witted and quite skilled at wordplay; but he is also somewhat cruel, as seen in his behavior toward Malvolio. Feste may act the part of the fool, but in fact he is very wise and perceptive about people's natures; he knows the perfect song for any occasion, but resents when his services are taken for granted.

A Priest

Marries Sebastian and Olivia, and later testifies about this union to Orsino and others.

Summary

Act I:

Count Orsino of Illyria is introduced; he laments that he is lovesick, and wishes that "if music be the food of love," he could kill his unrequited love through an overdose of music. Orsino's servant Valentine, whom Orsino sent to give his affections to Olivia, returns; Valentine was not allowed to speak directly to Olivia, but Olivia sent a message, via her handmaiden, that Olivia will continue to mourn her dead brother, and will neither allow Orsino to see her or to woo her.

Viola lands in Illyria, after a terrible shipwreck in which she was separated from her twin brother, Sebastian. Viola hopes that her brother was saved, as she was; the Captain, who also managed to get ashore, tries to console her of the hopes of finding her brother alive. The Captain recalls seeing her brother in the water after the shipwreck, clinging onto a mast, and riding above the waves. As it happens, the Captain is from Illyria, and tells Viola of Count Orsino, and of his love for Lady Olivia; the Captain also mentions Olivia's recent loss of both her father and her brother, and Viola, having lost her brother as well, commiserates with Olivia's situation. Viola proposes that she serve Orsino, since he is a good and just man; she conspires with the Captain that she may be presented to Orsino as a eunuch, and that her true identity as a foreign woman be concealed. The Captain agrees to help her, and he leads her to Orsino.

Sir Toby, Olivia's drunken uncle, is approached by Olivia's handmaiden, Maria, about his late hours and disorderly habits. Maria also objects to one of Sir Toby's drinking buddies, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a rather foolish man who Sir Toby has brought as a potential suitor to Olivia. Sir Toby has great affection for Sir Andrew, but Maria does not; she believes that Sir Andrew is a drunkard and a fool, and not to be suffered. Sir Toby attempts to introduce Sir Andrew to Maria; wordplay ensues from a series of misunderstandings, puns, and differing usages of words. Maria exits, and Sir Toby and Sir Andrew continue to quibble, with some amusing results; at last, they decide to start drinking.

Viola has now disguised herself as a boy, Cesario, and has been taken into the service of Count Orsino. Valentine remarks that Orsino and Viola, as Cesario, have become close in the short time that Viola has been employed; indeed, Orsino has already told Viola of his great love for Olivia. Orsino asks Viola to go to Olivia and make Orsino's case to the lady; Viola says she will obey, although she confesses in an aside that she already feels love for Orsino, and would rather be his wife than try to woo Olivia for him.

Feste first appears in the play in Act I. Olivia enters, with her attendants, and is somewhat displeased and short with Feste; Feste says she is a fool for mourning her brother, if she knows that her brother is in heaven. Viola/ Cesario arrives at Olivia's house, and is admitted after much waiting, and being examined by both Sir Toby and Malvolio. Viola is brought in to meet Olivia, who finds out Viola is a messenger on Orsino's behalf, and Olivia discourages Viola from wooing her for the Count. Viola tries to make Orsino's suit, but is unsuccessful; Olivia begins to show interest in Viola as Cesario in this scene. Viola is sent away at last, and Olivia has Malvolio go after Viola, with a ring and an invitation to come back tomorrow.

Act II:

Sebastian, Viola's brother, is shown alive, and in the company of Antonio, a somewhat shady sea-captain. Sebastian tells Antonio of his sister, Viola, who he fears has been drowned; he thanks Antonio for his kindness in saving him and resolves that he must be off alone.

Malvolio catches up to Viola, with the ring he was instructed to give Viola by Olivia. Viola is surprised, since she left no ring with Olivia; Malvolio grows impatient with Viola, throws it down onto the ground, and storms off. Viola realizes that the ring is proof that Olivia has some

affection for her as Cesario; she regrets that Olivia is in love with her disguise, as that will come to nothing, and also that she is in love with her master, but that she can do nothing in her present disguise.

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew are up late, drinking, and Feste joins them. They proceed to make a great deal of noise, by singing, drinking, and talking nonsense; Maria tries to get them to be quiet, but Malvolio is awakened by the noise, and comes down to berate them for disturbing the household. Once Malvolio leaves, Maria concocts a plan to make Malvolio look like a complete fool: she will write love letters to Malvolio and make it look like the letters have come from Olivia. The party decides to try this out and see if it will work; Maria leaves to go to bed, and Sir Toby and Sir Andrew decide to drink the rest of the night away.

Orsino calls upon Feste to sing an old song, that pleases him very well; Orsino then begins to talk to Viola/ Cesario of love, and its imperfections. Orsino compares women to roses "whose fair flower/ being once displayed, doth fall that very hour"; Viola does not approve of Orsino's slightly cynical view of women.

Viola attempts to soothe Orsino's melancholy by getting him to accept that Olivia might not love him, but that perhaps another woman does; Orsino counters this with the argument that women are very inconstant in their love, and could not have a feeling as deep as the love he has for Olivia. Viola knows that this is not true, in light of the great amount of feeling she has for Orsino; she attempts to persuade him that women are "as true of heart" as men, by telling him a story she makes up about a sister that loved only too constantly and too well. Orsino asks Viola to go again to Olivia, and make his suit; Viola obeys.

Maria appears, with the love-letter she has written for the purposes of baiting Malvolio. Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and their friend Fabian are present; they hide behind a tree as Malvolio approaches, and Maria places the letter somewhere where he is certain to find it. Malvolio approaches, already muttering nonsense about thinking that Olivia fancies him, and about how things would be if they were married; this angers Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, who want to beat Malvolio for his pretension. Malvolio finally spots the letter, and thinks he recognizes the handwriting as Olivia's; he takes the bait completely.

Act III:

Viola enters, on her way to see Olivia; she comes across Feste, who is full of wit and foolery as usual. Feste expresses his dislike for Viola, which Viola does not take personally; Viola gives him a few coins for his wordplay, and mentions the wit that it takes to act the fool as well as Feste does. Olivia then comes to meet Viola, and Viola again attempts to make Orsino's case.

Olivia confesses her affection for Viola/ Cesario, and begs to know if Viola does indeed feel the same way. Viola says no, then asks again if Olivia will have anything to do with Orsino; Olivia is constant in her lack of response to Orsino, but makes one last attempt to win Cesario over. Viola warns Olivia as best she can, telling Olivia that "I am not what I am," though Olivia does not guess at the statement's real meaning (III.i.139). Viola leaves< but not without an entreaty to return.

Sir Andrew finally comes to his senses, realizing that Olivia favors. His friend Fabian tries to convince him that Olivia is just trying to make him jealous; this does not soothe Sir Andrew's anger. Sir Toby then persuades Sir Andrew that he should challenge Cesario to a duel. Sir Toby

tells him to write a letter of challenge, which Sir Toby will deliver; Toby actually has no intent of sponsoring a duel, but thinks the exercise might cool Sir Andrew off a little.

Antonio fears some accident may happen to Sebastian since he is completely ignorant of the country. Sebastian wants to go about and see the sights, but Antonio tells him that he cannot; Antonio confesses that he was involved with some piracy against Illyria, and that he is wanted by the Count because of it. Antonio proposes that they meet up at an inn in one hour, and that Sebastian can wander about until then.

Maria warns Olivia of Malvolio's very strange behavior; Malvolio is wearing yellow, cross-gartered stockings, which Olivia abhors. Malvolio continues his absurdity, making remarks of unwarranted familiarity, and completely baffling Olivia with his misguided attempts to be amorous toward her. Olivia dismisses Malvolio's odd behavior as being some kind of passing madness, and orders that Malvolio be looked after.

Sir Toby, Maria, and Fabian approach Malvolio; they treat Malvolio's case as an instance of witchcraft or possession. Not satisfied with the havoc they have already caused, they decide to make Malvolio go mad, if they can. Sir Andrew returns, with his "saucy" letter for Cesario, and Viola as Cesario appears, having patched up any bad feelings with Olivia over their last, dramatic scene.

Sir Toby conveys Sir Andrew's challenge to Viola, and tries to make Viola shrink from the confrontation by greatly exaggerating Sir Andrew's meanness and anger. Sir Andrew and Viola come close to some sort of reluctant confrontation, when Antonio stumbles on them; Antonio is arrested by officers of the Count, and asks Viola for his purse, mistaking Viola for her brother Sebastian. Antonio is taken aback when Viola will not give him his purse, thinking that she, as Sebastian, is ungrateful for his help; he speaks of rescuing Sebastian from drowning, which lets Viola know that her brother might be alive. Viola hopes that what Antonio said is indeed true, and that her brother might have been saved from the wreck.

Act IV:

Feste approaches Sebastian, thinking that Sebastian is 'Cesario'; when Sebastian tells Feste that he does not know him, nor Olivia, whom Feste tells him to meet, Feste becomes rather upset, and accuses Sebastian of "strangeness". Then Sir Andrew comes, and strikes Sebastian out of anger, as if he were Cesario; Sir Toby and Sebastian come close to getting in a duel of their own, when Olivia finds them, and charges them to stop. Olivia dismisses Sir Toby, and asks Sebastian "would thou'dst be ruled by me," thinking that he is Cesario, due to his great resemblance to his sister. Sebastian decides to go along with it, struck by Olivia's beauty, thinking it all a pleasant dream from which he hopes he will not awaken.

Maria and Feste conspire to present Feste as Sir Topaz, the curate, to Malvolio, who is hidden from view. Feste tries to convince that Malvolio that he is crazy, and Malvolio continues to insist that he is not, that he has been wrongly incarcerated. Feste then confronts Malvolio as himself, and torments him some more; he fakes a conversation with himself as Feste and Sir Topaz, and Malvolio begs for paper and ink so that he can send a message to Olivia. Feste promises to fetch these things, and exits with a song.

Sebastian debates with himself whether he is mad, or whether it is the Lady Olivia who is crazy, though this does not stop him. Olivia asks him to come with her to the parson and be married to her; Sebastian, though he is completely confused, goes to be married to her.

Act V:

Fabian asks Feste for the letter Malvolio has written; Feste refuses this request, and then Orsino, with Viola, finds them. Viola points out Antonio, who is being brought to them by officers; Orsino remembers Antonio from a sea-battle, and Viola tries to defend Antonio from charges of crime by noting his kindness to her. Antonio claims that he rescued Viola from drowning, and that they have been in each other's company ever since; Orsino says that this is nonsense, since Viola has been serving him the whole time.

Then, Olivia approaches them, still denying Orsino's love, while admitting her affection for Viola. Orsino becomes angry at Viola, rather than Olivia, because of these developments; he begins to suspect Viola of double-dealings, and out of his anger, he admits his love for Viola, still disguised as a boy. Viola, for the first time, declares her love for Orsino, much to Olivia's consternation; Olivia counters this declaration by divulging that she was married, to Viola as Cesario, she thinks. A priest confirms Olivia's account, and Orsino becomes even more angry at Viola. Sir Andrew and Sir Toby enter, charging Viola with fighting them and injuring them; Viola is again shocked, and confused.

Suddenly, Sebastian dashes in, apologizing for injuring Sir Toby; he expresses his happiness at seeing Antonio again, and acknowledges Olivia as his wife. Viola and Sebastian see each other again, and there is a joyful reunion. Sebastian reveals to Olivia that she married him, rather than his sister in disguise; Orsino swears that he loves Viola, and will marry her.

Then, the action turns to Malvolio's condition; his letter is read, and his condition explained. Malvolio is upset at his mistreatment, and Olivia attempts to smooth things over; Fabian explains his, Sir Toby's, and Maria's part in Malvolio's torment. Then, Feste inflames Malvolio's anger, and he leaves, in a huff.

Orsino pronounces that happiness will stay with all of them, and that his marriage to Viola will soon be performed. Feste closes the play with a song about "the wind and the rain," a reminder that even great happiness is not safe from life's storms.

UNIT-5 Doctor Faustus (Marlowe)

Character List

Faustus Himself

He sells his soul to the devil

Faustus

A brilliant man, who seems to have reached the limits of natural knowledge. Faustus is a scholar of the early sixteenth century in the German city of Wittenburg. He is arrogant, fiery, and possesses a thirst for knowledge. As an intellectual, Faustus is familiar with things (like demon

summoning and astrology) not normally considered academic subjects by today's universities. Faustus decides to sell his soul to the devil in exchange for earthly power and knowledge and an additional 24 years of life. He proceeds to waste this time on self-indulgence and low tricks.

Faustus is the absolute center of the play, which has few truly developed characters.

Mephostophilis

From the Hebrew, mephitiz, destroyer, and tophel, liar. A devil of craft and cunning. He is the devil who comes at Faustus' summoning, and the devil who serves Faustus for 24 years. In lore, Mephostophilis (also spelled Mephistopheles, or Miphostophiles, and also called Mephisto) seems to be a relative latecomer in the recognized hierarchy of demons. He possibly was created for the Faustus legend.

In Marlowe's play, Mephostophilis has layers to his personality. He admits that separation from God is anguish, and is capable of fear and pain. But he is gleefully evil, participating at every level in Faustus' destruction. Not only does Mephostophilis get Faustus to sell his soul; he also encourages Faustus to waste his twenty-four years of power.

Wagner

Servant to Faustus. He steals Faustus' books and learns how to summon demons. At the end of the play, he seems concerned about his master's fate.

Good Angel and Evil Angel

Personifications of Faustus' inner turmoil, who give differing advice to him at key points. Their characters also reflect Christian belief that humans are assigned guardian angels, and that devils can influence human thoughts.

Valdes

Friend to Faustus, who teaches him the dark arts. He appears only in Act One.

Cornelius

Friend to Faustus, who teaches him the dark arts. He appears only in Act One.

Lucifer

Satan. "Lucifer" original meant Venus, referring to the planet's brilliance. In Christian lore, Lucifer is sometimes thought to be another name of Satan. Some traditions say that Lucifer was Satan's name before the fall, while the Fathers of the Catholic Church held that Lucifer was not Satan's proper name but a word showing the brilliance and beauty of his station before the fall. He appears at a few choice moments in Doctor Faustus, and Marlowe uses "Lucifer" as Satan's proper name.

Belzebub

One of Lucifer's officers. A powerful demon.

The Seven Deadly Sins

Personifications of the Seven Deadly Sins, not acts but impulses or motivations that lead men to sinful actions. They array themselves in a pageant before Faustus, although scholars think now that this section was not written by Marlowe.

Clown / Robin

Robin learns demon summoning by stealing one of Faustus' books. He is the chief character in a number of scenes that provide comic relief from the main story.

Dick

A friend of Robin's. He is one of the characters peopling the few comic relief scenes.

Rafe

A horse ostler, or groomer, and friend to Robin. With the Clown, he summons Mephostophilis, who is none too pleased to be called.

Vintner

A wine merchant or a wine maker. This Vintner chases down Robin and Rafe after they steal a silver goblet from him.

Carter

A man who meets Faustus while carting hay to town. Faustus swindles him.

Horse-Courser

A man who buys Faustus' horse. Faustus swindles him.

Hostess

An ale wench. She treats Robin and his friends kindly.

The Pope

Yeah, that Pope. In a move that would have pleased his Protestant audience, Marlowe depicts him as cruel, power-mad, and far from holy. Faustus plays some cheap tricks on him.

Bruno

A man who would be Pope, selected by the German emperor and representing the conflicts between Church and state authority.

Raymond

King of Hungary. He serves the Pope.

Charles

The German Emperor. Faustus performs at his court.

Martino

Knight in the court of the German Emperor. Friend to Benvolio and Frederick. When Benvolio seeks revenge against Faustus, Martino decides to help out of loyalty.

Frederick

Knight in the court of the German Emperor. Friend to Martino and Benvolio. When Benvolio seeks revenge against Faustus, Frederick decides to help out of loyalty.

Benvolio

Knight in the court of the German Emperor. Friend to Martino and Frederick. When Faustus humiliates him, he seeks revenge.

Saxony

A man attending at the court of the German Emperor.

Duke of Vanholt

A nobleman. Faustus performs illusions at his court.

Duchess of Vanholt

A noblewoman. Faustus fetches her grapes in January.

Spirits in the shapes of Alexander the Great, Darius, Paramour, and Helen

Faustus' illusions.

An Old Man

A holy old man. He tries to save Faustus by getting him to repent, and for his good deed, Faustus initially thanks him. But later, Faustus sends devils to harm the Old Man.

Summary

Doctor Faustus, a talented German scholar at Wittenburg, rails against the limits of human knowledge. He has learned everything he can learn, or so he thinks, from the conventional

academic disciplines. All of these things have left him unsatisfied, so now he turns to magic. A Good Angel and an Evil Angel arrive, representing Faustus' choice between Christian conscience and the path to damnation. The former advises him to leave off this pursuit of magic, and the latter tempts him. From two fellow scholars, Valdes and Cornelius, Faustus learns the fundamentals of the black arts. He thrills at the power he will have, and the great feats he'll perform. He summons the devil Mephostophilis. They flesh out the terms of their agreement, with Mephostophilis representing Lucifer. Faustus will sell his soul, in exchange for twenty-four years of power, with Mephostophilis as servant to his every whim.

In a comic relief scene, we learn that Faustus' servant Wagner has gleaned some magic learning. He uses it to convince Robin the Clown to be his servant.

Before the time comes to sign the contract, Faustus has misgivings, but he puts them aside. Mephostophilis returns, and Faustus signs away his soul, writing with his own blood. The words "Homo fuge" ("Fly, man) appear on his arm, and Faustus is seized by fear. Mephostophilis distracts him with a dance of devils. Faustus requests a wife, a demand Mephostophilis denies, but he does give Faustus books full of knowledge.

Some time has passed. Faustus curses Mephostophilis for depriving him of heaven, although he has seen many wonders. He manages to torment Mephostophilis, he can't stomach mention of God, and the devil flees. The Good Angel and Evil Angel arrive again. The Good Angel tells him to repent, and the Evil Angel tells him to stick to his wicked ways. Lucifer, Belzebub, and Mephostophilis return, to intimidate Faustus. He is cowed by them, and agrees to speak and think no more of God. They delight him with a pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins, and then Lucifer promises to show Faustus hell. Meanwhile, Robin the Clown has gotten one of Faustus' magic books.

Faustus has explored the heavens and the earth from a chariot drawn by dragons, and is now flying to Rome, where the feast honoring St. Peter is about to be celebrated. Mephostophilis and Faustus wait for the Pope, depicted as an arrogant, decidedly unholy man. They play a series of tricks, by using magic to disguise themselves and make themselves invisible, before leaving.

The Chorus returns to tell us that Faustus returns home, where his vast knowledge of astronomy and his abilities earn him wide renown. Meanwhile, Robin the Clown has also learned magic, and uses it to impress his friend Rafe and summon Mephostophilis, who doesn't seem too happy to be called.

At the court of Charles V, Faustus performs illusions that delight the Emperor. He also humiliates a knight named Benvolio. When Benvolio and his friends try to avenge the humiliation, Faustus has his devils hurt them and cruelly transform them, so that horns grow on their heads.

Faustus swindles a Horse-courser, and when the Horse-courser returns, Faustus plays a frightening trick on him. Faustus then goes off to serve the Duke of Vanholt. Robin the Clown, his friend Dick, the Horse-courser, and a Carter all meet. They all have been swindled or hurt by Faustus' magic. They go off to the court of the Duke to settle scores with Faustus. Faustus entertains the Duke and Duchess with petty illusions, before Robin the Clown and his band of ruffians arrives. Faustus toys with them, besting them with magic, to the delight of the Duke and Duchess.

Faustus' twenty-four years are running out. Wagner tells the audience that he thinks Faustus prepares for death. He has made his will, leaving all to Wagner. But even as death approaches, Faustus spends his days feasting and drinking with the other students. For the delight of his

fellow scholars, Faustus summons a spirit to take the shape of Helen of Troy. Later, an Old Man enters, warning Faustus to repent. Faustus opts for pleasure instead, and asks Mephostophilis to bring Helen of Troy to him, to be his love and comfort during these last days. Mephostophilis readily agrees.

Later, Faustus tells his scholar friends that he is damned, and that his power came at the price of his soul. Concerned, the Scholars exit, leaving Faustus to meet his fate.

As the hour approaches, Mephostophilis taunts Faustus. Faustus blames Mephostophilis for his damnation, and the devil proudly takes credit for it. The Good and Evil Angel arrive, and the Good Angel abandons Faustus. The gates of Hell open. The Evil Angel taunts Faustus, naming the horrible tortures seen there.

The Clock strikes eleven. Faustus gives a final, frenzied monologue, regretting his choices. At midnight the devils enter. As Faustus begs God and the devil for mercy, the devils drag him away. Later, the Scholar friends find Faustus' body, torn to pieces.

Epilogue. The Chorus emphasizes that Faustus is gone, his once-great potential wasted. The Chorus warns the audience to remember his fall, and the lessons it offers.
