



Cambridge IGCSE™

DRAMA

0411/13

Paper 1

October/November 2022

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL



Centres should download this material from the School Support Hub and give it to candidates.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the **two** play extracts provided in this booklet.
- You may do any appropriate preparatory work. It is recommended that you explore both extracts as practical theatre, investigating performance and staging opportunities.
- You will **not** be allowed to take this copy of the material **or** any other notes or preparation into the examination.
- A copy of the pre-release material will be provided with the question paper.

This document has **28** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

EXTRACT 1: THE MAHABHARATA

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

The Mahabharata is an epic Hindu poem from ancient India, originally written in Sanskrit. It was adapted for the stage by Jean-Claude Carrière and Peter Brook in the 1980s and later for television in a production lasting over five hours.

The poem is a historical account of the lengthy, deadly struggle for power between two groups of cousins. The first group was the Pandavas, sons of King Pandu. The second group was the Kauravas, sons of Pandu's half-brother, the blind king Dhritarashtra. These relationships are set out in the table below.

This extract is from the final part of the drama when a succession of characters is killed off in a terrible war. The scenes are called *The Death of Abimanyu*, *The Death of Ghatotkacha* and *The Death of Drona*.

The drama includes tensions, hatred, betrayals, deaths and a constant sense of destruction. These are presented in a highly stylised form of theatre.

CHARACTERS

KAURAVAS – sons of the blind king DHRITARASHTRA	PANDAVAS – sons of King PANDU and Queen KUNTI
GANDHARI, wife of DHRITARASHTRA	YUDHISHTHIRA, ARJUNA, BHIMA,
DURYODHANA, eldest son	DRAUPADI, wife of the five PANDAVA brothers
DUHSASANA, second son	ABHIMANYU, son of ARJUNA
JAYADRATHA, king of Sindhu Kingdom, married to Dushala, only sister of the KAURAVA brothers.	SUBHADRA, wife to ARJUNA, mother to ABHIMANYU
	GHATOTKACHA, son of a female demon and BHIMA

BHISHMA, an eighty-year-old noble hero, half-brother of DHRITARASHTRA and PANDU

KRISHNA, Hindu god revered for compassion, tenderness and love

KARNA, a warrior with family links to both sides

DRONA, royal teacher of combat to both PANDAVAS and KAURAVAS

ASWATTHAMAN, son of DRONA

SANJAYA, the blind king's adviser and chariot driver

VYASA, the poet

DHRISTHADYUMNA, a man born from fire, a phantom

The *iron disc* is a tight, heavily armoured circle of warriors that moves in unison to attack enemies.

The *needle* is a military formation designed to break into the disc.

THE DEATH OF ABHIMANYU

[In the morning, **Arjuna** and **Krishna** are hurriedly leaving for battle when a youth [ABHIMANYU] places himself in front of them and says to **Arjuna**.]

ABHIMANYU:	Father, where are you going?	
ARJUNA:	The enemy have made a ferocious attack. I'm going to throw them back.	5
ABHIMANYU:	Take me with you.	
ARJUNA:	Abhimanyu, you aren't old enough for war. We're going to swim in blood. [ABHIMANYU stops his father.]	
ABHIMANYU:	I'm your son and I'm strong—as strong as you. Are you afraid you'll grow old in my shadow? Why leave me yawning in a tent, surrounded by women? I need to fight. Take me with you.	10
KRISHNA:	Abhimanyu, your place is here! Out of the way.	
	[KRISHNA forces ABHIMANYU to move aside and the two men leave. ABHIMANYU remains alone. DRAUPADI enters and sees him.]	15
DRAUPADI:	Abhimanyu, your mother and your young wife are looking for you. What are you doing here, dressed for war?	
ABHIMANYU:	I couldn't sleep. All night long my skin burned and my heart kept knocking on my chest. [There is a sound of distant warfare, drums. DRAUPADI looks ahead.]	20
DRAUPADI:	The earth has vanished. There is only dust and men, a giant wheel of men grinding toward us. Abhimanyu, what is it?	
ABHIMANYU:	Drona has just launched his great offensive. [At this moment, YUDHISHTHIRA and BHIMA appear, very agitated.]	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Drona is advancing. He's in the center of his iron disc. He's crushing everything, he'll grind us to dust.	25
BHIMA:	Our elephants panic, they're fleeing in every direction.	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Listen, the disc is advancing on us like a machine bolted with rivets of death. Who can break it open?	
DRAUPADI:	Only Arjuna.	30
ABHIMANYU:	No. I can do so, too. [ABHIMANYU goes towards them.]	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Abhimanyu ... you know how to force the disc?	
ABHIMANYU:	Yes, I know how.	
DRAUPADI:	Arjuna gave you the secret?	
ABHIMANYU:	No, but before my birth, as I lay in Subhadra's belly, I heard my father speak of this secret.	35
DRAUPADI:	And you remember what he said?	
ABHIMANYU:	Word for word.	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Abhimanyu, we're lost. The disc will destroy us. Your father is far away. I appeal to you.	40
DRAUPADI:	He's almost a child.	
ABHIMANYU:	Child I may be, but I'll attack Drona's iron wall. I'll crack it apart. Only, in my mother's womb I didn't hear all the secret.	
DRAUPADI:	What exactly did you hear?	
ABHIMANYU:	I heard how to force a way into the disc, but if the disc closes, I don't know how to come out.	45
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Open up a breach, that's all we need; a breach and we'll follow you!	
BHIMA:	Open a breach, I'll be at your heels.	
DRAUPADI:	If you succeed, you'll be your father's equal.	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Quick! The disc's approaching!	50

ABHIMANYU:	Yes. I'll open a breach! Where's my driver? Bring me my arms! [<i>As he says these words, his mother, SUBHADRA, runs up to him.</i>]	
SUBHADRA:	What are you doing? Where are you going, my son? Why these weapons?	
ABHIMANYU:	Victory calls me. I'm going to fight.	55
SUBHADRA:	You're going to fight? Why? Are all our men dead?	
ABHIMANYU:	The living need me. My family, the entire earth today needs me. Yudhishtira has asked for my support! Tie on my weapons!	
SUBHADRA:	Who is your enemy?	
ABHIMANYU:	You hear what's making the earth growl? That's my enemy!	60
SUBHADRA:	The iron disc, commanded by Drona? Abhimanyu, your words are not your own, the thought of glory makes you blind. You forget your mother. Your death is here!	
ABHIMANYU:	Without me, it's death for everyone. But I know the special secret and I'll have miraculous powers. Don't be afraid, Mother, be proud and attentive. Watch how I walk. I'll lead the troops like a flame; all the armies will follow me! Arjuna is my father and the thought of him comes to my aid. Kiss me. [<i>ABHIMANYU kisses his mother and is ready for the battle.</i>]	65
	<i>[The enemy army, formed like a disc and commanded by DRONA, approaches. On seeing the child, DRONA calls to him:]</i>	70
DRONA:	Abhimanyu, out of the way!	
ABHIMANYU:	Drona, I'm going to break open your disc. Your slaughter ends here! [<i>The battle begins. ABHIMANYU manages to force his way into the disc, breaking it apart.</i>] Your disc is in pieces! The heads of your men will roll in the dust!	75
DURYODHANA:	All my army shattered by a child! Drona, where is your promise? Are you in love with our enemies, too? Duhsasana, go ahead! Kill this arrogant child! This lackey of death who smiles and despises us! Kill him! [<i>DUHSASANA is in front of ABHIMANYU.</i>]	80
ABHIMANYU:	I see you! My fist will crush you, Duhsasana! Come nearer! [<i>The two warriors fight violently. DUHSASANA is losing. He is wounded and carried off.</i>] Take that! Fall! Who wants to die now? I blaze, I'm dancing with strength! Karna, I've killed your eldest son! Duryodhana, I've killed your eldest son! I fly between the armies! Follow me, I've opened the disc! Throw yourself into the breach!	85
DRONA:	Jayadratha! Where is Jayadratha? [<i>JAYADRATHA appears at once.</i>] Quickly, in position! This is your moment. Bar the Pandavas' way! [<i>JAYADRATHA positions himself. BHIMA and YUDHISHTHIRA surge forward but seem stopped by an irresistible force.</i>]	90
ABHIMANYU:	Bhima! Yudhishtira! Over here! You'd think the air itself is blocking you! Quick! Why are you hurling yourselves against a wall of air? [<i>With their men, DURYODHANA and DRONA gradually surround ABHIMANYU, while JAYADRATHA effortlessly keeps the PANDAVAS at bay. ABHIMANYU, surrounded, is still fighting.</i>] I'm alone in the middle of the disc! And the disc is closing again! They're all around me, Karna, Drona, Aswatthaman, they're all against me! Come closer!	95
KARNA	[<i>To DRONA</i>]: You seem fascinated by his extraordinary strength.	
DRONA:	Break his chariot! [<i>KARNA breaks ABHIMANYU's chariot.</i>]	
KARNA:	His chariot is broken.	100
DRONA:	Break his bow!	
KARNA:	His bow is broken.	
DRONA:	Break his sword!	
KARNA:	His sword is broken!	

- ABHIMANYU: Drona, you've broken my sword. But I've still this enormous club which no two men can lift. [ABHIMANYU fights a moment with the club. The warriors break it.] 105
- KARNA: His club is broken! [ABHIMANYU seizes the wheel from his chariot.]
 ABHIMANYU: I've still got my chariot wheel. I'll crush you under this wheel!
 DRONA: Karna, break the wheel! [KARNA breaks the wheel. The young warrior still tries to defend himself but he is hit.] 110
- ABHIMANYU: Father! [He falls to the ground, dead. DRONA, KARNA, DURYODHANA, DUHSASANA, ASWATTHAMAN all surround the child's body. They are quite still and drop their weapons. Everything is quiet.] 115
- GANDHARI and DHRITARASHTRA appear, guided by SANJAYA.
- GANDHARI: Is Abhimanyu dead?
 SANJAYA: He's lying on the ground.
 [GANDHARI kneels beside the body.]
 GANDHARI: He's like the wind when it dies down. Those who killed him let their weapons drop. They weep in silence and they say, "It's just a child lying on the ground. Was this our duty?" 120
- [The KAURAVA warriors withdraw in silence. The royal couple follows. YUDHISHTHIRA, BHIMA, SUBHADRA, and DRAUPADI draw near the body. In the silence, ARJUNA appears, tired and wounded, led by KRISHNA. They come forward slowly.] 125
- ARJUNA: No music, no one sings, and as they see me my men draw away, looking at the ground. Why am I greeted in silence? Krishna, my body's limp and it's not from fatigue. Normally my son, Abhimanyu, runs eagerly to meet me. ... [He discovers ABHIMANYU's body:] I see him. He's lying unprotected on the ground. He isn't breathing. [He touches his son's arm and chest.] Cruel wounds cover his body like bites. He fought, and he's dead. Who killed him? Why, Abhimanyu? I could never grow tired of seeing you. You thought of me at the last moment, you cried out "Father, help me!" But I didn't hear you. I was far away and they struck you to the ground. These heroes have killed a child. [He straightens and says to KRISHNA:] Krishna, you knew it and you said nothing. [KRISHNA does not reply.] Who sent him to his death? 130
- YUDHISHTHIRA: I did. 140
 BHIMA: Only he knew how to force the iron disc.
 ARJUNA: Where is Vyasa?
 SUBHADRA: Vyasa has abandoned us. We are alone and my son is dead. He was an idol to women, a theme for poets. ...
- DRAUPADI: He was bewitched by war. 145
 ARJUNA: You didn't defend my son.
 YUDHISHTHIRA: We were all behind him, he was leading us to victory, but Jayadratha barred our way.
 ARJUNA: Jayadratha?
 BHIMA: Yes, with you away he had the power to stop us—only once. 150
 YUDHISHTHIRA: Impossible to break past him.
 ARJUNA: You sent my son to his death.
 DRAUPADI: They're telling you the truth. Jayadratha has turned all his hate toward us. He killed your son.
- ARJUNA: Now, I make a vow. Tomorrow I will kill Jayadratha. I will kill him before sunset. If I don't keep this promise, I'll throw myself into the fire and 155

	I myself will join the world of the dead. [JAYADRATHA <i>appears. He listens to ARJUNA from a distance.</i>] Gods and men, listen to me! What I say is true. Just as water is part of the sea, so Jayadratha already belongs to death. May my chariot be ready at dawn! [ABHIMANYU is carried away. ARJUNA stays with KRISHNA who says to him.]	160
KRISHNA:	You have made a terrible promise.	
ARJUNA:	Yes, I know.	
KRISHNA:	Tomorrow Jayadratha will be solidly protected.	
ARJUNA:	He will have eleven armies all around him.	165
KRISHNA:	If you don't keep your word, you must die. And they know it. Tomorrow every cry on the plain will be your life.	
ARJUNA:	Krishna, did you let my son die so as to push me deeper into the fight?	
KRISHNA:	I'm crossing the great era of darkness with you. This struggle is absolute. You and your brothers are the world's only light. Every moment, remember what I told you: if your heart breaks or closes up, if it becomes bitter, dark, or dry, the light will be lost. Tonight you spoke in grief. Your promise opens you to death. No one is dearer to me than you. I'm in anguish.	170
ARJUNA:	Advise me.	
KRISHNA:	I will go to my tent to think. Tonight, neither of us will be able to sleep. [JAYADRATHA goes to DURYODHANA. <i>He is very agitated.</i>]	
JAYADRATHA:	Duryodhana, I'm quitting. Arjuna has sworn to kill me.	
DURYODHANA:	Yes, so my spies tell me.	180
JAYADRATHA:	He said: "Jayadratha is already dead. I will kill him tomorrow, before the sun goes down." I'm afraid. I'm sweating, my legs shake.	
DURYODHANA:	But he also said, "If I don't kill him, I'll throw myself into the fire."	
JAYADRATHA:	Yes.	
DURYODHANA:	It's an extraordinary opportunity. Arjuna has allowed sorrow to get the better of him and tomorrow his pride will be his death. We will surround you like a living ring of armor.	185
JAYADRATHA:	Terrible winds whirl in the plain; the mountains shake and the night sky burns. Arjuna has sworn my death!	
DURYODHANA:	I've prepared everything, everything. No one will come near you. I'm telling you the truth. Shake off your fears and rejoice like me, because Arjuna has brought about his own death. Tomorrow he'll enter the fire and victory will be ours. Jayadratha, I forbid you to leave me.	190
DRONA:	Yes, Arjuna has killed himself. [DHRITARASHTRA and GANDHARI wake up. SANJAYA is with them.]	195
DHRITARASHTRA:	Sanjaya!	
SANJAYA:	I am here.	
DHRITARASHTRA:	Is it light?	
SANJAYA:	Yes, dawn has come. Those who are going to die get up and eat.	
DHRITARASHTRA:	Gandhari, what day is it?	200
GANDHARI:	The fourteenth day of the war.	
DURYODHANA:	And the last. [<i>He has just appeared, smiling, a rose in his hand. He pays respects to his father and mother.</i>]	
GANDHARI:	It's you, Duryodhana.	
DURYODHANA:	Yes, Mother, I'm bringing you a budding rose. Tonight the battle will be won.	205
GANDHARI:	Is Jayadratha well protected?	
DURYODHANA:	He's surrounded by thousands of elephants, thousands of chariots, thousands of men. For his battle order today, Drona has chosen the needle. He himself is on the point of the needle. Nothing will resist him. This evening, prepare to celebrate our victory. [<i>The sound of drums and shouts. SANJAYA cries out.</i>]	210

SANJAYA:	Arjuna has begun the attack! He's advancing like a whirlwind.	
GANDHARI:	What are those terrible cries?	
SANJAYA:	The painted monkey on his flag is shrieking. [DURYODHANA dashes out to join the battle.]	215
DHRITARASHTRA:	I feel the earth shake. Who's approaching? [Suddenly, BHIMA looms up in front of the royal couple. He is armed and impressive.]	
BHIMA:	It's me, Bhima! [DHRITARASHTRA is frightened. He tries to hit BHIMA but does not manage to touch him.]	220
DHRITARASHTRA:	Bhima!	
BHIMA:	I won't strike you, I've come to tell you that I'm annihilating your family. I've killed five of your sons since dawn! Soon you'll be alone in the dark. [BHIMA moves away.]	
DHRITARASHTRA:	He's gone?	225
SANJAYA:	He's returned to the battle.	
DHRITARASHTRA:	My hope's draining away, hour after hour. My son will destroy my people.	
GANDHARI:	Don't put the blame on your son! You don't know what justice is. Your heart has deserted you and your political sense is weak. [They leave, guided by SANJAYA. DURYODHANA and DRONA suddenly find themselves face to face.]	230
DURYODHANA:	Drona, your heart is with them, I know it. Arjuna is burning up my armies, and you, what are you doing? You live with us, but you love those we can never love. I've promised to defend Jayadratha and you are leading him to his death.	235
DRONA:	I can't change my battle order. The game we're playing here knows no pity and the stake today is Jayadratha. I'm only thinking of him.	
DURYODHANA:	And the weapon that's worth all the weapons and whose secret you know?	240
DRONA:	I haven't the right to use it and Arjuna possesses a superior weapon.	
DURYODHANA:	But if you strike first? [KARNA appears at this moment, tired and wounded. He sits for a while.] Karna! Looking for shelter! Then who will stand by me? I have always said that Karna has no rival! But you give up! You withdraw! [KARNA gets to his feet.]	245
KARNA:	No! This is the final lull before victory! If we hold out till nightfall, then without fail Arjuna will enter the flames. [They organize JAYADRATHA's defense.]	
	[ARJUNA appears. All his efforts fail against this defense.]	
ARJUNA:	Krishna, I'm losing all my blood. I've no more breath. For each man I kill, another takes his place. I can't beat Drona, the sun goes down, daylight fades. Jayadratha is still alive and I am sure to die.	250
KRISHNA:	Find a last atom of strength. Stand up again!	
ARJUNA:	I can't stand.	
KRISHNA:	And the weapon that Shiva gave you?	255
ARJUNA:	No, I don't want to devastate the earth. I'll die alone.	
KRISHNA:	I will come to your aid. Take your bow.	
ARJUNA:	What can you do?	
KRISHNA:	I will darken the sun. It's the moment. I will make it disappear. [KRISHNA holds out his hand and the sun's light disappears. The surprised KAURAVAS look at the sky then give shouts of victory.]	260
ARJUNA:	It's not really night?	
KRISHNA:	No, not yet, but they believe it. You hear them shout in triumph? They think you haven't kept your promise; they're singing your death. Look, they're putting down their weapons, the living armor parts.	265
ARJUNA:	Jayadratha lifts his face, he looks at the sky.	

- KRISHNA: No one thinks of defending him. Take your bow, pick an arrow, you know how to shoot in the dark. [ARJUNA *takes his bow and sets an arrow. He aims.*] He's advancing unprotected. He smiles, he thinks he's saved. Cut off his head! [ARJUNA *releases his arrow.*] 270
- [JAYADRATHA *falls. The shouts of joy cease at once. DHRITARASHTRA moves forward.*]
- DHRITARASHTRA: Why this brutal silence?
- KRISHNA: Jayadratha is dead.
- GANDHARI: But isn't it already night? 275
- KRISHNA: No, now I lift darkness from the sky. [*He gestures and the light returns.*] [*to DHRITARASHTRA:*] You can't see it, but the sun is still dazzling, the battle isn't over and your disappointed son weeps. Arjuna and Bhima return to their camp. Yudhishthira tells them, "Seeing you again brings me back to life." [*The light fades again, more slowly.*] And the sun sets for the second time. 280

THE DEATH OF GHATOTKATCHA

[Around DURYODHANA are gathered his principal chiefs: KARNA, DUHSASANA, DRONA, and his son, ASWATTHAMAN.]

DURYODHANA: To battle everyone!
 ASWATTHAMAN: To battle? At night? 285
 DURYODHANA: Take torches!

[The KAURAVAS go out. Only the royal couple and SANJAYA remain. KUNTI draws near.]

DHRITARASHTRA: What do we hear? What's this noise?
 KUNTI: The never-ending roar of battle. 290

DHRITARASHTRA: They're even fighting at night?
 KUNTI: In the dark, the blows are monstrous. The earth is covered with a bloody slime. They no longer recognize their friends; they kill them. They kill fugitives, they kill men already bleeding from their wounds, they fight with nails, teeth, tearing out hair, they kill with stones. 295

DHRITARASHTRA: They must be stopped! They must be told to respect the rules! Sanjaya, go and tell them!
 KUNTI: Useless. They'll kill Sanjaya! Nothing can calm such chaos.
 SANJAYA: They've put three torches on each elephant and five lamps on each chariot. The army lights up the night. Thousands and thousands of flames. The shining rises from the earth. It's as though the trees of a forest were covered with glittering flies. 300

GANDHARI: The earth is burning. It's like the last night of the world.
 [ARJUNA, KRISHNA and YUDHISHTHIRA appear—exhausted, alarmed—with torches.] 305

YUDHISHTHIRA: Krishna, Karna is going to destroy us. He seems to be everywhere. If a bush shakes I think he's there. My men don't even recognize their severed limbs; they're delirious, all my army is going mad.

KRISHNA: Yes, tonight Karna is walking savagely across the war.
 YUDHISHTHIRA: These cries tear my heart. The smell makes me sick. I hate this war. It destroys the mind. 310

KRISHNA: Arjuna, where are you going?
 ARJUNA: I'm returning to the fight. [KRISHNA holds him back.]
 KRISHNA: No, I don't advise you to face Karna tonight. The iron spear he clasps in his hand is for you. He's been keeping it in reserve for you for a long time. It's a divine spear that cannot fail to kill. 315

YUDHISHTHIRA: What can save us?
 KRISHNA: It's a trick of darkness we need. No one can stop Karna, except ... [He stops as though struck by an idea.]

YUDHISHTHIRA: Who? 320
 KRISHNA: I'm thinking of Ghatotkatcha, the son of Bhima and the forest demon. He swore that one day he would arise to save his father.

[GHATOTKATCHA appears out of the dark.]

GHATOTKATCHA: Here I am. Where's my father?
 KRISHNA: He's fighting, but he's wounded and threatened. 325

GHATOTKATCHA:	Who's threatening him?	
KRISHNA:	Karna. Listen carefully, Ghatotkatcha, your valiant hour has come. You know magic weapons. Demon of eclipses and illusions, you are your family's last defense. In the secret of darkness, offer Karna to the gods.	330
GHATOTKATCHA:	I'm enough for Karna. I will save my father and my human family. The earth will speak of my battle as long as there are men to hear. Step aside. I must prepare. [GHATOTKATCHA <i>starts his magic preparations as DHRITARASHTRA asks:</i>]	
DHRITARASHTRA:	Describe Ghatotkatcha to me.	335
GHATOTKATCHA:	My eyes are blood, my beard green, my mouth a gash like the fate of death. Cross-eyed, vast-bellied, sharp-toothed, I ride on a great eight-wheeled chariot, its black iron covered with bearskins, drawn by monster horses whose color is ever on the change. My flag is drenched in blood, it is crowned with a wreath of guts, and its pinnacle is a vulture, whose wings touch the sky. Night increases my power. Elephants piss with fear.	340
DHRITARASHTRA:	And Karna, where is Karna? [KARNA <i>has just appeared opposite GHATOTKATCHA.</i>]	
KARNA:	Karna is here. He prepares to fight.	345
GHATOTKATCHA:	The demon seizes a savage circle of steel. ...	
KARNA:	Karna splinters it with a shower of arrows. [<i>The fight begins in the night lit by torches.</i>]	
GHATOTKATCHA:	You won't escape from my hands alive! I leap, I howl into the clouds. I call down a rain of trees, a hail of rocks. At one moment I have a hundred bellies, a hundred heads, then I shrink into a finger. Suddenly I drop down dead; my father's enemies shout with joy! But once again I'm borne aloft. I thunder with laughter. I grow, I'm measureless, I exceed all excess.	350
DHRITARASHTRA:	And Karna! Where is Karna?	355
KARNA:	Karna stays where he is. He shoots razor arrows, reptile arrows.	
GHATOTKATCHA:	But the demon opens his cavelike chops and, laughing, swallows the cloud of arrows! Then I become a mountain! From this mountain tumbles a cascade, an enormous cataract of arms.	
GANDHARI:	And what is Karna doing under this avalanche?	360
KARNA:	Calmly, he takes an arrow, he fixes a celestial weapon—an astra—to it and the mountain explodes!	
GHATOTKATCHA:	Then Ghatotkatcha becomes a cloud of blood. ... Ghatotkatcha dives towards the earth! The earth splits, he plunges in; even the gods can't see him anymore! Then he multiplies the ferocious animals, the fire-headed snakes, the iron-beaked birds, the twisted-jawed hyenas.	365
KARNA:	Karna exterminates them all.	
GHATOTKATCHA:	This voice you hear has pledged your death! He now rains down a torrent of blood, streaked with lightning and meteors, a hurricane of axes and uprooted trees! Ghatotkatcha has reached the eye of the vortex of his frenzy. He is dripping with blood and sweat! Your son's armies are crushed, heads smashed, horses anatomized, elephants torn joint from joint. [DURYODHANA <i>and DUHSASANA, still sheltering, bring KARNA's magic lance and say to him:</i>]	370
DUHSASANA:	Karna, kill him! Kill him with your lance! Otherwise, he will destroy us all.	375
GANDHARI:	What is Ghatotkatcha doing? [GHATOTKATCHA <i>sees the lance coming towards him.</i>]	
GHATOTKATCHA:	He sees it, he recognizes it. He wants to flee, he's terrified, but the lance strikes him and pierces his heart. His heart explodes. The lance goes on to the end of the sky to vanish among the stars.	380

SANJAYA: Ghatotkatcha gives his last cry, he's forced to let go of his life. His body swells up, it's gigantic. He raises himself as high as he can in the air, then he crumbles, crushing thousands of warriors under his mountainous corpse. *[KARNA leaves with the KAURAVAS amidst shouts of joy. GHATOTKATCHA collapses. BHIMA rushes forward to take him in his arms.]* 385

BHIMA: Ghatotkatcha, my son!

THE DEATH OF DRONA

[DRONA *appears with his son, ASWATTHAMAN.*]

- ASWATTHAMAN: The men are blind with fatigue. They fight as in a dream, their eyes shut, striking their own bodies, giving themselves wounds. Father, let's all sleep an hour here on the battlefield. Yes, let's sleep. 390
- DRONA: Yes, let's sleep.
- [ASWATTHAMAN *gives a sign to the distant army and lies down beside his father. A figure draws near to DRONA and ASWATTHAMAN, who leaps up, weapon in hand.*] 395
- ASWATTHAMAN: Halt! Don't go near my father!
- VYASA: I am Vyasa.
- ASWATTHAMAN: What are you looking for?
- VYASA: I am not looking for anything. I'm watching over your father in his last sleep. 400
- ASWATTHAMAN: What are you telling me? Why do you wish to kill my father?
- VYASA: I don't know why I speak, nor what shadows move my tongue. I make no decisions.
- ASWATTHAMAN: Who will kill him? Tell me! 405
- [VYASA *points to a red, menacing shadow, moving slowly in the distance.*]
- VYASA: You see that red shadow? It's a man, born from fire. His name is Dhristhadyumna. Your father knows him.
- ASWATTHAMAN: No one can kill my father. 410
- VYASA: And yet each time he sleeps, the red phantom enters his dream and it says to him: "It's for this that I am born. And you know it, because you are afraid."
- ASWATTHAMAN: My father has no fear, not even in secret. He has never committed the slightest error. [*The man with the face of blood has sat down next to DRONA, who still sleeps.*] 415
- DHRISTHADYUMNA: He has committed the error that can destroy a life. Your father was without possessions, wretchedly poor. He couldn't even buy you milk.
- ASWATTHAMAN: Yes, I remember.
- DHRISTHADYUMNA: He was ashamed of his poverty and used all his force to become a terrible warrior, the hardest of men. He was born for peace, but chose war. That was his error. [*The apparition disappears after a short, menacing dance. DRONA wakes, sees his son and asks him:*] 420
- DRONA: Why don't you sleep?
- ASWATTHAMAN: Father, why did you tell all those chiefs you are going to die? Aren't you he whom no one can defeat? 425
- DRONA: Aswatthaman, this is the point of the needle and death's eye is fixed on me. [*DURYODHANA appears suddenly:*]
- DURYODHANA: Drona, why did you agree to rest? Why not follow your advantage?
- DRONA: Because I'm tired, I'm old. I've often told you so. 430
- DURYODHANA: Aswatthaman, I'm giving you the northern army. Your men are waiting. [*ASWATTHAMAN leaves quickly.*] Drona, day breaks, the fight is yours. Take up your arms, Arjuna is coming this way. [*The sound of the bow is heard.*]
- DRONA: I know the sound of his bow. I'm ready for him. [*DRONA and ARJUNA face each other. The single combat begins. When ARJUNA strikes successfully, DRONA congratulates him.*] 435

YUDHISHTHIRA:	Master against pupil!	
BHIMA:	It's the fight of my dreams! [DRONA and ARJUNA move away, they disappear from sight, still fighting.]	440
DRAUPADI:	Arjuna will never kill the man who taught him everything.	
BHIMA:	Arjuna's weakening. He's backing away!	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	I'm losing all hope of beating Drona. [ARJUNA returns to the PANDAVAS' camp to rest and bandage his wounds.] Drona must lay down his arms. Nothing can stand up to this ancient fury; he'll massacre everyone. He has become war itself. How can we make him lay down his arms?	445
KRISHNA:	There's just one way. Drona's only son is his whole life. He must be told that Aswatthaman is dead. He'll be so discouraged, so desperate, that he'll drop his weapons.	450
ARJUNA:	But Aswatthaman isn't dead. It'd be a lie.	
KRISHNA:	I know.	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	I don't agree. Find another way.	
BHIMA:	Wait. [BHIMA grabs an enormous club and goes out. There is a loud thud. BHIMA returns and says:] There. It's done. I've killed Aswatthaman.	455
ARJUNA:	Whom?	
BHIMA:	Our elephant called Aswatthaman, I've killed him.	
KRISHNA:	You've an elephant called Aswatthaman?	
BHIMA:	Yes, and I've killed it. [He shouts toward the enemy lines:] Drona, can you hear me? Drona! [DRONA's voice can be heard in the distance:]	460
DRONA:	What do you want Bhima?	
BHIMA:	I've killed Aswatthaman! [Silence. Then DRONA's voice asks:]	
DRONA:	Whom have you killed?	
BHIMA:	I've killed Aswatthaman! [DRONA appears. BHIMA says again:] Aswatthaman is dead.	465
DRONA:	I can't believe my son is dead. I suspect a lie. Yudhishtira, you who can only tell the truth, I ask you: has Aswatthaman been killed?	
	[YUDHISHTHIRA hesitates.]	
BHIMA:	He doesn't believe me, answer him. [The red dancer appears at this point and takes several steps towards DRONA who appears stunned at the sight of him.]	470
DRONA:	Dhrishadyumna, why are you advancing on me? Has day-break brought me my death? [To YUDHISHTHIRA:] Has Aswatthaman been killed? [YUDHISHTHIRA still refuses to lie. DHRISTHADYUMNA moves slowly towards DRONA.] Has Aswatthaman been killed, yes or no?	475
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Aswatthaman ... [He lowers his voice and turns his head] the elephant ... [He raises his voice again] has been killed. [A silence follows his words. DRONA moves away and becomes motionless.]	480
ARJUNA:	Your greed for victory has corrupted you. You've slipped into a lie like the rest of mankind.	
KRISHNA:	From now on, he's part of the earth. Perhaps this weakness will bring him victory. Look at Drona, he would like to fight still, but he can't. [DRONA seems unable to move. BHIMA moves toward him.]	485
BHIMA:	All at once, I see you clearly. You've no love in you. Your only love is killing, burying your iron deep in men's flesh. Your life is a long procession of corpses.	
KRISHNA:	Dhrishadyumna, strike quickly. You were born for this act. [DHRISTHADYUMNA seems to hesitate as though still afraid of approaching DRONA.] Don't be afraid, his energy is leaving him and	490

	you alone can take his life. [DHRISTHADYUMNA, <i>his sword drawn, moves toward DRONA.</i>]	
ARJUNA:	His death is inconceivable.	
KRISHNA:	His death is natural. Watch. His eyes are already closed, his breath quiets, it stops. [<i>All eyes are on DRONA.</i>]	495
BHIMA:	He's shining with light.	
KRISHNA:	He has reached the farthest fringe of life. His breath leaves him and rises into the air. This is what we see. Only his body stays. Dhristhadyumna will cut off a dead man's head. [DHRISTHADYUMNA <i>cuts off DRONA's head and leaves shouting:</i>]	500
DHRISTHADYUMNA:	Drona is dead! Drona is dead! [YUDHISHTHIRA <i>has fallen to the ground. BHIMA, staring into the distance, says to the others:</i>]	
BHIMA:	They scatter! They flee! Duryodhana tries to check the rout, but panic spreads.	505
DRAUPADI	[<i>To YUDHISHTHIRA:</i> Rise up! Rejoice!	
ARJUNA:	We've committed a crime. Victory is meaningless now.	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Yes, I killed him with my lie. What's that noise? [<i>There is the sound of battle cries and music.</i>] Their courage has returned. [ARJUNA <i>goes to survey the battlefield and announces:</i>]	510
ARJUNA:	Yes, they're advancing.	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Who's leading them?	
ARJUNA:	Aswatthaman! He chases the deserters, he blocks their way, he calls them to order.	515
YUDHISHTHIRA:	Quick!	
	[<i>The PANDAVAS leave. ASWATTHAMAN rushes forward, furious, accompanied by DURYODHANA and DUHSASANA. They stop in front of DRONA's bloody body.</i>]	
DURYODHANA:	They've assassinated your father!	520
ASWATTHAMAN:	His eyes were always fixed on death. I've no right to cry for him, but my angry body howls.	
DURYODHANA:	You couldn't defend him. You must take your revenge. Aswatthaman, I'm asking for the truth. Your father knew the secret of a weapon of extermination. Did he give you this secret?	525
ASWATTHAMAN:	Yes.	
DURYODHANA:	This weapon is sacred. Do you possess it?	
ASWATTHAMAN:	My father's orders were to let it sleep for eternity. Even at the end of his life, he did not wish it used.	
DURYODHANA:	But your father is dead, killed by a lie.	530
ASWATTHAMAN:	Arjuna has an even more terrible weapon, Posupata. If I launch my weapon, he will unleash his.	
DURYODHANA:	Unless he's dead already.	
ASWATTHAMAN:	The secret of this weapon has never been revealed. It could pierce the heart of the world, it could even kill the gods.	535
DURYODHANA:	They cut off your father's head.	
ASWATTHAMAN:	The earth shudders, the winds draw back in fear. Duryodhana, I will launch my weapon only once, with all my strength—I will root out my father's killers. All our men take cover!	
	[ASWATTHAMAN, DURYODHANA, <i>and their men go to take cover.</i>]	540
DHRITARASHTRA:	No! He mustn't launch that weapon! We'll all perish! Sanjaya, stop him!	
SANJAYA:	Too late, the weapon is launched! [<i>The lights change. The horrified</i>	

	PANDAVAS <i>appear on the battlefield with KRISHNA, DRAUPADI, and SUBHADRA. There is a burst of light.</i>	545
YUDHISHTHIRA:	What's this flame that's devouring the world? Elephants are howling in terror, snakes are hurling themselves into the sky.	
BHIMA:	Aswatthaman has just released his father's sacred weapon.	
YUDHISHTHIRA:	What can we do? Men, animals, the earth itself—all are shriveling to ashes.	550
GANDHARI:	I see a white heat.	
BHIMA	[<i>To ARJUNA</i>]: Arjuna! You have Pasupata. Turn it against him, quick!	
DRAUPADI:	Exterminate them! Don't let one of them remain to rejoice over our death! [<i>ARJUNA, disturbed, asks KRISHNA.</i>]	
ARJUNA:	Krishna ...	555
KRISHNA:	Lay down your weapons. Quick, lie on the ground, don't move, empty your minds, make a void. One mustn't resist this weapon, not even in thought. Otherwise it will hook on to you relentlessly, it will become more ferocious still. [<i>They all lie down except BHIMA, who straightens up and throws himself at the flame shouting.</i>]	560
BHIMA:	I can fight it, I can stop it!	
KRISHNA:	Bhima! Come back! [<i>BHIMA fights with all his force against the approaching flame but the more he fights, the more the weapon's strength increases. DHRITARASHTRA, GANDHARI, and SANJAYA have stretched out on the ground. KRISHNA forces BHIMA to lie down.</i>] Bhima, throw down your weapons! Lie down, don't look at anything. Empty your mind and think of the time when you didn't exist. [<i>They are all lying on the ground. The flame passes over without burning them. They don't move for a moment, then KRISHNA lifts his head and looks.</i>] It's over, the flames die down. A calm wind rises. I hear a bird sing. [<i>They all get up and embrace one another.</i>] We're alive. [<i>They leave the battlefield.</i>]	565
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EXTRACT 2: RED VELVET

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Extract 2 is taken from Lolita Chakrabarti's play *Red Velvet*, first performed in London in 2012. The play tells the story of Ira Aldridge, an American who became the first black actor to play the part of Shakespeare's Othello at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden in 1833. He took over the part after the great actor Edmund Kean collapsed on stage.

The extract consists of the whole of Scene Two, in which Ira is introduced to the company and starts to rehearse.

CHARACTERS

IRA ALDRIDGE	<i>Actor, American, black</i>
CONNIE	<i>Servant at London's Theatre Royal, Jamaican, black, 30s</i>
BETTY LOVELL	<i>Actor, English, white, 20s</i>
BERNARD WARDE	<i>Actor, English, white, 50s</i>
HENRY FORRESTER	<i>Actor, English, white, 20s</i>
CHARLES KEAN	<i>Actor, son of Edmund Kean, English, white, late 20s</i>
ELLEN TREE	<i>Actor, engaged to Charles Kean, white, late 20s</i>
PIERRE LAPORTE	<i>Manager of The Theatre Royal, French, white, 35</i>

Scene Two

1833. *The stage. Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, London. Early afternoon.*

A few chairs placed randomly around the stage. There is a table to one side.

A Jamaican woman in a crisp uniform, CONNIE, enters with a tea tray. She arranges it on a table, methodically neat.

Sounds of protest outside as three Covent Garden actors enter: BETTY LOVELL, HENRY FORRESTER, and BERNARD WARDE. They remove coats, hats, put down bags. BETTY's coat is splattered with flour thrown by protestors. 5

BETTY: It's absolutely mad out there. Connie, I need you.
CONNIE *takes BETTY's splattered coat and exits.*

BERNARD: They're ransacking the city... 10
HENRY: I'm sure London's seen worse, sir. It's terrifically exciting.
BERNARD: Enough excitement on this stage thank you very much...
HENRY: But we're at a crossroads, sir – a point of absolute, unequivocal change. Makes the blood rush.

BERNARD: Makes my blood freeze. 15
HENRY: The proposals are imperative, Mr Warde.
BERNARD: You can't be that naive...
HENRY: The petitions have been gathering steam for years...
BERNARD: Most people probably don't even know what they're signing...
CONNIE *re-enters with a costume dummy and puts BETTY's coat on it. She inspects the flour damage.* 20

HENRY: The buying and selling of human beings should be no part of any civilised society. When the trade is finally abolished in all British colonies, we'll be able to hold our heads up high again, sir...

BERNARD: For goodness sake, boy, our whole economy relies on the labour force on those plantations. How do you think this theatre was built? It's how things are. 25
HENRY: I think that's terribly short sighted...
BERNARD: Then it's a good thing I have spectacles.
BERNARD *puts on his glasses and opens his newspaper. Irritated silence.* 30

BETTY: Have you had any news about Mr Kean?
BERNARD: No.
BETTY: Awful, wasn't it? He just collapsed on stage. I saw everything from the wings. 35
HENRY: I could tell something was amiss... When he spat 'Villain...' I don't know why, I just ran on.
BETTY: Did you hear what he said after he fell?
HENRY: Oh yes and his enunciation was perfect even then – 'O God, I am dying. Speak to the audience, Charles'. 40

BETTY: I was crying.
HENRY: Poor thing.
BETTY: I wonder what's going to happen?
CONNIE *brushes the coat down by hand.*

BETTY: Can you brush it, Connie? 45
CONNIE: Yes, miss.
BETTY: Don't use water, it'll cake. (*To BERNARD.*) Did Pierre mention anything to you, sir?
BERNARD: No, dear, 'fraid not. Shifty lot the French, play their cards very close to the chest. 50

	<i>The sound of protest outside swells briefly.</i>	
BERNARD:	These people outside really should organise debate, not this kind of lawlessness.	
HENRY:	But people get frustrated, Mr Warde...	
BERNARD:	I'll say but I don't throw flour at them to alleviate my tensions. If you want to say something, say it. This is an excuse for looting and bad behaviour. (<i>Shouting outside.</i>) This is England – there's no Bastille to storm here!	55
BETTY:	My head's thumping!	
BERNARD:	It's that infernal racket... And look at this (<i>picking up a newspaper</i>), it's like an obituary. He's still with us, for heaven's sake. 'On Friday last, Edmund Kean collapsed on stage while playing Othello at Covent Garden, marking the end of an era.' He's not going to feel better reading that, is he?	60
	CONNIE <i>shows BETTY the brushed coat.</i>	
BETTY:	Thank heavens it wasn't eggs. Coat's not ruined is it?	65
CONNIE:	No, miss.	
	BETTY <i>indicates for CONNIE to take the coat to hang it up.</i>	
BETTY:	D'you want a cup of tea?	
HENRY:	Not for me.	
BETTY:	Where's the sugar from, Connie?	70
CONNIE:	Don't know, miss.	
BETTY:	I'll just have milk... I've stopped buying sugar and West Indian cotton – it's for a good cause. They're not well treated at all, you know. Anyway East Indian cotton's on the up, cheaper too.	
BERNARD:	We are Great Britain. Cheap labour is part of every great country. It's how things are done.	75
HENRY:	But they're people, Mr Warde, like you and me. They don't even have basic human rights...	
BERNARD:	Oh for goodness sake, the world's not fair, Henry. This isn't a fairy tale where everything comes up right in the end. This concept of equality and freedom, it's a fad, impossible to achieve because there'll always be those of us who must lead and those who follow. It is the very root of our civilised society. Now if you don't mind I'd rather focus on the problem at hand. Where on earth is Pierre? He did say two o'clock, didn't he?	80
BETTY:	That's what I was told.	85
BERNARD:	Well, a later rehearsal would've been nice.	
	CHARLES KEAN <i>enters with ELLEN TREE. She guides him in, talking softly, helps him to a seat, takes his coat and bag.</i>	
	<i>When they see CHARLES a kind of hush settles. Everyone edges collectively around him.</i>	90
BERNARD:	Charles! How is your father?	
BETTY:	Any news?	
CHARLES:	He's very weak.	
BETTY:	Awful.	
BERNARD:	Totally unexpected, he just fell to the floor.	95
HENRY:	I did try to catch him, sir, but...	
CHARLES:	I know. I know. Thank you all.	
ELLEN:	He's resting isn't he, Charles? Weak but comfortable.	
	<i>Collection of sympathies – 'terrible', 'shame', 'just awful'.</i>	
BETTY:	Can I get you some tea, Mr Kean?	100
CHARLES:	Please.	
BETTY:	Miss Tree?	
ELLEN:	Yes, Betty, thank you, dear.	
BETTY:	Connie...	
CONNIE:	Yes, miss.	105
	CONNIE <i>prepares the tea.</i>	

BERNARD:	How the devil did you get through?	
ELLEN:	We took a cab. Couple of police constables at stage door helped us in.	
BERNARD:	Did you see <i>The Times</i> , Charles? 'One is reminded of the momentous achievements of a very singular man'.	110
CHARLES:	Thank you, Bernard. That means a lot.	
ELLEN:	How are you, Betty?	
BETTY:	I've not been sleeping at all well. And I haven't paid my lodgings this week. What if we go dark? If we close...	
ELLEN:	Pierre's called us in. There must be a plan.	115
BETTY:	But can you be certain?	
HENRY:	Would you not rather be on hand at home, sir?	
CHARLES:	Not really...	
HENRY:	When my uncle John was ill I was an absolute mess.	
BERNARD:	Are you really all right to go on, Charles?	120
CHARLES:	Thank you for your concern but... I feel of more service to Father here, than at home.	
HENRY:	Have you played Othello yourself, Mr Kean?	
	CONNIE <i>arrives with the tea.</i>	
BETTY:	Henry!	125
CHARLES:	No, it's fine... Iago many times but... the title role was always Father's.	
ELLEN:	You could go on with the script, Charlie.	
CHARLES:	No need.	
	CONNIE <i>goes back to her 'station' as PIERRE LAPORTE, very dapper, enters through the auditorium, flustered and removing his coat.</i>	130
ELLEN:	Pierre...?	
PIERRE:	Oui. J'arrive.	
ELLEN:	Are you all right?	
PIERRE:	My ears are ringing. Someone knocked into me and ran off. I couldn't get round the building.	135
ELLEN:	Connie, run and tell the company manager Mr Laporte has arrived safely, will you?	
	<i>Exit</i> CONNIE.	
BERNARD:	Have you checked your purse?	
PIERRE:	Oui, merci. Charles... thank you for coming in. Any improvement?	140
CHARLES:	No, no... I'm afraid not.	
PIERRE:	Where's everyone else?	
BETTY:	They've blocked Trafalgar Square.	
BERNARD:	An absolute nightmare.	
HENRY:	But a minor inconvenience compared to the suffering of the slaves.	145
BERNARD:	Listen, my boy, I want sugar in my tea. I don't give a stuff how it gets there.	
	CONNIE <i>re-enters.</i>	
BERNARD:	Tea, Connie. Buckets of sugar.	
	BETTY <i>puts a hand on HENRY's arm to silence him.</i>	150
PIERRE:	D'accord, we have no time to waste... There is much to do.	
BETTY:	Are we closing?	
PIERRE:	Non, non, Betty, the Theatre Royal hasn't been dark since it opened. We will not be closing.	
	<i>Relieved murmurs.</i>	155
PIERRE:	First, on behalf of us all, our thoughts are with you, Charles. We pray Edmund will make a full recovery.	
	<i>Mutters of 'yes, yes,' 'hear, hear.'</i> CONNIE <i>gives BERNARD his cup of tea and goes back to her station.</i>	
BERNARD:	We'll move up, will we?	160
PIERRE:	Pardon?	

BERNARD:	Well... I hope I'm not speaking out of turn... but I rather presumed that Charles would take the role of Othello and we'd all bump up.	
PIERRE:	Ah. I see. Non... er that is not the case... no 'bumping', Bernard.	
BERNARD:	Oh I see.	165
PIERRE:	We will stay as we are.	
CHARLES:	How's that possible?	
PIERRE:	Well I have been in meetings these last two days discussing the options and... You have a pivotal role already, Charles. If you move, Bernard must play Iago then Giles must play Brabantio.	170
HENRY:	If you do need me, sir, I'm word perfect on Cassio. I'm absolutely prepared.	
PIERRE:	Thank you, Henry, but to be frank... it would be... too disruptive for us all.	
CHARLES:	We're disrupted already I think.	175
PIERRE:	Of course but we must try to...	
CHARLES:	You're being extremely unclear, Pierre.	
PIERRE:	I have engaged someone else... I didn't want to increase the pressure on you, Charles.	
CHARLES:	Someone else?	180
PIERRE:	Yes.	
CHARLES:	Is it William? Because I happen to know that he...	
PIERRE:	No. William's otherwise engaged.	
BETTY:	<i>(whispered to HENRY)</i> William who?	
HENRY:	<i>(mouths to BETTY)</i> Macready.	185
BETTY:	<i>(whispered back)</i> Oh my!	
CHARLES:	Have you asked everyone, Pierre? Is that how much you wish to avoid... disruption?	
PIERRE:	Not at all. My mind was clear from the start.	
CHARLES:	Then you're keeping us in suspense.	190
PIERRE:	I have managed to coax Mr Aldridge, Ira Aldridge, to debut on our stage.	
HENRY:	Oh my goodness!	
BERNARD:	Can't recall the face.	
HENRY:	That's just fantastic.	
PIERRE:	His returns are excellent. Full houses always.	195
HENRY:	Sorry, Mr Kean, I didn't mean...	
PIERRE:	Ira has been in the provinces for many years collecting remarkable reviews.	
CHARLES:	Did you say Aldridge?	
PIERRE:	Oui. He has played Othello to great acclaim in countless theatres.	200
ELLEN:	Do you know him, Charles?	
CHARLES:	I was meant to play with him in Belfast... a minor engagement. But I was ill, couldn't travel...	
ELLEN:	So frustrating...	
CHARLES:	It was only a couple of performances. Didn't hear anything of it.	205
ELLEN:	Aldridge, Aldridge... I think I've read his reviews.	
HENRY:	Have you seen him, Mr Laporte?	
PIERRE:	Mais oui.	
HENRY:	So you know...?	
ELLEN:	Know what?	210
HENRY:	That he... really is the best man for the job.	
BETTY:	He's the one from the Coburg Theatre, isn't he? 'The Revolt of Surinam'?	
HENRY:	He was wonderful.	
ELLEN:	So you've seen him?	
HENRY:	Several times. I had a friend in it – his first engagement. He was one of the slaves. He wasn't terribly good, I'm afraid. Tried too hard. Hasn't worked much since. But he did tell me how astonishing Mr Aldridge was	215

	to work with. I think that was one of his first engagements in this country.	
CHARLES:	What on earth d'you mean?	
ELLEN:	Isn't he the American?	220
HENRY:	Yes!	
BERNARD:	A Yankee?	
CHARLES:	Good lord! Was he any good?	
HENRY:	Well... it's not for me to say...	
CHARLES:	I asked you a question.	225
HENRY:	Yes... of course... well, sir... I was quite taken aback. I mean, who would have thought... he was quite, erm... extraordinary, sir.	
ELLEN:	I read he was 'Luminous'. I remember thinking how... beautiful.	
BETTY:	My friend saw him in Liverpool, said he was quite the ticket...	
CHARLES:	That's all very well but will he be up to it?	230
PIERRE:	I have no doubt. His reputation is immaculate. We are very lucky to get him. He has cancelled several engagements to join us.	
ELLEN:	And I have heard of him.	
PIERRE:	He won't disappoint, I promise.	
BETTY:	When will he go on?	235
PIERRE:	Tonight.	
	<i>Startled mutterings 'what?' 'really?' 'how can we?'</i>	
PIERRE:	We are sold out as Edmund always is. We cannot refund again. We will rehearse all afternoon and play this evening.	
CHARLES:	So he's here already?	240
PIERRE:	Oui. He should be here now. I will go and... er...	
	<i>A collective chatter of expectation from all but CHARLES.</i>	
PIERRE:	Tonight's show will be a tribute to your father, Charles. A complete stamp of quality in his honour.	
	<i>Exit PIERRE. CONNIE comes forward to clear the cups.</i>	245
BERNARD:	All go, isn't it?	
BETTY:	I'm so relieved...	
HENRY:	Me too, me too.	
ELLEN:	Never mind, Charlie, perhaps it's for the best. It'd be a lot of pressure on you and it keeps continuity for the company.	250
CHARLES:	I don't need consoling, Ellen.	
BERNARD:	Do you think we'll actually rehearse all afternoon? I have an appointment at five.	
	<i>PIERRE and IRA enter together.</i>	
PIERRE:	Ladies and gentlemen of the Covent Garden company may I present Mr Ira Aldridge.	255
IRA:	Good afternoon.	
	<i>Open mouthed silence.</i>	
PIERRE:	As I think I mentioned, Ira has played Othello many times...	
	<i>Silence.</i>	260
PIERRE:	You met Edmund once, didn't you...?	
IRA:	Why, yes I did... at the Coburg.	
PIERRE:	I remember he called you to his box and cross examined you...	
IRA:	Yes...	
PIERRE:	... 'what is your parentage?' You were speechless.	265
	<i>PIERRE laughs lightly. Nothing but silence.</i>	
IRA:	... May I just say... that I'm deeply honoured to join this company... I, I'm sorry it's in such sad circumstances... but the show, it... it won't suffer for it... I promise you.	
	<i>CONNIE approaches and waits awkwardly.</i>	270
PIERRE:	You want something?	
IRA:	No, not for me, thank you.	
	<i>PIERRE waves CONNIE away. HENRY steps forward.</i>	

HENRY:	Erm... I...	
PIERRE:	This is Henry, Henry Forrester, Ira. He plays Roderigo.	275
HENRY:	I really, really... am very pleased to meet you... sir.	
IRA:	Likewise, Henry.	
HENRY:	I'm a friend of Daniel Young. He was with you... at the Coburg Theatre?	
IRA:	Dan? Of course. How's he doing?	
HENRY:	Hasn't worked for a long time.	280
IRA:	Ah... The stage is much wider up here than it looks from the stalls, isn't it?	
HENRY:	I thought that.	
	<i>An awkward silence.</i>	
CHARLES:	Pierre, could I have a word.	285
PIERRE:	Of course.	
CHARLES:	I'd rather speak privately...	
PIERRE:	We are a company, Charles...	
CHARLES:	I think this calls for...	
IRA:	Mr Kean?	290
CHARLES:	Yes.	
IRA:	How do you do?	
CHARLES:	Yes, all right.	
IRA:	How is your father?	
CHARLES:	What?	295
IRA:	Your father?	
CHARLES:	There's still a chance he may pull through.	
IRA:	I'm very glad to hear it.	
PIERRE:	Did you make a list?	
IRA:	Yes, yes, of course.	300
	<i>IRA passes him a piece of paper.</i>	
PIERRE:	Excellent. Just these five scenes?	
IRA:	Uh huh.	
CHARLES:	Excuse me, am I the only person here who...? This... this situation seems... uncomfortable.	305
BERNARD:	Yes.	
CHARLES:	Thank you, Bernard.	
PIERRE:	What is it, Charles?	
CHARLES:	Well... it's obvious, isn't it?... <i>No one speaks.</i>	310
CHARLES:	Everyone will be expecting my father. You cannot possibly think of replacing him with... him.	
IRA:	Oh, I'm not attempting that at all, Mr Kean.	
CHARLES:	I don't feel at ease wi...	
IRA:	I'm not... what you expected. I understand. But this'll work, I assure you.	315
CHARLES:	That's not... well, yes, of course I am... but that's not... what I mean is... well...	
PIERRE:	This is hard for you, Charles, we all know that.	
CHARLES:	That's not what I'm saying...	
PIERRE:	What then?	320
CHARLES:	This is terribly awkward. It's not a personal issue I assure you, it's a... it's a practical one...	
PIERRE:	Let's work. We will find the practicalities as we go, non?	
	<i>PIERRE looks at the paper in hand.</i>	
PIERRE:	Act two scene one. From Othello's entrance... <i>CHARLES looks for support but gets none and moves aside. IRA moves into position. PIERRE ushers BERNARD forward.</i>	325
BERNARD:	Bernard Warde. I play Brabantio and Attendant.	
IRA:	Good afternoon.	

ELLEN:	Pierre, should we not perhaps move the chairs?	330
PIERRE:	Ah oui, oui. Connie.	
	CONNIE <i>moves the chairs</i> . HENRY <i>leaps up to help her</i> .	
PIERRE:	Thank you, Ellen.	
IRA:	Miss Tree... I am honoured.	
ELLEN:	... How d'you do?	335
IRA:	Well, thank you and really excited to be playing opposite you. I saw you play Romeo opposite Miss Kemble.	
ELLEN:	Oh!	
IRA:	You... moved me. I thought you held the boy's passion beautifully.	
ELLEN:	Why, thank you.	340
IRA:	I'm sorry, do you mind if I call you Ellen?	
ELLEN:	Erm... no... no... not at all.	
IRA:	Perfect... I wonder... could I see Desdemona's arrival in Cyprus?	
ELLEN:	Er... well...	
IRA:	It's just for me to get a sense of...	345
ELLEN:	Cyril's not here... he plays Cassio...	
PIERRE:	Henry, could you oblige?	
ELLEN:	Yes... yes, of course...	
HENRY:	Terrific. No problem. Where from?	
ELLEN:	Cassio says 'O! Behold the...'	350
HENRY:	Got it.	
	ELLEN, HENRY and BERNARD <i>take their places for the rehearsal of this scene from 'Othello'. And begin. Their acting is full of gesture, pose and scale.</i>	
HENRY/CASSIO:	O, behold,	355
	The riches of the ship is come on shore!	
	Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.	
ELLEN/ DESDEMONA:	I thank you, valiant Cassio.	
	What tidings can you tell me of my lord?	
HENRY/CASSIO:	He is not yet arrived.	360
ELLEN/ DESDEMONA:	O, but I fear – How lost you company?	
HENRY/CASSIO:	The great contention of the sea and skies Parted our fellowship – But, hark! a sail. PIERRE <i>reads in voices off – 'A sail, a sail!'</i>	
BERNARD/ GENTLEMAN:	They give their greeting to the citadel:	365
	This likewise is a friend.	
HENRY/CASSIO:	See for the news.	
	BETTY <i>gets ready to enter as Emilia but IRA stops it there.</i>	
IRA:	Thank you. Thank you very much. Can we leap to Othello's entrance?	
ELLEN:	Indeed.	370
	<i>The actors move into position, unsettled, unsure. IRA enters as Othello.</i>	
IRA/OTHELLO:	O my fair warrior!	
	ELLEN's <i>acting is charismatic. She does not look at IRA.</i>	
ELLEN/ DESDEMONA:	My dear Othello!	
IRA:	Ellen, would you mind... trying something?	375
ELLEN:	'Trying'?	
IRA:	Sorry, when you greeted me...	
ELLEN:	That is how Mr Kean... Oh, of course. I do beg your pardon.	
IRA:	No, not at all.	
ELLEN:	What is it you would like?	380
IRA:	I like chance. Possibility. I like to listen and respond. I think if we trust	

	each other we'll know when we get it right.	
ELLEN:	So I may play what I feel?	
IRA:	Absolutely.	
ELLEN:	How... avant-garde. What if you don't like what I do?	385
IRA:	It's not about me, it's about being true to the tragedy.	
ELLEN:	What frustrates me in our profession, Mr Aldridge, with all due respect, is the absolute attention given to the leading actor so that the story becomes lost. Without Desdemona the tragedy does not exist, n'est-ce pas? If we play together we conjure magic.	390
IRA:	My thoughts exactly. Shall we?	
ELLEN:	Yes.	
	<i>The others watch, intrigued.</i>	
IRA/OTHELLO:	O my fair warrior!	
ELLEN/ DESDEMONA:	My dear Othello!	395
IRA:	Ellen...	
ELLEN:	Mr Aldridge.	
IRA:	Ira, please. We've just escaped the storm, I feared I might never see you again. So this greeting is... intense. And this is the only point in the whole play we speak our love directly to each other and in blank verse. So the perfume of the moment must, how can I say it, envelop us. I'm seeing how beautiful you are, how you've made me love you entirely.	400
CHARLES:	<i>(hissed)</i> For goodness sake, Pierre...	
IRA:	A newly wed soldier would savour this new... contrast in his life. Don't you think?	405
ELLEN:	Yes, I suppose...	
IRA:	And you?	
ELLEN:	Well... as a young... relatively sheltered woman, I too was afraid in the storm and am in awe of this gentlemen warrior, this new husband.	
IRA:	Would your sheltered woman also be thinking of her... new found love?	410
CHARLES:	Ellen...?	
IRA:	It's all in the play.	
ELLEN:	Of course it is. Well I... what else could she be thinking?	
PIERRE:	Would you like to go back, Ira?	
IRA:	Yes, shall we try that again? And when you say 'My dear Othello', would you look at me?	415
ELLEN:	Ah but... well... doesn't that keep all intent between us? What I mean to say is we mustn't neglect our audience. They're one of our main players after all.	
IRA:	Yes but if they can't see how much we love each other, they'll feel nothing at all.	420
	CHARLES <i>walks noisily to his bag and ruffles around. He brings out an apple.</i>	
PIERRE:	Charles? You are supposed to be on stage.	
CHARLES:	I'm peckish.	425
PIERRE:	Take your position please.	
	CHARLES <i>does so.</i> IRA's <i>acting is formal but earthy and fluid.</i>	
IRA/OTHELLO:	O my fair warrior!	
ELLEN/ DESDEMONA:	My dear Othello!	
IRA/OTHELLO:	It gives me wonder great as my content To see you here before me. If it were now to die 'Twere now to be most happy, for I fear, My soul hath her content so absolute That not another comfort like to this Succeeds in unknown fate.	430 435

ELLEN:	Do you mind a little friendly observation? When you said 'content' you put the emphasis on the first syllable 'con-tent' which is very American I think...	
IRA:	I like its scale, its volume, 'wonder great as my content' wonder as vast as myself...	440
ELLEN:	Yes of course, I see that, I do. I, I merely thought if you try 'content' as we say it, meaning happiness, it makes the scale larger. Allows the line to expand even more.	
IRA:	'It gives me wonder great as my con-tent, content To see you here before me.'	445
	Yes I see. Interesting. I'll try it. Thank you.	
ELLEN/ DESDEMONA:	Pleasure. 'The heavens forbid But that our loves and comforts should increase Even as our days do grow.'	450
IRA/OTHELLO:	'Amen to that, sweet powers! I cannot speak enough of this content, It stops me here, it is too much of joy. And this, and this the greatest discords be That e'er our hearts shall make.'	455
	<i>IRA takes ELLEN's hands in his and kisses them. A collective intake of breath as the other actors look to CHARLES.</i>	
CHARLES:	What the devil...! Pierre?!	
IRA:	Was that all right?	
ELLEN:	Er... perfectly...	460
BERNARD:	Really, Mr Laporte, I'm not sure...	
PIERRE:	I think we should continue...	
IRA:	I went for spontaneity.	
PIERRE:	... marking it through...	
ELLEN:	Yes...	465
IRA:	From the moment between us...	
CHARLES:	But this is preposterous...	
PIERRE:	Do not break the flow, Charles. We can discuss later.	
CHARLES:	I think we...	
PIERRE:	Charles, please – we continue –	470
	<i>Charles's acting is 'teapot' school verging on melodrama.</i>	
CHARLES/IAGO:	[<i>Aside</i>] 'O, you are well tuned now, But I'll set down the pegs that make this music, As honest as I am.'	
IRA:	Charles...	475
CHARLES:	Mr Aldridge?	
IRA:	Is that how you're going to do it?	
CHARLES:	Yes, it absolutely is.	
IRA:	Might I suggest...	
CHARLES:	I have played this role opposite my father for the best part of a year. He has given me many excellent notes and I have listened to them all. This will be my interpretation of Iago not yours.	480
IRA:	Are you not open to improvement?	
CHARLES:	You're implying you know better.	
IRA:	No... no, not at all. Look... I see this is... complicated for you.	485
CHARLES:	At last!	
IRA:	What I mean is... being part of the company... Mr Kean's company but... without your father...	
CHARLES:	I shall lead this company for him.	
IRA:	Excuse me?	490

CHARLES: It's a natural progression.

IRA: No... that's not the...

CHARLES: This theatre has a royal patent to present quality spoken drama. Not burletta, not curiosities but drama. That is our task and as such, I am best equipped to lead this company. 495

IRA: I think you'll find that as the title role, I am best placed to lead this company.

CHARLES: Who on earth do you think you are?

PIERRE: Charles!

CHARLES: This isn't some provincial experiment. This is Covent Garden... 500

PIERRE: Charles, I think we should...

CHARLES: We're not a freak show you know.

ELLEN: Charles!

IRA: With acting like that we could be.

PIERRE: Ira! 505

CHARLES: I beg your pardon?

PIERRE: Gentlemen please, we are losing the thread...

CHARLES: I've been performing with my father for years...

IRA: You think that qualifies you in some way?

PIERRE: Let us maintain our purpose... 510

CHARLES: I know exactly what I'm doing.

IRA: None of us *know*, Mr Kean.

CHARLES: Speak for yourself.

IRA: Talent is an unknown quantity.

CHARLES: Have you ever heard of pedigree? 515

IRA: And everyone knows lightning never strikes the same place twice.

CHARLES: How dare you!

PIERRE: Gentlemen, stop this. Please, remember we are artists of the highest calibre.

CHARLES: Oh shut up, Pierre! 520

ELLEN: For goodness sake, Charlie...!

PIERRE: Enough! We take a five minute break and then continue. Yes?
A raw silence.

IRA: I'll go put on my costume, it'll help me work.

PIERRE: You know where your dressing room is? 525

IRA: I'll find it.
Exit IRA.

BERNARD: Oh... my... goodness! He's black!

PIERRE: I can see you're upset, Charles...

CHARLES: Upset? Upset? It's a complete joke. You say you don't want to upset the company and then you land us with... that! 530

PIERRE: Ira is an extremely accomplished actor.

BERNARD: Bit damn full of himself.

CHARLES: Are you all right, Ellen?

ELLEN: Yes, of course I am. 535

BERNARD: (to HENRY) You knew, didn't you? You knew all along.

ELLEN: When I read 'black' in the reviews I presumed it was the mood...

CHARLES: There will be riots in the stalls if he gropes Ellen like that.

ELLEN: He didn't grope...

CHARLES: It's disgusting. He's taking advantage. 540

BERNARD: I must say I don't feel at all at ease...

ELLEN: It's very Othello.

CHARLES: Oh for goodness sake. That's very fashionable, Ellen – the play is still relevant! Hurrah for the domestic style, may classical drama turn in its grave. But let's deal with reality, you can't possibly be serious about this going ahead tonight? 545

PIERRE: Absolutely. I am serious.
Silence.
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