

London College of Music Examinations

Drama Handbook 2018–2021

Additional performance pieces for Grades 1 to 7

Candidates can perform any of the dramatic pieces in this booklet in place of a piece from the published handbook. An original, printed copy of the relevant handbook must still be brought to the exam.

Grade 1

JENNY Do you know, ever since I was very young, I have always loved Joke shops, well, they're called Party Shops nowadays but they are full of odd and interesting stuff.

I like the balloons and the face paints, but what I really like are the princess costumes — all spangly and long.

I always audition for the local panto, hoping to get the part of the princess, but always end up as Third Villager, so I simmer in the background up stage left. A willowy girl who was in my class called Natasha always gets the part of the Princess; she is also going to be Carnival Queen in October... grrrr...

In our Party shop, there are three rooms, the first one is the party room full of flags, balloons, face paints, candles and birthday cards. The second room is the Halloween store full of masks, blood, red light and Dark Lord costumes.

I find the third room enthralling, partly because of those Venetian plague-doctor masks and the wigs as well as wolf heads, but mainly because in the corner there is a dusty old table with a cloak tossed over a chair and black hats, moustaches, pipes and pocket watches left lying about as if someone has got up and left in a hurry. There is an old-fashioned clock, too. It all looks mysterious and inhabited. Oh yes, and there are loads of rubber spiders all over the table...

The kind lady who runs the shop assures me no one uses the room and her mother who is often dressing the shop windows after her work as a hospital matron on nights looks on and smiles at my fantasies.

She doesn't know Natasha. But I do. And I know Natasha is petrified by spiders. I shall buy a handful tomorrow and leave them on the carnival float. So maybe I will be a princess one day.

Grade 2

GIRL My friend Patsy, who lives in the next street to us, is such a show-off!

She makes up tall stories all the time, always exaggerating. She says her great-aunt lived to 105 and showed me an old photo of an odd young lady in a hat and high-heeled shoes riding a horse in Australia, so she said.

Her mum allows her to take her phone to bed — she is on Instagram all night but says she's ADHD — or 'acca-dacca' as she calls it, which stops her concentrating at school. My mum says if she slept more at night, she would do better in lessons. She is just exhausted.

She says her dad knew Freddy Mercury and drives a BMW and her mother is a famous hairdresser who works in television.

She never invites me to her house but we see a lot of each other at school where she pretends she has an older sister who gets into all sorts of trouble and scrapes in London — we have never seen this sister and whenever I go past Patsy's house, there are no lights on.

She never stops inventing stuff, though, even in lessons. In Geography last week, she pretended she'd lived in Africa where her dad was a big game hunter, which he clearly wasn't and the rest of the class just rolled their eyes to the ceiling... she doesn't seem to care when the others laugh at her as long as she's the centre of attention. She likes me because I listen and don't compete... and I let her borrow my phone sometimes...

(Her phone rings.)

Hello ... hi, Patsy, where are you? ...

What do you mean? ... on your own?

Where's your mother? Isn't your sister at home?

What!! ... no, don't be silly ... that's got to be one of your stories ... have you checked with the police? I can't turn on the local news, I'm on my way home.

Where? ...on the bypass... oh, no!!

Grade 3

(Juliet appears aloft as at a window.)

ROMEO It is my lady, O, it is my love:
 O, that she knew she were!
 She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?
 Her eye discourses, I will answer it.
 I am too bold, t'is not to me she speaks:
 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
 Having some business, do entreat her eyes
 To twinkle in their spheres until they return.
 What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
 As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
 Would through the airy region stream so bright
 That birds would sing and think it were not night.
 See how she leans her cheek upon her hand
 O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
 That I might touch that cheek!

from *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II Scene 2 by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 3

JULIET The clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse;
In half an hour she promised to return.
O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts,
Which ten times faster glides than the sun's beams,
Driving back shadows over low'ring hills;
Therefore do nimble-pinioned doves draw Love,
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.
Now is the sun upon the highmost hill
Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve
Is three long hours, yet she is not come.
Had she affections and warm youthful blood
She would be as swift in motion as a ball;
My words would bandy her to my sweet love,
And his to me.
But old folks, many feign as they were dead,
Unwieldy, slow, heavy and as pale as lead.
(*enter the NURSE*)
O God, she comes! O honey Nurse, what news?
Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

from *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II Scene 5 by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 3

(A miser admires his hoard.)

VOLPONE Good morning to the day; and, next, my gold:
Open the shrine, that I may see my saint.
Hail the world's soul, and mine. More glad then is
The teeming earth, to see the longed-for sun
Peep through the horns of the celestial ram,
Am I, to view thy splendour, darkening his:
That lying here, among my other hoards,
Shew'st like a flame, by night; or like the day
Struck out of chaos, when all the darkness fled
Unto the centre. O, thou son of Sol,
(But brighter than thy father) let me kiss,
With adoration, thee, and every relic
Of sacred treasure, in this blessed room.
Well did wise poets, by thy glorious name,
Title that age, which they would have the best;
Thou being the best of things: and far transcending
All style of joy, in children, parents, friends,
Or any other waking dream on earth.
Thy looks, when they to Venus did ascribe,
They should have given her twenty thousand Cupids;
Such are thy beauties and our loves!

from *Volpone*, Act I Scene 1 by Ben Jonson (1572–1637)

Grade 3

[Salerio] Why I am sure if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh. What's that good for?

SHYLOCK To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies — and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute — and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

from *The Merchant of Venice*, Act III Scene 1 by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 3

TERRY My dad takes me to car boot sales every Sunday morning. The sales are in some fields by our local fruit market and the same people are always there. “Dealers...” says dad darkly “they always get the best bargains because they come so early...” I used to go with him so we could spend time together as he works so hard in the week, but I now have caught the bug, too. I enjoy the excitement that this week may be the week when we find something really valuable which will change our lives....(*he laughs to himself*)...some hope, but dad says we may find something which will be worth lots in years to come. He goes on about Harrison Ford’s hat and whip when he played Indiana Jones in those old movies. They sold for thousands as film memorabilia years later. “It’s all about the history, not the object, it’s just a hat”. (*sighs*) I don’t quite get that, but I do know that dad got this passion from his dad, my grandfather, who, when he was a boy, was given a garden shed for his tenth birthday. My grandad and his friends used to spend hours in the shed — a sort of gang. They played on the local common all afternoon in the holidays and used to try to bring something unusual to show each other in the shed in the evening. Usually, old birds’ nests, blackberries or bracken spears. But, one evening, grandpa made a spectacular find — an old flintlock pistol — the wooden parts had gone but the metal bits, the pan, hammer, trigger and barrel were intact. He believed it belonged to Dick Turpin!

It spent years in the pride of place on the shed wall.

After he died, we cleared his house out, but never found the pistol. Dad thinks one of grandpa’s friends took it or grandma threw it out by mistake. She was always saying, “boys and their toys”. My father longs to find something like that for us to show to our friends — he’s sure one day we’ll find ‘treasure’. Mum looks at him, but she has cleared a space in the attic for his ‘junk’ as she calls it...

Grade 3

EVA (*panting heavily*) I've just come in from a run... it's killing me. (*bends over to catch her breath*) ...urgh, I hate exercise... it's so embarrassing. (*breathes more normally*).

Oh, hello (*addresses the audience now she has gathered her composure*), I should explain what this is all about...

My little sister runs like the wind.

She wins every race at school and has a cupboard full of medals and cups in her room, well actually, she keeps them in her bookcase next to her bed. In fact, there are more medals, than books in her bookcase...

This is because she loathes reading.

Mum and Dad have tried everything to persuade her to finish a book; they leave books lying about with colourful covers; Dad reads to her every night at bedtime — she just falls asleep... I adore reading and get twitchy if I haven't got something to read. I am rubbish at sport, though — I hate 'team games' of any kind and couldn't hit a ball for toffee... but I spend all my money on books and am saving up my birthday money for a Kindle.

My sister watches TV, of course and is addicted to her phone but she won't pick up a book.

Finally, last month, when I was suggesting she might start with Harry Potter or Matilda, she said she would make a bet with me.

"What?" I asked.

"I'll read a book, if you will take up running..."

"You can't be serious... me, run?" I tried to laugh it off.

"No, you run every Saturday for fifteen minutes and I will read for the same amount of time," she said.

"I can't run — I'll blow up..."

Unfortunately, my mother heard us and made me promise to do what she said. For three months!! My sister comes with me to be sure I don't take a short cut or walk... aaarggh! What a deal!

Mind you, I'm not sure if anyone checks whether she is reading — I'll test her next week, for sure!

(*she runs off triumphantly*).

Grade 4

CHORUS Here we stand close by the cathedral. Here, let us wait.
 Are we drawn by danger? Is it the knowledge of safety, that draws
our feet
 Towards the cathedral? What danger can be
For us, the poor, the poor women of Canterbury? What tribulation
With which we are not already familiar? There is no danger
For us, and there is no safety in the cathedral. Some presage
of an act
 Which our eyes are compelled to witness, has forced our feet
Towards the cathedral. We are forced to bear witness.

Since golden October declined into sombre November
 And the apples gathered and stored, and the land became brown,
sharp points of death in a waste of water and mud,
 The New Year waits, breathes, waits, whispers in darkness.
 While the labourer kicks off a muddy boot and stretches his hand
to the fire,
 The New Year waits, destiny waits for the coming.
 Who has stretched out his hand to the fire and remembered the
Saints at All Hallows,
 Remembered the martyrs and saints who wait? And who shall
Stretch out his hand to the fire and deny his master? Who shall
be warm
 By the fire and deny his master?

from *Murder in the Cathedral* by TS Eliot (1888–1965)

Grade 4

TITANIA These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never since the middle summer's spring
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge have sucked up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land
Hath every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents.
The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attained a beard.
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
The crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine-men's-morris is filled up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
For lack of tread are undistinguishable.

from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II Scene 1, by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 4

TROTTER I remember one morning last spring — we was coming out of the salient. Just when it was getting light in the morning — it was that time when the Boche was sending over a lot of that gas that smells like pear-drops, do you know?

[Osborne] I know. Phosgene.

TROTTER That's it. We were scared to hell of it. All of a sudden we smelt that funny sweet smell, and a fellow shouted 'GAS!' and we put on our masks, and then I spotted what it was.

[Osborne] What was it?

TROTTER Why, a blinkin' may-tree! All out in bloom, growing beside the path. We did feel a lot of silly poops — putting on gas-masks because of a damn may-tree. *(he stretches himself and tries to button his tunic)* Lord, I must get me fat down. *(he gets up)* Well, I'd better go and relieve Stanhope. He'll curse like hell if I don't. I bet he's got a red-hot liver this morning. I don't like this time of day in the line. The old Boche 'as just 'ad his breakfast and sends over a few whizz-bangs and rifle grenades to show 'e ain't forgotten us. Still, I'd rather have a bang or two than this damn quiet... Cheero!

from *Journey's End* by RC Sherriff (1896–1975)

Grade 4

PUCK Now the hungry lion roars,
 And the wolf behowls the moon,
 Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
 All with weary task foredone.
 Now the wasted brands do glow,
 Whilst screech-owl, screeching loud,
 Puts the wretch that lies in woe
 In remembrance of a shroud.
 Now it is the time of night
 That the graves, all gaping wide
 Every one lets forth his sprite
 In the church-way paths to glide.
 And we fairies, that do run
 By Hecate's triple team
 From the presence of the sun,
 Following darkness like a dream,
 Now are frolic; not a mouse
 Shall disturb this hallowed house.
 I am sent with broom before
 To sweep the dust behind the door.

from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V Scene 1. by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 5

ROSE Yes — (*dreamily*) and then I went to Cavendish Square, engaged to Arthur — how badly I behaved at Cavendish Square! How unlike a young lady! What if the old folks *were* overbearing and tyrannical, Arthur could be gentle with them. ‘They have not many more years in this world’, he said — dear boy! — ‘and anything we can do to make them happy’ — and what *did* I do? *There* was a chance for me — to be patient and womanly; and I proved to them that I was nothing but — an actress.

[Avonia] It doesn’t follow, because one is a —

ROSE Yes, ’Vonia, it does! We are only dolls, partly human, with mechanical limbs that *will* fall into stagey postures, and heads stuffed with sayings out of rubbishy plays. It isn’t *the* world we live in, merely *a* world — such a queer little one! I was less than a month in Cavendish Square, and very few people came there; but they were *real* people — *real!* For a month I lost the smell of gas and oranges, and the hurry and the noise, and the dirt and the slang, and the clownish joking, at the ‘Wells’. I didn’t realise the change that was going on in me; I didn’t realise it till I came back.

from *Trelawny of the ‘Wells’*, Act III Scene 1, by Arthur Wing Pinero (1855–1934)

Grade 5

AUBREY Ah, but I shan't be alone, and that's what I wanted to tell you. I am going to be married

...Look here; I daresay you two old friends think this treatment very strange, very unkind. So I want you to understand me. You know a marriage often cools friendships. What's the usual course of things? A man's engagement is given out, he is congratulated, complimented upon his choice; the church is filled with troops of friends, and he goes away happily to a chorus of good wishes. He comes back, sets up house in town or country, and thinks to resume the old associations, the old companionships. My dear Frank, my dear good doctor, it's seldom that it can be done. Generally, a worm has begun to eat its way into hearty, unreserved, pre-nuptial friendships; a damnable constraint sets in and acts like a wasting disease; and so, believe me, in nine cases out of ten a man's marriage severs for him more close ties than it forms...

I know what you're going to say, Frank. I hope so, too. In the meantime let's face dangers. I've reminded you of the usual course of things, but my marriage isn't even the sort of conventional marriage likely to satisfy society.

from *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, Act I Scene 1, by Arthur Wing Pinero (1855–1934)

Grade 5

AENEAS From Troy am I, Aeneas is my name,
Who, driven by war from forth my native world,
Puts sails to sea to seek out Italy;
And my divine descent from sceptred Jove:
With twice twelve Phrygian ships I ploughed the deep,
And made that way my mother Venus led;
But of them all but scarce seven do anchor safe,
And they so wrecked and welter'd by the waves,
As every tide tilts 'twixt their oaken sides;
And all of them, unburdened of their load,
Are ballassed with billows wat'ry weight.
But hapless I, God wot, poor and unknown,
Do trace these Libyan deserts, all despis'd,
Exil'd forth Europe and wide Asia both,
And have not any coverture but heaven.

from *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, Act I Scene 1, by Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593), and
Thomas Nashe

Grade 5

DIDO Run for Aeneas, or I will fly to him.
O dull-conceited Dido, that till now
Didst never think Aeneas beautiful!
But now, for quittance of this oversight,
I'll make me bracelets of his golden hair;
His glistening eyes shall be my looking-glass,
His lips an altar, where I'll offer up
As many kisses as the sea hath sands;
Instead of music I will hear him speak,
His looks shall be my only library;
And thou, Aeneas, Dido's treasury,
In whose fair bosom I will lock more wealth
Than twenty thousand Indias can afford.
Oh, here he comes! Love, love, give Dido leave
To be more modest than her thoughts admit,
Lest I be made a wonder of the world.

from *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, Act I Scene 1, by Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593), and
Thomas Nashe

Grade 6

HELENA O spite! O Hell! I see you are all bent
To set against me for your merriment.
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so,
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You are both rivals and love Hermia;
And now both rivals to mock Helena.
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! None of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience to make you sport.

from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III Scene 2, by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 6

MACBETH Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle towards my hand? Come let me clutch thee:
I have thee not, yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o'th'other senses,
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's off'rings and withered murder,
Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl is his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.

from *Macbeth*, Act II Scene 1, by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 6

[Gerald] So where are you now, Inspector?

INSPECTOR Where I was before, Mr Croft. I told you — that like a lot of these young women, she'd used more than one name. She was still Eva Smith when Mr Birling sacked her — for wanting twenty-five shillings a week instead of twenty-two and six. But after that she stopped being Eva Smith. Perhaps she'd had enough of it.

[Birling] Do you know what happened to this girl after she left my works?

INSPECTOR Yes, she was out of work for the next two months. Both her parents were dead, so she'd no home to go back to. And she hadn't been able to save much out of what Birling and Company had paid her. So after two months, with no work, no money coming in, and living in lodgings, with no relatives to help her, few friends, lonely, half-starved, she was feeling desperate.

[Sheila] I should think so. It's a rotten shame.

INSPECTOR There are a lot of young women living that sort of existence in every city and big town in this country, Miss Birling. If there weren't, the factories and warehouses wouldn't know where to look for cheap labour. Ask your father.

[Sheila] But these girls aren't cheap labour — they're people.

INSPECTOR (*dryly*) I've had that notion myself from time to time. In fact, I've thought that it would do us all a bit of good if sometimes we tried to put ourselves in the place of these young women counting their pennies in their dingy little back bedrooms.

from *An Inspector Calls* by JB Priestley (1894–1984)

Grade 6

BENVOLIO Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay.
Romeo, that spoke him fair, bid him bethink
How nice the quarrel was, and urged withal
Your high displeasure; in all this, uttered
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed,
Could not take truce with the unruly spleen
Of Tybalt's deaf to peace, but that he tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast,
Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
And with martial scorn, with one hand beats
Cold death aside, and with the other sends
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
Retorts it. Romeo, he cries aloud,
'Hold, friends! Friends, part!' and swifter than his tongue,
His agile arm beats down their fatal points,
And twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled;
But by and by comes back to Romeo,
Who had but newly entertained revenge,
And to't they go like lightning, for, ere I
Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain.

from *Romeo and Juliet*, Act III Scene 1 by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 7

AIMWELL (to Archer, who is pretending to be his servant) The appearance of a stranger in a country church draws as many gazers as a blazing-star; no sooner he comes into the cathedral, but a train of whispers runs buzzing round the congregation in a moment: *Who is he? Whence comes he? Do you know him?* Then I, sir, tips me the verger with half-a-crown; he pockets the simony and inducts me to the best pew in the church; I pull out my snuff-box, turn myself round, bow to the bishop, or the dean, if he be the commanding officer; single out a beauty, rivet both my eyes on hers, set my nose a-bleeding by the strength of imagination and show the whole church my concern, by my endeavouring to hide it; after the sermon, the whole town gives me to her for a lover, and by persuading the lady that I am a-dying for her, the tables are turned, and she in good earnest falls in love with me.

[Archer] There's nothing in this, Tom, without a precedent; but instead of riveting your eyes to a beauty, try to fix 'em upon a fortune; that's our business at present.

AIMWELL Psha! No woman can be a beauty without a fortune. Let me alone, for I am a marksman.

from *The Beaux Stratagem*, Act II Scene 2, by George Farquhar (1677–1707)

Grade 7

FERDINAND Let me see her face again;
Why didst thou not pity her? What an excellent
Honest man might'st thou have been
If thou hadst borne her to some sanctuary!
Or, bold in a good cause, oppos'd thyself
With thy advanced sword above thy head,
Between her innocence and my revenge!
I bad thee when I was distracted of my wits,
Go kill my dearest friend, and thou hast done't.
For let me but examine well the cause;
What was the meanness of her match to me?
Only I must confess, I had a hope,
Had she continu'd widow, to have gain'd
An infinite mass of treasure by her death:
That was the main cause; her marriage,
That drew a stream of gall quite through my heart;
For thee, (as we observe in tragedies
That a good actor many times is cursed
For playing the villain's part) I hate thee for't:
And, for my sake, say thou hast done much ill, well.

[Bosola] Let me quicken your memory: for I perceive
You are falling into ingratitude. I challenge
The reward due to my service.

from *The Duchess of Malfi*, Act IV Scene 2, by John Webster (1580–1634)

Grade 7

MACBETH To be thus is nothing.
But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares,
And to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he,
Whose being I do fear; and under him
My genius is rebuked, as it is said
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters
When first they put the name of king upon me
And bade them speak to him. Then prophet-like,
They hailed him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them, the gracious Duncan have I murdered,
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo kings.
Rather than so, come Fate into the list,
And champion me to th'utterance. Who's there?

from *Macbeth*, Act III Scene 1, by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 7

(Enter LADY MACBETH, alone, with a letter)

LADY
MACBETH *(reads)* ‘They met me in the day of success, and I have learned by the perfectest report they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king who all-hailed me Thane of Cawdor, by which title before these weird sisters saluted me and referred me to the coming on in time with “Hail, king thou shalt be.” This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart and farewell.’

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised; yet I do fear thy nature,
It is too full o’th’ milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
Yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou’dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries ‘Thus thou must do’ if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

from *Macbeth*, Act I Scene 5 by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Grade 7

MRS SULLEN Not that I disapprove rural pleasures, as the poets have painted them; in their landscape every Phyllis has her Corydon, every murmuring stream, and every flowering mead, gives fresh alarms to love. Besides, you'll find, that their couples were never married:— but yonder I see my Corydon, a sweet swain it is, Heaven knows! Come, Dorinda, don't be angry, he's my husband, and your brother; and, between both, is he not a sad brute?

[Dorinda] I have nothing to say to your part of him, you're the best judge.

MRS SULLEN O sister, sister! If you ever marry, beware of a sullen, silent sot, one that's always musing, but never thinks.

There's some diversion in a talking blockhead; and since a woman must wear chains, I would have the pleasure of hearing 'em rattle a little. Now you shall see, but take this by the way. He came home this morning at his usual hour of four, wakened me out of a sweet dream of something else, by tumbling over the tea-table, which he broke all to pieces; after his man and he had rolled about the room, like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket; his feet as cold as ice, his breath as hot as a furnace, and his hands and face as greasy as his flannel night-cap. O matrimony! He tosses up the clothes with a barbarous swing over his shoulders, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half-naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneable serenade of that wakeful nightingale, his nose! Oh, the pleasure of counting the melancholy clock by a snoring husband!

from *The Beaux Stratagem*, Act II Scene 1, by George Farquhar (1677–1707)