

# From *Measure For Measure* by William Shakespeare

Juliet is pregnant. The father of her child, Claudio, is her husband “upon a true contract”, which means that they have exchanged vows but have not gone through an official church service. Because they are not married in the eyes of the law or church, Claudio has been arrested and sentenced to death.

DUKE Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?

JULIET I do; and bear the same most patiently.

DUKE I'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience  
And try your penitence, if it be sound,  
Or hollowly put on.

JULIET I'll gladly learn.

DUKE Love you the man that wronged you?

JULIET Yes, as I love the woman that wronged him.

DUKE So then it seems your most offenceful act  
Was mutually committed?

JULIET Mutually.

DUKE Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

JULIET I do confess it, and repent it, father.

- How does Juliet feel about her relationship with Claudio?
- What does the Duke mean when he says that Juliet's “sin [is] of heavier kind than” Claudio's? Why would he think this?

# From *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen

**Nora has recently returned from a Christmas shopping trip. The audience has seen her eat two macaroons, but she hid them and wiped her mouth when her husband Torvald entered.**

HELMER      You look awfully – how shall I put it? – awfully guilty today.

NORA        Do I?

HELMER      Yes, you do. Look me in the eyes.

NORA        (*looks at him*) Well?

HELMER      (*wags his finger*) Has my little sweet-tooth been indulging herself in town today, by any chance?

NORA        No, how can you think such a thing?

HELMER      Not a tiny little digression into a pastry shop?

NORA        No, Torvald, I promise –

HELMER      Not just a wee jam tart?

NORA        Certainly not.

HELMER      Not a little nibble at a macaroon?

NORA        No, Torvald – I promise you, honestly - !

HELMER      There, there. I was only joking.

NORA        (*goes over to the table, right*) You know I could never act against your wishes.

HELMER      Of course not. And you've given me your word –

- How could Helmer's lines be delivered in different ways by an actor, in order to create different impressions of the character and his relationship with Nora?
- At what time in history do you think this play is set? Why?

# 'Remember' by Christina Rossetti

Remember me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more day by day  
You tell me of our future that you planned:  
Only remember me; you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
Than that you should remember and be sad.

- In what ways does this poem create a positive impression of the relationship between the speaker and the addressee (the person she is speaking to)?
- Is there any evidence to support a more negative interpretation of the relationship?

# From *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

‘We don’t know each other very well, Nick,’ she said suddenly. ‘Even if we are cousins. You didn’t come to my wedding.’

‘I wasn’t back from the war.’

‘That’s true.’ She hesitated. ‘Well, I’ve had a very bad time, Nick, and I’m pretty cynical about everything.’

Evidently she had reason to be. I waited but she didn’t say any more, and after a moment I returned rather feebly to the subject of her daughter.

‘I suppose she talks, and – eats, and everything.’

‘Oh, yes.’ She looked at me absently. ‘Listen, Nick; let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?’

‘Very much.’

‘It’ll show you how I’ve gotten to feel about – things. Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. “All right,” I said, “I’m glad it’s a girl. And I hope she’ll be a fool – that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.”

- How does Fitzgerald imply that Daisy is unhappy in her marriage to Tom?
- Why do you think Daisy wants her daughter to grow up to be “a beautiful little fool”?

# From *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton

After he had leaned out into the darkness for a few minutes he heard her say: 'Newland! Do shut the window. You'll catch your death.'

He pulled the sash down and turned back. 'Catch my death!' he echoed; and he felt like adding: 'But I've caught it already. I *am* dead – I've been dead for months and months.'

And suddenly the play of the word flashed up a wild suggestion. What if it were *she* who was dead! If she were going to die – to die soon – and leave him free! The sensation of standing there, in that warm familiar room, and looking at her, and wishing her dead, was so strange, so fascinating and overmastering, that its enormity did not immediately strike him. He simply felt that chance had given him a new possibility to which his sick soul might cling. Yes, May might die – people did: young people, healthy people like herself: she might die, and set him suddenly free.

- What impression do we get of Newland's feelings towards his wife? How is this impression created?
- Could this extract be seen as humorous? How?