Section A: Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet

Read the following extract from the start of Act 5 Scene 1 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play Romeo's servant arrives in Mantua with the mistaken news of Juliet's death.

ROMEO
News from Verona!—How now, Balthasar?
Dost thou not bring me letters from the Friar?
How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How doth my Juliet? That I ask again,
For nothing can be ill if she be well.
BALTHASAR
Then she is well and nothing can be ill.
Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault
And presently took post to tell it you.
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.
ROMEO
Is it e'en so?—Then I deny you, stars!—
Thou knowest my lodging. Get me ink and paper,
And hire post-horses. I will hence tonight.
BALTHASAR
I do beseech you, sir, have patience.
Your looks are pale and wild and do import
Some misadventure.
ROMEO Tush, thou art deceived.
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do.
Hast thou no letters to me from the Friar?
BALTHASAR
No, my good lord.

Starting with this extract, explore how Shakespeare presents tragic catastrophe in Romeo and Juliet.

Write about:
- how Shakespeare presents tragic catastrophe in this extract.
- how Shakespeare presents tragic catastrophe in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]