King Henry VIII Study Guide

King Henry VIII by William Shakespeare

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

King Henry VIII Study Guide.......1

Contents.......2

Introduction.......3

Plot Summary.......5

Further Study.......24

Copyright Information.......26

Introduction

Upon first reading, *Henry VIII* seems obscure and inaccessible to modern readers. Its episodic plot leaps from one group of characters to the next, relying on the audience's background understanding of Tudor history to fill in the gaps. Despite its difficulties, however, the basic format *of Henry VIII* looks more familiar. It can be seen as an Elizabethan version of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," a glimpse, although fictionalized, into the lives of the most famous public figures of the era. It examines the private and the public lives of England's rulers, and looks at what happens when personal likes and dislikes get tangled up with politics. Henry's desire to find a new wife is not just the story of a man having an affair; he is the king, and the woman he chooses will influence a nation and mother the heir to the throne. The squabble between Buckingham and Wolsey is not just the jealousy of two men competing for their boss's attention; the outcome is a matter of life and death and will determine whether nobles and commoners have equal right to rule. The popularity of stories about the personal lives of the powerful is borne out by the large collection of history plays written and performed during Shakespeare's time. Audiences wanted to know about the lives of their public figures, just as modern audiences are fascinated with the personal lives of the Kennedy family, or the British royal family. For all its familiarity as a peek into the lives of the famous, *Henry VIII* contains qualities that are peculiarly Elizabethan. As much as a modern author or director might fictionalize the lives of modern leaders, for example in Oliver Stone's version of the life of John F. Kennedy, modern stories sometimes lack the moral tone prevalent in *Henry VIII.* Shakespeare's play belongs to a medieval tradition known in Latin as *de casibus illustrorum,* "concerning the falls of great men." The typical *de casibus* story depicts a man rising to greatness and then falling at the whims of fortune. The story moralizes the fall, teaching that no amount of worldly power or wealth can survive the final stroke of fortune which is death, and that wise princes will amass spiritual wealth rather than scrambling after fleeting worldly goods. The falls of Buckingham, Katherine, and Wolsey all occur in the *de casibus* tradition; Wolsey especially seems to undergo a spiritual transformation after being stripped of his earthly power. In this sense, the play is meant to be a meditation for members of the audience to contemplate their own existence in the material world. The idea of renouncing material things can still be found in the major religions, in the Catholic Lent or the Islamic Ramadan, for instance.

But *Henry VIII is* not all serious moralization. It is also a celebration and a spectacle. Just as modern movies are often released in conjunction with holidays like Christmas or Thanksgiving, it is believed that *Henry VIII* was first performed during the wedding festivities of Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King James I. In keeping with the tone of celebration surrounding the wedding, the play is full of pomp and spectacle as it celebrates the glory of Henry's reign and his line of heirs that led to James I. Scenes such as Katherine's trial or Elizabeth's christening, in which troops of actors parade across the stage wearing the gorgeous robes of a noble or the gowns of a bishop, would have been equivalent to modern special effects: something visually exciting and

very much out of the ordinary. The long list of characters includes many whose sole function is to add to the visual splendor of the play.

The play is not just about politics, it is itself a political act. Throughout the play, but especially in the final scene, Shakespeare celebrates the monarchy, the Tudor line, and the ascension of James I to the throne. Against the backdrop of others' falls, Henry remains steadfast, regal, and above the effects of fortune; he maintains the dignity of the monarchy. Cranmer praises Elizabeth in the final scene and describes her as a phoenix□a mythical bird that rises again out of its own ashes. He predicts that her virtues will be reborn in her heir, the very King James before whom the play was first performed. Flattering to the monarch, to his Protestant religion and to his triumph over the Catholics, the play is like a modern day campaign speech that extols the virtues of the leader and paints an unflattering portrait of his opponent.

Plot Summary

Act I

After the Prologue foretells that mightiness will meet misery, the scene opens in London, 1520, shortly after a sumptuous meeting of state in France. Buckingham asks an account from Norfolk, who describes an incredible display of riches, and credits Cardinal Wolsey for the spectacle. Buckingham expresses vehement dislike of Wolsey. Norfolk warns him against arousing Wolsey's anger. Buckingham continues, and Norfolk tries to calm him. Buckingham is arrested, and realizes he has been framed by Wolsey. At court, King Henry prepares to hear Buckingham's case, but is interrupted by Queen Katherine, who pleads on behalf of the commoners against a new tax. Ignorant of the tax, Henry questions Wolsey, who claims the Council approved it. Henry pardons the commoners. Buckingham's servant testifies against him. Despite Katherine's mistrust of the servant, Henry pronounces Buckingham a traitor. Later, the nobles eagerly anticipate Wolsey's banquet. At the banquet Anne Bullen flirts with the nobles. Henry and his men arrive, disguised, and Henry is struck by Anne's beauty.

Act II

Outside Westminster, two gentlemen blame Wolsey for Buckingham's condemnation. Buckingham goes calmly to his execution, avowing his innocence and loyalty, and forgiving his accusers. The gentlemen discuss rumors that Henry is divorcing Katherine, and again blame Wolsey. Henry welcomes Cardinal Campeius, who arrives from Rome to examine the divorce. In the women's apartments, Anne pities Katherine and swears she would not be queen. Anne's attendant doubts her sincerity, especially when Anne accepts the title Marchioness of Pembroke, offered by Henry. At the hearing for the divorce, Katherine throws herself at Henry's feet, begging to be remembered as a dutiful and loving wife. She asks that he spare her until she can seek advice from her friends in Spain, but Wolsey and Campeius rebuke her. Katherine names Wolsey her enemy and refuses him as judge. After she leaves, Wolsey asks Henry to clear his name. The king publicly excuses him, explaining that the divorce stems from his own misgivings about the legality of his marriage.

Act III

Wolsey and Campeius offer Katherine counsel, but she declines, fearing betrayal. She says she has been a good wife, and grows angry as the two men continue to press her. They remind her that such stubbornness and disobedience do not become a queen, and she finally relents. Surrey returns to avenge Buckingham. Norfolk and Suffolk inform him that now is a good time to strike at Wolsey because Henry has accidentally intercepted a secret letter from Wolsey to the pope. Meanwhile, Henry has secretly married Anne. Henry discloses that he has accidentally acquired Wolsey's inventory,

which reveals embezzlement. In soliloquy, a distressed Wolsey admits his worldly ambitions. When the nobles return to strip Wolsey of his office, he grows indignant, until they read the charges against him. A humbled Wolsey laments the inevitability of the fall of great men.

Act IV

Two gentlemen exchange news as they admire Anne's coronation procession: Katherine is divorced and many nobles have been promoted. Another gentleman describes the coronation itself, remarking on Anne's beauty. In Katherine's new apartments, her servant Griffith describes Wolsey's death. Katherine falls asleep and sees a vision. Capuchius (an ambassador from Emperor Charles V) arrives with a message of comfort from Henry. Katherine thanks him, but says the comfort comes too late, as she is near death. She sends a message to Henry, asking him to care for their daughter Mary and to reward her servants after she is dead.

Act V

Gardiner (the secretary to the king) and Sir Thomas Lovell exchange news: Anne is in labor. Gardiner says that Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, will be called before the Council the next day on charges of heresy. Meanwhile, Henry promises Cranmer royal support and gives him a ring. Anne's attendant announces the birth of a princess. The next morning at the Council, Cranmer is made to wait outside with the commoners. Henry, displeased, eavesdrops on the hearing. Nobody dares accuse the archbishop, a fellow member of. the Council, but Gardiner explains it is Henry's wish to imprison Cranmer and afterwards judge him as a private citizen. When guards come for Cranmer, he produces the king's ring. Henry enters the chamber. Gardiner flatters the king, but Henry rebukes him and orders them all to love Cranmer. At the palace, the porter complains about the crowd arriving for the christening. The baby is brought out in a sumptuous procession, and Cranmer predicts that the baby, Princess Elizabeth, will be a model of virtue, bringing blessings and prosperity to her kingdom. The king declares a holiday, and the Epilogue asks for the audience's applause.

Characters

Aburgavenny (Lord Aburgavenny):

Lord Aburgavenny is Buckingham's son-inlaw, and he shares Buckingham's dislike of Wolsey. He corroborates Buckingham's charges against Wolsey, explaining that Wolsey bankrupted some of the nobles when he organized the visit to France (I.i.80-83). He is arrested with Buckingham.

Aldermen:

Not listed in the cast of characters, two aldermen are called for in the stage directions in V.iv. They are part of the spectacular procession at Elizabeth's christening. Middle class officers from the city of London, they and the mayor are the only ones in this scene not associated with Henry's court.

Anne (Anne Bullen, afterwards Queen Anne):

See Bullen

Archbishop of Canterbury (Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury):

See Cranmer

Baby (Princess Elizabeth):

See Elizabeth

Bishop of Lincoln:

See Lincoln

Bishop of Winchester (Gardiner, afterwards Bishop of Winchester):

See Gardiner

Bishops:

Several bishops are present to hear the case for Katherine's divorce in II.iv. Although their deliberation would have been important historically, their presence in this scene mostly serves to convey a sense of pomp and pageantry.

Brandon:

Brandon is a noble who arrives with a sergeant to arrest Buckingham and Aburgavenny in the name of the king. He seems to be only discharging an official duty, and expresses sympathy for his prisoners.

Buckingham (Duke of Buckingham):

Buckingham is a noble, afterwards condemned as a traitor. In this play about falling from greatness, Buckingham is the first to fall. Beloved of the commoners and respected by his peers, he is the victim of a plot presumably launched against him by Wolsey, whom Buckingham accuses of having bribed his servants to testify against him. Buckingham's surveyor (a kind of overseer), who has been recently discharged after Buckingham's tenants complained about him, tells Henry that Buckingham has pretensions to the throne and has spoken openly about murdering both Henry and Wolsey. In an off-stage court scene described by two gentlemen, the surveyor's story is corroborated by three other servants, including Buckingham's confessor, who as a priest ought to keep Buckingham's confessions confidential, and a monk who supposedly fed Buckingham with prophecies that he would govern England. Despite the questionable characters of all four witnesses, Buckingham is condemned upon this testimonyhis unwavering assertion that he is innocent notwithstandingand he is marched through the streets of Westminster to his execution. The cause of Wolsey's enmity towards Buckingham is not entirely clear, but it most likely arises from a dislike and perhaps a fear of the duke who is one of his strongest detractors. Norfolk warns Buckingham not to incur Wolsey's ill favor because "What his high hatred would effect wants not / A minister in his power" (Li. 107-08), in other words, Wolsey has the power to strike at those he hates. However, Buckingham is vehement and unrelenting in his dislike for Wolsey. He accuses him of exploiting others in order to fulfill his own ambitions, in this particular case of forcing the gentry to pay for the sumptuous spectacle in France so that he (Wolsey) could claim all the credit for having arranged such an elaborate affair. Buckingham condemns Wolsey's ambitions all the more for being the attempts of a commonerWolsey is an Ipswich butcher's sonto rise above his rank. The degree of Wolsey's power is threatening to the nobles, who inherit their wealth and their titles from a long ancestral line, and who earn their right to govern through this noble bloodline. If Wolsey, who was born without wealth, title, or bloodline, can exercise power as Lord Chancellor (a title that belongs to the office, not the family line), then there is nothing to distinguish those born into the nobility from those born as commoners. This notion has the potential to upset the whole structure of society and is Buckingham's over-riding concern when he says "I'll to the King, / And from a mouth of honor quite cry down / This Ipswich fellow's insolence; or proclaim/There's difference in no persons (I.i.136- 39). In addition to his scorn for Wolsey's low birth, Buckingham also believes the cardinal guilty of treason. He accuses him of conspiring with Charles the Holy Roman Emperor and accepting bribes from him to "break the ... peace" with France (Li. 190). All of Buckingham's suspicions about Wolsey are shared by other characters later in the play; the commoners clamor against his French taxation (I.ii.23-25), and the gentlemen believe Wolsey engineered the divorce of Henry and Katherine to revenge himself on Charles (who is Katherine's newphew) for not rewarding him (II.i.161-64).

Except for his dislike for Henry's favorite minister, Buckingham is, in his speech and behavior, loyal to his king. Although he is hot-tempered and proud while speaking against Wolsey, he accepts his arrest and condemnation with humility and "noble patience" (II.i.36). When he realizes he has been framed, he resigns himself: "It will help

me nothing / To plead mine innocence; for that dye is on me / Which makes my whit'st part black. The will of heav'n / Be done in this and all things! I obey" (I.i.207-10). Asserting his innocence to the very end, Buckingham nonetheless bears "no malice for [his] death" (II.i.62), forgives his accusers (II.i.83), and is thankful for his noble trial (II.i.l 19).

Some of his last thoughts are for Henry: "My vows and prayers / Yet are the King's; and till my soul forsake, / Shall cry for blessings on him" (II.i.88- 90). In the *de casibus* tradition, which teaches that all great men must fall from worldly power, Buckingham in his farewell speech makes the transition from worldly ambition to spiritual peace. His fall seems due more to unfortunate circumstances than to any treasonous intentions. Bullen (Anne Bullen, afterwards Marchioness of Pembroke, afterwards Queen Anne):

Anne Bullen is the second wife to Henry. Although the historical Anne Boleyn was a strong woman who played an active part in shaping this segment of England's history, the Anne Bullen of the play has an insignificant and passive role. Her few appearances on stage, which establish her great physical beauty and virtuous temper, are less important than the effect her mere presence has on the whole plot. Henry is instantly struck by her beauty, and Suffolk attributes the king's fascination with her as the reason for his seeking to divorce Katherine (II.ii.17-18). Henry's secret marriage to Anne leads to Wolsey's downfall, when Henry discovers that Wolsey has sent letters to the pope expressly to prevent his marriage to Anne. "In that one woman I have lost for ever," cries Wolsey when he learns of the king's displeasure (IV.i.409). Wolsey detests Anne as too low-born□"a knight's daughter" (III.ii.94)□and disagrees with her religious views, calling her a "spleeny Lutheran" (III.ii.99). Historically, unable to obtain the pope's approval for his divorce, Henry broke with Rome and established himself as head of the English church in order to marry Anne. The tremendous upheaval of this Reformation is barely mentioned in the play. Anne is the mother of Princess Elizabeth, who eventually became Queen Elizabeth I. The historical Anne Boleyn was beheaded for treasonous adultery only three years into her marriage. Even though the play is about the fall of great men and women, it is not surprising that Anne's fall is not foreshadowed here; Shakespeare ends the play on a note of celebration, and Anne is the mother of the Elizabeth whose majesty will transcend the cycle of falling from greatness as it is presented in the play.

Butts (Doctor Butts):

Doctor Butts is Henry's physician. He notices Cranmer being forced to wait outside the Council chamber with common and alerts the king to this indignity.

Campeius (Cardinal Campeius):

Cardinal Campeius is sent from the pope to examine Henry's case for divorce. A sullen Henry becomes suddenly cheerful upon his arrival. Campeius, always courteous in his speech, flatters the king. Wolsey confides in Campeius and tells him: "Learn this,

brother, / We live not to be grip'd by meaner persons" (II.ii. 134-35). From this point on, Campeius becomes Wolsey's dedicated co-partner in bringing about Katherine's downfall. He backs Wolsey up at Katherine's trial, and later seconds him in his attempt to gain a private conference with the queen. It is in the interview with Katherine that Campeius's honeyed words are at their most insidious. Along with Wolsey, he courteously and unrelentingly insists that Katherine accept their counsel. He flatters her, and politely denies all of her well reasoned accusations that they are there to betray her. Even his rebuke to her is a courteous reminder that stubbornness and anger are not becoming in a person of her nobility (III.i. 168-74). Under such an unwavering and courteous attack, a tired Katherine finally gives in, knowing she has lost. Campeius reveals how completely he has become the agent of Wolsey when he sneaks away from court without taking leave of Henry (III.ii.56- 60). After all the work he has done to secure Katherine's divorce, he has now gone to Rome to thwart it because Wolsey is afraid a divorced Henry will marry the Protestant Anne. Wolsey, with the help of Campeius, is trying to arrange a marriage with the French king's sister, an alliance which will further Wolsey's ambitions while displeasing his enemy Charles V, the emperor.

Capuchius:

Capuchius is ambassador from the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V of Spain. Capuchius visits Katherine, aunt to Charles, during her final illness and delivers a message of comfort from Henry.

Cardinal Campeius:

See Campeius

Cardinal Wolsey, Archbishop of York:

See Wolsey

Chamberlain (Lord Chamberlain):

The prime minister of the king's Privy Chamber, the chamberlain would be equivalent to a modern chief of staff. The chamberlain is responsible for maintaining the king's household. In the play the chamberlain is most often seen in his official capacity: worrying about a shipment of horses that did not make it to the royal stables, identifying Henry's ring when Cranmer produces it in the Council, or ordering the porter to keep better control over the palace gate at the christening. The chamberlain is necessarily interested in court politics and often makes up part of the group of nobles exchanging news. He is concerned about Wolsey's influence over the king, saying that "he hath a witchcraft / Over the king in' s tongue" (III.ii.18-19).

Although the chamberlain describes Wolsey as "a bold bad man" (II.ii.43) and disapproves of his policy, he does not bear the strong personal dislike for Wolsey that many of the other nobles do. Sent with the others to strip Wolsey of his office, the chamberlain is the only one who does not taunt him and in fact offers sympathy: "Press not a falling man too far! ... My heart weeps to see him / So little of his great self" (III.ii.333, 335-36).

In his more candid moments, the chamberlain's easy temper erupts into humor. He jokes with Sands about French fashion, and teases Sands and Guilford about their over-fondness for women. At Wolsey's party, he is the one who plays along with the king's disguise and informs Henry of Anne's identity.

Chancellor (Lord Chancellor):

The king's chief minister of state, the chancellor would be equivalent to a modern prime minister or secretary of state. The chancellor is responsible for the king's public affairs. He carries the great seal as a sign of office. In the play, the chancellor functions in an official rather than a personal role. The character referred to as chancellor replaces Wolsey in this office at III.ii.393-4. His primary task is to preside over the Council during Cranmer's trial (V.i.36-215). Although the chancellor is named as Sir Thomas More, historically More was not Lord Chancellor at the time of Cranmer's trial, but this inconsistency does not affect the chancellor's official role in the play.

Cranmer (Cranmer, afterwards Archbishopof Canterbury):

Cramner is Henry's right-hand man after Wolsey's fall. Cranmer has been abroad on business concerning the divorce of Henry and Katherine and returns to court with what Henry needs to proceed with it. Wolsey, and later his disciple Gardiner, despise Cranmer as a Protestant and heretic, but Henry promotes him to archbishop of Canterbury. As archbishop, he crowns Anne and later christens Elizabeth. The gentlemen praise Cranmer as "virtuous" (IV.i.105), but the nobles are deeply troubled by his religious views and his influence over politics. Gardiner calls him "a most arch-heretic, a pestilence / That does infect the land" (V.i.45-46) and heads a movement to "root him out" (V.i.53). Cranmer is poised on the brink of a fall similar to Buckingham's, but is saved through the intervention of the king. Henry allows the Council to try Cranmer, but meets secretly with Cranmer before the trial to prepare him for what is coming and to urge him to bear it with patience. Cranmer asserts his "truth and honesty" (V.i.122), but realizes when Henry describes the "malice /Of ... great size" (V.i. 134-35) with which he is opposed that only the king can protect him from this trap. Henry has absolute faith in Cranmer's "truth and... integrity" (V.i. 114) and gives him a ring in token of his confidence. At his trial Cranmer is calm and polite to his accusers, despite their discourteous treatment of him. When he produces the ring and the Council realizes he has the king's countenance, they grow alarmed: "Do you think ... / The King will suffer but the little finger / Of this man to be vex'd?" (V.ii. 140-42) asks Norfolk. That royal

intervention can disrupt the cycle of falling to defeat that almost claimed Cranmer along with Buckingham, Katherine, and Wolsey is a demonstration of the power of monarchs to transcend the cycle, a power which Cranmer himself predicts for Elizabeth. In the final scene of the play, embraced by Henry to be the godfather to his child, Cranmer foretells of Elizabeth's glorious reign, and so ends the play on a note of hope.

Although the historical Cranmer, a favorite of Anne Boleyn, was instrumental in bringing about the Reformation, this aspect of his character is not directly dealt with in the play.

Crier:

The crier is the official whose job it is to call Henry and Katherine to appear before the court during the divorce proceedings.

Cromwell:

Cromwell is a servant to Wolsey. Cromwell sheds tears at his master's fall, and this loyalty and sympathy redeems Wolsey, who until now has been disliked by everybody save the king. Wolsey tells Cromwell to "Be just, and fear not; / Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's, / Thy God's, and truth's" (III.ii.446-48), advice which Cromwell takes to heart. After Wolsey's fall, Cromwell becomes a trusted servant to Henry and is promoted to secretary. He fulfills this role in the Council, where apart from his official duties, he also reminds Cranmer's accusers that "'Tis a cruelty / To load a falling man" (V.ii.111-12). His sympathy for the unfortunate arises perhaps from his having witnessed the fall of his beloved master Wolsey, but his defense of Cranmer turns out to be justified, in light of Henry' s judgment. Historically, Cromwell had a long career as one of Henry's most trusted advisors.

Denny (Sir Anthony Denny):

Denny brings Cranmer to Henry for their secret midnight meeting before Cranmer's trial (V.i.80- 85).

Doorkeeper:

Listed in the stage directions merely as "keeper," the doorkeeper of the Council chamber informs Cranmer that he must wait outside.

Dorset (Marchioness of Dorset):

Not listed in the cast of characters, the marchioness appears twice on stage, once during Anne's coronation procession, and once during Elizabeth's christening ceremony. She is named one of Elizabeth's godmothers.

Elizabeth (Princess Elizabeth, referred to as Baby):

Elizabeth is the future Queen Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry and Anne. Although not listed in the cast of characters, and making only a brief appearance in her christening ceremony, Elizabeth is important to the play insofar as it is the story of events leading up to her birth. Cranmer predicts that Elizabeth will have a glorious reign and that her virtues will return, phoenix-like, in her heir after she is gone (V.iv.39-55). As a phoenix, which rises again from its own ashes, Elizabeth transcends the cycle of falling into defeat which has claimed the other great men and women in this play. Written after Elizabeth's long reign in the time of her heir, James I, the play glorifies the princess, but historically Elizabeth was third in line for the throne, and there is a period, during her sister Mary's reign, when she was actually imprisoned in the Tower. Her path to the throne was not as smooth as Cranmer predicts in the play.

Epilogue:

An unspecified actor who closes the drama, the Epilogue's function is to let the audience know the play is over and to call for their applause.

Gardiner (Gardiner, afterwards Bishop of Winchester):

Gardiner is Henry's secretary, and becomes the bishop of Winchester after Wolsey's fall. Although the king's servant, Gardiner is secretly loyal to Wolsey. Gardiner is a man with strong opinions and his own agenda for the kingdom. A Catholic who disagrees with Queen Anne's religious views, he hopes that she will die during childbirth (V.i.22-23). He boasts that he has "incens'd the lords o' th' Council" against the Protestant Cranmer, whom he calls a "rank weed" that must be rooted out (V.i.43, 52). At the Council meeting, Gardiner forces Cranmer to wait outside, and when the Chancellor suggests that he treat Cranmer with more dignity out of respect for his position, Gardiner urges the Council not to be soft on him. Gardiner is curt and officious when he tells Cranmer he will be committed to prison and stripped of his titles according to the king's wishes. When Cromwell reminds him to show some mercy, Gardiner calls him an unsound Protestant. When Cromwell rebukes him, Gardiner's comment that he will "remember this bold language" (V.ii.119) suggests that he is the kind of man to hold a grudge. Gardiner's hypocrisy is revealed when Henry enters the Council chamber.

Officious and domineering with his fellow Councilors, Gardiner is all charm and affability with his sovereign. Henry sees through Gardiner's flattery, however, and rebukes him before the Council as having a "cruel nature and a bloody" (V.ii.164). At the king's order, a humbled Gardiner promises to embrace and love Cranmer.

Garter King-at-Arms:

An important functionary, he marches in the coronation procession as well as the christening procession, where he blesses the princess.

Guards:

Guards escort Buckingham to and from prison. They are impressively armed as they bring Buckingham from his arraignment in a solemn procession.

Gentlemen:

The two gentlemen who appear at the beginning of Act II and again in Act IV, where they are joined by a third, function as narrators, filling in bits of the story not shown on stage and offering their own commentary. They sympathize with Buckingham and distrust Wolsey, they pity Katherine and admire Anne's beauty. Their sentiments are meant to reflect the prevailing opinion.

Other gentlemen are called for in the stage directions at various points in the play, to convey brief messages and to fill out crowd scenes in the court. Gentlemen are the lowest rank in the upper class.

Griffith:

Katherine's gentleman servant, Griffith cares for her at Kimbolton after the divorce. He tells Katherine of Wolsey's death, and when she lists his faults reminds her also to speak of his virtues, which he enumerates for her. Katherine praises him as "an honest chronicler" (IV.ii.72). Griffith demonstrates his deep loyalty as a servant through his concern for Katherine's health (IV.ii.82), and in his rebuke to a messenger who is rude to her (IV.ii. 103).

Guilford (Sir Henry Guilford):

Guilford welcomes the ladies to Wolsey's banquet and bids them to be merry and carefree. The chamberlain teases him that his youth makes him overly fond of women.

Henry (King Henry VIII of England):

Henry VIII is not so much the story of Henry the man, as it is the story of what happens in the kingdom while Henry is king. It begins with Henry's spectacular visit of state to Francis I of France, and ends thirteen years later with the christening of his daughter Elizabeth. The play is foremost a celebration of the Tudor dynasty, which begins with Henry's father and culminates in Queen Elizabeth I and her heir, James Stuart.

Behind the events of this celebratory play looms Henry: royal, benevolent, and beyond the reach of fortune. In Shakespeare's time, it was believed that kings were God's earthly agents, and as such, higher than ordinary men. In the play, Henry is not subject to the whims of fortune that claim Buckingham, Katherine, and Wolsey; in fact, he demonstrates his almost god-like power through his ability to rescue Cranmer from a similar fate. The king's favor is redemptive, but his frown can bring men down, as it does with Wolsey. Henry's power is absolute, and throughout the play—no matter what he does—he inspires the respect, admiration, loyalty, and love of his subjects. Cranmer, speaking of Princess Elizabeth, describes her as a phoenix, able to rise again from her own ashes (V.iv.40). This extraordinary feat applies to Henry as well, as he reforms and reshapes his England after his own liking, while never suffering the disapprobation of his subjects. As king, he is above the ravages of worldly fortune. As a character, Henry is difficult to pin down, not so much in that he lacks a personality as that his personality is almost completely tied up in his kingship. He is consistently courteous and fairminded when hearing official business. When Katherine kneels before him with a suit from the people, Henry treats her with great respect and raises her to his side (I.ii.10-13). Even when he believes that Buckingham is a traitor, he grants that "If he may / Find mercy in the law, 'tis his" (I.ii.21.1-12). For all his courtesy, Henry is not above an occasional burst of temper. Hearing for the first time of a tax he supposedly imposed, a surprised and indignant Henry cries "Taxation? / Wherein? and what taxation?" (I.ii.37-38). Angered at the discourteous behavior Gardiner has shown to Cranmer, he rebukes him before the entire Council and calls him "spaniel" (V.ii.161). Henry's quirk of speech—to cry "Ha!" when displeased—is familiar to all the nobles. The greatest thing to arouse his displeasure is his inability to obtain a divorce from Katherine. The king has a stricken conscience on the matter of his marriage to Katherine. He believes that his "marriage with the dowager, / Sometimes our brother's wife" is incestuous, and his stillborn sons proof that he stands "not in the smile of heaven" (II.iv.181-82, 188). He swears in court that "no dislike i' th' world against the person / Of the good Queen, but the sharp thorny points / Of my alleged reasons, drives this [divorce] forward" (II.iv.224-26). Indeed, all of his interactions with Katherine are courteous and respectful; there is no evidence that he does not still love her. At the same time, however, Henry is deeply attracted to the lovely Anne Bullen, whom he secretly marries before the divorce is finalized. At some point, the nobles's suspicion that Henry's conscience has only "crept too near another lady" (II.ii.18) becomes accurate.

When the play opens, Henry appears to be in danger of being overshadowed by Wolsey. In his first entrance he is seen leaning against Wolsey's shoulder. Later he learns that Wolsey has caused a tax to be levied without his knowledge. The nobles fear that Wolsey has "a witchcraft / Over the King in 's tongue" (III.ii. 18-19) and pray that "Heaven will one day open / The King's eyes, that so long have slept upon / This bold bad man" (II.ii.41-43). Although Wolsey has been the king's favorite for so long, in the end it is only a matter of time before Henry re-exerts his power over the ambitious cardinal. Already aware at the end of Katherine's trial that "These Cardinals trifle with [him]" (II.iv.237), Henry is ready to cast Wolsey down when his private letters accidentally fall into his hands, almost as if in answer to the nobles's earlier prayer. In the end, the usurping Wolsey becomes merely a scapegoat, on whom the falls of

Buckingham and Katherine are blamed, and Henry, who was never in any real danger of being overshadowed, reemerges like the sun he is described as.

Katherine (Queen Katherine):

Katherine of Aragon is wife to Henry and is afterwards divorced. Much of the central action of the play concerns Henry's attempt to divorce Katherine, his wife of over twenty years. Historically, Katherine, daughter of the Spanish King Ferdinand II, had originally been married to Arthur, Henry's older brother and heir to the English throne. However, when Arthur died a few months afterward, his marriage unconsummated, Katherine was married to Henry, the new heir. At the time, it was considered a form of incest to marry a brother's widow, but the pope determined that since the first marriage had never been consummated, Katherine had not really been Arthur's wife and therefore the marriage between Katherine and Henry was legitimate. However, when nearly all of their children were either born dead or died shortly after birth, Henry began to believe that God was punishing him for incest. It was the fear that he was endangering his immortal soul by living in sin that prompted him to seek a separation from Katherine. By this time Katherine's nephew, Charles V of Spain, who was also the Holy Roman Emperor, had marched into the Vatican and was holding the pope prisoner. It seemed very unlikely that Charles would allow his aunt to be cast aside by the English king. Unable to obtain a divorce sanctioned by the pope, Henry broke with the Catholic church of Rome and established himself head of the church in England. This Reformation, brought about in order to divorce Katherine, had far-reaching effects on all of English history. In the play, Katherine first appears in a scene which takes place before the divorce is initiated. Henry treats her with great respect and courtesy when she interrupts Buckingham's trial in order to plea on behalf of the commoners that their tax is too high. Katherine is moved out of compassion for the people, but also out of a sense of honor towards the king and a concern that his dignity will suffer if the people continue to grumble. Her arguments are both compassionate and intelligent, and, unlike the king, she is able to penetrate Wolsey's dissembling and confront him directly. Her compassion and her penetration surface again during Buckingham's trial. When Wolsey emphasizes Buckingham's alleged faults, she reminds him to "Deliver all with charity" (I.ii.143). She is the only one to perceive that the man testifying against Buckingham might be doing so out of spite (I.ii.171-76).

After Buckingham's arraignment, both gentlemen and nobles are saddened to hear rumors of a separation between Henry and Katherine. Although Henry testifies that his conscience resolved him on it out of fear of incest (II.iv. 170-210), his subjects believe that Wolsey is to blame for the divorce. Whatever the cause, Katherine suddenly finds herself the victim of circumstances beyond her control. She is called to trial with great pomp and ceremony, yet she realizes that the formal justice system will do nothing to defend her innocence; like Buckingham, she is aware that her fate has been decided even before the trial. Instead of playing along with the charade, Katherine throws herself at Henry's feet and begins an eloquent, impassioned plea to his sense of right and justice, daring him to do right by her. She demands to know "In what have I offended you?" (II.iv.19), reminds Henry that she has been a "true and humble wife" (II.iv.23), and

asks only that he spare her until she can seek the advice of her advocates, her "friends in Spain" (II.iv.55). Katherine's sorrow turns to anger when Wolsey tries to placate her. With a righteous indignation that makes her one of Shakespeare's strongest heroines, she refuses to be judged by the man who is her enemy. The trial is a travesty, the judge is also the accuser, and Katherine turns her back on the whole corrupt system, saying "I will not tarry; no, nor ever more / Upon this business my appearance make / In any of their courts" (II.iv. 132-34). Her behavior leads Henry to proclaim her "The queen of earthly queens. / She's noble born; / And like her true nobility she has / Carried herself towards me" (II.iv. 142-44). Although she is eventually worn down by continued pressure from Wolsey and Campeius, Katherine maintains her regal dignity until the end. She ceases to argue with the cardinals because, as they maintain, such behavior does not befit a queen. After Wolsey's death, she is able to commend his virtues and forgive him. In her final illness, Katherine sees a vision in which spirits bow before her and crown her with a garland, suggesting that she will be honored in heaven. Her spiritual purity gives Katherine strength even after she has been stripped of her worldly titles, and her fall in the material world is superseded by her victory in the spiritual one. Still a loving wife, even after Henry has cast her aside, Katherine sends a final message to her husband: "tell him in death I blest him" (IV.ii.163). Although defeated, Katherine still has a noble bearing, and her final wish is to be buried "like / A queen, and daughter to a king" (IV.ii.171-72).

Ladies:

Ladies, or noblewomen (as opposed to commoners or untitled members of the gentry), are present in the background at Wolsey's party, and in the coronation and christening processions, where they would most likely be sumptuously dressed, adding to the spectacle.

Lincoln (Bishop of Lincoln):

Lincoln attends Katherine's trial. He testifies that having examined the question of the divorce, he is the one who counseled Henry to go forward with it. This implies that Lincoln found ecclesiastic reasons to believe that Henry's marriage to Katherine, his brother's widow, was incestuous.

Lords:

Lords, or title-bearing noblemen, are present in the background at Katherine's trial, where they carry in the sword and mace, and at Elizabeth's christening, where they carry a canopy over the princess. In both cases their presence adds to the pageantry of the scene.

Lovell (Sir Thomas Lovell):

Lovell is an important knight in Henry's court. He provides a rare flattering portrait of Wolsey when he praises his generosity before the banquet (I.iii.55-57). Lovell has a strong sense of duty and conscience. Even as he leads Buckingham to his execution, he asks for forgiveness. Later, when he relates the news that Anne is having a difficult labor and Gardiner hopes she might die, although he shares Gardiner's sentiment, his "conscience says / She's a good creature, and ... does / Deserve our better wishes" (V.i.24-26). His accidental meeting with Gardiner at midnight seems a bit conspiratorial as they freely exchange secret news, but in his interactions with Henry there is no evidence that Lovell is anything but a loyal servant to his king.

Man:

A servant to the porter at the palace gate, he and the porter complain about the crowd of people coming to the christening. These two characters are the only commoners to have speaking parts in the play. Unlike the nobles, they speak in prose and use slang.

Marchioness of Dorset:

See Dorset

Mayor of London (Lord Mayor of London):

Although the mayor is not listed in the cast of characters, he is called for in the stage directions at the coronation and the christening. The city of London had an autonomous government from the royal court, and the presence of the mayor in these two scenes, which take place on the streets of London, indicate co-operation between the city and the court.

Norfolk (Duchess of Norfolk):

The duchess of Norfolk is not listed in the cast of characters, but is called for in the stage directions in the coronation procession, and again in the christening procession, where she has the important task of carrying the baby Elizabeth. She is one of Elizabeth's godmothers.

Norfolk (Duke of Norfolk):

Norfolk, a high-ranking nobleman, is well acquainted with political affairs. One of his main functions in the play is to share news with other members of the court. As a duke (the highest rank beneath kings and princes), Norfolk shows little of the pride that Buckingham displays; on the contrary, he is humble, temperate, and eager to think well

of everybody. He is impressed by Henry's magnificence in France, which he praises, and troubled by Buckingham's vehement dislike for Wolsey. Although he is grieved that Wolsey may have bought peace with France at too high a price, nevertheless he defends the cardinal against Buckingham's attacks and tries to calm his anger. When Buckingham accuses Wolsey of treason, Norfolk replies "I am sorry / To hear this of him and could wish he were / Something mistaken in't" (Li. 193-95). However, Norfolk grows to dislike Wolsey when he believes him responsible for urging the king to divorce. Norfolk is upset about the amount of power Wolsey is gaining, but his primary concern seems to be for Katherine's situation, and Henry's happiness. He suggests visiting Henry to "put the King / From these sad thoughts that work too much upon him" (II.ii.56-57). It is indicative of the kingdom's general dislike for Wolsey that by the time of his downfall, even the mild Norfolk is eager to see him go. He gives Surrey news that will aid his strike against Wolsey, and cries "amen!" to the idea that Henry's displeasure will soon oust Wolsey from power (III.ii.56). When Henry sends him to strip Wolsey of his signs of office, unlike the other nobles Norfolk is polite and gentle with the cardinal. Throughout the play, Norfolk demonstrates his concern for others even as his actions prove the strong loyalty he has to the king.

Officers:

Officers are present in the background at Katherine's trial and Anne's coronation. They include anyone who performs an office, but specific officers such as "verger" or "judge" are often called for in the stage directions.

Old Lady:

She waits on Anne and teases her about her ambitions to become queen. In the tradition of several of Shakespeare's female attendants (for example, the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet,* Emilia in *Othello),* she uses bawdy language: "A threepence bow'd would hire me / ... to queen it" (II.iii.36- 37) (with a pun on "quean" i.e. "prostitute"). The old lady announces the birth of Elizabeth, and then complains that Henry hasn't rewarded her enough for bringing the news (V.i. 172-76).

Page:

The page listed in the cast of characters is Gardiner's boy-servant, who holds the torch for him when he walks at midnight and encounters Lovell. Other pages, not listed, mill outside the Council chamber door as Cranmer is forced to wait.

Patience:

She is Katherine's attendant, who cares for her at Kimbolton after the divorce. She grows alarmed at Katherine's paleness after she awakens from her vision.

Porter:

He keeps the palace gate and complains about the crowd arriving for the christening. The porter and his man are the only two commoners with speaking parts in the play. Their lower class is reflected in their speech; unlike the nobles, who speak in verse, they speak in prose and use slang.

Prologue:

The Prologue announces the beginning of the play and sets the tone as he asks the audience to imagine the characters "As they were living" (Pro. 27), and informs them that it will be a story of how "mightiness meets misery" (Pro.30).

Quiristers:

They are members in a choir. They are not listed in the cast of characters, but are called for in the stage directions to sing during the coronation procession. Their presence contributes to the pomp and spectacle of the scene.

Sands (Lord Sands, also referred to as Sir Walter Sands):

One of the lords at Wolsey's banquet, Sands fancies the ladies and flirts with Anne. In an earlier scene, he complains that an "honest country lord" such as himself cannot compete for the ladies' attention against the younger, more fashionable men (I.iii.44). The title "lord" means that he is a nobleman, but he is inexplicably demoted to "knight" in the stage directions that have him escorting Buckingham from his arraignment (S.D.II.i). Such inconsistencies in the text are not uncommon, and pose challenges for any textual editor of Shakespeare.

Scribes:

They are hired to write out or copy official documents. Scribes record Katherine's trial, and one of them prompts the crier to call Henry and Katherine to the court.

Secretaries:

Secretaries make up part of Wolsey's retinue when he first appears in Act I. The secretaries produce the papers that make it possible for Wolsey to arrest Buckingham.

Sergeant-at-arms:

He arrests Buckingham for treason, in the name of the king. He also appears as part of the official procession in the background at Katherine's trial.

Spirits:

Spirits appear during Katherine's vision. It is unclear whether the spirits are supernatural entities, or if they merely represent a dream Katherine is having. In either case, their curtsies and their presentation of the garland, a sign of honor, indicate that Katherine's greatness is acknowledged in the spiritual world despite her fall in the material one.

Suffolk (Duke of Suffolk)Act I:

A high-ranking noble, Suffolk is often the companion of Norfolk. Suffolk has a slightly cynical sense of humor, which causes him to deliver his news with a sharper edge than Norfolk. Informed that Henry's "marriage with his brother's wife / Has crept too near his conscience" (II.ii.16-17), Suffolk rejoins "No, his conscience / Has crept too near another lady" (II.ii.17-18). Suffolk dislikes Wolsey, but believes himself beyond his reach. He is eager to tell news relating to Wolsey's downfall, news that as "wasps that buzz about [Henry's] nose / Will make this sting the sooner" (III.ii.55-56). When he is sent to subpoena Wolsey, he does so in an officious and unsympathetic manner.

Surrey (Earl of Surrey):

Buckingham's son-in-law, Surrey was abroad in Ireland by Wolsey's orders when Buckingham was executed, and he returns seeking revenge against the cardinal. Although he is hot-tempered and needs to be filled in on the latest news, his attack on Wolsey, when it comes, is cool and well-studied. He resists using his sword (III.ii.277) and instead begins to recite from memory the articles against Wolsey (III.ii.304). When the chamberlain stops him with "Press not a falling man too far!" (III.ii.333), he forgives Wolsey.

Surveyor:

A servant to Buckingham, the surveyor testifies to Buckingham's treasonous intentions and is believed by Henry, although Buckingham calls him "false" and believes Wolsey has bribed him (I.i.222- 23). Katherine suspects he is making the charges out of spite, after losing his position when Buckingham's tenants complained about him (I.ii.171-76). Buckingham is condemned upon his testimony.

Vaux (Sir Nicholas Vaux):

Vaux escorts Buckingham to his execution and orders a barge befitting "The greatness of his person" (II.i.100), but Buckingham rebukes him for mocking his fallen state.

Winchester (Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester):

See Gardiner

Wolsey (Cardinal Wolsey, Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor until III.ii):

Henry's prime minister until his fall, Wolsey is a butcher's son who has risen to his high position through his own ambition. As cardinal, Wolsey holds power in the Catholic Church; as chancellor, he holds power in affairs of state. He is almost universally disliked throughout the kingdom. In almost the first reference to Wolsey in the play, Buckingham complains "The devil speed him! no man's pie is freed / From his ambitious finger" (I.i.52-53). Norfolk warns that "The Cardinal's malice and his potency" are equal, and that "his nature" is "revengeful" (I.i.105,108,109). It is not just the noblemen who distrust Wolsey, but the commoners, the gentlemen, and even the queen. Before he even becomes Henry's agent against her in the divorce, Katherine suspects Wolsey of framing things "which are not wholesome" against the commoners and the king (I.ii.45). The nobles believe the demise of "This bold bad man" cannot come soon enough (II.ii.43).

The suspicions against Wolsey are not unjustified. He reveals his ambitious nature nearly every time he appears on stage. When Henry revokes the tax levied by Wolsey, the cardinal whispers to his secretary to inform every shire that their relief comes about only through his own intercession (I.ii. 102-08). Later, he reveals to Campeius that Gardiner, the king's new secretary, is secretly under his command. When Campeius expresses concern for the demise of the old secretary, who was banished by Wolsey, Wolsey cold-heartedly says "He was a fool/ For he would needs be virtuous" (II.ii.131-32). Wolsey's work on behalf of the king's divorce has ulterior motives. By deposing Katherine, Wolsey wishes to insult her nephew, Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. Charles has failed to aid Wolsey in gaining the popedom, and Wolsey's plan to get rid of Katherine and marry Henry to the sister of the French king, Charles's enemy, is revengeful.

Yet for all his conniving and self-interested plots, Wolsey is never truly disloyal to the king. Wolsey believes it is possible to further himself while still acting in the king's best interest, as he tells Henry "Mine own ends / Have been mine so, that evermore they pointed / To th' good of your most sacred person and / The profit of the state" (III.ii.171-74). His role in bringing Katherine down, cruel as it may seem, is at Henry's request. His attempt to block Henry's marriage to Anne, although partially stemming from his own

dislike of the woman, is also based on the conviction that Anne is too low-born for his king and that the duchess of Alancon is a better match in terms of birth and politics. Henry relies on Wolsey, and when they first appear together, the king is leaning on the cardinal's shoulder (S.D.I.ii). Wolsey's assertion to Henry that his "duty" will "stand unshaken yours" no matter what happens is sincere (III.ii.196, 199), and until his fall, Henry trusts his minister. Wolsey is not a universal villain. He is a kind master who rewards his servants well, as when he promotes both Gardiner and Cromwell. He displays his liberality when he hosts a splendid banquet, and inspires Lovell to say of him, "That churchman bears a bounteous mind indeed, / A hand as fruitful as the land that feeds us; / His dews fall every where" (I.iii.55-57). Even Katherine, who must blame him for her divorce, acknowledges his generosity and honor after his death.

The ambitious Wolsey finally finds redemption in his fall. Preoccupied by his own schemes to separate Henry from Anne, a distracted Wolsey accidentally sends some of his private letters to the king. The letters reveal not only his dislike of Anne, but also his accumulation of private wealth with which to buy the popedom. One frown from the king tells Wolsey he is undone. Yet unlike the falls of Buckingham and Katherine, Wolsey's seems justified, for he brings it about by his own deeds. This realization humbles Wolsey, and in a stirring soliloquy he throws off ambition and finally gains self-knowledge. For the first time in the play, Wolsey can say "I know myself now, and I feel within me / A peace above all earthly dignities, / A still and quiet conscience" (III.ii.378-80). Cromwell weeps at his master's fall, and Wolsey warns him "Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me: / Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition!" (III.ii.439-40). Wolsey sadly realizes the mistakes he has made and says "Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal /I serv'd my king, He would not in mine age / Have left me naked to mine enemies" (III.ii.455-57). It is not too late for Wolsey to transfer his "hopes" to "heaven" (III.ii.459), and like Buckingham and Katherine, achieves spiritual peace through resignation of worldly place.Women

They are Katherine's waiting women, who sit with her in her apartment as she does needlework. One of them plays the lute and sings (III.i.3-13). Historically, these would have been gentlewomen and noblewomen living in Katherine's court, not common servants.

Further Study

Baker, Herschel. Introduction to *Henry VIII,* by William Shakespeare. In *The Riverside Shakespeare,* edited by G. Blakemore Evans, 976-79. Chicago: Houghton Mifflin, 1974.

This introduction concentrates on the textual problems which have led critics to suspect dual authorship in this play.

Bevington, David. Introduction to *Henry VIII,* by William Shakespeare. In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare,* edited by David Bevington, 913-16. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980.

Bevington touches on several areas of interest concerning the play, including the question of authorship, the play's relationship to the earlier histories, theme, and character.

Foakes, R. A. Introduction to *Henry VIII,* by William Shakespeare, xv-lxv. The Arden Shakespeare. London: Methuen, 1957.Foakes provides a detailed discussion of authorship, date, and sources before going into great detail about the structure of the play. His character sketches focus mostly on the main characters.

Knight, G. Wilson. *"Henry VIII* and the Poetry of Conversion." In *The Crown of Life,* 256-336. London: Methuen, 1947.

The chapter on Henry VIII is a rich source for further character study. Wilson examines Buckingham, Wolsey, Katherine, Henry, as well as many of the more minor characters.

Margeson, John. Introduction to *Henry VIII,* by William Shakespeare, 1-59. The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

The introduction is divided into sections on date, authorship, sources, critical history, the unity of the play, the verse of the play, and stage history. Margeson includes illustrations of some of the characters and stage configurations.

Morrison, N. Brysson. *The Private Life of Henry VIII.* New York: Vanguard Press, 1964.

This condensed biography of Henry VIII covers most of the events that occur in the play, offering a quick historical insight into the background story of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*

Ridley, Jasper. *Henry VIII.* London: Constable, 1984.

This biography of Henry VIII covers the events of the play in greater detail than Morrison's book, and is a useful source for those who want a deeper historical insight into the play.

Starkey, David. *The Reign of Henry VIII.* New York: Franklin Watts, 1986.

Starkey provides a different approach to the historical Henry VIII, telling the story of the politics over which the king presided. It is useful for studying the historical characters of Wolsey, Cromwell, Gardiner, and others of the Council.

Yates, Frances A. *Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

In the chapter on *Henry VIII,* Yates examines the play's qualities as Shakespeare's last play at the end of a long series of history plays. She examines *Henry VIII* in the context of the Catholic-Protestant conflict.

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Shakespeare for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

©1997-2002; ©2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc.

Gale and Design® and Thomson Learning™ are trademarks used herein under license.

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any

form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

For permission to use material from this product, submit your request via Web at http://www.gale-edit.com/permissions, or you may download our Permissions Request form and submit your request by fax or mail to:

Permissions Department
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

Permissions Hotline:
248-699-8006 or 800-877-4253, ext. 8006
Fax: 248-699-8074 or 800-762-4058

Since this page cannot legibly accommodate all copyright notices, the acknowledgments constitute an extension of the copyright notice.

While every effort has been made to secure permission to reprint material and to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, The Gale Group, Inc. does not guarantee the accuracy of the data contained herein. The Gale Group, Inc. accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Shakespeare for Students (SfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, SfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of SfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of SfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in SfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed�for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as �The Narrator� and alphabetized as �Narrator.� If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. � Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name �Jean Louise Finch� would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname �Scout Finch.�
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by SfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an at-a-glance comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

SfS includes The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature, a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Shakespeare for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Shakespeare for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Shakespeare for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from SfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Shakespeare for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from SfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Shakespeare for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of SfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Shakespeare for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of SfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Shakespeare for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Shakespeare for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535