The Last Night of Ballyhoo Study Guide

The Last Night of Ballyhoo by Alfred Uhry

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Introduction

In his second play, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, Alfred Uhry explores the lives of Jewish southerners, a society that he introduced to the American theater-going public with his Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Driving Miss Daisy*. The setting and plot of *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* developed from stories Uhry heard growing up in a southern Jewish family, as well as his own experiences. As he told Don Shewey from *American Theatre,* "I went to one of the last Ballyhoos there was, when I was 16—it was like a German-Jewish debutante ball." However, Uhry also had a keen desire to explore Jewish identity, including prejudice inflicted on Jews by other Jews. Uhry combined these two interests to create the privileged world of the Levy/Freitag families. They live in a large home on one of Atlanta's finest streets. They belong to an elite country club. Their children may attend prestigious private universities. All these trappings and conveniences of wealth, however, cannot change the fact that they are Jews who live in an overwhelmingly Christian society. The prejudice that they experience as a result of their religion does not deter them from embracing mainstream southern society or from replicating this discrimination within their own culture; German-Jews such as the Levys and Freitags look down on "the other kind" of Jews—Eastern European Jews. While *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* deftly explores this anti-Semitism, Uhry also intersperses his serious message with sparkling banter, comedic non sequiturs, and hilarious characters and characterization. *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* was first produced at the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996 and went to Broadway the following year; its play script is available from Theatre Communications Group.

Author Biography

Alfred Uhry was born in 1936 to an upper-middle-class German-Jewish family in Atlanta, Georgia. His father was a furniture designer and artist, and his mother was a social worker. He attended Brown University in Rhode Island, graduating with a degree in English in 1958.

Uhry had worked on varsity shows at Brown with Robert Waldman; Uhry wrote the script and lyrics, and Waldman wrote the music. After college, Uhry moved to New York to begin his career in show business, where he continued to collaborate with Waldman. Their musical, *The Robber Bridegroom* (1975), was based on a novella by southern writer Eudora Welty. Uhry wrote the script and the song lyrics. The play was a surprise hit off-Broadway and moved to Broadway for the 1976-1977 season. It earned Uhry a Tony Award nomination and a Drama Desk nomination.

Uhry continued to work on other musicals, but these projects were unsuccessful, either closing on opening night, or soon thereafter, or never opening at all. Uhry began to write comedy scripts for television shows and lyrics for commercials and also taught English and drama at a New York high school. In 1984, as Uhry was struggling to get a musical about Al Capone off the ground, the idea came to him to write a play instead.

The characters in *Driving Miss Daisy* (1987) are based on people that Uhry knew growing up, including his grandmother and her African-American chauffeur. *Driving Miss Daisy*, Uhry's first play, was an instant success, running for three years in New York. Uhry won a Pulitzer Prize in 1988 for it. Uhry also wrote the adaptation for the film version of this work.

After his surprise hit, Uhry was approached by the Olympic Games' Cultural Olympiad to produce a play for the 1996 Olympic Games that would be held in Atlanta. He revisited Atlanta's Jewish milieu that he knew so well to create his story about intraethnic prejudice. *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* went on to win Uhry another Tony Award. In 1998, he wrote the book for the musical *Parade*, which played at Lincoln Center in New York. It also had anti-Semitism as a central focus. Uhry lives in New York, where he is active in the Dramatists Guild. He also has served as an advisor to the Guild's Young Playwrights Festival.

Plot Summary

Act 1

The Last Night of Ballyhoo opens in the living room of the Freitag/Levy home, where Lala is decorating a Christmas tree. It is 1939 in Atlanta, Georgia, the afternoon of the premiere of *Gone With the Wind.* Boo comes into the room and starts talking to Lala about calling Peachy Weil to get a date for Ballyhoo, which is now less than two weeks away. Boo ruins Lala's good mood, and she goes rushing from the room. Boo is worried because Lala is unmarried and unpopular. Reba confesses that Sunny does not have a date for Ballyhoo either. While the sisters-in-law are talking about their children, Adolph arrives home. He tells the women he has invited Joe Farkas, a new employee, home for supper. When Joe arrives, Boo gets annoyed that she has not been told that he is working for the family company. The women retire to the kitchen, and Lala comes downstairs. She suggests that Joe attend the movie premiere with her that evening.

After dinner, conversation shifts to Joe's family and whether he will go home for Christmas. Joe explains that his family doesn't celebrate Christmas but he will be going home for Pesach, or Passover. The Levys don't celebrate Passover. They went to Passover one year when Lala was in fifth grade, and Lala remembers it as boring. She is more interested in finding out whether Joe will be in town for Ballyhoo. They explain Ballyhoo to Joe: it is a social party that young Jewish people from all over the South attend. Then Lala again suggests that Joe and she go downtown, but Joe says he must go home since he has to catch a train early the next morning. After he leaves and Lala has gone upstairs, Boo turns to her brother and says, "Adolph, that kike you hired had no manners."

The next scene opens five days later aboard a southern-bound train. Sunny is in a sleeping compartment reading a book when Joe knocks on the door. Adolph had asked him to check in on Sunny to see if she needed anything. Sunny and Joe get into a conversation that ends in his asking her to go to Ballyhoo with him.

The next scene returns to the Freitag house. It is the morning that Sunny's train is due to arrive, and Adolph plans on meeting her. While he waits for Reba to get dressed, he comments that he is disturbed about Adolf Hitler's attack on Poland. Boo thinks he should be concerned with his own family instead, and then she complains that Adolph favors Sunny. Adolph reminds her that Sunny's father took care of them all after their father died. Boo also complains because she never got to work in the family business even though she got better math grades in school than either of her brothers. After Adolph and Reba have left, the phone rings. It is Peachy Weil calling for Lala. Peachy is coming to Atlanta the day after Christmas, but he does not ask Lala to Ballyhoo. Boo picks up the phone to call Peachy's aunt and set things straight.

That night, Sunny and Adolph are playing cards, and Reba is sitting nearby, knitting. A conversation develops about a local girl who went crazy after going to teachers' college.

Sunny never heard about this story, and Reba confesses it's because the girl was "the other kind." Sunny doesn't understand what her mother means, and Reba explains that the phrase refers to Jews who are from Eastern Europe instead of Germany, like them. Reba and Adolph claim that "the other kind" can be identified by their appearance.

Boo and Lala return from seeing *Gone With the Wind,* which Lala thinks is a masterpiece. Then Joe comes to the door, bringing some figures for Adolph. Adolph insists that Joe have some coffee, and Lala goes to the kitchen to make it. Alone with Sunny, Joe asks her if she and her family are really Jewish. Sunny insists that she always just wanted to be like everyone else, but Joe thinks that she is. To show he is wrong, Sunny tells him about the summer when she was going into the seventh grade and she was at the Venetian Club Pool with her friends. A man came by the pool and called out her name and then told her that Jews were not allowed to swim in the club pool. Joe then asks Sunny out for a date and leaves shortly thereafter. When Lala finds out that Joe has asked Sunny to Ballyhoo, she gets angry and calls Joe aggressive. Lala and Sunny argue about who gets more attention in the family, and Lala says that Sunny is a hypocrite because she is going to Ballyhoo even though she claims she doesn't care about going. Lala points out that she will be going to Ballyhoo with someone who belongs there—"a Louisiana Weil"—whereas Sunny will be going with "a New York Yid."

Act 2

Act 2 opens the next day. Lala and Boo are arguing because Lala refuses to call Peachy. Lala eventually calls, but Peachy has already left for Atlanta. Boo calls the cook and asks her to check if Peachy's tuxedo is in his closet. When they find out it is not, Lala and Boo take this as positive proof that Peachy is going to take Lala to Ballyhoo. They go shopping for a new dress. That night, Lala models her new dress, which is an unbecoming hoop skirt. Sunny and Joe come in from their date. He dances with Lala but manages to step on her dress and tear it. Boo and Lala go upstairs to fix the dress. Adolph gives Joe tickets to Ballyhoo; he gets them free because he is a past president of the club, which is restricted to wealthy Jews. Joe leaves, and Sunny and Adolph talk about love.

The next scene takes place on Christmas Day. The presents have been opened. Peachy Weil comes over, and he and Lala exchange impertinent quips, but eventually he officially invites her to Ballyhoo. The next evening finds Peachy and Joe awaiting their dates. The talk turns to war in Europe, but it is clear that Peachy cares little about the events there. The couples depart for Ballyhoo.

At Ballyhoo, while Sunny and Lala are in the ladies' room, Joe learns from Peachy that the Standard Club, which hosts the dance, is a closed club. "The other kind" of Jews attend the Progressive Club; the Standard Club is only for German Jews. However, Joe shouldn't be worried about being treated poorly, since Adolph once was a president of the club. Furious, Joe leaves the party, leaving Sunny to wonder what happened. She gets a ride home from a friend. However, Joe comes by the house later. He and Sunny

angrily discuss why he left Ballyhoo. He doesn't think she should have taken him to a club that discriminates against Jews, and Sunny retorts that she didn't think it would make a difference; according to Sunny, the Standard Club is nothing at all like the Venetian Club. The fight escalates with Joe accusing Sunny of speaking "Jew hater talk." The two part. Then the doorbell rings. It is Lala. Peachy has proposed, and she and Boo are thrilled.

The final scene takes place one week later on a train approaching Wilmington, Delaware. Sunny is in her sleeping compartment when there is a knock on her door. It is Joe. At first he claims he is on the train because he is in the area for work and, besides, Adolph asked him to check up on her. However, he later admits that he drove all the way to the train just to see her. Sunny says that Joe's "Jew hater talk" can't be true because it would be as if she hated herself. She apologizes for taking him to Ballyhoo. Joe and Sunny confess to missing each other and end up kissing and crying. The train is about to depart, so Joe must leave. Sunny is sad, but Joe tells her that they have the whole future ahead of them and to "think of something really good, and we'll just make it happen." What Sunny thinks of is dinner at her home in Atlanta, with Adolph, Boo, Reba, Lala, and Peachy already seated. Sunny and Joe join them, and Sunny lights the Sabbath candles and says the blessing.

Act 1, Scene 1

Act 1, Scene 1 Summary

In mid-December of 1939, Lala Levy sings Christmas carols as she decorates a Christmas tree while her aunt Reba watches and knits. Lala's mother, Boo, comes in and orders Lala to take the star off the top of the Christmas tree. She explains that a tree is a sign of the season like a Halloween pumpkin, but because the star symbolizes the birth of the Messiah, trees in Jewish homes like theirs can't have stars. Reba agrees. Lala complains that instead of fighting about Christmas trees, they should all be celebrating because Clark Gable and other movie stars are in town for the world premiere of *Gone with the Wind* just a few blocks away. Boo suggests that Lala should have other things on her mind, such as who's going to take her to Ballyhoo in a couple of weeks. She suggests that Lala call a boy named Sylvan, a family friend. Lala holds out hopes for another boy named Ferdy Nachman, but Reba warns her off him.

Lala tries to leave, saying she's going down to the movie theater to see the stars. When Boo asks her why she wants to go down to the theater, she confesses that she's writing a book about the South that she's convinced is going to become a movie. Lala further adds that she needs to get an idea what she'll be in for at her opening night. Boo says she should be doing something more constructive, like calling Sylvan. Boo reminds Lala that she didn't listen when Boo told her to prepare for being rushed at a sorority at university in Michigan, and that was a disaster. Boo says that Lala has to take her place in society, but Lala says that because they're Jews, they have no place in society and runs out. Lala a complains as she is leaving that only her mother could ruin both Christmas and *Gone with the Wind* in the same night.

Boo blames Lala's behavior on having caught the measles when she was a child, missing a lot of school, and not making friends. She says that God must be laughing at the big joke he's played on Boo and compares Lala to Reba's daughter, Sunny, who is happy and successful at Wellesley College. Reba says that Lala just came home from Michigan because she was homesick, and reminds Boo that she came home halfway through her wedding night because she was homesick.

Adolph, Boo's brother and Reba's brother-in-law, comes in and comments on the star on the top of the tree. Boo says it's coming down. Adolph says dinner smells great and tells Boo that company is coming, a fellow from the office. Boo tells him he should have remembered that their cook's been home sick all week and called her so she can be ready. The doorbell rings, and Adolph admits Joe Farkas, a young man from New York. Adolph introduces him around, saying that Joe is going to be taking over some of the traveling at work. Reba asks some embarrassing questions, and Boo takes her off into the kitchen.

Adolph opens his paper, which has a big headline referring to *Gone with the Wind*. Joe says he's never read it, and Adolph confesses he hasn't either. They talk about Joe

staying at the Y, and how uncomfortable his mother is with a good Jewish boy like Joe staying at a Young Men's *Christian* Association.

Lala comes down ready to go out to the premiere. Adolph introduces her to Joe, and she invites him to go down to the premiere with her. As Reba and Boo put supper on the table, Lala tells Joe that she's going to be in New York soon, meeting with publishers for her novel. They sit down to eat, and Reba toasts Joe, welcoming him to Atlanta.

Act 1, Scene 1 Analysis

The Last Night of Ballyhoo is the story of how a not-too-observant Jewish family becomes more observant. This scene uses two important symbols to set up how non-observant they are.

The first symbol is the Christmas tree, which represents how accepting the family is of cultural and social traditions based on Christianity. The fact that Boo rejects having the star on the top of the tree tells us that there are still some lines she won't cross. Jews don't accept Christ as the Messiah, which explains why Boo doesn't want the star at the top of the tree, since the star represents the Messiah's birth. As later scenes show us, however, Boo is more concerned about how having a star will make the family look to the neighbors than anything else. Meanwhile, Lala's singing of Christmas carols is another example of how far the family has moved from the traditions of their faith.

The second symbol is *Gone with the Wind*, a famous and extremely popular book and movie in the South for two reasons. First, it was the first novel of the Civil War told from a Southern point of view. Second, when the book was published and later a movie based on the book was released, the entire country got caught up in the excitement. In short, it was the most powerful element of popular culture at the time, and therefore is a powerful symbol of how secular this family is becoming. This shows up in several aspects. Lala's obsession with the movie represents the fact that she is more concerned about being Southern and being caught up in pop culture than she is about being Jewish. The fact that Adolph hasn't read it in the face of its almost-universal popularity suggests that he's focused on work more than anything else. The fact that Joe hasn't read it reinforces his status as an outsider in this Southern world, as established by his New York accent.

We also know from Joe's comments about his mother's reaction to his staying at the YMCA that he's perhaps a more observant Jew than the other characters, which sets up the central conflict and dramatic action of the play. Joe performs the function of a catalyst, meaning that because he is the motiviation for the changes that other characters undergo.

Act 1, Scene 2

Act 1, Scene 2 Summary

Reba and Boo clear the table, and Adolph snoozes in his chair as Lala and Joe talk in the living room. Lala tells Joe the first line of her novel and tries to come up with the name of the home for the central family, saying it has to sound as Protestant as possible. She tells him her family is the only Jewish family on a socially mobile, very Protestant street.

Joe changes the subject, talking about how he'd have been glad to help out in the kitchen and how his mother insisted that he and his brothers know how to cook. Boo asks him whether he'll be going home for Christmas. He says that his family doesn't celebrate Christmas, but adds that he will go home for Passover in the spring. Lala tells how she went to a Passover supper once, spilled wine all over the tablecloth, and found the whole thing boring. When Reba asks whether those festivities are held in the spring, and Joe says yes, Lala eagerly observes that he'll be around for Ballyhoo. This leads to a discussion of what goes on at Ballyhoo, hayrides, wiener roasts, parties and on the last night, a huge dance. Boo and Reba argue over how the tradition of Ballyhoo got started, and finally Boo wakes up Adolph, so he can have the final word. Adolph looks at Joe and wonders why Boo would think Joe would be interested in the Ballyhoo. Joe realizes it's late, gets up and leaves. As Lala storms up to her room telling them all to stop looking at her, Boo says to Adolph "That kike you hired has no manners."

Act 1, Scene 2 Analysis

In this relatively brief scene, we see even more clearly how far Lala and her family have drifted from the traditions of their faith. Lala's pride in their being the only Jewish family on a socially-influential street, her disparaging references to traditions such as the Passover Seder, and Boo's use of the work "kike" (a word with similar connotations to Jews as the word "nigger" is to Blacks) all strongly declare that this family has little time for either their faith or people who share it. This is ironic because, as we'll see later, when the truth about Louisa's absence is revealed, society still sees them as Jews, even though they don't really think of themselves as such.

The explanation of Ballyhoo and the argument over its origins make the point even further. Joe's family's traditions are clearly faith-based activities, and the description of the activities of Ballyhoo come across as completely secular, or non-religious, in nature. Joe's sudden departure is the direct result of his perception of, and discomfort with, the differences between his and Lala's perspectives about their Jewish heritage.

Act 1, Scene 3

Act 1, Scene 3 Summary

On a train stopping over in Baltimore, Reba's daughter, Sunny, sits reading when she's interrupted by Joe. He introduces himself, and then tells her he was asked to look in on her by Adolph, who gave him some money to give to her in case she was running short. When he asks what she's reading, she tells him that it's a book by communist writer Upton Sinclair. Joe says she doesn't look like a communist, and Sunny says that reading communist writing doesn't make a person into one. She tells him she's a sociology major, at which time he reveals that he was an art major but had to drop out of college because his father died and he had to go back home to work. He comments that since she's studying, she'll have a lot to do over the holidays and won't be going to Ballyhoo. Sunny describes Ballyhoo as a bunch of Jewish people trying to be Episcopalians. Joe invites her to go, but before she has a chance to answer, the conductor calls "All Aboard!" Joe says he has to go to work and leaves the train.

Act 1, Scene 3 Analysis

The seeds for later conflict are sown in this scene. When Joe shows an immediate interest in Sunny shortly after we've seen Lala develop the same sort of interest in Joe, it sets up a classic love triangle. The question is, given what he knows of her family, what does he see in Sunny? When she tells him what she's reading and that she's a sociology major, he sees the possibility that someone in that family actually has an open mind and a willingness to learn and/or change. Joe sees Sunny as different, someone who not only thinks but maybe thinks like him, and this makes her intriguing. Sunny sees much the same thing in Joe, which makes their mutual attraction understandable, and which makes their later conflict that much more painful and dramatic.

Act 1, Scene 4

Act 1, Scene 4 Summary

The next morning, Reba is clearing away after breakfast and Adolph is doing some paperwork when Boo comes in with the morning paper. As she hands it to Adolph, she announces that she just saw Louisa, their cook, going to work at Arkwright's across the street. Boo adds that she asked Louisa why she had changed jobs, but Louisa said Boo already knew why. Reba reminds Boo that Boo did ask Louisa if she knew anything about some money missing off Adolph's bureau, implying that Louisa probably felt accused of stealing and left in protest.

Adolph, reading the paper, tells Reba to hurry and get ready. As Reba runs upstairs to put on a dress, Boo asks Adolph what's upset him so much. Adolph comments on how Hitler is going into Poland, and it doesn't look good. Boo angrily asks Adolph to pay attention to what's going on in his own home, rather than what's going on halfway across the world. She then asks him why he's going down to pick up Sunny at the train station when she knows her way home perfectly well. She accuses him of playing favorites, Sunny over Lala, because he never cared for Lala's father, Boo's husband DeWald.

Adolph reminds her how Sunny's father (his and Boo's oldest brother Simon) worked his fingers to the bone not only to provide the necessities of life for his family, but also to provide extras such as the sterling silver Boo insisted upon when she got married. Boo then accuses Adolph of keeping both her and DeWald out of the family business. Adolph says that he tried to fit DeWald in, but it never worked out. He goes on to say that the reason that Boo wasn't involved with the business was that she chose to stay home and raise Lala. Reba returns, and she and Adolph go to the train station.

Boo picks up the phone and calls Sylvan, the boy with whom she wants Lala to go to Ballyhoo. After making small talk about Sylvan's aunt, Boo calls Lala downstairs as though Sylvan was the one who called, saying he wants to speak to her. Lala and Sylvan have a brief conversation, and when they hang up, Lala tells Boo that Sylvan will be in town the day before Christmas. When Boo asks whether Sylvan asked her to Ballyhoo, Lala replies that it didn't come up and adds that she's got hopes for someone else. Boo tells her that Ferdy, the boy they mentioned in the first scene, is already going with someone, but Lala says that isn't who she meant. Boo gets ready to call Sylvan's aunt to see if she knows where Sylvan's mind is at in regards to Ballyhoo.

Act 1, Scene 4 Analysis

This scene makes clear that the most important thing to Boo is being socially acceptable, which she pursues to the point of desperation and obsession. This desperation manifests in her determination that Lala should go with just the right boy to

Ballyhoo. The passing mention of the impressively-valuable silver that Adolph says she insisted upon when she got married supports this idea. Meanwhile, her accusation that Adolph kept her and DeWald down, when Adolph clearly and reasonably tells her the reasons why DeWald never got ahead, suggests that Boo refuses to accept reality, a refusal that extends to seeing how much a role her being Jewish plays in her life.

It's never stated outright, but the clear implication is that Louisa went to work for the Arkwrights because they're not Jewish. Boo's overly emphatic insistence that she doesn't know why Louisa left suggests that she believes her Jewishness can't possibly be the reason. Boo's denial reveals her refusal to believe how unacceptable being Jewish is. This makes her comment to Adolph about paying attention to his family rather than what Hitler is doing in Poland deeply ironic. We in the audience already know that Hitler's goal throughout World War II was the extermination of the Jewish race. While Boo is fighting to ensure that being Jewish doesn't make a difference, events across the world are making exactly the opposite point.

Act 1, Scene 5

Act 1, Scene 5 Summary

Later that night, Sunny and Adolph play cards as Reba knits socks. They chat about the way they used to play cards when Sunny was little, whether Adolph used to let Sunny win, and how Adolph is winning now. Reba comments that higher education makes people insane, and, as an example, tells the story of a former neighbor, who boarded a train to start her second year at college and ran up and down the aisles of the train with her clothes off. She describes the girl as being of "the other kind," and explains to Sunny there are two kinds of European Jews--those from Western Europe like them (which basically means German) and those from Eastern Europe like the "others" (which basically means Russian). Adolph wins another hand of cards, they chat about Sunny's life at university, then Reba goes up to bed. After she's gone, Adolph tells Sunny a story of how he found university brochures hidden on her father's desk when she was six years old, and comments on how proud he'd be of her.

Lala and Boo come in after going to a showing of *Gone with the Wind*. Boo asks whether anyone has called. When Lala tells her to calm down, Boo says it's not enough to know that Sylvan is taking Lala to Ballyhoo, she has to know whether he's taking her to the dance on the last night. When Adolph asks Lala why she hasn't taken off her coat, Lala reveals a poster-sized picture of Scarlett O'Hara she lifted from the lobby of the movie theatre. Just as Boo comments that what she did is a crime, there's a knock on the door. Boo thinks it's the police, but Adolph opens the door and admits Joe.

Joe says he's back from his road trip and has brought some financial figures for Adolph to look at and starts a conversation with Sunny. Lala asks how they know each other, and Sunny explains that they met on the train. Boo hints that it's too late for company, but Adolph can see that Joe and Sunny want to spend time alone and suggests that they have coffee and cake. Lala goes out to make coffee; Boo and Adolph go up to bed, and Sunny and Joe are left alone.

After some small talk about how Joe got his job with Adolph, Joe asks whether Sunny and her family really are Jewish. She says they are full-blooded Jewish on both sides of the family. Joe comments on the Christmas tree, and when Sunny says that having a Christmas tree doesn't mean they're not Jewish. Joe replies that it just means that they don't want to be Jewish. Sunny tells him that he doesn't know how it can sometimes hurt to be Jewish and tells a story of how she was asked to leave a public swimming pool because no Jews were allowed. She also talks about how a professor in her comparative religion class said all religions were basically the same at their core and that religion doesn't matter much in the modern world. Joe suggests that Hitler would disagree, but Sunny says that Hitler's an aberration and tells him to limit the conversation to normal human beings. Joe says he didn't want to spend his first date talking about Hitler anyway,.When Sunny says this evening isn't a date, Joes asks Sunny to go with him to a burger place the next night.

Lala comes in saying the coffee's brewing. Joe says he should be heading home anyway, and confesses that he's not as Jewish as Sunn is because on the Russian side of his family, there's a non-Jewish aristocrat. Joe asks Sunny if she still wants to go to Ballyhoo with him; she says yes, and Joe happily leaves.

As Lala turns out the lights, she suggests that Joe has bad manners for making her go through all that trouble of making coffee and then leaving. This leads Lala to accuse Sunny of trying to be superior. Lala reminds Sunny of how Sunny wore a new outfit to Lala's father's funeral, saying that nobody wears fancy clothes to a funeral unless they want to draw attention to themselves. Lala says that Sunny always got all the attention, even from God, who didn't give her one Jewish feature. Lala adds that things are still the same, since all Sunny has to do is come to town, and she has an invitation to Ballyhoo. Sunny says Ballyhoo means nothing to her, so Lala says that means Sunny should refuse Joe's invitation. At first Sunny says she won't go but then changes her mind. When Lala calls her a hypocrite, Sunny comments that Lala's so disagreeable it's no surprise nobody wants to take her to Ballyhoo. Lala tells her that she'll see what happens when she waltzes into the dance on the arm of the socially-acceptable Sylvan Weil from Louisiana!

Act 1, Scene 5 Analysis

In this scene it becomes clear that this play isn't just about the tensions between Jews and society. Reba's observation about the two different kinds of Jews suggests that there's not just a sense of "us against them," there's also a sense of "us against us." This sense is reinforced when Joe, admittedly in a sense of fun, tells Sunny that he's not only less fully Jewish but from a part of the world that, according to Reba's story, makes him "the other kind." What we're seeing now is a play that examines the question of what it means to be Jewish, which in turn leads to the larger thematic question of what defines identity.

Lala's identity is defined by her desire to be as non-Jewish as possible. This is represented by her obsession with *Gone with the Wind*. Boo's identity is defined by her desire to be socially successful, Sunny's identity is defined by her education, Reba's by being just a little behind the beat (so to speak), and Adolph's by work. As the play progresses, we see that these identities are all forms of denial of the one thing that truly defines them all, their Jewish heritage. Joe's example teaches the other characters to embrace more openly this fundamental part of who they are.

The confrontation between Sunny and Joe makes up the first-act climax of the primary, most thematically-related plot - the discovery of identity. As they speak, they each challenge what the other believes, which increases the tension between the two of them and foreshadows their conflict in the second act. The secondary plots, involving the love triangle, and whether Lala will go to the last night of Ballyhoo, climax in the confrontation between Sunny and Lala. It's difficult to say what makes Lala angrier--her long-simmering resentments of Sunny, or the fact that she believes Sunny stole her

date for Ballyhoo. Whatever the reason, this scene also sets the stage for the confrontations and discoveries made in Act 2.

Act 2, Scene 1

Act 2, Scene 1 Summary

The next morning, Sunny studies, Boo does the accounts for the store, Reba knits and Lala paces, nervous about whether Sylvan is going to take her to Ballyhoo. Boo convinces Lala to call him. Lala finds out from the housekeeper that Sylvan has already left, and so she won't find out whether he's going to take her to the dance. Boo calls the housekeeper back and discovers that Sylvan left with his tuxedo and dancing shoes. This convinces everybody that he will be asking Lala to Ballyhoo, and they all congratulate her. Lala then convinces her mother to go shopping for a dress with her. They go upstairs to get ready.

Reba tells Sunny how proud she is of her, growing up so differently from her. She explains that when she (Reba) was young, she'd have been silly about going to Ballyhoo like Lala, but tells Sunny she's glad that she's being serious, going to college and studying. Sunny tells Reba that she is actually going to Ballyhoo, and Reba congratulates her happily. Sunny goes up to air out her dress, and Reba comments to herself that she's happy Sunny is at least a little like Reba.

Act 2, Scene 1 Analysis

We see yet again how desperate Boo is for Lala to go to Ballyhoo and make a good impression as Boo goes to rather extreme lengths to find out about Sylvan's plans. We also get our only glimpse of the mother-daughter relationship between Reba and Sunny, which seems to have warmth and genuine affection. This is a clear contrast to the relationship between Boo and Lala, which at times seems much more difficult. This is partly the result of Lala's desire to define her own identity outside of her mother's influence, but is also the result of a certain aspect of Boo's character that's beginning to become apparent.

Comments Boo makes in this scene about how the store would be making more money if she was running it and about Reba's bad cooking suggest to us that Boo has either a high opinion of herself or a low opinion of other people, or both. This, combined with her desperate desire to be socially successful, suggests that at the center of her character is a powerful feeling that she just doesn't measure up; in other words, she talks herself up before somebody else can talk her down. This sense of self-dislike in Boo, and to a lesser degree, in the rest of her family, is pointed out by Joe later in the play and is the basis for both dramatic tension and confrontation.

Act 2, Scene 2

Act 2, Scene 2 Summary

That night, Adolph snoozes in his chair and Reba clears the dinner table as Lala models her dress, a, filly ball gown with a big hoop skirt, for the last night of Ballyhoo. It looks like something out of *Gone with the Wind*, which makes Adolph refer to her as "Scarlett O'Goldberg." Lala asks Adolph to dance with her, and he does so, reluctantly. Joe and Sunny come in and start dancing as well. Joe accidentally steps on Lala's dress and tears it. She rushes upstairs in tears, and Boo follows Lala while commenting that they couldn't allow Lala even a little happiness. Reba says the rip is easily fixable and goes upstairs to help.

As Joe apologizes and Adolph says it's not really a big deal, Reba calls down for Sunny to come up and help with the dress. When she's gone, Joe comments that Boo doesn't like him, and offers his opinion that it's because he's too Jewish. When Adolph says that Boo doesn't really like anybody, Joe goes on to explain that back home being Jewish is no big deal because everybody's Jewish and proud of it. He then offers to pay for the tickets Adolph got him and Sunny for Ballyhoo, but Adolph tells him that the tickets were free since he is a vice president of the country club where the dance is being held. Adolph goes on to explain that it's a Jewish club, and non-Jews wouldn't want to go; besides they have their own clubs--clubs where Jews aren't allowed. Joe says that that means the club is where all the Jews go, but Adolph says the club is restricted. When Joe asks what he means Adolph makes a joke, saying it's restricted to those who eat too much.

Just then Sunny comes back, saying that the dress is fixed. Joe apologizes again, calling himself a klutz. Sunny doesn't understand what that means, and Joe explains it's a Yiddish word meaning someone clumsy. He kisses her cheek and says goodnight.

When he's gone, Sunny talks about how attractive she finds him, and Adolph tells her that she should try to hang on to him because he's a good man, and Sunny's father would be proud. Sunny asks whether Adolph was ever in love, and he tells a story about a young woman with beautiful hands, who he saw every day on the bus. He talks about how they looked at each other a lot but never spoke, and how she just stopped riding the bus one day. He goes on to say that he dated a few girls, but always compared them to the girl on the bus and never found anyone who made him feel the same way. Sunny says he'd make a wonderful husband, and Adolph jokes that that's the last thing he needs, another woman in the house.

Act 2, Scene 2 Analysis

Lala's dress reinforces the idea that she's obsessed with pop culture, which as we've seen defines her identity. When Joe accidentally tears the dress, it's symbolic of what

he's doing to Sunny and the whole family. His pride in his Jewish heritage is slowly tearing apart their own identities, which are shown to be shallow by Sunny's ignorance of the meaning of "klutz." The irony of this situation is that Joe and Sunny are falling in love and are clearly, as Adolph points out, a good match.

When Adolph mentions that their country club is restricted but doesn't answer when Joe asks why, it reminds us that Joe is the wrong kind of Jew and of the "us against us" conflict. It also foreshadows the confrontations and revelations about what the restriction to the club is that come up in Scene 4.

Adolph's story about the girl on the bus is simply told, with just enough detail to make it romantic. But the context in which it's told (a play about identity and being Jewish) has been so clearly established that we're left wondering whether the girl stopped riding the bus because she believed Adolph to be Jewish. In other words we're given a sketch and left to fill in the blanks ourselves of what the sketch means. This is an example of well-crafted writing, dramatic or otherwise.

Act 2, Scene 3

Act 2, Scene 3 Summary

It is Christmas Day. Boo rushes around making sure the house is clean and tidy for Sylvan while Reba accepts a Christmas gift from Louisa - watermelon pickles, which Boo hates. As Reba tries to calm down Boo, Adolph appears wearing the sweater Reba knitted him for Christmas. Reba tells him he can take it to the thrift shop if he doesn't like it, but Adolph protests that he loves it. The doorbell rings.

Sylvan Weil (nicknamed Peachy) comes in and introduces himself. He comments on the Christmas tree, calling it a Chanukah bush. Reba and Boo introduce themselves, and after some small talk about Peachy's family, Lala comes downstairs. She and Peachy say hello to each other in a mocking-teasing kind of way, and Boo invites him to have some coffee cake. He says he can't if it has nuts, since he's fatally allergic. Adolph, Boo and Reba excuse themselves, leaving Peachy and Lala alone.

Peachy confesses that he lied about being allergic to nuts, and Lala laughs. He then tells her that he won't be taking her to the last night of Ballyhoo - his family is making him take his little cousin Sally. When Lala says she understands, Peachy asks her what color orchid to by for Sally's corsage. They agree on white, and then Peachy confesses that he was just joking about that too, that he'll pick her up at nine to take her to the dance. Lala, very relieved, says she'll be ready, and Peachy leaves just as Boo comes in with a piece of cake without nuts. Lala tells her he's gone and that he did promise to take her to the dance. Boo calls him a lovely boy.

Act 2, Scene 3 Analysis

The main purpose of this brief scene is to introduce us to Peachy Weil, and illustrate the differences between him and Joe. Where Joe is courteous, Peachy is irreverent. Where Joe is respectful, Peachy is mocking. Where Joe takes pride in his family, Peachy ridicules his. Where Joe seems genuinely interested in Sunny as a person, Peachy seems to look on Lala as a plaything. All in all, Peachy comes across as disagreeable, which makes Boo's comment that he's a lovely boy quite ironic and her ambitions to social acceptability somewhat disturbing, if that's the kind of person she thinks is socially advanced - which she clearly does.

Act 2, Scene 4

Act 2, Scene 4 Summary

Peachy, dressed in a tux, and Joe, dressed in a plain dark suit, wait for their dates for Ballyhoo to come downstairs. Adolph is reading the paper, and Joe asks what the news is from Poland. When Adolph says it's not good, Joe reveals he's got family over there. Peachy comments that what goes on in Europe is Europe's business, and says his family's been in Louisiana for a hundred and fifty years.

Boo comes downstairs and announces that the girls are ready. Sunny comes down first and looks beautiful. Joe apologizes for how he's dressed, and Sunny says it's all right. Lala then comes down in her big Scarlett O'Hara dress, and Peachy teases her about not being dressed up enough. Sunny and Joe say good night and go out.

As Boo pins on Lala's corsage, Peachy passes on greetings from a mutual friend called Dorothy, who turns out to be someone who applied for the same sorority as Lala did at the same time, and was accepted when Lala wasn't. Lala is so surprised to hear this that she faints. Boo calmly sends Peachy out to get the car ready. Boo wakes Lala up and tells her to get going. Lala protests that she can't go; she'll be humiliated if Dorothy sees her. Boo tries to convince her to go, but Lala refuses. Boo then imagines a future in which Lala is continually humiliated by the story of how she fainted on the last night of Ballyhoo. She tells Lala to go upstairs, work on her novel, and pack up the dress to be returned. Lala puts on her wrap and goes.

Boo explains to Adolph, who saw the whole thing that she had to do what she did because she didn't think Lala would get another chance. She then talks about how strange it is that she and Adolph ended up living together, saying she thought they were going to be happy and asks what happened. Adolph says he doesn't know.

Act 2, Scene 4 Analysis

The differences between Joe and Peachy show up even more clearly in this scene. We see it in what they're wearing in that Peachy is far more image conscious than Joe; we see by what they say that Joe is far more concerned about the Jewish community as a whole than Peachy, and we see how much more interested Peachy is in social status. Even as this difference between the two young men clearly makes Adolph think about himself and his Jewish heritage, it makes us think again about the shallowness of Boo's ambitions.

Even though they're shallow, though, we see that those ambitions are still desperately important to her when she humiliates Lala into going to Ballyhoo. What makes this scene even more painful to watch, aside from the things Boo says, is that we know from seeing Peachy's behavior the kind of world that Boo seems desperate for Lala to join Since we know that Lala is some what of a free spirit, we know that she'd be miserable

in that world. By the end of the scene, though, we get the feeling that Adolph has seen what we've seen, and perhaps cares about what happens to Lala more than he ever has before. We also get the sense that Boo is at least beginning to understand the depth of what she's done to her daughter and is feeling the beginnings of remorse.

Act 2, Scene 5

Act 2, Scene 5 Summary

At the dance, Lala and Sunny rush off to the bathroom, leaving Peachy and Joe alone. After small talk about why girls always go to the bathroom together, Peachy asks Joe whether this is his first time at the Standard Club, which he refers to as being a lot better than the Progressive Club. When Joe seems confused, Peachy explains that the Progressive Club is where "the other kind" of Jews belong, and the Standard Club is only for German Jews. Joe asks whether Sunny knew this, and Peachy tells him that Adolph used to be a past president of the Standard Club. Joe angrily leaves.

Act 2, Scene 5 Analysis

The "us against us" aspect of the play's central conflict as foreshadowed by the many previous references to "the other kind" of Jew comes to a head in this scene. It seems unlikely that Peachy acts maliciously with clear and pre-meditated intent to humiliate Joe. We get the impression that Peachy is just too stupid to think that deviously. Joe, however, is quick to see and feel the humiliation, and we get the sense that once Joe finds out that Sunny and Adolph know about the difference between the two clubs, he understands what caused Adolph's earlier discomfort. This scene sets the stage for the thematic and dramatic climax of the play in the following scene.

Act 2, Scene 6

Act 2, Scene 6 Summary

Sunny comes in, announcing she's home. When Adolph comes out of the kitchen she tells him that a boy named Harold brought her home because Joe suddenly disappeared without saying goodbye. There's a knock on the door, and Sunny opens it to admit Joe. She asks what happened; he says he went for a drive, and Sunny says goodnight and starts upstairs. Joe says goodnight and starts for his car, but then Adolph says they need to have a discussion and leaves them alone.

Sunny says she has a right to know what happened, and when Joe suggests she should have a pretty good idea; she says she doesn't know at all. He asks why she didn't tell him that guys like him, the "other kind," weren't welcome at the Standard Club and compares his experience that night with her experience at the swimming pool. She tells him it's not the same thing at all, that all that "other kind" stuff doesn't matter to her, and just about everybody's welcome at the Standard Club, anyway. She goes on to say that where she comes from, men don't treat women the way Joe treated her. Joe responds with a sarcastic Southern accent and accuses her of being a Jew hater. She angrily asks him how he dares to storm into her house and make accusations like that. He says she should just call him a kike and get it over with, and she says it already is over with. Joe responds with a Yiddish expression which Sunny says she doesn't understand. Joe translates it - "Thanks for nothing." He goes out, and Sunny goes upstairs.

After a few moments, Lala comes in and shouts for her mother. Adolph, Boo and Reba all come running as Lala announces that Peachy has asked her to marry him. Peachy follows her in, and Boo asks whether it's true. Peachy says that his parents said it was okay and that at least they knew what they were getting, with the family going all the way back on both sides. He goes on to say that he might be interested in coming to work for Adolph at the store. Boo is thrilled. Adolph is not.

Act 2, Scene 6 Analysis

The scene between Sunny and Joe is the thematic and dramatic climax of the play. The hypocrisy and shallowness of Sunny's notions of identity are directly challenged by Joe, who feels his pride in his faith and family have been demeaned. His experience at the dance and her experience at the pool aren't exactly the same, simply because he didn't directly experience racism the way she did. His point is, however, that institutional racism such as the kind practiced at the club is the same thing. He drives his point home with his suggestion that she should call him a kike, which is ironic because he's unaware that Boo has already done that. Here, though, we see how painful an epithet like that has the potential to be. The final nail he drives into the coffin of Sunny's safe

and accepted identity is his Yiddish, which is doubly hurtful and therefore doubly pointed because Sunny doesn't know what it means.

The ultimate irony, of course, is that this scene is immediately followed by the news that all Boo's ambitions for Lala could very well be realized. Peachy's proposals to Lala and suggestion that he work with Adolph represents the very real possibility that they could all be drawn into the socially-acceptable world of Peachy and his family, and even further away from the life of racial and religious integrity as represented by Joe. Once again, Adolph's reaction tells us that he sees the truth of what's going on far more clearly than Boo, which makes us wonder at the end of this scene whether the marriage between Peachy and Lala will actually happen.

Act 2, Scenes 7 and 8

Act 2, Scenes 7 and 8 Summary

We're back on a train, this time the train to Wilmington. Sunny is again reading, and Joe again comes to find her. Sunny says she's been thinking a lot about what he said, and tells him it isn't true that she's a Jew hater because that would mean she hates herself. When he seems doubtful, she tells him that what's really going on for her is ignorance, a not knowing what being Jewish is and means. She says she does know a bit of Yiddish and misquotes the Sabbath Blessing. He corrects her gently, and she apologizes for taking him to Ballyhoo, saying she should have known better. He also apologizes for acting like a jerk. They say they miss each other, kiss passionately and start to cry.

The conductor calls out "All aboard!" Sunny panics, but Joe tells her they've got the whole future to choose from, and that all she has to do is think of something good, and together they'll make it happen. She agrees; Joe leaves, and Sunny stands center stage and thinks ... and the lights come up on her home.

The Christmas tree is gone. Joe, Adolph, Boo, Reba, Lala and Peachy are seated at the dinner table. Sunny joins them, lights the Sabbath Candles, and recites the Jewish Sabbath Prayer. The family exchanges the Sabbath Blessing as the lights fade to black.

Act 2, Scenes 7 and 8 Analysis

Compassion, love and understanding ultimately triumph in this scene and in the play. Both Joe and Sunny admit they've made mistakes and realize new truths about themselves. In Sunny's case, and therefore in the case of the play, this new truth is not just that it's all right to be Jewish. It's that ignorance and denial are powerful and dangerous and lead not only to a lack of true identity but also to the possibility of hurting others the way she hurt Joe.

The play's final moments bring the play full circle. Where once the stage was dominated by a non-Jewish symbol (the Christmas tree), it's now dominated by an image that is arguably a centerpiece of both the Jewish faith and of Jewish family life, the Sabbath meal. Joe has catalyzed this change, although there's little or no indication at the end that Boo, Lala or Peachy are fully and willingly going to embrace this new aspect of their lives nor how far Sunny, Adolph or Reba will go in exploring their Jewish heritage. Ultimately, though, this ending suggests that because two people have listened to and learned from each other, a door to a larger truth has been opened. This suggests that the play's theme relates not only to questions of personal and racial identity, but also to the general values and rewards of compassion, perspective and communication.

Characters

Joe Farkas

Joe Farkas is a Brooklyn Jew who has moved to the South to work for Adolph at the bedding company. Joe never went to college, but according to Sunny, he is "very bright." Proud of his heritage, Joe is surprised to meet a family with no real sense of Jewish identity. Unlike the majority of the characters in the play, Joe manifests concern for the Jews in Europe, not simply because he has relatives there but because he feels a bond with his coreligionists. Joe is extremely sensitive to the prejudice that the Levys hold toward him—and any Eastern European Jews. When he finds out that the Standard Club does not allow his "kind" of Jew to belong, he leaves the dance and Sunny. He also accuses Sunny of "Jew hater talk." However, he comes to regret his hard words and effects a reconciliation with her.

Adolph Freitag

The bachelor Adolph Freitag, who lives with the two widows, runs the family's bedding business that was first started by their oldest brother, Sunny's father, who is now dead. Of the older members of the family, Adolph is the only one who demonstrates any real recognition of the world outside of the Atlanta Jewish community; for instance, he shows concern over the situation in Europe, particularly with regard to the Jewish population. He enjoys a special bond with Sunny, a closeness not replicated with the air headed Lala, and is pleased at the developing relationship between her and Joe. Despite these positive qualities, Adolph is not immune to the social snobbishness that afflicts his family; for example, he is a past president of the restricted Standard Club.

Reba Freitag

Reba Freitag, the widow of Boo and Adolph's brother, shares a house with the two of them. Generally seen knitting, Reba is far more easygoing than her sister-in-law, but she also is a little vague. The play's character notes describe her as "not quite in synch with everybody else."

Sunny Freitag

Sunny Freitag is Reba's twenty-year-old daughter. She is the opposite of her cousin Lala, with her cheerful disposition, blond hair, and intellectual curiosity. Despite her socalled Aryan features, Sunny has been the victim of prejudice: when she was a teenager, she was kicked out of a private swimming pool in front of all her classmates. This experience has made her grow up feeling different from all her friends. She has returned from Wellesley, where she is majoring in sociology, for the Christmas holidays. Sunny is unique in her family. More open-minded, she has never even heard the phrase

"the other kind" and cannot fathom what it means. Although she disparages Atlanta's Jewish social scene, she agrees to attend Ballyhoo with Joe. She grows increasingly fond of him in a short period of time, yet her deception in not telling him that the Standard Club is restricted threatens their burgeoning relationship. In the resulting fight, when she explains to Joe that she regards them as "equals," Sunny reveals that she has been touched by the social snobbery that is so pervasive among her family. Unlike her family, however, Sunny comes to comprehend the inherent irrationality of disliking Jewish people simply because they come from Eastern Europe or New York or wherever, for she realizes that would be like hating herself. By the end of the play, having reconciled with Joe, she demonstrates a clear and real interest in exploring her religious and cultural background. Thus, Sunny, who previously believed that religion didn't matter in today's world, shows that she has undergone a major transformation.

Boo Levy

Beulah "Boo" Levy is a widowed southern matron. She and Lala live in the family home with her brother-in-law and sister-in-law. Worried that the unpopular and socially awkward Lala will never marry, her greatest concern seems to be getting Lala a date for Ballyhoo. She willfully tries to ignore the fact that Lala is unpopular because of personality issues, and she insists that Lala make use of the family's social standing to win suitors. When Lala resists, Boo resorts to bullying, browbeating, and dominating tactics. Her methods pay off. Boo forces Lala to call Peachy Weil and makes her attend Ballyhoo, but by the end of the play, Peachy has proposed to Lala.

Boo holds social standing above all else. She is ecstatic about Lala's engagement to Peachy—even though he makes no effort to conceal his offensive, boorish behavior—simply because he is a member of one of the South's most well-regarded Jewish families. By contrast, she dislikes Joe Farkas because of his family background; she even calls him a "kike." Like the rest of her family, Boo believes that German Jews, such as themselves, are superior to Eastern European Jews, such as Joe.

Lala Levy

Beulah "Lala" Levy is Boo's socially awkward twentyish-year-old daughter. Having left college before finishing the first semester because she did not get pledged to the good Jewish sorority, Lala lives at home and seems to do very little with herself. She is prone to flights of fantasy. For instance, with the Atlanta movie premiere of *Gone With the Wind,* Lala declares herself an author. However, like her mother, her foremost desire is to obtain a date for Ballyhoo. When she first meets Joe, she sets her sight on him, but he prefers Sunny. This partiality unleashes Lala's long-standing jealousy of her prettier, smarter, less stereotypically Jewish cousin. Lala thinks that Sunny has always gotten all the attention in the family. However, once Peachy asks her to attend Ballyhoo with him, she immediately feels superior to Sunny because she has a date with a member of one the South's best Jewish families, whereas Sunny's date is a "Yid." Like her mother, Lala

exalts their social position and looks down on people not of their milieu. Thus, Lala is delighted by Peachy's proposal, despite the utter lack of romance or emotion involved.

Peachy

See Sylvan Weil

Sylvan Weil

Sylvan "Peachy" Weil hails from a good Jewish family in Lake Charles, Louisiana. He has come to Atlanta with his family, and Lala and Boo have their eyes set on him as a Ballyhoo date. He is uncouth, socially inappropriate, and either completely unaware or disinterested in the offenses he inflicts on others, particularly Joe. Despite these glaring faults, Lala is delighted with his marriage proposal.

Themes

Social Standing

Social standing plays an important role in Boo's world. Her family numbers among the best Jewish families in Atlanta. Adolph is a past president of the restricted Standard Club, and their family home is the only Jewish household on Habersham Road. Boo wants her daughter to associate only with the right kind of Jews. For instance, she disparages the sorority bid because "Nobody but *the other kind* belong to A E Phi." She encourages Lala to try to become popular, insisting, "Your place in society sits there waiting for you, and you do nothing about it." The importance of social standing eventually allows even the socially awkward Lala to make a good marriage. Peachy Weil, himself uncouth and offensive, proposes to Lala. Because he is from one of the finest Jewish families in the South, Boo is ecstatic. Similarly, Peachy's father approves of his son's engagement to Lala because he and his wife know "what they're getting here, all the way back on both sides."

Other members of the family are also affected by the concept of social standing. While Lala disparages her mother's class presumptions, she is not above using their status to impress Joe, making sure that he knows that their address is "about the best" in town. When she gets upset because Joe prefers Sunny to her, she lashes out at Sunny, telling her that Joe is just a "New York Yid," whereas she will be going to Ballyhoo with someone who belongs there—"a Louisiana Weil." Sunny's education also reflects her background—it is not a coincidence that she is majoring in sociology at the elite, private Wellesley College. There she reads books with socialist leanings like Upton Sinclair's *The Profits of Religion,* which, according to Joe, glorifies the "unwashed masses and the beauty of the working class."

Assimilation

The Levys, Freitags, and Weils represent those families who emigrated from Europe generations ago and assimilated to the United States fairly quickly. Assimilation is a common practice for immigrants, and for many cultures, success is indicated by integration into mainstream society. Unlike the newer Jewish immigrants, both the Levy and Weil families claim an extended southern lineage. Peachy's family has been in Louisiana for one hundred and fifty years, and they have no relatives remaining in Europe. This family history contributes to their status as the "Finest family in the South!" The Levys and Freitags also have an extended southern lineage. Boo takes great pride in the fact that great grandma's cousin Clemmie was the "first white child born in Atlanta." The assimilation of the Levy/Freitag family is apparent in Boo's claims to connections and birthright. However, the assimilation process also poses social and personal problems. Does the family's birthright give them claim to inferior status in southern society, or does it give them claim to a religious heritage that dates back more than two thousand years?

Though the characters believe that being as much like their Christian southern neighbors as possible represents the pinnacle of success, assimilation does not always bring positive transformations. As Stefan Kanfer points out in the *New Leader,* one of the undercurrents of the play is "Sunny's feelings of rootlessness—her antecedents make the coed too foreign for WASP acceptance, yet she knows nothing about the traditions or lore of Judaica." The assimilation of Jewish families who have been in the United States for a long period of time also leads them to look down on the newer immigrants, who tend to be those from Eastern Europe, contributing to the divisions that exist between these two groups.

War and Anti-Semitism

The war in Europe provides a backdrop to the play. Although European events are only mentioned in passing, they are relevant because World War II has become a symbol of rampant anti-Semitism. Adolf Hitler brought his anti-Semitic feelings to the forefront of Germany's social policy in the 1930s, and with Germany's conquest of other European countries, Hitler was able to spread his message (often already in existence among other European populations) and murder about two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population. Among the Levy/Freitag household, however, with the exception of Adolph, no one pays attention to events in Europe. At one point, Adolph verbalizes his concern over Hitler's attack on Poland, and Boo's response is that he should be concerned for his family instead. On the night of Ballyhoo, the topic of the war comes up among Peachy, Joe, and Adolph. Peachy's only response to Joe's worry about his relatives in Poland and Russia is the flippant, "Let's hope they can dodge bullets." In 1939, many Americans were still hoping that the United States could keep out of the European conflict, and Peachy's feeling about the matter—that it is Europe's problem and Europeans should figure it out themselves—is reflective of popular opinion at that time. It would seem that the Levys and Freitags would be more sensitive to the persecution of their fellow Jews in Europe, but they have internalized the anti-Semitism of the society that surrounds them to such an extent that they subconsciously inflict it on their fellow brethren in Europe.

Style

Ending

The ending of *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* remains ambiguous. Does the family's Sabbath dinner represent Sunny's fantasy of the future, or does it represent a future that has become realized? The scene is so brief that it is impossible to formulate an accurate answer to this question. However, whether the scene is fantasy or reality, it does highlight the direction in which at least one member of the family is headed; for Sunny, the future clearly holds a new interest in Judaism. With Joe's help, Sunny will try to steer her family to learn more about their religious and cultural heritage.

Comedy

The Last Night of Ballyhoo is a comedy. Many of the characters indulge in deadpan banter and one-liners. When Lala emerges dressed in a hoop skirt like Scarlett O'Hara wears in *Gone With the Wind,* Adolph calls her Scarlett O'Goldberg. To explain why he never married, Adolph tells Sunny that he fell in love with a girl he saw on the streetcar every day. She was the love of his life because "I never saw her for more than twenty minutes at a time, and I had no dealings with her whatsoever." The characters also evoke humorous images of unfortunate people. Boo foresees Lala's future if she doesn't get married soon: she will be keeping house for eighty-five cats and getting arrested for running down the street wrapper. Reba counsels Lala against going on a date with Ferdie Nachman because "his father picked his nose during his own wedding ceremony." Reba's statement that higher education can lead to insanity is one of the funniest non sequiturs (a statement that does not follow logically from anything previously said). Reba recalls the story of Viola Feigenbaum, the "least hideous" of seven hideous sisters. Viola, being the smartest, attended teacher training school but then went crazy on the train, taking off all her clothes and running up and down the coach.

Setting

The play is set in Atlanta in 1939, a location that is particularly relevant because the South was rife with prejudice. In the 1930s (and for several decades thereafter), white society significantly discriminated against African Americans. They were segregated at schools and restaurants, on buses and in train stations, and into their own communities; African Americans lived a separate life from white southerners. While Jewish southerners are not excluded nearly to that extent, they too are excluded from certain institutions, such as the Venetian Club. By setting the play in the South, Uhry is able to subtly remind the audience of the South's longstanding history of prejudice. In such an environment, intraethnic prejudice is more likely to develop.

Historical Context

The Great Depression

The United States spent the 1930s in the midst of the Great Depression. This global economic recession was the worst depression in American history. Thousands of banks closed, leaving their customers with lost savings. Unemployment jumped dramatically, from just less than four percent in 1929 when the depression began; it reached its height in 1933, when about twenty-five percent of the U.S. population was out of work. By the late 1930s, many families had begun to feel some economic relief, but the depression did not end until the United States entered World War II in 1941.

Popular Culture in the 1930s

Americans turned to the movies as a way of forgetting their problems during the Great Depression. *Gone With the Wind,* based on a novel by Margaret Mitchell, became the most popular film of the decade. Comedies and musicals were also popular. However, some filmmakers illustrated social issues. *Sullivan's Travels* depicted the hobo life, and *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* criticized the wealthy.

Literature of the 1930s often reflected a new wave of realism. Books like John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* portrayed the hard life of migrant farm workers as they traveled to California in search of a better life. Richard Wright's *Native Son* reflected a young African-American man's bitter experiences in a racist world.

Theater of the 1930s saw a shift throughout the course of the decade. At the beginning of the 1930s, many plays dealt with the country's labor and class struggles, while some plays, like Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes,* attacked upper-class greed. By the late 1930s, however, the most popular plays celebrated traditional American values, such as Thornton Wilder's *Our Town.*

World War II

War broke out in Europe in 1939. Adolf Hitler had already annexed Austria and Czechoslovakia to the Third Reich, and on the morning of September

1, 1939, Hitler announced the annexation of Danzig, a Polish port city with a large German population. At the same time, Germany began a massive attack on Poland. Nazi troops and tanks entered the country by land, while the air force bombed from above. With this act of aggression, Hitler broke the pact that he had made in 1938 with Great Britain and France, promising to make no more claims on territory in Europe. Within forty-eight hours of the German attack, Britain and France had declared war on Germany. However, they took no military action to turn back the German assault, and Poland was easily subdued, surrendering on September 17.

In western Europe, France and Britain began mobilizing for a war, but little military action took place. Newspapers began to speak of a "phony war" in the region, but this terminology proved invalid on April 9, 1940, with Germany's invasion of Denmark and Norway. Both countries quickly fell to the German onslaught and remained under German occupation until the end of the war in 1945. Hitler next turned his sights westward, invading the Low Countries in rapid succession. By June 1940, even France had fallen; Britain stood alone to face the Nazi menace.

U.S. Involvement in World War II

Throughout the 1930s, the United States had expressed its determination to remain neutral in future wars. Though some people believed that the Nazis posed a threat to the whole of civilization, most Americans did not think the United States should concern itself with Europe's war. The United States did revise the Neutrality Act in 1939 to allow American firms to sell munitions to Great Britain. After the fall of France, American sympathy for Britain increased, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt, convinced that the United States would be drawn into the war eventually, transferred fifty old American naval destroyers to Britain in 1940. Congress also passed the first national draft law to be adopted by the country during peacetime. By early 1941, the United States was selling war materials to Britain on credit, and by that autumn the U.S. Navy was involved in an undeclared war with German submarines. On December 7, 1941, Japan, which was allied with Germany and Italy, attacked a U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and the United States officially joined the war on the side of the Allies.

Critical Overview

The Last Night of Ballyhoo was originally commissioned by the Alliance Theatre Company for presentation at Atlanta's 1996 Olympic Arts Festival. It immediately drew an appreciative audience, including Michael Sommers, who introduced the play to the American Theater Critics Association (ACTA) prize-awarding committee. According to Sommers, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* was full of "tasty regional talk, seriocomic situations, and well-crafted realistic form." *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* went on to win an ACTA citation as an outstanding new play.

In 1997, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* opened on Broadway, and the majority of theater critics responded as favorably as earlier audiences had. Greg Evans called it a "winning new play" in *Variety* and made special note of the "wonderfully crafted script." Richard Zoglin pointed out in *Time,* "Uhry juggles a lot of elements with no evident strain, creating a believable family that seems both quirky and emblematic." Edward J. Mattimoe wrote in *America* of the drama's pathos, calling it a "human comedy," one that ends in both laughter and tears. *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* won a Tony Award for the best play of the 1997 season.

Uhry had first come to national attention ten years earlier, with his prize-winning *Driving Miss Daisy*. *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* bore certain resemblance to the earlier play; it too was set in Atlanta among upper-class Jews. *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* also reunited crucial members of *Driving Miss Daisy*—playwright, actor, and director—so it is not surprising that *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* would be compared to its predecessor. Like the earlier play, wrote Don Shewey in *American Theatre,* "it operates by stealth, adopting a disarmingly conventional form to tell a story we haven't quite heard before." Evans agreed that, with its "abundant humor" and "laugh-provoking dialogue," *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* was "a more than worthy successor" to *Driving Miss Daisy*. To Zoglin, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* was actually superior, "richer, more textured than the rather schematic Miss Daisy."

Critics also responded to what Sommers called "the dark central issue the play so winningly illuminates": the treacherous place of Jews within a Christian society. According to Zoglin's analysis, the Levy and Freitag family is forced into a "tricky dance of assimilation and accommodation." Because of their religious background, the family experiences discrimination, yet they also discriminate against those Jews they deem to be of lower quality. Mattimoe noted, "There are enough unsettling comments about Jewish people—made by Jewish people—to show that any ethnic group, once put down absorbs some of the negativity themselves." More than one critic commented on the audience's shocked response to Boo Levy's use of the word "kike." This very real discomfort reflects the unsettling facts of discrimination. Yet, as Shewey wrote, "Part of the triumph of *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* is that Uhry allows ethical dilemmas and class tensions to arise without turning his characters into stick figures or the drama into a predetermined 'issue' play."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Korb has a master's degree in English literature and creative writing and has written for a wide variety of educational publishers. In the following essay, Korb discusses the anti-Semitism felt by the Jewish family in Uhry's play.

Uhry's *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* is a humorous play that still raises a serious social issue: anti Semitism inflicted by Jews. Although the Levy/ Freitag family lives in a society in which Jews are discriminated against on a regular basis and although they personally have experienced prejudicial treatment because of their Jewish faith, they persistently regard "the other kind" of Jews—those who do not descend from German Jewry—as socially inferior. Like their friends, the Nachmans, Strausses, and Lillienthals, they see nothing wrong with their behavior, nor do they ever equate their prejudicial treatment of others with the discrimination that is wrought upon themselves. Indeed, their greatest efforts are seen, not in attempting to thwart discrimination but in imitating their Christian neighbors. Through their negative reaction to their Eastern European brethren as well as their own embrace of Christian traditions over Jewish ones, the family demonstrates marked anti-Semitic characteristics. This issue is compellingly explored against the hardly mentioned but ever-present backdrop of the events leading up to the European Holocaust, thus serving as a chilling reminder of the pervasive and dangerous effects of anti-Semitism, or prejudice in whatever form it chooses to take.

The play opens with a scene that sets the family's glorification of Christianity over Judaism: Lala is decorating the family Christmas tree. The fact that she is "surrounded by cardboard boxes of ornaments" clearly shows that a Christmas tree is a family tradition in the Levy/Freitag home. Boo, however, is unhappy with Lala's adorning the tree with a Christmas star. As she chastises her daughter, "Jewish Christmas trees don't have stars." A star would be as bad as setting up a manger scene on their lawn; both decorations would make people think "we're a bunch of Jewish fools pretending we're Christians." Irony abounds in this scene. First, although Boo, supported by Reba, insists that Christmas is an American holiday, on par with Valentine's Day or Halloween, it is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Second, and more notably, Boo and Reba and all of their upper-class Jewish milieu actively and eagerly take on the trappings of their Christian neighbors. They imitate the social activities of the Christians, from forming their own country club to creating a closed membership list at those clubs. As Sunny tells Joe, "Ballyhoo is asinine.... a lot of dressed up Jews dancing around wishing they could kiss their elbows and turn into Episcopalians."

Despite the pretensions that the upper-class Jews make to society, they are bitterly aware of what they lack. Lala succinctly sums up their status in this important first scene. "Guess what, Mama? We're Jews. We have no place in society," she says. Boo concedes that maybe the Levys and Freitags are "not right up there at the tip top with the best set of Christians, but we come mighty close." The fact that the family is the only Jewish household on Habersham Road supports Boo's assertion, but no one stops to analyze the dysfunction inherent in this situation; not only has the Levy/Freitag family chosen to live amidst people who do not regard them as equal, but the family also can

make no claims to actually belonging amidst these people because even they think they are actually inferior.

For the most part, however, the Levy/Freitag family does their best at overlooking their self-perceived inadequacies resulting from their Judaism. December 25 finds them in a living room strewn with the remains of ribbons, wrapping paper, and gift boxes. In stark contrast to this celebration is their ignorance of and disinterest in Passover, an important Jewish holiday. When Joe mentions this holiday, Boo has to remind her daughter of "That time we went to the Seder supper with one of Daddy's business acquaintances.... You were in the sixth grade." Lala's remembrance of this holy occasion, however, centers on spilling red wine and being terribly bored by "all the ishkabibble."

The family feels drawn to Christian traditions despite the fact that they have experienced very real instances of discrimination. For example, the only reason Ballyhoo even takes place is that southern Jews were denied entrance to the private country clubs. More telling and more personal, however, is Sunny's recollection of being discriminated against the summer she was going into seventh grade. At the Venetian Club Pool with her best friend, Sunny's name was called out by a man who "said I had to get out of the water." She tells Joe, "And Vennie Alice asked him why and he said Jews weren't allowed to swim in the Venetian pool. And all the kids got very quiet and none of them would look at me." The reaction to this discrimination also provides insight into the relationship between the Jews and their Christian friends. Sunny recalls how Vennie's mother called up her mother and apologized, and she and Vennie "stayed friends—sort of. Neither of us ever mentioned it again, but it was always there." Sunny's recollection shows that while southern society prefers to pretend that such discriminatory treatment does not happen, they are aware of these instances as well as the inherent validity behind them; after all, no one protests such rules or such humiliations. Like the rest of her community, Sunny, who always wanted "to be like everybody else," accepts that being Jewish and being Christian are distinct from each other. Interestingly, Joe agrees with her but for a very dissimilar reason; where he comes from, in Brooklyn, Jews are proud of being Jews.

More disturbing than the glorification of Christianity, however, is the Jews' imitation of Christian behavior to such an extent that they, too, have created their own social echelon. In their class system, Jews like themselves—from German background—are at the top, whereas Jews who do not come from a German background, or Jews "east of the Elbe," the river that separated Germany from Czechoslovakia, are seen as vastly inferior. Joe's entry into their lives sets off this alarming and perhaps unexpected prejudice. Many theater critics commented on the surprised gasp that Boo's words, which close the second scene of act I, drew from the audience: "Adolph, that kike you hired has no manners."

To Boo and her Jewish set, Joe is simply one of "the other kind." Although Jews of Eastern European ancestry are different from German-descended Jews, no one really specifies in what way. Reba claims that a person can identify them merely by the "way they look," but despite her foolish words, when Sunny tells her mother of the Ballyhoo

date with Joe, Reba refers to him as "that good-looking boy who works for Adolph" and is pleased. Ironically, the whole family recognizes that Lala looks more like "the other kind" than the good kind of Jew; Lala herself regards her physical characteristics in comparison to the blond, Aryan-featured Sunny as proof that God prefers her cousin. "Look at my hair! Look at my skin! Look at my eyes! Listen to my voice!" she exclaims to Sunny. "I try, and I try, and no matter what I do it shows, and there's just nothing I can do about it." Physically then, Lala is like Joe: "too Jewish."

The family is forced to deal with their anti-Semitism on the night of Ballyhoo. The insensitive Peachy lets Joe know that the Standard Club is restricted. By rights, people like Joe, "where you people went.... The Other Kind.... Russian. Orthodox," go to the Progressive Club. The Standard Club is historically limited to German Jews, although they have started to let in a few non-German Jews, "but they try to only take ones that are toilet trained." The argument that Joe and Sunny have as a result of this revelation is the most pointed discussion of Jewish anti-Semitism in the play. Despite her experience of being discriminated against because of her Judaism, it never occurred to Sunny that Joe would not want to be at a place that would discriminate against him because of his particular Jewish background. When Sunny tells him that the discrimination practiced by the Standard is not the same as the discrimination that was perpetrated against her by the Venetian Club, that in fact she regards herself and Joe as "equals," Joe becomes extremely offended. Then Sunny tells him how embarrassed she felt at his impolite behavior of leaving her alone at the dance. She says, "How could you know any better?" which Joe interprets as Sunny saying that he could not possibly know any better because "the other kind" of Jew lacks the manners that the genteel German Jews possess. "Jew hater talk, . . ." he lashes out. "I been hearing that garbage all my life, but damned if I thought I'd ever hear it coming out of a Jewish girl."

As Edward J. Mattimoe wrote in *America,* this anti-Semitism inflicted by Jews "show[s] that any ethnic group, once put down, absorbs some of the negativity into themselves." The Jewish self-hatred plays out against the muted backdrop of the events in Europe. By December 1939, German Jews, living under the Third Reich, had already been deprived of their citizenship and segregated from Aryan society, and they had experienced numerous physical assaults in attacks on their person and in the destruction of their businesses and synagogues. As Don Shewey writes in *American Theatre,* "It's a mark of Uhry's skilful understatement that, without a word being spoken, the audience is agonizingly aware that on the other side of the Atlantic, Hitler's 'final solution' is making a mockery of distinctions between German Jews and 'the other kind.'" The historical knowledge of the losses the Holocaust inflicted upon the Jewish population renders Sunny's belief that Hitler is an "aberration" painfully and terrifyingly naïve.

The Last Night of Ballyhoo ends with the challenge it presents to the family to reject this ethnic negativity and stop turning on each other and, instead, to recognize the fallacy of Jewish anti-Semitism. They must embrace themselves as they are, with Jewish warts and all, and come to the recognition that being Jewish does not make them inferior, no matter what their Christian counterparts might think. The final image the play presents

shows a future in which Sunny, at the very least, has come to learn about and value her Jewish heritage.

Source: Rena Korb, Critical Essay on *The Last Night of Ballyhoo,* in *Drama for Students,* The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

Dybiec Holm is a published writer and editor with a master's degree in natural resources. In this essay, Dybiec Holm discusses multiple sources of tension in Uhry's story that make it so effective.

In all storytelling, including drama, tension is a necessary element that makes the story interesting. Tension can be created by conflicts that characters need to overcome or by obstacles that their environment presents to these characters. In Alfred Uhry's *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, tensions abound, creating layers of nuances and dilemmas. These make for an interesting play and quickly let one know that this story goes far beyond the surface.

The primary source of tension in this play is the characters' shame and denial of their own Jewish religion. But Uhry takes an already interesting premise and adds additional twists. The characters live in the South and are a minority in Atlanta, a predominantly Christian community. It is 1939, and Hitler is in power across the ocean. Jews in this community label each other in a racist fashion; German-American Jews feel that they are superior to Eastern European-American Jews.

Uhry's loosely knit, extended family of characters knows little about their Jewish heritage and chooses not to pursue it. So desperate are these people to fit in with the rest of Atlanta's non-Jewish population that the Freitag/Levy family puts up a Christmas tree every year, though no evidence of menorah candles (to celebrate Hanukkah) is found in the house. Boo, a character completely concerned with presenting the right appearance to society, justifies the presence of their Christmas tree without a star by making it clear to her daughter Lala that "Jewish Christmas trees don't have stars." Boo walks a fine tightrope between realizing she is not a Christian and not wanting to seems too Jewish:

Boo: If you have a star on the tree, you might as well
go . . . buy a manger scene and stick it in the
front year.
Lala: I'd like that.
Boo: Fine. Then everybody that drives down
Habersham Road will think we're a bunch of
Jewish fools pretending we're Christian.

Both Boo and Lala emphasize that their presence on Habersham Road is significant, since it's the most upscale street in town and they are the only Jews on it (the other Jewish family lives "at the tacky end of the street where it doesn't count").

Boo is so concerned with appearances that she expends great energy to make sure that Lala doesn't foul up and make the rest of the family look bad. She berates Lala for

getting rejected by a college sorority, but Uhry never loses sight of the opportunity to show the audience the strange tightrope that these Southern Jews walk:

Boo: You keep making the same mistakes over and
over! Your place in society sits there waiting
for you and you do nothing about it.
Lala: Guess what, Mama? We're Jews. We have no place in society.
Boo: We most certainly do! Maybe not right up there
at the tip-top with the best set of Christians, but
we come mighty close. After all, your great-
grandma's Cousin Clemmie was—
Boo and Lala: The first white child born in Atlanta!

Even the superficial and immature Lala has a sense for what their community really thinks about Jews. Much later, Lala again shows evidence of shame and self-hate when she compares her looks with Sunny's:

Lala: Oh come on, Sunny. You've always gotten the
attention. Even from God!
Sunny: What?
Lala: He didn't give you one Jewish feature and look
at me!
Sunny: That's absurd.
Lala: Look at my hair! Look at my
skin! Look at my eyes! Listen to my voice! I try and try and no
matter what I do it shows and there's just
nothing I can do about it.

For Lala, her looks are the ultimate stamp of disgrace, something that cannot be disguised or hidden, something she is stuck with.

In scenes like these, Uhry plays with tension. The obsession that Lala and Boo have with appearances and societal mores is paired (and sometimes overshadowed) by the larger tension that these Jews are never completely accepted by society around them. For example, both Lala and Boo are determined to find Lala a date for Ballyhoo, a prestigious holiday dance for Atlanta's well-off, young Jews. But even the prestige of Ballyhoo is dampened with the knowledge that the local Christian population has their own holiday party, and Jews are not invited. Adolph and Joe discuss the Standard Club, the country club where Ballyhoo will be held:

Joe: Sounds pretty spiffy.
Adolph: I wouldn't say that.
Joe: Jews only?
Adolph: You bet.
Joe: No Christians allowed?

Adolph: Technically, but the truth is none of 'em would wanna come anyway. They've got clubs of their own, which they won't let us near.

Then, in the next line of dialog, Joe gets his first hint of discrimination between Jews, though he does not learn the details until later:

Joe: So this is where all the Jews go.
Adolph: Oh no. We're restricted too.
Joe: What do you mean?

With some discomfort, Adolph explains that only wealthy Jews get into this club. It is much later that Joe learns the real reason: the club is open to German-American Jews and closed to American Jews of Eastern European descent. It is yet another layer of tension that Uhry weaves into this play.

With the introduction of Joe Farkas, the Jew from New York, Uhry places further illumination on the Freitag/Levy family's shame and denial of their own heritage. Joe, a practicing Jew from a community where people are proud of their heritage, is a perfect foil for the denial and ignorance of people like Boo and Lala. Even the well-educated Sunny (who is a foil herself for the less-sophisticated Lala) knows very little about her Jewish traditions. But she knows enough to see that she does not fit in. And Sunny reveals, inadvertently, that she has some discomfort with the dysfunctional tightrope her family walks regarding their religious beliefs.

Joe: Are you people really Jewish?
Sunny: 'Fraid so. A hundred percent back—on both sides.
Joe: 'Fraid so?
Sunny: Oh, you know what I mean.
Joe: Yeah. You mean you're afraid you're Jewish.
Sunny: No. Of course not. That's just an expression.
Joe: Ok. What do you mean?
Sunny: I don't think I mean anything. It was just something to say. Can we please talk about something else?

Joe's initial comment is also telling; these Jews are so unlike the Jews whom he lives among that he questions whether they are really Jewish.

Uhry also uses Joe to vocalize things Jewish, such as common Yiddish words like *klutz* or the Yiddish word for William (Velvel). It's even more telling that the Freitag/Levy family usually does not know what the Yiddish words mean. Joe is also able to

elaborate on traditions of which the family is either ignorant or disdainful, including Passover:

Lala: You have to sit through one of those boring things every single year? One night of all that ish-kabibble was enough to last me the rest of my life.
Boo: Now, Lala. Be tolerant.
Joe: I sit through two every year. First night at Aunt Sadie's. Second night at home.
Lala: Poor baby!
Joe: Are you kidding? I wouldn't miss either of 'em for anything in the world.

Not lost in the exchange is the irony of Boo telling Lala, a Jew, to be tolerant of Jewish customs. These Jews truly want to separate themselves from anything Jewish.

Shamed by their own Jewishness, the Freitag/ Levy family holds onto the hope that as German-American Jews, they are at least superior to other Eastern-European American Jews. When Joe reveals his lineage ("Russia, Poland, Hungary. My family came from everywhere"), Boo takes an immediate dislike to him. In one of the most explosive and loaded moments in the play, Joe dodges taking Lala to a movie. After he leaves, Boo says, "Adolph, that kike you hired has no manners."

Because Sunny is more aware and educated than the self-centered Lala, it makes sense that Sunny will, in the course of this play, honestly confront her own discomfort and puzzlement with the family shame. Sunny even has a hurtful story of discrimination from her own past that she shares

with Joe. But Lala's ignorance provides the perfect opportunity for Uhry to introduce another character to demonstrate the tension of self-hatred and denial that is so present in this play. Peachy Weil provides an excellent foil: he's the opposite of Joe; he's ashamed of his Jewishness (but vehemently proud to be a German-American Jew rather than an Eastern European one); he's rich, of old southern money, and extremely concerned with appearances. Uhry makes Peachy's obnoxious and ignorant persona obvious from the start. Here, Peachy not so subtly alludes to his alleged superiority as a German-American Jew, while making some pretty heartless statements:

Joe: Howza' war news, Mr. A?
Adolph: Not so good.
Joe: Yeah, I got relatives over there.
Adolph: Poland?
Joe: Uuh-hunh. And Russia.
Adolph: Well. Let's hope for the best.
Joe: Yep.
Peachy: Let's hope they can dodge bullets.

Joe: Excuse me?
Peachy: Hey! Easy there, bud! None of this mess is my fault. It ain't even my problem.
Joe: That right?
Peachy: You bet. It's Europe's problem and they gotta solve it on their own. Right, Adolph?
Adolph: I'd say that depends on where your family is.
Peachy: Well, mine's been in Louisiana for a hundred and fifty years.

At times, Uhry's characters touch upon subjects that could be considered feminist or gender role issues. These create interesting minor tensions of their own, though not as important to the story as some of the other contrasts that have been presented. Still, these moments serve to further compare the difference between Joe's background and the Freitag/Levy family. Boo, for example, seems surprised and none too pleased when Joe informs her that he can cook and do dishes. However, when Sunny later mentions that she makes coffee in her dorm room all the time, Lala snipes, "I can imagine what that must taste like!" It is as if Lala is determined to hang on to something that she might be able to do better than Sunny, even if it is traditional "women's work." It is a credit to Uhry's talent as a writer that he manages to keep the tone of the play both light and serious at the same time, amidst the sniping that takes place in this family.

The Last Night of Ballyhoo is a complex play with many opportunities for tension and for the exploration of troubling subjects. Despite this, the story manages to maintain a simultaneous mood of comedy. Don Shewey of *American Theatre* describes the play as edging "toward a sitcom formula without falling into it." Amazingly, Uhry accomplishes the balance of comedy and seriousness, of subtlety and directness, all within the layers of tension that this story encompasses.

Source: Catherine Dybiec Holm, Critical Essay on *The Last Night of Ballyhoo,* in *Drama for Students,* The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #3

Covintree is a graduate of Randolph-Macon Woman's College, with a degree in English. In this essay, Covintree discusses the impact of southern culture on Jewish identity for the characters in Uhry's play.

To be southern or to be Jewish in 1939 is to be part of a specific community with principles, ceremonies, language, attitude, and actions that represent and reinforce the culture. To be southern *and* Jewish is to be a part of a unique community that Alfred Uhry focuses on in his play *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*. Though the play primarily takes place in the house of Adolph Freitag, it coincides with two major events—the opening of the movie *Gone With the Wind* and Hitler's rise to power—that stand like bookends at either side of the story and its characters. These events and the characters' reaction to them reflect the struggle for allegiance this family must find. Are they true to their southern upbringing or their Jewish religion? This family is both southern and Jewish, and they stand in the midst of both cultures. As Tony Horwitz states in his book *Confederates in the Attic*, "It was the honor-bound code of the Old South. One's people before one's principles." For Jews in the South, the statement is compounded: who are the people, Jews or southerners, and which are the principles, orthodoxy or upbringing? The answer to this question for a southern Jew could completely alter his or her life. In *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, Uhry argues that the Freitag family has misunderstood their priorities and improperly answered this question. These southern Jews have currently chosen the South before their Jewishness, but when introduced to Joe Farkas, the Freitags are forced to examine their southern ness and their Jewishness.

For years, the Freitags and Levys have lived together as southerners. Since the deaths of Adolph and Boo's brother and then Boo's husband, Adolph has shared his home with his sister, Beulah, his sister-in-law, Reba, and their daughters, Lala and Sunny, respectively. Like others of southern high society, Beulah Levy goes by her nickname, Boo, Adolph is a past president of the club, and they can trace their bloodline to "the first white child born in Atlanta."

Lala Levy is a typical southern girl. She and her mother, Boo, are constantly worrying about keeping up appearances in the city of Atlanta. From the very first pages of the play, Lala's two main concerns appear to be seeing the new movie *Gone With the Wind* and finding an appropriate escort to the social event of the season, Ballyhoo. Boo is constantly pressuring her to make acceptable choices and to rise to her place in society. She is embarrassed at her daughter's choice to leave college after the disgrace of not getting into the right sorority. She vigorously works to ensure a date to Ballyhoo for Lala and to marry her off to someone acceptable and appropriate.

As German Jews, Boo and Lala clearly see themselves as superior to "the other kind" of Jews, the Orthodox Jews from Eastern Europe. But Lala, as with the rest of her family, is keenly aware of how being Jewish means that there are those in society superior to her. Nothing will ever make her completely acceptable in southern Christian society. The family struggles with being a part of the Jewish upper class, knowing they will never be

a part of the Christian upper class. Adolph is past president of the Standard Club, a Jewish club, just as restrictive but started because Jews were not allowed in the other clubs. Lala has been raised with southern culture at the forefront, but she cannot reconcile the fact that her looks will always proclaim her as Jewish:

Look at my hair! Look at my skin! Look at my eyes!
Listen to my voice! I try and I try and no matter what
I do it shows and there's just nothing I can do about it.

Lala blames her Jewish features for her inability to get a date to Ballyhoo and perhaps for her social failures at college.

As Sunny tells Joe, she and her family are a part of a class of "dressed up Jews . . . wishing they could kiss their elbows and turn into Episcopalians." Perhaps this is why there is a Christmas tree in the Freitag home, a lifetime tradition for Sunny, a tradition that Boo justifies by comparing it to a Halloween decoration and banning the star. Perhaps, like other southern Jews of the time, their meals are not completely kosher, their weenie-roasters not strict about using all-beef hot dogs. Tony Horwitz gives an example in his book *Confederates in the Attic* of one such restaurant that fuses Jewish and southern culture: "Gershon Weinberg's Real Pork Barbeque."

This desire to be something else also explains Lala's obsession with *Gone With the Wind*, a Hollywood movie that focuses on the survival of plantation owners following Emancipation near the end of the Civil War. In his book *Confederates in the Attic*, Horwitz argues that the movie "had done more to keep the Civil War alive, and to mold its memory, than any history book or event since Appomattox." Though Jews went back as far as the Civil War, the movie clearly omits this. When Lala talks of writing a related story, she wants to name the plantation "something elegant and pure and real Protestant." She chooses the name of her own street, not because her own Jewish family lives there but because it is a street that primarily belongs to "half the membership of the Junior League!"

It could be assumed that the Freitags and Levys are a family of Reform Jews, but they are so far reformed that they seem removed from the real Jewish center of this culture. As Uhry himself confesses to Alex Witchel in the *New York Times* article "Remembering Prejudice, of a Different Sort," this family is "ashamed of being Jewish," and there is "an ignorance, a hole where the Judaism should be." It is not enough that there is a Christmas tree in their house, but none of the family members even knows what time of year Passover occurs. The Freitags do not know the Hebrew name for it, Pesach. They respond to the mere mention of the holiday as if it has nothing to do with their heritage, calling the seder meal "interesting" (Boo) and "boring" (Lala) and referring to the Hebrew prayers as "all of that ish-kabibble." Even one of the most sacred of Jewish holidays and the basic language that surrounds it are foreign to the Freitags.

When Joe Farkas enters the home of this family, he is entering a Jewish home that is southern first and Jewish much further down the line. Of course, Joe is a part of "the

other kind," an Orthodox Jew raised in New York on food from the "Old Country," who "think[s] being Jewish means being Jewish." He finds this type of southern Jewish home completely unbelievable and questions its very validity. Boo feels no conflict of loyalty in treating him poorly, even calling him a "kike," as she believes that Eastern European Jews are also lower-class Jews. Of course, Joe's desire to pay for Ballyhoo and Adolph's response to the exchange briefly suggest that Boo's assumption of class is inaccurate. Still, Boo, Lala, and Peachy see no conflict in mistreating Joe because he is more Jewish than they are.

Within this family, Joe withstands hurts like the ones Sunny admits to, hurts of which she herself is afraid. Though Adolph, Reba, and Sunny treat him with general kindness, it is still clear they are unfamiliar with his type of Jewishness and are not always able to prepare him for hurtful situations. Sunny has had her own experience with being the victim of unreasonable prejudice, when she was pulled out of a country club pool as a child for being Jewish. Even though Sunny tells Joe this story, she does not forewarn him about the possible attitudes and assumptions held by those at the Standard Club for Ballyhoo. When he comes to pick her up, he is not wearing a tuxedo and does not have a corsage. He is also unaware of the restrictive attitude of the club, and so Sunny unintentionally puts Joe in a situation that is just as insulting and humiliating as her own childhood experience with prejudice was.

In addition to this personal insult, Joe is appalled that these socialite Jews barely seem aware of the rising situation with Hitler in Europe. Peachy sees no connection between himself and the Jews in Europe. With the audience's knowledge of the Holocaust, it almost becomes unreal that these Jewish characters think nothing of insulting other Jews nor of remaining ignorant to the injustices caused by the Hitler regime. In a time when southern society is so careful to separate types of Jewish people, there is a German government putting all Jews into one community, one that cannot tolerate any type of Jew.

Adolph and Sunny are perhaps the only people in their family even slightly aware of what it might really mean to be Jewish and its universal connection. Sunny is a stellar student, reading forward thinkers like Upton Sinclair, yet she remains removed from these ideas, never claiming any of them personally. She is guided by her southern culture and upbringing and has many prejudices to overcome and much to learn about what it really means to be Jewish. Her romantic relationship with Joe forces her to a private off-stage epiphany during which she must reassess the questions of who are her people, what are her principles, and how do these two things share company?

Sunny's answers to these questions comprise the final scene of the play. Though the scene could be argued either as fantasy or reality, it clearly answers the question of southern/Jewish loyalty for her, for Joe, for the rest of the cast, and for the audience. Sunny's ideal wish, her "something good," is her answer—a shared Sabbath with her family, a moment when community is formed through the deep bond of the Jewish religion. Through Sunny, Uhry has also answered this question, scripting every character to speak in Hebrew. Uhry ends the play with simple stage directions, "the

candles shine," closing the play with this vision of hope and religious devotion and making his point and his position clear.

Source: Kate Covintree, Critical Essay on *The Last Night of Ballyhoo,* in *Drama for Students,* The Gale Group, 2002.

Topics for Further Study

Do you think the final scene of the family's Sabbath dinner is fantasy or reality? Explain your answer.

Find out more information about American-Jewish reactions to the persecutions of European Jews. What efforts did American Jews make to help European Jews? What additional efforts do you think they might have made?

Investigate other forms of racism that took place in the South in 1930s, such as discrimination against African Americans.

Write a journal entry, as if you were Joe, explaining how you feel about the Levy/Freitag family.

Find out more about Jewish life in the 1930s. Compare Jewish life in the South to Jewish life in the North. Are the characters in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* accurate reflections of their time period?

Do you think the play is more comedic or more serious? Do you think the use of comedy is an effective tool for putting forth important social issues? Explain your answer.

Compare and Contrast

1930s: Over 100,000 German Jews enter the United States between 1933 and 1939, but many, many more Jews are denied entry because of existing quota laws. Most of these Jews will die in Nazi concentration camps.

Today: Between 1991 and 1998, 54,900 Germans immigrate to the United States. During this same period, another 371,658 immigrants are admitted as permanent residents under existing refugee acts.

1930s: In 1939, almost all of Europe is involved in World War II. However, the United States still remains out of the war, although it provides Great Britain with military supplies.

Today: In 2001, in response to a terrorist attack, the United States launches its war on terrorism. In October, the United States begins bombing raids on terrorist training camps and other military targets in Afghanistan, which is believed to shelter the terrorists responsible for the attacks

on the United States. The United States has the backing of NATO in this assault.

1930s: The most popular film of the decade is 1939's *Gone with the Wind,* a technicolor epic. For years, the film is the leader in box office receipts.

Today: *Titanic,* made in 1997, is one of the most popular films of the 1990s. It grosses more than $600 million, giving it the alltime number one box office ranking.

1930s: Americans entertain themselves by going to the movies, listening to radio programs, listening to music, and reading. Clark Gable, who stars in *Gone with the Wind,* is a leading heartthrob.

Today: In addition to attending movies, watching television, and listening to music, many Americans find entertainment on the World Wide Web. On the Web, people can download music and movies, communicate via email, make purchases, read magazines, and conduct any number of other activities.

What Do I Read Next?

Uhry's *Driving Miss Daisy* (1987) is the play that rocketed the author to success. Uhry won the Pulitzer Prize for this play about a southern Jewish matron's decades-long relationship with her African-American chauffeur.

Lanford Wilson's play *Talley's Folly* (1980) is set in the South in the 1940s. It tells of the courtship of a Protestant woman by her persistent Jewish suitor.

Many critics have compared *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* to Tennessee Williams's play *The Glass Menagerie* (1944). One of Williams's finest dramas, this play revolves around a down-and-out St. Louis family. In hopes of finding a husband for her painfully shy daughter, Amanda encourages her son to bring "gentlemen callers" home to his sister, but her plans backfire.

Wendy Wasserstein's play *The Sisters Rosenswieg* (1992) deals with issues of self-hatred among expatriate Jewish New Yorkers. The sisters are three Brooklyn-born women who gather to celebrate one sister's birthday and end up confronting their past and future.

Southern writer Eudora Welty's novel *Delta Wedding* (1946) focuses on the relationships between members of a plantation family gathered for a wedding in 1923.

Further Study

Arad, Gulie Ne'eman, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism,* Indiana University Press, 2000.

Israeli historian Arad discusses American Jewry and their lack of significant reaction to the Nazi crisis in Europe.

Freedman, Samuel, *Jew vs. Jew: The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry,* Touchstone, 2000.

Freedman explores how relationships among American Jews have changed in the latter half of the twentieth century and offers suggestions on how American Jews can unite.

Hayward, Dave, "*Ballyhoo* and Brotherly Love: Alfred Uhry's Olympic Premiere," in *Back State,* Vol. 37, No. 34, August 23, 1996, p. 39.

Hayward and Uhry discuss the genesis of *The Last Night of Ballyhoo.*

Sterritt, David, "A Voice for Themes Other Entertainers Have Left Behind," in *Christian Science Monitor,* July 29, 1996.

Uhry talks about the family in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo,* their prejudices, and his own interest in exploring his religion in his writing.

Witchel, Alex, "Remembering Prejudice, of a Different Sort," in *New York Times,* February 23, 1997, sec. 2, p. H5.

Witchel explores class divisions among Jews as depicted in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo.*

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Uhry, Alfred, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo,* Theater Communications Group, 1997.

Zoglin, Richard, "*The Last Night of Ballyhoo,*" in *Time,*

Vol. 149, No. 11, March 17, 1997, p. 68.

BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Drama for Students (DfS) 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, DfS 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 DfS 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 DfS 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 DfS 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 DfS 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

DfS 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 Drama 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 DfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS 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 Drama for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Drama 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 DfS 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.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

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

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Drama 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 DfS, 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 Drama 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 DfS, 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 Drama 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:

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