The Lion in Winter Study Guide

The Lion in Winter by Anthony Harvey

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Contents

Introduction

James Goldman's historical play *The Lion in Winter* depicts the interpersonal relationships among members of the English royal family on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day of the year 1183. The play is set in the castle of King Henry II of England, located in Chinon, in the English-ruled region of France. Though it was not particularly well received in its debut as a Broadway play in 1966, Goldman's screenplay adaptation of *The Lion in Winter*, which was released in 1968, won him an Academy Award (Oscar).

The Lion in Winter concerns the interpersonal dynamics and political wrangling of King Henry; his wife Eleanor, whom he has kept imprisoned in a tower for the past ten years; and their three sons, who are vying for the privilege of being named heir to the English throne. Eleanor, who has been let out of prison to celebrate Christmas with her family, favors Richard as heir, while Henry favors John. To complicate matters, the young King Philip II of France has arrived to remind Henry of a treaty he signed many years earlier, promising to marry his heir to Philip's sister Alais. However, Alais has been Henry's mistress for the past seven years, and Henry is hesitant to marry her off to any of his sons.

The Lion in Winter explores themes of dysfunctional family, political maneuvering, war and peace, as well as aging, death, inheritance, and posterity. As the principle characters plot, scheme, conspire, and counter-plot between each other, the deep-seated emotional ties between them get played out in the political arena, such that sibling rivalry and marital jealousy translate into civil war, treason, and perhaps even murder among the members of a royal nuclear family.

Author Biography

James A. Goldman was born June 30, 1927, in Chicago, Illinois. He attended the University of Chicago, graduating with a bachelor of arts degree in 1947, and went on to complete a master's degree and then a doctorate in 1950. Goldman then moved to New York City to pursue postgraduate studies in music criticism at Columbia University, but was drafted into the United States Army after two years of study. He served in the army from 1952 to 1954, during the Korean War.

After being honorably discharged from the army, Goldman decided to become a playwright instead of pursuing a career as a music critic. His first play, *They Might Be Giants*, was produced in 1961 at the Royal Theatre in Stratford, England. That same year, Goldman's second play, *Blood, Sweat, and Stanley Poole* (1961), co-written with his younger brother William Goldman, was produced on Broadway. Goldman wrote the lyrics and co-wrote the book for the musical *A Family Affair*, a comedy about the families of a bride and groom bickering over their wedding preparations, which was produced on Broadway in 1962. *The Lion in Winter*, Goldman's fourth play, was first produced on Broadway in 1966. During that same year, he collaborated with celebrated composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim on a made-for-television musical called *Evening Primrose* (1966), about a group of people secretly living in a department store.

Though not particularly successful as a stage play, the film version of *The Lion in Winter* (1968), with a screenplay by Goldman, was a box-office hit that won Goldman an Academy Award (Oscar). A motion picture adaptation of *They Might Be Giants*, for which Goldman also wrote the screenplay, was produced in 1971. That same year, *Follies* (1971), a musical about a reunion of former chorus-line showgirls, for which Goldman wrote the book, with music and lyrics by Sondheim, was produced on Broadway. A revival production of *Follies*, completely revised by Goldman, was produced in 1987. *Follies* was a popular and critical success, winning the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for best musical, as well as the Evening Standard Award and the Laurence Olivier Award for best musical.

With the success of the film adaptation of *The Lion in Winter*, Goldman earned a reputation as a screenwriter skilled at dramatizing the marital relationships of couples drawn from history and literature, such as *Nicholas and Alexandria* (1971), about the Russian Czar and Czarina; *Robin and Marian* (1976), about the legendary Robin Hood and Marian; and *White Nights* (1985), a spy thriller starring Russian ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov. Goldman also authored four novels: *Waldorf* (1965), *The Man from Greek and Roman* (1973), *Myself as Witness* (1980), and *Fulton County* (1989).

Goldman and his first wife, Marie McKeon, had two children. Goldman and McKeon divorced in 1972. In 1975, he married producer Barbara Deren. His last completed play, *Tolstoy* (1996), concerns the final weeks in the life of celebrated nineteenth-century Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy. Goldman died of a heart attack October 28, 1998, in New York City, at the age of seventy-one.

Plot Summary

Act 1, Scene 1

Act 1, scene 1 is set in the castle chamber (bedroom) of Alais (pronounced "Alice") Capet, a beautiful twenty-three-year-old woman who is the mistress of King Henry. Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry's wife, has been imprisoned by Henry in a tower for ten years, but is being let out to join the family at court for Christmas. Henry explains that, since his eldest son Henry died the previous summer, he has yet to name a new heir to his throne. He tells Alais that, while he plans to name John as heir, Eleanor wishes to see Richard made heir. Henry, who is fifty years old, points out that his primary goal is to ensure that the lands he has amassed under his rule will remain unified after his death, rather than being broken up by a civil war between his sons.

Act 1, Scene 2

Act 1, scene 2 is set in the reception hall of the castle. Richard, Geoffrey, and John, who are the sons of Henry and Eleanor, have arrived for the Christmas Eve festivities. Richard is twenty-six, Geoffrey is twenty-five, and John is sixteen. Soon Eleanor, who is sixty-one, and then Henry and Alais, enter the hall.

Finally, King Philip II of France, a young man of seventeen, arrives to discuss political matters with Henry. Based on a treaty between Henry and King Louis VII of France (Philip's father) made sixteen years earlier, Philip's sister Alais has been promised as the wife of whichever son Henry names as heir to his throne. As part of this treaty, Henry was given the French region of Vexin. Philip informs Henry that he must either marry his heir to Alais immediately, or he must return the Vexin region to French rule.

Henry explains that he has not yet decided which of his three sons to name as heir and so cannot see Alais married until he has decided whom she is to marry. He points out that if he dies without an heir and without leaving all three sons contented with their lot, a civil war will break out over the question of who is to be the next king. Philip, however, maintains his stance that either Alais must be married to an heir immediately or Henry must return the Vexin region to France.

After Philip leaves, Eleanor mentions the fact that she raised Alais, who was brought to Henry's castle as a girl and grew up there. Alais and Eleanor exchange words, clearly regarding each other as rivals for Henry's affections. After Alais leaves the room, Henry assures Eleanor that he will never set her free from imprisonment in the tower because she tried more than once in the past to lead a civil war against him. Eleanor asks Henry why he cannot simply return the Vexin region to Philip, but Henry explains that it is a strategically important territory that he cannot afford to forfeit.

Act 1, Scene 3

Act 1, scene 3 is set in Eleanor's chamber at the castle, where Henry announces that he has decided to name Richard as his heir and that Alais will be married to Richard. After Henry, Alais, and John leave the room, Eleanor points out to Richard and Geoffrey that Henry is only bluffing with this proposal and that he has no intention of naming Richard as his heir, or of marrying Richard to Alais. Eleanor attempts to convince Geoffrey and Richard to scheme with her in order to ensure that Richard marries Alais and is made heir, but both men refuse her offer.

Act 1, Scene 4

Act 1, scene 4 is set in the reception hall, where a Christmas tree has been put up. Geoffrey convinces John to side with him and Philip in starting a war against Henry. After Henry and Alais enter and the others leave the hall, Henry explains to Alais that he has no intention of marrying her to Richard or of naming Richard as heir.

Eleanor enters the hall with an armful of wrapped Christmas presents and begins to arrange them under the tree. Soon, Alais leaves the room, and Eleanor and Henry discuss the various ramifications of Henry's supposed promise to name Richard as heir. Henry tells Eleanor that he wants to take the Aquitaine region from Richard and give it to John, as compensation for not naming John as heir. Eleanor, however, insists that he not give John the Aquitaine. She begs Henry to give the Aquitaine, which was hers before she married him, back to her. It seems that although the Aquitaine is under the rule of Richard, Eleanor has the legal authority to determine whether or not Henry transfers the land to John. Henry, however, proposes that he will set Eleanor free from imprisonment if she allows him to transfer the Aquitaine to John. Eleanor responds that she will only agree to this if Henry arranges for Richard and Alais to be married immediately.

Henry agrees to Eleanor's proposal, immediately calls his sons, as well as Alais and Philip, together and informs a castle priest that he is to marry Richard and Alais that very moment. Alais protests that she does not want to marry Richard, but she is physically dragged by the others to stand with Richard before the priest. Just as the priest is about to begin the marriage rites, Henry mentions that the marriage will go through only on the condition that John is given the Aquitaine. When Richard learns of this, he refuses to go through with the wedding, and it is called off.

John is happy to learn that he is once again Henry's choice for heir. Philip calls Richard a "dunce" for not realizing that Henry never intended him to marry Alais in the first place. Philip then reminds Henry that he has a treaty to honor and that he must either marry Alais to his heir immediately or he must return the Vexin to France. Henry, however, asserts that he refuses to either see Alais married or return the Vexin, regardless of the treaty.

After Philip leaves the room, Richard tells Henry that he is prepared to go to war against his father in order to secure the throne for himself. Henry responds by informing Richard that he will be kept prisoner in the castle until Richard agrees that John will inherit the throne.

Act 1, Scene 5

Act 1, scene 5 is set in Eleanor's chamber at the castle, still on Christmas Eve. Eleanor learns that John had conspired with Philip to go to war against Henry. She explains to Geoffrey and Richard that, once she tells Henry of John's scheme against him (which was made when John believed that Richard was going to be made heir), Henry will disinherit John, and Richard will once again be named heir. She tells Richard to go to Philip and ask for aid from his soldiers to help Richard (who has been imprisoned in the castle by Henry's order) to leave the castle before she tells Henry of John's treachery.

Act 1, Scene 6

Act 1, scene 6 is set in Philip's chamber at the castle. Geoffrey knocks at the door and asks to talk with Philip, who is dressed for bed. Geoffrey informs Philip that once Henry learns that John betrayed him, he (Geoffrey) will become the favored son and be named heir. Geoffrey explains that if he is named heir, John, Richard, and Eleanor will band together to declare war against him. Thus, he asks Philip to promise to provide him with military support in exchange for which Geoffrey will give him all of England's land holdings in France.

Philip agrees to side with Geoffrey, when suddenly John, who has been hiding behind a tapestry, jumps out and accuses Geoffrey of betraying him. Geoffrey tells John that he was only bluffing and that John should have trusted him. John comments that he is not sure anymore who are his friends and who are his enemies.

Just then, Richard knocks on Philip's door. John and Geoffrey hide behind a tapestry before Philip lets Richard in. Richard tells Philip that if he provides military support for Richard to go to war against Henry for the throne, Richard will give Philip the Vexin territory as well as the region of Brittany. Richard and Philip discuss their friendship two years earlier in France, implying that they had been lovers at that time.

Just then, Henry knocks at the door, and Philip directs Richard to hide behind the bed curtains. Henry asks Philip what his strategy is at this point, and Philip states that his strategy is patience□that while he himself is young and has time on his side, Henry is getting old and the rivalry among his sons will eventually weaken him politically.

Philip then informs Henry that he and Richard were lovers when they were together in France. He explains to Henry that he never really loved Richard but that he became Richard's lover so that one day he could destroy Richard politically by informing Henry of his son's homosexuality, which would be considered a scandal. Hearing this, Richard

jumps out from behind the bed curtains and insists that Philip is lying and that Philip had truly been in love with him.

Geoffrey then jumps out from behind the tapestry and asks why he has never been considered as a possible heir to the throne, but Henry completely dismisses Geoffrey, saying he never thinks about him at all. Geoffrey then informs Henry that John has schemed against him, but Henry insists that John would never betray him. Geoffrey then pulls aside the tapestry and reveals John hiding behind it.

Realizing that John has indeed betrayed him, Henry asserts that he has no sons, that he has disowned all of his sons, and that he will be recorded in history books as a king who never had sons. Emotionally shaken by his own words, Henry staggers out of the room, crying "I've lost my boys."

Act 2, Scene 1

Act 2, scene 1 is set in Henry's chamber, where Henry and Eleanor discuss their marriage, family, and all the political scheming they have been engaged in. Henry informs Eleanor that he really wants to have their marriage annulled so that he can marry Alais and have a son with her, whom he will name as heir to the throne. He tells Eleanor that he plans on leaving that night to travel to Rome to seek the Pope's permission to have their marriage annulled.

Eleanor is clearly still in love with Henry and is devastated by the thought of him annulling their marriage and marrying someone else. She points out that, as soon as Henry leaves England to go to Rome, she, Richard, Geoffrey, and John will rise up against him and usurp his rule. Henry responds that in that case, he will lock up all three sons in the cellar while he travels to Rome, so that they cannot rise up against him while he is gone.

Act 2, Scene 2

Act 2, scene 2 is set in Alais's chamber. Henry enters and informs Alais that he is taking her to Rome to seek the Pope's permission to marry her. She points out that if they have a son together, Eleanor, Richard, Geoffrey, and John will conspire to murder the boy, so that they will not be disinherited. Alais refuses to marry Henry unless he agrees to imprison his sons for the rest of their lives. Henry responds that, in that case, he will ensure that all three of his sons are locked up forever.

Act 2, Scene 3

Act 2, scene 3 is set in the wine cellar of the castle, that same night, where Richard, Geoffrey, and John have just been locked up. Eleanor enters, carrying a tray of daggers, which she offers to her sons, bidding them to escape. They, however, agree that they do not want simply to escape, but to kill Henry.

Henry then enters the cellar with Alais. He announces that he is prepared to sentence all three sons to death for treason. He raises his sword to kill Richard but fails at the last moment, finding that he cannot bring himself to murder his own children. The three sons then grab their knives and run out of the cellar.

After Alais leaves to go upstairs, Henry and Eleanor are left alone together in the cellar. Husband and wife embrace, having reached a temporary truce. Eleanor mentions that he will be sending her back to prison for now, but Henry assures her that she will be allowed to join the family again for the Easter holiday.

Act 1, Scene 1

Act 1, Scene 1 Summary

This play places several historical characters, principally King Henry II of England and his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, into the fictionalized context of a family gathering at Christmas and dramatizes the personal and political conflicts that result. In a series of wittily written confrontations, the characters manipulate each other like pieces on a chessboard, constantly seeking weaknesses in each other and jockeying for advantage. By the end of the play the situation is the same as when it started--nothing has been resolved, but everybody, including the audience, has enjoyed the game.

The first scene takes place in the bedchamber of Henry's mistress, Alais (Alice). As Alais tries on a small crown, Henry tells her she's making a futile gesture and tells her to hurry. She says she's going to stay in her room and he can send up reports of what's happening, but he insists, saying he doesn't want to argue with her because he's got enough enemies as it is. When Alice wonders just how much of an enemy she could be, Henry tells her not much, saying she doesn't matter to the others but only to him, adding that of the many women with whom he's had affairs, he's loved none but her. Alais refers to one of those women, Rosamund, and to Eleanor. After commenting about he kept Eleanor imprisoned for 10 years and about how curious he is to see how she's aged, Henry talks about his and Eleanor's differing plans for their kingdom, how Henry wants their son, John, to be king but Eleanor wants their son, Richard. He refers to how Alais would be married to John if he became king, and Alais says she doesn't care for John and only wants to be with Henry. Henry tells her that isn't possible, reminding her that as part of his agreement with Alais' brother, King Philip of France, she is to marry the heir to the throne or else Henry has to return a key piece of land, the Vexin. This leads him to comment that he's always fallen in love with women who have the rights to land, not just Alais and the Vexin but also Eleanor and the Aquitaine, the largest and wealthiest province in France.

Alais suggests that he adored Eleanor, but Henry says he can't recall and then says that he wants Alais to come downstairs with him and be by his side when he confronts his wife and children. He says that before he dies he's got to know who's going to inherit his kingdom and says again it has to be John, talking about how much they love each other. Alais tells him none of his children love him, but Henry says that just because they fight it doesn't mean they don't care. This leads Alais to comment that she's going to fight to stay with Henry, but he assures her that his plans will enable them to stay together as well as make John king and Richard powerless. She asks when it's safe to believe him, and he says it's always safe, even when he lies. He goes on to talk about how his enemies may be smarter or more ruthless or more dishonest, but he will still beat them all and have his way. He says history will call him "a master bastard" and then invites her to go down to meet the family with him.

Act 1, Scene 1 Analysis

All the characters and many of the circumstances of this play are matters of historical record. Henry, Eleanor, their sons, and their allies all existed, as did their conflicts over land, power, and influence. At the same time, there is little information about how their relationships played out in private. This means that in general, the playwright has used facts as a springboard for a work of imagination, drawing on history to define drama and drama to illuminate history. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis, all historical references, including those related to the basic relationships, are taken as based on fact, and the focus will be less on history and more on the drama.

In this first scene, those basic relationships are carefully and effectively defined, establishing the central conflicts and setting up the drama to come. This means that the scene is basically exposition, or the establishing of the play's context, a common element in almost every work of drama but one of particular importance in this play. This is because it's essential to understand right from the beginning who is fighting over what and why since the fight itself is full of twists, turns, and manipulations.

At the core of the various conflicts--who is going to marry Alais, who is going to get control over which piece of land, who is going to become king--is the issue of who loves whom and how much. It is arguable that the characters all see love as a bargaining chip or a weapon, and that nobody truly loves anybody. It's certainly true that every character at one point or another uses love in this way, but the evidence of the text suggests that in all cases love, its presence, absence, or loss, is genuinely and deeply felt and, therefore, a powerful motivator. The key evidence in support of this theory is the way that, in general, characters react most intensely to the challenges facing them when those challenges involve betrayal of love and/or questions of whether love is real.

Three examples can be found in this scene. The first is the way Alais and Henry go to great lengths to assure each other of their love and promise to fight for each other so that their love can continue. The second can be found in Henry's comment about how much his family fights, and the subsequent suggestion that fighting doesn't mean there's no love. The third and most dramatically relevant example is how Henry's assertion that there is deep love between him and John, which foreshadows the deep disappointment they both feel when they betray each other at various points in the action. Similar assertions and betrayals appear throughout the play, becoming a kind of motif, or pattern. Such motifs are generally indications of a play's thematic point, which in the case of this play, seems connected to the idea that in spite of efforts to treat it as such, love simply is not a commodity.

The first of several other key elements of foreshadowing occurs in the references to the futile gesture of Alais putting on the crown, which foreshadows the way she is never going to be queen actually and to continue the chess metaphor, is going to remain just a pawn. Other foreshadowing includes the references to Philip of France, a character who plays a key role in the action to come, and to Rosamund, a mysterious woman in Henry's past who played a key role in the deterioration of the relationship between

Henry and Eleanor. A final foreshadowing occurs in Henry's reference to himself as a "master bastard," a term he uses here with some pride but which he uses again later in circumstances of which he's much less proud, when he's about to imprison his three sons for the rest of their lives.

Act 1, Scene 2, Part 1

Act 1, Scene 2, Part 1 Summary

This scene is set in the castle's reception room. Richard, Geoffrey, and John politely argue over who gets to enter the room first, with John eventually winning. As John hangs holly, the three brothers talk about how Eleanor arrived that morning, how she and Richard aren't as close as they once were, and how John is Henry's favorite but how Richard is determined to be king. As they bicker, Eleanor enters, greets them with pointed and clever remarks, and asks where Henry is. When Richard responds with a pointed remark about Henry's being with Alais, Eleanor reminds him that she raised Alais and cares for her a great deal. Eleanor then asks whether Philip has arrived, and when Geoffrey says he's not there yet, Eleanor's comments reveal that she was once married to Philip's father. Finally, she asks how Henry is, and when John asks whether she truly cares, she says she cares more than he could possibly know. Richard comments that Henry is still planning to make John king, and Eleanor comments that the other two sons will have to learn to live with disappointment.

Henry enters with Alais and asking "which two?" He and Eleanor greet each other, bantering about how he let her out of prison for the holidays. Eleanor then greets Alais with genuine fondness, telling her to embrace her as she did when she was a child and saying that "affection is a pressure [she] can bear." Henry orders Richard, Geoffrey, and John to support him during his negotiations with Philip, who then comes in and formally greets them all. Henry immediately begins negotiations, and Philip demands that either Alais be married or the Vexin be returned to France's control. Henry speaks crudely to him, Philip turns to leave, Henry patronizingly tries to instruct him in how to conduct negotiations, and Philip says he's already got tutors and starts again to go. Henry suggests that he wait for his counteroffer, saying he's better at diplomacy than Henry thought he'd be. Philip says he wasn't sure that Henry had noticed, and then exits.

Henry suggests that the family start hanging holly, but Eleanor tells him to pay attention to what his sons are going through, accusing him of not really knowing them. He says that the opposite is true, that they don't know him, and he refers to an ancient British king named Lear, whom he describes as having carved his kingdom up to give to his children, something he says he'll never do. He says he's determined to live his kingdom whole when he dies, to one person. Richard says he's going to do everything in his power to have both the crown and Alais, referring to himself as Henry's "loving son" and to John with a derogatory remark, saying that he will not trade away anything that is his right. As he exits, John complains about what Richard called him, and Eleanor tells him to leave.

As John exits, Geoffrey talks about how he's going to be his chief advisor, complains about how no one ever thinks of him in terms of being king, and says it's not the lack of power that bothers him, it's the lack of attention or affection. As he exits, Eleanor comments that she doesn't much like her children, except for Alais, whom she

comments that she raised but didn't give birth to. Alais accuses her of never caring, but Eleanor says she truly does, commenting pointedly that whomever Henry has sex with is of no real concern to her. This leads Henry to bring up Rosamund, which in turn, leads Eleanor to make a joke about how long she's been dead and to tell Alais the story of how Rosamund and Henry met and loved each other, but Henry still put Eleanor's lands first. Alais comments that she knows Henry will leave her if he has to, saying as she exits that she has no doubt Eleanor could hurt her very easily if she wanted to.

Act 1, Scene 2, Part 1 Analysis

Personal and political battle lines are defined further in this scene with the appearances of Eleanor, the three princes, and Philip. We see here how each area of conflict parallels the other, how arguments over who has how much power comes from essentially the same source as arguments over who is the most loved within the family, that source being simple need for recognition, acceptance and respect. We also see how land equals love for Henry and his sons, with their arguments indicating that none of the sons feels that he has enough of either and that Henry believes he's only got so much of either to give. These arguments build on the previously discussed idea that love, not power, is the core issue at the heart of every relationship in the play.

Eleanor seems to have a different perspective on love, as indicated by her comment to Alais about affection. This is the first of several instances in which her concerns about love and relationships seem to be both genuine and expressed for their own sake, rather than connected solely to arguments over land and power. This is not to say that the political games being played around her are unimportant; on the contrary, they are more important to her than anyone because her much-valued and much-longed-for freedom is at stake. Neither is the point made to suggest that she's above manipulating love to get what she wants, an aspect to her character illustrated by a later conversation she has with Richard in Act 1, Scene 3, and her plotting at the end of Act 1. What is being suggested is that her reasons for using love in this way are different from those of the men, less land-oriented and more personal, having to do with the way her own love has been used and manipulated. Also, as she herself eventually says, her time in prison has taught her that games of power are less important than genuine affection and relationships between people. This suggests that as a character, Eleanor embodies a key aspect of the play's theme, the way that love is not a commodity and must be valued for its own sake.

At the same time, Eleanor's comments about Rosamund function, perhaps paradoxically, on two levels. They support the idea that love is of paramount importance to Eleanor, suggesting that she recognized the genuine affection Rosamund and Henry had for each other and that she loved Henry enough to give him the freedom to accept love where he found it. At the same time, they point out to Alais that Henry treats the love of all the women in his life, including Eleanor herself, as commodities, of less value to him than land or power. This, in turn, provides an explanation for why she is so concerned with thwarting Henry's ambitions for John. As the action of the play reveals, Henry manipulated and continues to manipulate her love for him as a means to retain

control over her lands, and that's the reason she has to get even. Even though Alais' comments just before her exit question whether Eleanor really means what she says about love, Eleanor's determined focus on revenge actually reinforces the idea that love is actually more important to her than anything else. Because she honors love so much, when love is dishonored in the way that Henry has dishonored hers, her lust for revenge becomes terrifying, and on occasion turns her into the monster that she is often accused, in the play and in history, of being.

The reference to Lear is not a reference to William Shakespeare's play of the same name, which hadn't been written at the time *The Lion in Winter* is set, but to the historical character who inspired it. Ancient records indicate there was indeed a King Lear, who did try to divide his kingdom into three portions. The reference works here because Shakespeare's dramatization of the life of that king has made his story widely known.

Act 1, Scene 2, Part 2

Act 1, Scene 2, Part 2 Summary

As Henry and Eleanor finish putting up the holly, they banter about whether Henry truly misses Eleanor, how difficult life in her prison/castle is, and how difficult it will be for Henry to lose Alais. Henry reminds Eleanor of how many rebellions she's led against him, and she comments that she nearly won the last one, asking how important the Vexin truly is. When Henry says it's essential because even though it's small, it gives him a launching point from which to invade France if he ever needs to. Eleanor says that if Alais doesn't marry Richard, she will see to it that Henry loses the Vexin. She's determined Richard will be king and admits it's important to her because it's so important to Henry. Henry says in the years Eleanor's been in prison he's surprised himself by discovering how sick he is of war and how pleasant it is to live in a peaceful kingdom. He asks Eleanor to give him peace, promises to strike back if she strikes at him, and then offers her his arm as they prepare to go in to meet their subjects. As they exit, Henry comments on how he can still see love in Eleanor's smile, but when she asks whether he ever loved her, he says no. She says that will make the fight to come more pleasant.

Act 1, Scene 2, Part 2 Analysis

The brief exchange between Henry and Eleanor is conducted in a bantering way that conceals some deep-seated emotions. At this point we, and they, are aware that they are both extremely powerful and dangerous to each other, not just because they're both politically strong, but also as a result of their evident intimacy and affection. In other words, they know how to hurt each other emotionally and militarily, and as the action of the play unfolds they go ahead and do it. It's an intense, dynamic, love-hate relationship fueled on Henry's part by his determination to not appear weak and on Eleanor's part by her overwhelming desire for revenge, a relationship that proves the old saying that no one's quite as easy to hate as the person you love the most. This suggests that Henry's exiting statement that he never loved Eleanor is a lie, while her response suggests not only that she knows he's lying and, in fact, still loves her, but also that as a result of that knowledge, she'll take pleasure in both blocking his plans and causing him pain.

One of the play's two important elements of symbolism crystallizes in this scene as a result of the reference to the Vexin's relatively small size. When taken into consideration with the reference to the relative largeness and richness of the Aquitaine, the fact that the Aquitaine is Eleanor's home, and she originally owned the rights to it, and that the Vexin is under Henry's control, we begin to understand that the Vexin represents Henry himself, and the Aquitaine represents Eleanor. This symbolism is developed further if one takes into consideration Eleanor's larger perception and experience of love. It's not too much of a stretch to suggest that the largeness of the Aquitaine represents the largeness of Eleanor's soul, while the smallness of the Vexin represents the smallness

of Henry's, and the battles over who controls which territory represent the battles for their respective owner's love, affection, and respect. In other words, Richard's fight for both territories represents his struggle for both his parents' love.

Act 1, Scene 3

Act 1, Scene 3 Summary

In Eleanor's chamber, Eleanor wraps Christmas presents as Richard enters. Their conversation reveals that she called him there, that she hopes for them to be as close as they once were, and that Richard thinks she wants to be close only because he owns the rights to her land, the Aquitaine, which he thinks she wants back. John bursts in followed by Geoffrey, announcing that Henry's coming with the terms for the treaty with France. Henry and Alais enter, and Henry announces that Richard is to marry Alais and inherit the crown. John protests, but Henry tells him he's much less suited to be king than Richard is, saying sadly that all his dreams are lost. Eleanor accuses him of making his plans up as he goes along, but Henry says that Richard would simply take the crown if it weren't given to him. He concludes by saying that by giving the crown to Richard, his fondest dream, keeping the kingdom together, is realized. As he exits, Alais asks Eleanor what she said to convince him, and when Eleanor tells her, she says that because she's got nothing to lose she's more dangerous than any of them.

As Alais exits, John wonders aloud why everybody hates him. Richard makes fun of him, and Eleanor tries to apologize for not mothering him well enough, but John rejects her. As he starts to go, John asks Geoffrey to go with him, but Geoffrey stays, saying that since John is no longer the favorite, he has no interest in serving him. John exits, Geoffrey asks Eleanor what she has to say to him, and Eleanor tells him everything Henry said was a lie. Geoffrey offers to side with her against John, but Eleanor asks him for whom he's really working, accusing him of trying to find a way to sell everybody out to everybody else. Geoffrey admits that's exactly what he's working on, saying that he wants to watch Henry and Eleanor destroy each other. Eleanor comments that he's got a gift for hatred, Geoffrey says he learned from the best, and Eleanor offers him the chance to be Richard's advisor. Geoffrey rejects the offer and exits.

Eleanor asks for a glass of wine and then comments that she can't seem to reach any of her children, except in confrontations. Richard gives her some wine, and they argue over what Eleanor truly wants, with Eleanor saying she wants to see Richard become king and Richard saying she only wants to see Henry destroyed. As Eleanor drinks her wine, she recalls how beautiful she once was, and how she and Henry were once desperately in love and powerful together. As she refers to a man named Thomas Becket and to Rosamund, saying there were no rivals to her and Henry's mutual desire, she comments that she'd have been happier if she'd been sterile, that all her fights with Henry have been a waste, and that loving Richard more than Henry has cost her everything. When Richard asks again what she wants, she tells him that she can get him the throne and Alais, but that she has to have the Aquitaine back to do it. Richard accuses her of being more believable in the conversation she had with Geoffrey. When Eleanor says she loves him, Richard says she's incapable of love. She grasps his hand, saying that her love is as real as her touch. She pulls out a small knife and begins to carve her will into her arm, saying that she'll leave everything to Richard. She reminds

him of the arts she taught him, he clasps her to him, and she says he truly does remember what they were to one another.

Act 1, Scene 3 Analysis

Love and hate become indistinguishable in this scene as Eleanor's simultaneous love for Richard and hatred for Henry define her ultimate goal: to destroy Henry's plans by placing Richard on the throne and marrying him to Alais. It's at this point that the political and emotional game playing begins in earnest, with all of Henry and Eleanor's children fighting for position in the same way as their parents, everyone resorting to lies and manipulations in their increasingly desperate efforts to gain advantage. The line between love and hate becomes particularly blurry in the conversation between Richard and Eleanor, in which it becomes impossible to determine which is truly the motivating factor in Eleanor's relentless and reckless pursuit of the Aquitaine, her love for Richard or her hatred for Henry. The point is not made to suggest that they're mutually exclusive, or that one is a lie while the other is true, but rather to call attention to the play's secondary thematic point that that love and hate can, and do, feed off each other. This aspect to the relationship is seen from another angle in Eleanor's comment about how loving Richard has destroyed everything, which suggests that obsessive love can be as dangerous as hatred. How obsessive both her love and hate are is indicated by her dramatic gesture with the knife at the end of the scene, which finally convinces Richard that she means what she says and wins him over to her.

The appearance of the knife foreshadows the appearances of the knives in the play's climactic confrontation in Act 2, Scene 3, in which they appear to represent the desire in Eleanor, Henry, and their sons to destroy and dominate each other. Its appearance here, therefore, is a manifestation and dramatization of the desire in Eleanor to win her battle with Henry over power, lands, and princes.

Thomas Becket is another historical figure, a former friend and advisor to Henry whom he made archbishop and who accumulated a great deal of power and wealth, enough to make Henry perceive him as a rival. Their friendship soured as Becket's influence grew, with the result that Becket was brutally murdered by soldiers who took seriously an angry, offhand remark of Henry's about getting rid of him. Historically and in the play Becket's fate weighed heavily on Henry's conscience, which means the mention of his name at this point in the play foreshadows the role he plays in the growing conflict between Henry and Eleanor.

Act 1, Scene 4, Part 1

Act 1, Scene 4, Part 1 Summary

Back in the reception room John angrily drinks from a bottle of wine as Geoffrey enters and tries to convince him to trust him again. At first John refuses, but then Geoffrey says he said what he said in Eleanor's chamber to convince the others to trust him. He says that now that they do, he and John can work together freely, adding that they've got to make an alliance with Philip so they can attack Richard and Eleanor. Philip enters, having overheard their conversation and asking what John plans to do, promising to add his soldiers to John's if John decides on war. When John continues to hesitate, Geoffrey reminds him that it's either Richard on the throne or him, and Philip assures him they can win. John says that Henry's coming, and Geoffrey and Philip exit.

Henry enters with Alais, whom he tells to leave, but she stays. He asks John whether he's seen Philip, but John doesn't answer, telling Henry instead that their planned hunting trip is off. Henry asks why, commenting on how they had a good time together on their last trip. At first, John doesn't answer, but after Henry asks again, he admits he's upset because Henry's given Richard everything. Henry asks whether he really thinks he'd do that, but John says he doesn't love him any more and exits. When Henry wonders out loud why John was so upset, Alais tells him John thinks he meant what he said about Richard. Henry angrily says John is all he's got, and wonders whether everybody needs to be reassured about who loves whom. Alais reminds him he promised her to Richard, commenting that she thinks Henry likes being able to pass her around. Henry says he's got to get the Aquitaine for John, and Alais comments that she "talk[s] people and you answer back in provinces." Henry comments that he gets them mixed up, using as an example the way that Eleanor doesn't see the Aquitaine as a province but as a way to torture him.

As Henry imagines what Eleanor is saying to Richard, imitating her as he does, Eleanor enters with her Christmas presents. Henry makes a joke about how he's giving her a tombstone, and Alais comments on how they've grown old gracefully. As she starts to go, Henry asks her to stay, saying that seeing them together upsets Eleanor. Alais says she recognizes the look in his eyes and that he's about to tell her he loves her. Henry says he does, but Alais says he really doesn't and exits. Henry comments to Eleanor that he talks that way to keep Alais' spirits up, and asks her how she got on with Richard.

Act 1, Scene 4, Part 1 Analysis

Lies and manipulations continue in this scene as we discover the truth, or what appears to be the truth, behind Geoffrey and Henry's actions in the previous scene. The play is getting to the point where it's unclear who, if anyone, can be believed about anything. It helps to remember that in the middle of all the game playing, all the characters are

essentially struggling to achieve the same thing, what will benefit them the most. The type of benefit varies from character to character. John is after recognition, Geoffrey is after influence, Richard is after power, Eleanor is after revenge, Henry is pursuing his goal of keeping his kingdom alive, Philip wants respect from Henry, and Alais just wants to be with the man she loves. Regardless of whatever each is after, at this stage everyone is becoming increasingly desperate to achieve his or her goals and to gain an advantage over each other, a desperation that drives the ever-escalating tension to the climactic confrontation in the dungeon at the end of Act 2.

The previously discussed idea that for Henry love equals land is reinforced twice in this scene, once by John's suggestion that by giving Richard the kingdom Henry doesn't love him anymore, and once by Alais' comments that Henry talks about people in terms of provinces. Interestingly, Henry's initial response to both comments indicates that he feels he's not doing anything wrong, with his surprise at the depths of John's resentment and his casual belief that Eleanor feels the same way illustrating his belief that that's the way the world and relationships work. At the same time, his protestations of love for Alais seem less convincing than he might like them to be. This is the result of his comments about how seeing him care upsets Eleanor and his comments to Eleanor after Alais leaves. We see clearly in this section that up to now, love has really been nothing more than a bargaining chip for Henry in all of his relationships, an aspect to his character that Eleanor attempts to exploit in the following scene.

Act 1, Scene 4, Part 2

Act 1, Scene 4, Part 2 Summary

After Alais has exited, Henry asks Eleanor whether she's gotten the Aquitaine back from Richard, explaining that he needs it to give to John to make up for giving Richard the throne. Eleanor tells him that there is no way that John is going to get the Aquitaine and taunts Henry into telling her what he's offering in return for it. Henry says that if she gives him the Aquitaine, he'll give Eleanor her freedom. This leads Eleanor to reminisce about some of her travels when she was younger, particularly a crusade to Jerusalem she co-led with her then husband, the King of France. Her memories remind her how much she loves traveling and how difficult it's been for her to be imprisoned for so long, and Henry says he doesn't like to know she's suffering. She believes him, and he offers her a pen to sign their treaty. Eleanor agrees, but adds a condition--that as part of the deal, Richard and Alais marry right away. Henry says he can live without Alais, and Eleanor says that she thought he loved her. Henry says he does, and Eleanor says she's glad to hear it, revealing she'd been afraid that giving Alais away wasn't going to hurt. She then calls for John, Richard, and Geoffrey to join them as Henry calls for a priest.

Philip, John, Geoffrey, Richard and Alais all enter, and Henry announces the deal that he and Eleanor have made. Alais says that Henry's only plotting and isn't to be believed, but Henry tells her that he won't fight a war over her. As everybody prepares to make a procession into the Chapel, Alais pleads to be released from the marriage, asking what Henry gains by marrying her to Richard. When Henry reveals that Eleanor has given him the Aquitaine in exchange for freedom, Richard angrily refuses to go through with the ceremony, accusing Eleanor of lying to him and refusing to give her the Aquitaine. Henry says he made the deal he did because of the treaty with Philip, but Richard challenges both him and Philip to war. Philip tells him that Henry had no real intention of letting go of Alais. Henry loses his temper, talks patronizingly to Philip, and says that now there's no possibility of his getting either of his demands met, for Alais' marriage or the return of the Vexin. As Philip exits, Richard mockingly refers to Henry as a lion, reminding him he's getting old and that someday he'll start a fight he can't win. Henry insists Richard will inherit what he gives him, Richard challenges him to war, but Henry declares that until everybody agrees John is to be the next king, they're all prisoners and points out further that Richard will be unable to get messages to his soldiers. Richard says there hasn't been a castle built that can hold him, and he storms out. John and Geoffrey then leave together, with John talking happily about how he's king again.

Eleanor says she came close to getting what she wanted, Henry comments on how pleased he is with the way the situation played out. They tease each other about how scared they were and what happens next, with Henry commenting that he knows he's winning the game but doesn't quite know what the next move is. Alais tells Henry she really was frightened and that he can't play with other people's feelings the way he played with hers. He tells her that he realized he couldn't lose her, which he says means

that he cares for her more than he thought. He asks Eleanor what she's thinking, and she says she wants to see him kiss her, saying she's imagined it often and wants to see how right she is. Henry speaks lovingly to Alais, and then as Eleanor watches, kisses her passionately.

Act 1, Scene 4, Part 2 Analysis

Once again political game playing takes center stage, and once again someone's reaction to Henry's casual treatment of their feelings takes him by surprise. The difference between Alais' reaction to his plotting and John's reaction to a similar action in the first part of the scene is that Alais isn't the only one knocked off balance by what Henry does; he also does it to himself. The strength of his feelings for Alais seems to be a genuine astonishment to him, but even then he can't resist making use of them, clearly wielding his delight in Alais and in their love as yet another weapon to hurt Eleanor. The kiss he bestows on Alais is as much about taking revenge on Eleanor for trying to trick him as it is about genuine passion.

The question is why Eleanor asks to see them kiss in the first place. Taken in context with the scene in Act 2, when she pleads with him to admit that he still loves her, the request to see the kiss might come from the same emotional place, a desire to find out where Henry's true feelings lie. It's fairly clear she knows what her own feelings are. Eleanor is clearly aware that she's miserable in prison, that she still loves her husband, and at the same time desperately wants to hurt him. This contrast between the two of them is at its clearest point in the play during their long conversation at the beginning of this section, with Henry lying and manipulating all the while, taking advantage of Eleanor's lapses into vulnerability and honesty. No wonder he comments at the end of the scene that he's winning. He is, but only because he's playing the game much more ruthlessly than Eleanor, a fact that Philip comments on, with perhaps surprising perceptiveness, to the furious Richard.

To continue the chess metaphor, Henry is playing this political game with the skill and tactics of a master, thinking several moves ahead while his opponents are thinking only one or two. He knows, for example, that there's no way he's ever going to let Eleanor go free, which means that their entire conversation is calculated so he can find out what her plans are. He also knows at the end of their conversation there's no way Richard will agree to marry Alais if it means losing the Aquitaine, which is why he agrees to Eleanor's demand and which is why he only pretends to be angry when Richard loses his temper and calls the wedding off. This is something else that Philip seems to be aware of, meaning that as Henry observed, Philip is better at this kind of game playing than anyone expected him to be. Finally, Henry also knows that Richard's rejection of the agreement means Philip will be unhappy and probably plot with John and Geoffrey, a situation that forms the basis for the conflict to come in Act 1, Scene 6. All of this leads back to Henry's reaction to Alais' anger and the apparent discovery of the depth of his feelings. Is he truly surprised, is he playing his game, or is he such a skilled manipulator that he's able to turn his surprise to his advantage in the way that the other characters are not? The action of the play supports the latter idea, which makes Henry the master

player of this game and the others, in spite of their resentment, his pawns. The pawns, however, have a few more tricks up their sleeves, as the following scene and the rest of the play bear out.

Act 1, Scene 5

Act 1, Scene 5 Summary

Alone in her bedchamber, Eleanor tries on her jewels, commenting to herself about how she's lost again but will have another chance after being locked in prison for another year. Geoffrey enters, saying that Richard is in a rage, that John is running after him and goading him, and that he's come to see whether Eleanor is lonely. Eleanor offers him her crown, but he doesn't try it on, talking about his third birthday and saying that he remembers not the gifts but who was doing what to whom and feeling nothing but indifference from his parents. He asks why that is, but Eleanor evades the question, saying she doesn't have a simple answer and talking about how she used to get bored listening to the conversations of older and wiser men, but that she'd listen now.

John enters, saying he wants to gloat, but Eleanor says she's too tired to respond in the way he wants. A moment later, Richard enters, complaining about how they're all Henry's prisoners. Eleanor says she's already a prisoner so it makes no difference to her, and then tells Richard that they've lost and that he should accept it. As John mocks him, Richard pulls out a dagger and makes as if to kill him, but Eleanor stops him with a poetically written speech about how they, people with their differences and hatreds, are the origins of war but they could also be the origins of peace. Geoffrey pointedly comments that there's still Philip to consider, which reminds John that he agreed to join with Philip in a war against Henry.

As John begins to panic, Geoffrey advises him to let him handle everything, but John exits without paying attention. Eleanor realizes she now has an advantage, and tells Geoffrey to keep John away from Philip until she has a chance to tell Henry that John has betrayed him. Geoffrey exits to do as she asks, and Eleanor turns to Richard, telling him to make an alliance with Philip at any cost. After he exits, Eleanor comments to herself that she hasn't lost, and she's now able to stick her knife in Henry's vulnerable spot, his belief that John loves him. She looks at herself in her mirror, comments on how lovely she is, and wonders how her king could have left her.

Act 1, Scene 5 Analysis

In this brief scene, Eleanor moves a significant emotional distance, from feeling defeated to feeling triumphant, revealing that she can be as ruthless as Henry is and just as eager to use love as a weapon. It's in her comments about Henry's love for John and vice versa that this family's general perspective on love is stated most clearly: love is a weakness, a vulnerability, a place to stick the knife. Once again, however, the difference between Eleanor and the men around her, as is evident in this scene and throughout the play, is her belief that it doesn't have to be this way. This scene illustrates how she's caught up in other people's games in spite of an apparently genuine desire for peace in the world and in her immediate circle. It is arguable that her speech about

the origins of peace is the result of her feeling both fatigued and defeated. There is, however, evidence in the play and in history to support the belief that this was and is her true philosophy, that she engaged in war to promote peace, and as previously stated valued love and respect above all. Again, this would explain her passionate and desperate desire to defeat Henry since he brings war and hatred and mistrust into her perhaps too-idealistic world.

Act 1, Scene 6

Act 1, Scene 6 Summary

This scene takes place in Philip's bedroom, where the walls are hung with tapestries and there is a large bed enclosed by heavy curtains. Philip is preparing for bed as Geoffrey enters, looking for John and saying that the fighting within the family is coming to a head, which means by morning he could be named heir to the throne. As he and Philip discuss what alliances they could make if that happened, John jumps out from behind a tapestry and accuses Geoffrey of betraying him.

As Geoffrey is telling that it was Philip, who was betraying him, Richard is heard offstage. Geoffrey and John hide behind tapestries as he enters, saying Eleanor sent him. Philip pours some wine, and recalls a visit Richard made to Paris. Richard tries to convince him to make an alliance against Henry, but when he insists Philip give him an answer, Philip tells him he'll get an answer when he's ready to give him one, and then comments that Richard never writes. When Richard says he never writes anyone Philip changes the subject and asks what kind of deal they could make. After negotiating use of land and horses, Richard says he never wrote because he didn't think Philip would answer and refers to his having gotten married. Philip says his marriage makes no difference, takes Richard's hand, and leads him to the bed. Richard reminds Philip that he hasn't said he loves him, but Philip says he'll say it when the time comes.

Henry is heard, calling for Philip. Richard urges him not to answer, but Philip opens the canopy of the bed, suggesting that Richard hide and listen to what Henry has to say. Richard conceals himself just has Henry enters, asking whether Richard or Eleanor has come to see him and saying he's come to offer peace. Philip speaks rudely to him, saying Henry's old, and that he, Philip, will get everything he wants eventually. Henry admits that things seem bleak, but adds that Philip's plan to let the princes fight Henry instead of doing it himself is first-class thinking. As Philip accepts the compliment, Henry prepares to go, taunting Philip about how he's just given all his plans away. Philip angrily talks about the way Henry abused and manipulated his father, implying that he's out for revenge. He then tells how he and Richard met and proclaimed their love for each other, saying that he only did it so he could one day torture Henry with the revelation of his son's deviant nature.

Richard bursts out from behind the canopy insisting Philip's love was genuine and challenging him to fight. When Henry refuses to leave, Richard turns his anger onto him, asking why Henry never seemed to care for him or be interested in him and saying he doesn't want Henry's crown, only his affection. Henry doesn't believe him, adding that Richard is completely under Eleanor's influence and has no room for him in his life, and then thanking God he has John. Geoffrey steps out from behind the tapestry, saying that both Richard and John have acted to betray Henry and that he's the only trustworthy son left. Henry says again that he has faith in John's love, which makes Geoffrey pull the tapestry aside and reveal John, who says that he would never plot against Henry.

Henry sees his presence there as evidence that that's exactly what he was doing, and angrily asks why John couldn't believe he was acting on his behalf, loving him, and giving him everything. John accuses him of not loving anyone or anything. Henry, in a pain-filled and poetic speech, talks about how he's lost his sons.

Act 1, Scene 6 Analysis

The most important thing to note in this scene is who overhears what, what effect it has, and why Philip leads each conversation in the direction that he does, keeping in mind that he knows all along who's listening and what reaction he's trying to trigger. As the scene begins, John has already come to Philip, presumably to follow through on the plans made earlier to establish an alliance and declare war on Henry. John overhears Geoffrey's plans to take the throne and believes him to be betraying him. He gullibly believes what Geoffrey tells him about Philip and goes into hiding as soon as Richard approaches. This means that Philip knows Geoffrey will say anything to manipulate John and plans what he's going to say to Richard accordingly.

In the next section, Geoffrey and John hear Richard plot with Philip against Henry and take power for himself. Philip steers this conversation as well, knowing that he can use what he knows Geoffrey and John will have heard to gain advantage over both Henry and Richard. The third section contains the key conversation between Henry and Philip, who carelessly lets himself be goaded and manipulated into revealing his plans. Once again Henry plays his game like a master, leaving Philip vulnerable not only to him but to Richard, Geoffrey, and John. Philip knows that the brothers have overheard everything and now presumably believe he can't be trusted. This is why he says what he says about Richard, knowing that Richard will lose his temper, reveal himself, and get himself into a confrontation with Henry.

It's at this point that the issue of love again comes forcefully and powerfully into focus. The somewhat surprising mention of love between Richard and Philip in the earlier part of this scene added not only a surprising element to their relationship and an intriguing aspect to Richard's character. It also foreshadowed the revelation in this confrontation that apparently, all he's ever wanted from anyone was the equivalent of a hug, a genuine one as opposed to what he perceives as the literal and metaphorical hugs with hidden agendas he's always gotten, and is still getting, from Eleanor. For his part, Henry seems to find it impossible that Richard's desire for his affection is genuine, and it's here that his tendency to believe people see the world and relationships the same way he does also comes powerfully into focus.

Awareness of this aspect of Henry's character is what makes Geoffrey step forward when he does, taking the opportunity to reinforce not only Henry's belief that Richard was out to betray him, but also to tell him that John was about to do the same thing. By pulling aside the tapestry and revealing John to his father, Geoffrey puts the final nail in the coffin of Henry's belief in John, using both the evidence of John's perfidy and Henry's suspicious nature to create the ultimate advantage for himself. In doing so, he

completes the act first contemplated by Eleanor, wounding Henry by attacking him in the place where he's most vulnerable: his love for John.

It's interesting to note at this point that once Richard reveals himself, Philip says nothing for the rest of the scene. He's clearly engineered this entire sequence of confrontations so that the war between father and sons that he was planning and confessed to Henry actually begins in this room. Maybe Philip isn't as careless as previously suggested. In other words, he's won. When Henry talks about having lost his sons, which is really a comment about having lost both their faith and their love, Philip has gained the advantage that all the other characters have fought so hard to achieve. There is every possibility that as the curtain comes down on this scene and on this first act, he's smiling.

Act 2, Scene 1

Act 2, Scene 1 Summary

This scene is set in Henry's bedchamber. Alais sits by the fire, adding spices to a pot of hot wine and singing a Christmas carol. Eleanor comes in, Alais tells her Henry's not there, and Eleanor says they can talk behind his back, briefly recounting what happened in Philip's bedroom. When Alais asks whether she ever really loved Henry, particularly before Rosamund came into his life, Eleanor says that was a very long time ago and makes jokes about Rosamund's appearance. This leads Alais to comment that Eleanor must still hate Rosamund even now, but Eleanor says her hatred was a long time ago, too, and that she only hated Rosamund because she took her place at Henry's side. Alais talks about how Eleanor looks at Henry and sees cities and coastline and taxes while she only sees Henry the man and asks Eleanor to leave him for her. Eleanor says she left him years ago, leading Alais to comment that she seems cold and unreachable and to ask whether she was like that when Alais was a child and loved her. Eleanor says she most likely was, and she reveals that she's come to give Henry whatever he asks for. Alais says she'd like to see Eleanor suffer and then embraces her. Eleanor sings the carol Alais was singing at the beginning of the scene, and asks whether Alais is weeping. As Alais is saying she isn't, Henry appears in the doorway and comments on how many stars there are, saying that the three wise men must have had great eyes to see a new one. Alais hands him some wine, and he tells her to go to bed, saying that he and Eleanor need to talk. Alais tells him that Eleanor wants him back and then exits.

Henry pours Eleanor wine, asking whether it's true that she wants him back. Eleanor says that Alais just thinks she does, commenting that "she thinks the need for loving never stops." Henry says she's got a point. They toast each other and talk about Henry's plans after the confrontation in Philip's bedroom. Eleanor wonders whether she's eager for revenge out of habit, saying she's tired and offering to sign anything Henry wants to get a little peace. Henry applauds her ironically, she protests that she means what she says, and he continues to applaud, mocking her for being unbelievable. She kisses his hand, but he angrily pulls it away as she wearily wonders how they got to this point in their lives and what's going to happen to her now. Henry tells her he wants a new wife to give him new sons, which Eleanor takes to mean that he's going to have their marriage annulled and their sons declared bastards. Henry lists his sons and comments on how none of them are suited to carry on the kingdom, which leads him and Eleanor to argue about who is the most responsible for their turning out the way they did. Henry talks about how Eleanor rejected him in favor of Richard, which leads Eleanor to point out that she did so only after he rejected her for Rosumand. Henry refuses to believe it's that simple, and then when Eleanor says that she adored him then and still does, says that's the most terrible lie she could have told. She says that's why she saved it up for this moment, and then they embrace each other passionately. They reminisce about how they met and instantly fell in love, kiss, and then Eleanor says there will be no annulment, adding that she doesn't want to lose him.

When Henry talks about how there's no way she can lose him because she doesn't have him, Eleanor refers to the chains that bind them together. She reminds him that even if he does get an annulment, even if he and Alais do get married and even if Alais does bear him a son, Richard will still be out there ready to attack, even if he has to wait for Henry to die to do it. She also says that after what he's put her through, anything she does to him will be considered justice. There is nothing she can do that is too cruel. Henry starts to go, saying he's preparing to go to Rome to ask the Pope for an annulment. Eleanor says that if he goes, she and all her sons will join with Philip and rise against him, gloating that she's got him at last. Henry tells her that she's overplayed her hand, that she should have agreed to wait quietly for his return and then staged her rebellion while he was away. He taunts her with his plans for a large procession to accompany him to Rome, and she then taunts him about being terrified of dying, hinting that she slept with his father and that she preferred him to Henry. Henry finally exits, shouting that he feels ill.

Eleanor, alone and cold, tries to warm herself by the fire, commenting that "[every] family has its ups and downs" and that she doesn't and can't feel anything, asking herself whether it's possible to go back.

Act 2, Scene 1 Analysis

At this point it seems appropriate to discuss the play's dialogue, which functions on several levels. In general, what the characters say is very witty, expressing feelings and/or ideas in clever and unusual ways. This allows for a great deal of humor, an important component in a play that might otherwise become tediously full of tactical arguments, names of unfamiliar places and people, and plot-stopping reminiscences. There is also a certain sense of anachronism, of people using words and phrases that don't fit with the story's time and place. A certain degree of this is to be expected, given that in the spoken language of twelfth-century England and France was decidedly different from those languages today. That being said, lines like Eleanor's reference to "ups and downs" and many others have a contemporary feel to them that, while slightly jarring, again allows for humor and understandability.

Perhaps most important, dialogue is used as a means of defining character. For Henry and Eleanor, who are generally the most witty of the characters, dialogue is often used as a disguise, a mask behind which they hide their real emotions. In other words, what they say is tends to be ironic, meaning that what they truly mean or feel is the opposite of what they say. This occurs throughout the play, with key instances appearing in this scene as both Henry and Eleanor say in various ways that they neither love nor want each other, but then open themselves to their mutual passion and end up in an intimate embrace. Dialogue, therefore, becomes a clue as well as a disguise.

Philip and Geoffrey also use dialogue as a disguise, but to a lesser degree than Henry or Eleanor. While it's true they speak the way they do to conceal their intentions, their ultimate goal is to manipulate and control, meaning that dialogue for them is used to trigger feelings and reactions in others. Key examples of this are the way that Philip

speaks in Act 1, Scene 6, and Geoffrey speaks throughout the play. Finally, there are the characters who speak bluntly and directly, concealing little and revealing much. Alais, Richard, and John are all, to various degrees, people whose feelings are close to the surface and who, as a result, tend to not think before they speak. Their dialogue is generally less witty and less calculated than that of the others, providing a vivid contrast to Henry and Eleanor, in particular, whose emotions tend to be more difficult to read.

Dialogue plays a vital role in the plot of the play because the way characters say what they say defines the action as much as what they do (action), what they want (motivation), or why they want it (subtext).

Act 2, Scene 2

Act 2, Scene 2 Summary

At dawn the next day, Alais is sleeping as Henry enters to her room, wakes her up, tells her they're leaving to go to Rome, relates what happened between him and Eleanor after she left the room, kneels, proposes, and convinces Alais there's nothing Eleanor or Richard can do to stop them. When he says that Richard and his brothers are locked in the cellar with the wine, Alais tells him he can't ever let them out, saying that if she ever actually has a child they would come after it and kill it, and she won't see her children murdered. Henry protests, but Alais says that if he truly wants to marry her, locking up his sons is the price he has to pay. Henry tries to bully her into obeying him, but then he realizes she's right, commenting on how hard it is to believe that he has children who would murder other children. He then starts to leave, and Alais asks him whether he's going to let them out or lock them in. He describes himself as a "master bastard" for even thinking about it, and then confesses that he doesn't see himself as having a choice.

Act 2, Scene 2 Analysis

The point of this brief scene is to put pressure on Henry, with Alais making Henry think about the consequences of his actions. This is something she's done to him throughout the play, the prime example before this point taking place in Act 1, Scene 4, when she chastised him for playing games with her feelings. This aspect of Henry's character, the way he acts and speaks without really considering the ramifications of what he's doing, is an interesting contrast to his previously discussed ability to think two or three moves ahead of his opponents. It suggests that he's clever, but not wise, that he knows tactics, but doesn't really know people. This might be why he's so surprised by people's reactions to him, why he talks about provinces instead of people, and most important why love is almost entirely a commodity to him rather than a genuine feeling.

Act 2, Scene 3

Act 2, Scene 3 Summary

This scene takes place in the castle's wine cellar. John opens a casket of wine and pours for Geoffrey and Richard, and then he and Geoffrey taunt each other about how neither knows what's going to happen next. Richard says he does know. He says that they're going to be sent even deeper underneath the castle, into the dungeons. Geoffrey says it's even more likely they'll be killed since they're a danger to Henry if they remain alive. He comments that he's frightened. John insists that someone is going to rescue them, but then he becomes frightened and reaches for Geoffrey when he hears a door open.

Eleanor enters with a covered tray, saying that she's due to leave in a few hours, that she's come to say goodbye, and that she's brought breakfast. She removes the cover from the tray and reveals a stack of daggers and swords, saying there's only one guard outside and adding that once he's dispatched, escape will be easy since things are so busy in the courtyard because of Henry's imminent departure. Richard immediately plans to escape so he can declare his war, but Geoffrey says it might be wiser to wait, hinting that he, Richard, and John should band together and kill Henry then and there. Eleanor tells them to take the knives and run, but Geoffrey plots the killing, accusing Eleanor of having it in mind all along. She denies it and starts to leave, but Richard tries to stop her, thinking she's on her way to warn Henry. Geoffrey tells him to let her go, saying that if she did warn him, all her sons would be executed for treason, and she doesn't want that. Richard then changes his mind, agreeing with Geoffrey and saying in spite of Eleanor's protestations that she must have had killing Henry in mind when she brought in the knives because at one point she tried to kill him herself. She says all she ever wanted was her husband back.

As Geoffrey and Richard argue about what to do with Eleanor, Henry enters, followed by Alais. John hurriedly covers up the tray of daggers as Henry draws closer with candles, saying that what happens in dungeons needs to be seen clearly. Eleanor starts to "take the breakfast things," but Richard stops her and argues with Henry about what's going to happen to him and his brothers, saying they can't be left out because the only choice they've got if they're free is to keep fighting. When Henry says they've got nothing to fight with, Geoffrey and Richard move to the tray, and Eleanor removes the cover. Henry comments ironically on how brave his sons are, asks how they planned to kill him, and dares them to try.

John pleads with Henry to take him back and runs to him, but stops short when he sees that Henry has pulled his sword and is pointing it at his stomach. Eleanor urges him to execute them, saying that he gave them life and he can take it. Henry agrees, calling their executions just and formally pronouncing the sentence of death. He raises his sword as though to kill Richard but then drops it to the ground, saying in a suddenly quiet voice that children are all he has. He tells them to leave and never come back.

Geoffrey, Richard, and John exit. Alais then comments on how Eleanor manipulated the situation to save her sons' lives and then tries to comfort Henry, who says he wants nothing to do with women any more. Alais goes, saying that when he's ready, she'll be waiting.

Henry talks about how much he's lost, but Eleanor tells him that all he's lost is land, meaning his dream of keeping his kingdom unified. She says she's lost land in that way several times over and that its pain is nothing compared to the pain she experienced at the loss of him. Henry holds her as she repeats over and over that she wants to die. Finally, he says it will happen eventually, and at that she smiles. He wonders how she can smile after everything she's been through, and she makes a joke about how smiling is the way she shows despair, saying that there's everything in life but hope. Henry says they still have each other, and maybe that's what hope is. He then offers to see her to the ship that will take her back to prison, saying that he'll consider letting her out for another visit at Easter and joking that she can make another try at striking him down. As they exit, they joke about hoping they never die.

Act 2, Scene 3 Analysis

All the play's political and personal conflicts come to a head in this climactic scene in which the play's most potent symbol reappears in the form of the knives brought in by Eleanor. It's interesting at this point to look back at the one previous appearance of a knife, in Act 1, Scene 3, when Eleanor begins to carve her will into her arm. At that moment, she's preparing to draw her own blood but also Henry's "territorial" blood by ensuring that Richard holds on to the Aquitaine. In both instances, then, knives represent the desire for destruction that lives in every member of this family, the way they all wield hatred and love and provinces as they would a dagger in hopes of drawing both territorial and emotional blood.

Does Eleanor mean it when she claims she had no intention of causing Henry's death, or is she lying? Evidence suggests the former, and that Geoffrey is, in fact, projecting his own nastiness onto his mother. Eleanor has repeatedly professed her deep love for Henry and is about to do it again, love which in spite of her parallel hatred of him is strong enough to prevent her from going as far as her sons seem prepared to go. Her reluctance to kill is paralleled in Henry, but he's reluctant for a different reason. He refuses to kill on principle because a father doesn't kill his children, a belief foreshadowed in his conversation with Alais in Act 2, Scene 2. This means that his sword, which has a similar symbolic meaning to Eleanor's knives, takes on an ironic value when he lowers it, indicating in a way that's perhaps Freudian and perhaps isn't that his power has ended, that he's become politically impotent. In this moment, he becomes an old man.

Another question is the one raised by Alais, whether Eleanor manipulated the situation to create this resolution. There's not much evidence to support a theory either way, though Eleanor's protestations that she didn't ever have the killing of Henry in mind might suggest she didn't think any further ahead than getting her sons out of prison. A

third question is whether Eleanor means it when she says she wants to die. In this case, it seems clear that while she may be sinking into the depths of despair after realizing she's got no chance of winning Henry back or destroying him and that she's lost her influence over her sons, she's still tough enough to smile at Henry's feeble jokes and joke back about trying again on her next release from prison. This illustrates the symbolic point discussed earlier about Eleanor's largeness of spirit and reiterates the thematic point that the commitment to love represented by that spirit can, and will, triumph over the desire to destroy.

Characters

Alais Capet

Alais (pronounced "Alice") Capet is the mistress of King Henry II of England and the sister of King Philip II of France. Alais is a beautiful twenty-three-year-old woman who has been Henry's mistress since she was sixteen years old. In a treaty between France and England that was made when she was a young girl, Alais was promised in marriage to whichever of Henry's sons he names as his successor. But Alais is deeply in love with Henry and does not want to marry any of his sons. However, she has no power whatsoever to determine her own future and is merely subject to the political wrangling of the other characters in the play. She describes herself as a "pawn" in the political maneuvering between Henry, Eleanor, Philip, and the three sons. Alais's only source of power lies in Henry's emotional attachment to her, although he makes it clear that he will not let his attachment interfere with his political decisions. Alais was brought to Henry's castle when she was seven years old and was raised by Eleanor, but now she and Eleanor regard each other as rivals for Henry's affections.

Toward the end of the play, Henry announces that he is going to take Alais with him to Rome to have his marriage with Eleanor annulled, so that he can marry his young mistress and have a son by her, whom he will then name as his heir. Alais, however, points out that, if they have a son, Eleanor will help Richard, Geoffrey, and John kill the boy, so that they will not be disinherited. Alais thus tells Henry that she will only marry him if he promises to keep his other sons imprisoned for the rest of their lives. However, Henry finds that he cannot bring himself to imprison or execute his own sons, and so Alais is left to continue on as his mistress. The issue of which, if any, of Henry's sons she will be forced to marry is left undecided.

Philip Capet

Philip Capet, also known as King Philip II of France, arrives at the English court to negotiate with King Henry a sixteen-year-old treaty between France and England. At seventeen, Philip, who has been the King of France for three years, is described as handsome, impressive, and politically savvy. Philip confronts Henry to remind him of a treaty by which Henry promised to marry Alais to whichever of his sons will be the heir to the throne, in exchange for which France granted England a parcel of land known as the Vexin. Philip informs Henry that he must either marry Alais to his heir immediately, or he must return the Vexin region to France. Henry, however, points out that he has not yet decided which of his sons to name as heir, and so cannot determine which one will marry Alais; yet Henry also refuses to return the Vexin to France. Although Alais is Philip's sister, Philip demonstrates no personal attachment to or interest in her, and completely disregards her personal wishes, considering her only as a bargaining chip in his negotiations with Henry. Philip demonstrates himself to be as astute and wily as the Plantagenets in his efforts to out-scheme and out-maneuver each member of the

Plantagenet family, skillfully playing them off against each other. While nothing is resolved by the end of the play□Henry still has not honored the treaty with France□Philip points out that, because he is young and Henry is old, he has the patience to wait out Henry on these disputed matters, and that France will eventually prevail.

Queen Eleanor

See Eleanor of Aquitaine

Eleanor of Aquitaine

Eleanor of Aquitaine, also known as Queen Eleanor, is the wife of Henry and the mother of Richard, Geoffrey, and John. Eleanor and Henry got married when he was eighteen and she was twenty-eight. They have been married for thirty-two years. Ten years earlier, Eleanor attempted to start a civil war against Henry, for which he imprisoned her in a tower in England, where she has since remained, except on holidays, when she is allowed to join the family. She favors their son Richard as the heir to the throne, and is constantly plotting and scheming for Richard to be made the next king. When, by the end of the play, all of her schemes have once again failed, Eleanor embraces her estranged husband, and they seem to have reached a temporary truce. She knows that she will be sent back to prison, but looks forward to joining the contentious family circle again when she is released for the Easter holiday.

King Henry II

See Henry Plantagenet

King Philip

See Philip Capet

Geoffrey Plantagenet

Geoffrey Plantagenet is the middle son of King Henry and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and holds the political post of overlord of Brittany. While John is Henry's favorite son and Richard is Eleanor's favorite, Geoffrey is nobody's favorite. Geoffrey, who is twenty-five, is described as "the owner of the best brain of a brainy family." However, although it is understood that he is the smartest of the sons, and he is the second oldest after Richard, he is never even considered as a possible heir to the throne. Geoffrey attempts to scheme with all of the other characters at various points, hoping that if he can eliminate both Richard and John from consideration for the throne, Henry will have no other choice but to choose him as the next king. However, all of Geoffrey's schemes fail,

and he is left by the end of the play with the same inconsequential status in the family that he has always had.

Henry Plantagenet

Henry Plantagenet, also known as King Henry II of England and Normandy, is a fifty-year-old man. He has spent his life conquering regions of France and the British Isles, and now his life's goal is to ensure that his territory remains unified after he dies. His eldest son, Henry, who had been named as the heir to his throne, died the previous summer, and now he must decide which of his sons to name as his new heir. He has promised the throne to John, the son he most favors, but he knows there is a threat of civil war breaking out over the question of who will be the next king after his death. Henry has kept Eleanor, his wife of thirty-two years, locked up in a tower for the past ten years, because of her efforts to start a civil war against him. He has taken Alais Capet as his mistress for the past seven years.

Toward the end of the play, Henry decides that he really wants to go to Rome and ask the Pope to annul his marriage to Eleanor, so that he can marry Alais and have a legitimate son by her, whom he can then name as his heir to the throne. However, he realizes that Eleanor, Richard, Geoffrey, and John would try to kill this new son, if the child were born male. He is thus faced with the decision of whether or not to lock his sons, as well as his wife, in prison for the rest of their lives, so that he can safely produce an heir with Alais. In the final moments of the play, Henry accuses Richard of treason and raises his sword to kill him, but finds that he does not have the heart to murder his own child. By the end of the play, Henry remains undecided as to whom he will name as his heir.

John Plantagenet

John Plantagenet is the youngest son of King Henry and Eleanor of Aquitaine. John, who is sixteen, is described as a charming-looking boy who, despite the adolescent pimples on his face, is "sweet-faced and totally adorable." Although he is neither brave like Richard nor smart like Geoffrey, John is his father's favorite son, and expects to be made heir to the throne when Henry dies. John is the least savvy of all the characters in the play. Because he tends to be a bit dim-witted, he cannot keep pace intellectually with the plotting, scheming, double-crossing, and deceptions by which all of the other characters operate. He is represented as an immature child who has been spoiled by his father, and who has grown up expecting to be made heir to his father's throne, without having to prove himself or accomplish anything in order to achieve this position of power. When John for a time believes that Henry has decided to name Richard as his heir, Geoffrey talks him into scheming against Henry and Richard. Later, Henry once again changes his tactic and re-promises the throne to John. But when Henry decides instead that he wants to produce a new heir with Alais, John is once again disinherited.

Richard Plantagenet

Richard Plantagenet, also known as Richard the Lionheart, is one of the sons of King Henry and Eleanor of Aquitaine. Richard, who is twenty-six, has been a famous soldier since he was sixteen, and he "looks like his legend." Richard is the bravest and most soldierly of the three sons, and has always been his mother's favorite. Throughout the play, Eleanor maintains that her wish is to see Richard named heir to Henry's throne. Richard is a warrior through and through, and is determined to be the next king of England. Of the three sons, he is the most defiant against his father, insisting that he will one day take the throne by force, if it is not given to him. Nonetheless, at the end of the play, when Henry accuses Richard of treason and sentences him to death, Henry finds that he cannot bring himself to raise his sword against his own son.

Richard the Lionheart

See Richard Plantagenet

Themes

Dysfunctional Family

The central thematic focus of *The Lion in Winter* is on the interpersonal dynamics of members of a dysfunctional family. Goldman's play is essentially a story about dysfunctional family writ large. Although the members of the family are kings, queens, and princes, their complex and troubled emotional attachments to one another are represented as an amplified version of the same kinds of problems people experience in modern families. As is often the case with twenty-first-century families, the Plantagenet family in *The Lion in Winter* experience such problems as jealousy, sibling rivalry, parental neglect, parental favoritism, marital infidelity, and factionalism among family members. The political implications of the characters' interpersonal dynamics merely demonstrate these basic emotional relationship issues on a grand scale.

Political Maneuvering

While the characters in *The Lion in Winter* are motivated by deeply personal feelings about each other, they are also engaged in real power struggles with vast political implications. The issue at hand concerns the outcome of three different questions: who will become the next king of England after Henry dies; who will marry Alais, the sister of the French king; and who will control the important French regions of the Vexin and the Aquitaine? The answer to each of these questions implies a reordering of the existing political power dynamics within the royal family and between France and England. All of the principle characters thus plot and counterplot with and against each other in order to determine the outcome of these three questions.

War and Peace

The political negotiations between the characters in *The Lion in Winter* will determine whether the outcome will be war or peace between the different factions. History tells us that the historically real characters on which this play is based spent much of their lives enmeshed in wars between France and England over the French territories that had come under English rule, as well as in civil wars within the Plantagenet family over who would inherit the English throne.

Early in the play, Henry comments that he has spent most of his life at war, and that he is sick of it. He explains that, in recent years, during which time there was relative peace between England and France, he has enjoyed the peacetime activity of overseeing the English legal system. History tells us that Henry II in fact did make considerable contributions to systematizing and modernizing English law.

Eleanor later comments that wars are made by the decisions of individuals, not by abstract entities. She tells her sons:

[W]e're the origins of war. Not history's forces nor the times nor justice nor the lack of it nor causes nor religions nor ideas nor kinds of government nor any other thing. We are the killers; we breed war. . . . Dead bodies rot in streams because the living ones are rotten. For the love of God, can't we love one another just a little? That's how peace begins.

The implication of Eleanor's statement is that wars are not inevitable occurrences, but are the result of human choices, and that, therefore, it is possible to choose peace instead of war.

Aging, Death, Inheritance, and Posterity

The Lion in Winter is also about aging, death, inheritance, and posterity. Today, a person who is fifty years old is considered to be middle-aged, with many years left to live. In medieval times, however, a fifty-year-old man was regarded as being close to the end of his life. Henry, who is fifty, remarks at one point that he is the oldest living man he knows. Yet he is also aware of the fact that he is approaching death, which adds a sense of urgency to his need to decide on an heir.

Early in the play, Alais asks Henry why he cares what happens to his land and kingship after he dies, since he will not be around to see it. Henry responds that he must know before he dies that his kingdom will remain intact, and not be splintered by civil wars. The tensions between the characters throughout the play are thus due largely to the competition between Henry's sons over who will be heir to his kingdom.

Henry's obsession with his own posterity is at heart motivated by the fear of death and the desire for immortality. In the closing lines of the play, Henry says to Eleanor, "You know, I hope we never die," to which Eleanor responds, "I hope so, too." Thus, Henry's inability to accept the inevitability of his own death is the subtext of his failure to choose an heir to his kingdom.

Style

The Historical Play

The Lion in Winter is a historical play in the sense that the characters are drawn from historically real figures in French and English history. The basic outlines of their place in history thus provide a context for the characters and relationships represented in the play. Goldman fills in much of this historical background through dialogue. At various points in the play, Eleanor and Henry explain the history of their lives and relationships to the younger characters. With this device, Goldman provides the reader with necessary historical information in a manner that blends naturally into the dialogue and action of the play.

In reading a historical drama, it is important to remember that the details of the characters' personalities and relationships, though based on real people, are fictional creations of the author, and should not be regarded as necessarily factually accurate. As Goldman indicates in a "Historical Note" that precedes the printed version of the play,

the facts we have, while clear enough as to the outcome of relationships□such things as who kills whom and when□say little if anything about the quality and content of those relationships. The people in this play, their characters and passions, while consistent with the facts we have, are fictions.

Goldman further explains in his "Historical Note" that he combined two historically real events into one fictionalized event. That is, he created an imaginary situation which combined a historically real meeting between Henry and Philip in the year 1183 with a royal court held in 1184 at Henry's Windsor Castle in England into "a Christmas Court that never was." Goldman is thus able to dramatize with more intensity the ways in which the political wrangling within Henry's immediate family affected his political dealings with the French king.

Dialogue

Much of the dialogue in *The Lion in Winter* is anachronistic (out of its proper historical context), in the sense that, while the play is set in the Middle Ages of the twelfth century, the characters tend to speak in a manner that sounds distinctly modern and twentieth-century. While many critics have criticized Goldman for his anachronistic dialogue, others have pointed out that it was an intentional choice on the part of the author. The modern-sounding way in which the characters express themselves causes them to come across to the modern reader more like everyday people, rather than depicting them as lofty legendary figures, as they are often portrayed in myths, legends, and historical accounts.

Literary References

The characters in *The Lion in Winter* make a number of references within their dialogue to classic mythology and literature. The reader's appreciation of Goldman's play is thus increased through an understanding of these references. For example, Henry at various points refers to his wife Eleanor as Medusa, Circe, and Medea. Medusa is a figure from Greek mythology whose hair is made of snakes, and who has the power to turn men to stone if they look at her. Circe is a beautiful sorceress from Greek legend who lives on an island and has the power to turn men into animals. In the play *Medea*, by Euripides (a fifth-century b.c. Greek playwright), Medea is an enchantress married to Jason. After Jason forsakes her for another woman, Medea seeks revenge against him by murdering their two young sons. Henry compares his own wife to Circe, Medusa, and Medea in the sense that all three characters are women who have the power to seduce men and then destroy them.

Historical Context

King Henry II of England

King Henry II of England, also known as Henry Plantagenet, was born in the year 1133 in Normandy, in what is now northern France. Though he became the king of England, he spent most of his life in Normandy, and the spoken language of his royal court was French. Henry was given the title Duke of Normandy in 1150, while he was still a teenager, and he inherited the title Count of Anjou upon the death of his father in 1151.

Eleanor of Aquitaine

Eleanor of Aquitaine was born about 1122 and lived to become one of the most influential and politically powerful women of her time. When her father died, Eleanor inherited the Aquitaine region, an area in western France that was larger than the domain ruled by the French king. While still a teenager, Eleanor married the heir to the French throne, who became King Louis VII soon afterward. This marriage brought the Aquitaine under French rule and made Eleanor the queen of France.

Eleanor was married to Louis for fifteen years, during which time she gave birth to two daughters, but no sons. She exerted significant political influence over her husband's reign. A daring and adventurous woman, she also traveled with him on the Second Crusade during the late 1140s. However, Louis eventually became jealous of Eleanor's attentions to other men, and their marriage was annulled. With the end of her first marriage, Eleanor was once again the sole ruler of the Aquitaine region.

Eleanor and Henry

In 1152, just a few months after the annulment of her marriage to Louis, Eleanor of Aquitaine married Henry Plantagenet, who was eleven years younger than she. With his marriage to Eleanor, Henry acquired the title Duke of Aquitaine. A year later, Henry invaded England and was granted by treaty the status of heir to the English throne. He was crowned King Henry II of England in 1154, making him the ruler of one of the largest territories in Europe, sometimes referred to as the Angevin empire, encompassing most of the British Isles and about half of France□a region stretching from Scotland in the north to the Pyrenees mountains in the south. Henry's powers eventually extended to Ireland and Wales, as well. Eleanor was instrumental in the political administration of Henry's kingdom, and she was also an important patron of the arts, promoting the development of courtly music and poetry.

Henry and Eleanor together had eight children, some of whom died before reaching adulthood. The surviving daughters were married off to powerful dukes, counts, and princes throughout Europe. Their eldest surviving son, Henry, was named heir to the throne. In the early 1170s, Eleanor, young Henry, Geoffrey, and Richard supported a

revolt against Henry and John, on the grounds that Henry was unfairly doling out parcels of land to his sons. Henry was able to put down the rebellion, and he forgave his sons, but he kept Eleanor imprisoned in a castle in England until his death.

In 1181, another rebellion was incited by a quarrel between Richard and his brother, the young Henry, over the rule of the Aquitaine region. This dispute ended, however, when young Henry died in the summer of 1183. The following year, a dispute broke out between Richard, who controlled the Aquitaine, and John, who had been granted permission by his father to take over the Aquitaine.

King Philip II of France

King Philip II of France, also known as Philip Augustus, was born in 1165 in Paris, the son of King Louis VII of France (Eleanor's first husband). Philip became king of France in 1179, at the age of fourteen, inheriting the throne from his father. In 1180, he married Isabella. Throughout the reigns of Henry II and his heirs, Philip fought to regain the French territories that had come under English rule. By the time of his death in 1223, Philip was the wealthiest and most powerful king in Europe.

King Richard I of England

Richard Plantagenet was born in 1157. After his brother Henry died, Richard was the eldest surviving son of Henry and Eleanor. As a boy, Richard's parents gave him the title Duke of Aquitaine and of Poitier. A celebrated soldier from an early age, Richard throughout his life incited rebellions against his father in efforts to win the right to inherit Henry's throne as king of England. During the late 1880s, Richard allied with King Philip II of France in a revolt against King Henry and Richard's brother John. In 1889, Henry was defeated by Philip and Richard and was forced by treaty to name Richard as the heir to his throne.

Upon Henry's death a few months later, Richard became the new king and Eleanor was released from prison. After fifteen years of imprisonment, Eleanor once again took up an active and important role in the government of the realm. When Richard left England for three years to go on the Third Crusade, Eleanor ruled in his name. During this period, John attempted a rebellion to usurp the throne from Richard, but Eleanor's forces defeated him. When Richard returned from the Crusades, he forgave John for rebelling and promised to name him as heir to the throne.

Throughout their reigns, Richard and Philip fluctuated between alliances, truces, and battles. While they fought on the same side during Richard's final rebellion against his father, they were more often fighting in opposition to one another over French territories. Richard was killed in 1199, at the age of forty-two, during a local skirmish over a hoard of gold.

King John of England

John Plantagenet, the youngest son of Eleanor and Henry, was born in 1167. After Richard I died without an heir, Eleanor was an important factor in securing the throne for John as his successor. Geoffrey, the middle son of Eleanor and Henry, had died by this time, but his son, Arthur, claimed himself as the rightful heir to the English throne, based on the fact that Geoffrey had been Henry's next eldest son after Richard. Arthur was given support from King Philip of France in fighting his uncle John over the English throne, but Arthur was captured and is believed to have been killed by John.

Soon after ascending the throne, John signed a treaty with Philip, ceding important lands to France. Like Richard and Philip, John and Philip fought many battles over French lands, occasionally ending in treaties, but ultimately resulting in Philip's recapture of most of France from the English crown. John's mother Eleanor died in 1204, at the age of about eighty-two.

John has often been described as the worst king in the history of England. However, because he was so unpopular among the landed gentry, he was eventually forced in 1215 to sign the Magna Carta (Great Charter), a document which curtailed the powers of the monarchy and became the foundation of English government. When John died the following year, his son became King Henry III of England. When Philip died in 1223, he was succeeded on the French throne by King Louis VIII.

Critical Overview

The Lion in Winter received mixed reviews of its 1966 Broadway debut production, and was essentially a critical and commercial failure. However, the 1968 film production of *The Lion in Winter*, based on a screenplay adaptation written by Goldman, was a critical and commercial success, winning Goldman an Academy Award. Since then, *The Lion in Winter* has been a favorite production for high schools and small community theaters. A Broadway revival of *The Lion in Winter*, produced in 1999, received mixed reviews.

Critical responses to *The Lion in Winter* throughout the history of its production on stage and screen have generally addressed similar issues. The play's critical supporters and detractors alike make note of Goldman's anachronistic use of modern American dialogue in the mouths of twelfth-century French and English characters. Many critics fault the play for this quality, asserting that Goldman's dialogue is ridiculously anachronistic, as well as sounding stilted and stagy.

Other critics, however, find that Goldman's ability to portray historical figures in an updated manner is the greatest strength of the play, because of the way in which it demonstrates the timeless quality of family relationships. In a *New York Times* review of a 1981 production of *The Lion in Winter*, Joseph Catinella comments that Goldman's play "takes many liberties with history," but notes that it is "the human clashes that give the script its contemporary flair and endow its people with genuine, not waxworks, emotions." Hoyt Hilsman, in a *Daily Variety* review of a 1994 production of *The Lion in Winter*, similarly observes: "Set in Chinon, France, in 1183, when 'dysfunctional' royal families not only made each others' lives miserable but sent armies after their relatives' domains, Goldman's story still has a very contemporary spin."

Critics likewise disagree over Goldman's interweaving of humorous dialogue and situations with elements of drama. Some praise *The Lion in Winter* as a comic family drama that demonstrates the wit and humor of its characters as well as their deeply human qualities and the poignancy of their genuine need for love. In a *New York Times* review of a 1988 production, Leah D. Frank asserts, "while *The Lion in Winter* is, without question, a comedy, what makes it interesting is the underlying seriousness of a disputatious family caught in a historical vise." James Lardner observes, in a *Washington Post* review of a 1981 production of the play, "Goldman's entertaining notion was to portray this royal tribe as a family of shouting, feuding, pining, pouting, snapping, plotting, everyday folks."

Many reviewers comment that the dramatic core of *The Lion in Winter* lies in the tension between the estranged husband and wife, Henry and Eleanor, and the effects of that conflict on their children. As Marianne Evett highlights, in a Cleveland *Plain Dealer* review of a 1993 production, Goldman's play "is full of family scenes□the kind of bruising, manipulative encounters that maybe only husbands, wives and children can deal out to each other and survive."

Evett further comments that the scenes between Eleanor and Henry express

a complex love of choices made, some of them terribly wrong; of treachery and mutual respect, hurts forgiven and unforgiven, memories of pain and of shattering happiness. In short, a sense of real life, lived and shared by two extraordinary people.

The Lion in Winter has frequently been compared to Edward Albee's celebrated play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962), which similarly focuses on the bitter struggles between a husband and wife who simultaneously taunt and impress one another with their barbed wit and capacity to deeply wound each other. As Leonard Hughes notes in a *Washington Post* review of a 2000 production of *The Lion in Winter*: "Goldman's disturbing story . . . is rather like *King Lear* meets *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" Ben Brantley, in a *New York Times* review of the 1999 Broadway revival of *The Lion in Winter*, comments that Goldman's play shares with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* the quality of "a thoroughly modern examination of a destructive marriage." Brantley continues, "Like Mr. Albee's George and Martha, Goldman's Henry and Eleanor have turned emotional vivisection into a savage parlor game, slashing away in marital disharmony while admiring each other's skills in doing so."

Criticism

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

Critical Essay #1

Brent holds a Ph.D. in American culture from the University of Michigan. In this essay, Brent discusses the theme of the dysfunctional family in Goldman's The Lion in Winter*.*

The central dynamic in the Plantagenet family stems from the relationship between Eleanor and Henry. During the first years of their marriage, they were strongly attracted to each other and deeply in love with one another. However, over time, they became estranged. Eleanor claims that their marriage fell apart sixteen years earlier, after Henry began an extramarital affair with a young woman by the name of Rosamund, whom he brought to live with them in the castle, thus displacing his wife in his affections. Henry, however, claims that their relationship started to fall apart before that. He tells Eleanor that after their son Richard was born she became so attached to her child that Henry felt rejected by her. After Rosamund died, seven years before the play takes place, Henry took Alais as his mistress.

Although she often denies it, Eleanor admits at certain points in the play that she is still in love with Henry, and that all she really wants is for him to take her back. She is deeply bitter about his years-long affair with Rosamund and painfully jealous of his current relationship with Alais. Eleanor is pained by his rejection of her for Rosamund, and now Alais, more than she suffers over her imprisonment. However, Eleanor's love for Henry is tangled with her jealousy, anger, and resentment toward him. All of Eleanor's actions thus stem from this feeling of rejection by her husband. Since she knows he will never take her back, she can only express her strong feelings toward him by seeking revenge against him through political plotting. Because Henry favors John, Eleanor favors Richard, and the two parents act out their resentment toward one another through encouraging Richard and John to regard each other as rivals for the throne.

Henry's feelings for Eleanor are jumbled and not entirely clear. Although he was once deeply in love with her, they became estranged many years ago. Henry has good reason to distrust Eleanor because she incited their sons to military rebellion against him ten years earlier, and came close to killing him in the process. However, Henry clearly admires Eleanor for her feistiness and intellectual power, and enjoys the fact that she is his equal in verbal and political sparring, in contrast to which he occasionally finds Alais's sweetness and good-heartedness somewhat dull and irritating.

Although Henry claims that he no longer cares for Eleanor, he is still capable of jealousy over other men's attentions to his wife in the past. On several occasions, Eleanor taunts Henry with the possibility that she may have had an affair with his father, who has been dead for many years. At one point, Eleanor claims that this was merely a rumor, and is untrue, but she later insists that Henry's father had indeed been her lover from the very beginning of their marriage. Henry is enraged by this, prompting Eleanor to insist that he stills cares about her enough to be upset by the idea of her having had an affair.

The feelings between Eleanor and Alais are equally complicated. Alais was brought to the castle at the age of seven, having been promised in marriage to Henry and Eleanor's eldest son Henry (who has recently died). Alais was thus raised by Eleanor, whom she regarded as a mother. Alais tells Eleanor that, as a girl, she had always worshipped the queen and looked up to her as a role model. Now the two women, one in her sixties and the other in her twenties, regard each other as rivals for Henry's affections. However, the deep mother-daughter sentiment that Eleanor and Alais still feel toward one another is expressed in one tender moment when Alais, overcome by the stress of the family situation, breaks into tears and Eleanor cradles the young woman in her arms to comfort her.

While the Plantagenet sons on one level are vying for the throne, they all at various points express the sentiment that what they really want is for their parents to express genuine love and affection toward them. Thus, the desire to be loved by their parents is acted out through competition over who is to be made heir to the throne.

Geoffrey, the middle child, expresses this sentiment most openly and strongly. On several occasions, he asks his mother and father why they have never paid any attention to him or expressed any love toward him. Throughout the play, Geoffrey points out to both of his parents that they have always expressed complete indifference to him, personally as well as politically□and both Eleanor and Henry openly admit to Geoffrey that they have never given him much thought. When Geoffrey asks his parents why they have always been so indifferent toward him and why they have never even considered him as a possible heir to the throne, they both brush him off without providing any explanation for their indifference. Geoffrey makes clear on several occasions that he does not really care who is made king, but that he wishes his parents would at least give him the consideration he deserves as their son. Geoffrey's bitterness toward his parents for never giving him any love is expressed through his desire to be involved in the political plotting and counter-plotting between them. If he cannot win their love, he seeks revenge by pitting them against each other with complex conspiracies.

Richard, by contrast, while emotionally neglected by his father as a child, was emotionally smothered by his mother. Richard was raised as his mother's favorite, and expresses the sentiment that Eleanor's intense love for him, and her possessiveness over him, was unnatural and selfish. Richard points out to his mother that she never truly loved him, but that she only uses him to try to get back at Henry. On the other hand, Richard complains to Henry that he was never given any fatherly love or attention, and that all he ever wanted was for Henry to love him. Henry explains that Richard was always allied with Eleanor, and so Henry felt he never had a chance to give Richard any attention. Richard insists that all he ever really wanted was his father's love. Henry, however, dismisses this plea, insisting that Richard only wanted his crown, not his love.

John, who has always been his father's favorite, is cold and distrustful toward his mother. However, although Henry repeatedly states that he loves John and John loves him, both express the feeling that the sentiment between them is not genuine love. While Henry maintains that John is the only son he loves, and that John loves him, the

other characters point out that John's attachment to his father is really only an expression of his greediness in assuming that he will be made the next king of England. Thus, when John's betrayal of his father is exposed, Henry is devastated by the realization that John does not truly love his father, but only loves the power his father has promised to him. John, likewise, feels that his father does not genuinely love him, but only uses him in opposition to Richard, as a means of getting back at Eleanor.

Thus, while all of the members of the Plantagenet family express the desire to be genuinely loved by the others, they all regard each other's expressions of so-called love as a selfish excuse for acquiring political power and seeking revenge against others. They all feel rejected and unloved by one another, and yet they all perpetuate this dynamic by using each other in elaborate political power games expressive of their deep-seated resentment toward each other for depriving them of real love.

Source: Liz Brent, Critical Essay on *The Lion in Winter*, in *Drama for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Critical Essay #2

Holm is a genre, literary, and nonfiction author. In this essay, Holm looks at a variety of aspects of this play that make it a compelling classic.

The Lion in Winter is full of the things that make for an excellent story. Its characters are extremely complex and face conflicts that are not easily resolved. It is tightly plotted, and the dialog is intelligent and riveting. The character motivations, dark as they may be, are portrayed convincingly. Throughout the play, commentary on the human condition can be read between the lines. *The Lion in Winter* is a compelling classic because it demands concentration from its audience but does so in a way that is enjoyable rather than burdensome.

Goldman gets the attention of his audience immediately by making it known that power is a theme that defines this story. Every single character is struggling for power, some quite skillfully. Perhaps the least skillful character is Alais. With an economy of words, Henry's first line to Alais□"You must know that's a futile gesture. Come along."□sets the audience up for power struggles ahead. Alais would like to be Queen and also to be Henry's wife. She's out of her league, however, compared to the incredibly scheming and very human Eleanor. With characteristic economy of language, Goldman's Henry tells Alais that even if she tried to make trouble, it would be fruitless because she "doesn't matter to the others; only me." Truly, Alais lacks the amazing cleverness of Henry, Eleanor, and to an extent, Eleanor and Henry's three sons. This is made clear on the second page of the play and sets the audience up for future danger. Yet, Alais is necessary to the story; she is a foil to Eleanor's age and cleverness; she exposes a tender, loving side of Henry (and of Eleanor); and Henry almost decides to marry her. At one point, Alais reveals honest self-awareness of her powerlessness and the dangerous world around her when she admits that she is the most dangerous of all the characters, since she is a pawn. Much of this story resembles an infinitely clever chess game, where the stakes are power, acquisition, and life or death.

Right away, Goldman makes it known that there is at least one power struggle at stake in this story: the struggle for the crown. The jungle metaphor three lines into the play also foreshadows danger ahead. Henry says "It's going to be a jungle of a day." However, this metaphor is used again at the end of the play, with a greater sense of danger and futility implied: "We're jungle creatures, Henry, and the dark is all around us. See them? In the corners, you can see the eyes." At the end of the story, the jungle metaphor means much more. It not only alludes to the continuous power struggles between these characters but to the dangerous world they have, in part, created through their intricate efforts at scheming.

Bigger than Alais's wish for the crown, however, is the intense power struggle between Henry and Eleanor. Two willful, conniving, and intelligent people, locked in a struggle for power, who also still love each other although their love seems perilously close to hate□what could possibly be more compelling? They have stalemated each other into a corner. Because they cannot possibly give up their struggles for power (whether it

involves land acquisition, choosing an heir, or allowing themselves to love each other), Eleanor and Henry are locked in an endless stalemate. They can, and will, connive against each other until they die, but nothing will truly be resolved. Such is the sense of futility that runs through the play, which the characters recognize.

Henry: We're in the cellar and you're going back to prison and my life is wasted and we've lost each other and you're smiling.

Eleanor: It's the way I register despair. There's everything in life but hope.

Henry and Eleanor are back where they started. Neither has managed to get anything they wanted; Henry does not have Aquitaine, and Eleanor is still his prisoner.

There are even times in the story when it seems that Goldman tempts the reader with the suggestion that Henry may actually love Eleanor more than Alais. Henry is every bit as complex as Eleanor; they are well matched and made for each other. When Alais leaves a scene at one point, Henry tells her he loves her "like my life." After Alais is gone, Henry says "I talk like that to keep her spirits up." Not to be outdone, Eleanor's comments to Henry often walk a fine line between sarcasm and true love: "I never could deny you anything." Neither of these willful people can let their guard down for long enough to truly admit their love for each other.

Amidst all the treachery and scheming in this play, Goldman still provides humor, although it is dark and dry, given the context of the story. Many of the lines are wonderful, almost brilliant in how they convey humor and danger at the same time. It is another dichotomy that is represented in this story, just like the dichotomy (or trichotomy) of Eleanor and Henry's love and rage and scheming toward each other. Referring to the scheming that goes on in the royal household, Henry says that his house is full of intellectual activity. Geoffrey "hums treachery"; Richard "growls out for gore"; Eleanor thinks "heavy thoughts like molten lead and marble slabs." Eleanor hopes that the French king is like his father□"simon pure and simon simple." Eleanor proclaims her son "dull as plainsong" and threatens to give him up out of boredom. Truly, as Dany Margolies wrote in *Back Stage West*, "The impression one retains of these family members is their unabashedly open loathing of one another and their fight-to-the-death backstabbing." This is true, but amazingly, the sarcasm can cross a fine line into the realm of dark humor.

Goldman's economy of language works well in this play. Early on, the reader has been well prepared for Eleanor's entrance, as well as her formidable presence and ability to wield power. In the previous pages, she has been referred to as "the New Medusa," the "great [b□□]," and the reader is aware that for some reason, she is locked up in a tower. Obviously, Eleanor has power that must be kept in check. In several concise lines of dialog, the reader is further introduced to Eleanor via her sons. The reader also immediately understands the sons' own power struggles and their ability to scheme and connive, though they never achieve the brilliance of their parents.

In a very few lines, the reader knows that the sons are struggling for the crown, they think little of their mother, John is less mature than the others, and Richard was once a favorite of Eleanor's. The reader can intuit that there is at least a little fear and carefulness regarding Eleanor, although none of the sons will admit it out loud.

Some of the most interesting things about *The Lion in Winter* are the internal conflicts that Henry and Eleanor struggle with. Although they are locked in a power struggle, they still, underneath all their plotting and scheming, love each other. It seems incredible that these two can so love and hate each other at the same time, yet Goldman makes it believable. These characters are casualties of the futile stalemates they have created for themselves and for each other, and they know it. Complex characters such as these are well-rounded and make for a compelling story and believable character motivations.

Another interesting internal dichotomy of Eleanor's is her genuine love for her husband's mistress.

Eleanor: I don't much like our children. Only you□the child I raised but didn't bear.

Alais: You never cared for me.

Eleanor: I did and I do.

Eleanor's affection for Alais is demonstrated again. While this may seem incredible, Eleanor is created so convincingly that the reader is able to believe that she is actually strong enough, even noble enough, to put her love for the girl that she raised above her disappointment with not being able to claim Henry's affections. Indeed, as scheming and incredibly bright as Eleanor is, she is also necessarily pragmatic. The reader is also given enough hints throughout the play to realize that Henry really does love Eleanor at least as much as Alais, though it is a different, tormented kind of love replete with its own passion and power struggles. These moments are all the more poignant and interesting because of the complexity of the two main characters.

Henry: There are moments when I miss you.

Eleanor: Many?

Henry: Do you doubt it?

Eleanor calls Henry a "marvel of a man." Henry recalls Eleanor's spellbinding beauty when he first met her. These two walk a tightrope of love, rage, and desire for power□the tension that holds this story together.

Eleanor displays the same conflicting feelings for Richard. While there are times in the play that it seems she would not hesitate to disown all her sons ("I don't much like our children"), scene 3 ends with genuine sentiment on her part, regarding Richard.

See? You do remember. I taught you dancing, too, and languages and all the music that I knew and how to love what's beautiful. The sun was warmer then and we were every day together.

Beyond all the scheming that royal life at that time in history necessitated and that these characters have brought upon themselves, they still display genuine human virtues. In the end, neither are able to kill their sons, though their sons' existence will eventually put them in danger. They express regret for what could have been. Eleanor regrets losing Henry, and the fact that she cannot ever have him back. Henry regrets wasting fortunes, squandering lives, and spending "everything." Yet, there is something compelling in their passion for each other even though they cannot and will not allow themselves to fully realize it.

With the subtlety and economy that is typical of Goldman's writing, he manages to make a few important observations about the human condition without hitting his readers over the head. Both of these are integral to the story and propel these characters' motivations, even though the characters realize their utter futility or destructiveness. In a telling bit of dialogue, Eleanor likens her family to the "origins of war. . . . Dead bodies rot in field and stream because the living ones are rotten." Eleanor realizes that her and her family's scheming actions propagate more of the same, but she and the others do not stop. Henry finds it incredible that he has "children who would murder children" even though "fish eat their young, and foxes: but not us." Here, Henry is commenting on the animal instincts that lie beneath the surface in the human animal and that rise to the surface in dangerous and violent ways in this story.

This play is rich with aspects that work together well to make it an exceptional story: complex characters with interesting internal and external conflicts, compelling dialog that often does double duty, and a poignant and dangerous look at the human condition and some unresolvable stalemates.

Source: Catherine Dybiec Holm, Critical Essay on *The Lion in Winter*, in *Drama for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Critical Essay #3

Goldfarb has a Ph.D. in English and has published two books on the Victorian author William Makepeace Thackeray. In the following essay, Goldfarb explores the significance of the family struggles in Goldman's play.

Towards the end of the first act of *Lion in Winter*, John, the youngest prince, is astonished and horrified when his older brother Richard pulls a knife on him. "A knife," he says, "he's got a knife." To which his mother, Eleanor, responds by saying: "Of course he has a knife. He always has a knife. We all have knives. It is eleven eighty-three and we're barbarians."

This is a joke, of course; it is in fact the sort of easy laugh line that some commentators have complained about in Goldman's play, but there are some interesting things going on in this passage nevertheless. The laugh itself derives from a sort of distancing effect reminiscent of the plays of the German playwright Bertolt Brecht, with the character in effect stepping back to comment on herself, violating the rules of realism. It is this sudden violation that creates the laugh, but there is more than humor here. First of all, Goldman seems to ask his audience to notice how different these people from the Middle Ages are from modern people. In modern middle-class families, brothers do not normally pull knives on each other.

But, before his modern audience can get too comfortable in feeling they are superior to these character, Goldman suggests that the differences are not really that great after all. Just a few moments after the knife scene, Eleanor realizes that she can use something John has said to get the better of him and to wound his father, her husband, Henry. John has let slip the fact that he has been plotting with Philip, the French king, to attack Henry. Eleanor knows that finding this out would hurt Henry because John is his favorite. "Oh, I've got the old man [Henry] this time," she says. "The damn fool thinks he loves John, he believes it. That's where the knife goes in."

The knife in this case is not a real knife but a metaphorical one. Eleanor is not planning to wound her husband physically, but emotionally, just as a modern person might do. Indeed, all of the wounding in this play is emotional. Real knives are seen on occasion, and there is talk of war and death but all that actually happens is that members of a family argue, plot, and hurl insults at each other. Most of the time, the characters seem more modern than medieval, which has led some commentators to criticize the play for not being historically accurate. "Goldman uses his historical setting merely as a subterfuge for romantic comedy," says Robert Brustein, which does raise the issue of why Goldman chose to set his tale of family conflict eight hundred years in the past.

Perhaps the point is to show that on a figurative level, the struggles that go on in a modern family are just as serious, dangerous, and wounding in their own way as the bloody struggles carried on by the people of 1183. "Knives, knives," says Eleanor just after the knife scene and her comment about wounding Henry. It is not clear whether she is referring to physical knives like the one Richard carries or to emotional knives.

Perhaps both. Perhaps the point is that there is little difference: emotional wounds can be as serious as physical ones and medieval struggles to conquer provinces and win thrones are just heightened versions of the struggles that go on in modern families every day.

Goldman's point seems to be that all families, whether modern or medieval, struggle. "What family doesn't have its ups and downs?" says Eleanor in another of the play's laugh lines. Again the message is contradictory. The line is funny because Eleanor's attempt to make her family seem no worse than other families seems absurd at first. She makes the comment just after telling Henry she once slept with his father; whether that statement is true or not (and characters in this play tell lies all the time, so it is hard to tell), this seems far beyond the sort of thing that would be said in most families. And yet, as Eleanor says, what family does not have its ups and downs? What family is free of squabbles and lies and hurtful actions?

What do families squabble over? If Henry is to be believed, it is power. "Power is the only fact," he says early in act 1. Indeed, the play on one level is all about the struggle for power: the struggle to decide who will inherit the throne of England and also rule over large areas of France. But, Henry does not seem quite correct. Power in this play is one fact, but not the only one. There is also love and lack of love. Geoffrey, for instance, the middle and always forgotten son, complains that he gets no love; his parents, he says, have never felt anything "warmer than indifference" for him. When he complains about being left out of the discussions of who will inherit the throne, his complaint is less about not having a chance to be a king but about being overlooked. "It isn't power that I feel deprived of," he says; "it's the mention that I miss. There's no affection for me here."

Similarly, Henry himself shows that more than power is at stake at the end when he finds he cannot kill his rebellious sons. Unable to strike them down, he collapses on the floor, saying, "Children . . . They're all we have." It seems he has real affection for his sons, or at least a sense of parental duty towards them. He even displays real affection for Eleanor despite all their verbal jousting and the fact that he keeps her locked up in a castle. Even their insults seem good-natured most of the time, which can be seen, for example, when they banter over headstones or about whether the sea parted on Eleanor's voyage. At the end, Henry declares their great hope to be that they have each other.

In fact, one of the most interesting points Goldman seems to be making is that the jousting and fighting are all part of the love: one cannot have one without the other. It might be thought that peace and harmony would be preferable to all the maneuverings and deceit, and there is a moment in the play when Eleanor rhapsodizes over the possibility of peace. She calls on her sons to join her in putting an end to all the squabbling. "For the love of God," she says, "can't we love one another just a little? That's how peace begins."

Eleanor's sudden pacifism, however, seems merely a result of her feeling defeated in the struggle with her husband. She has just finished telling Richard to accept the fact

that the two of them have lost to Henry. A moment later, however, when it turns out that all is not lost after all, she forgets her yearning for peace and starts plotting anew, making her comment about sticking the knife in Henry. Tellingly, the stage direction at this moment, as she forgets about peace and returns to the struggle, is: "Alive again." The peace she sought seems to have been connected to death; only when she struggles is she alive. Similarly, when Henry earlier in the play says he has grown tired of war and asks for peace, Eleanor says "How about eternal peace?"□in other words, death. Peace is for the grave, the play seems to be saying; to be alive is to struggle.

This may seem like a gloomy attitude, but the play's tone is far from gloomy or pessimistic. Goldman calls it a comedy, and in addition to the humor in it, the ending seems upbeat in its way. It is not a conventional happy ending. There is no reconciliation; there is not even a resolution of the conflict. Robert Brustein complains that the author never even bothers to resolve the issue of who will inherit the throne. Even Walter Kerr, a critic who praises the play, is troubled by the lack of resolution. There is no moral at the end, he says, no one to cheer for and no goal to look forward to. He does wonder if "the mazelike trickiness" of the play might be part of its meaning, and he is on to something there. Elsewhere he speaks of the play as being "a roundabout game," and if he means that the play is something of a merry-go-round ride, then he is even closer to its essence.

As the play ends, Henry invites Eleanor to return at Easter to "strike me down again." Eleanor says she might just succeed next time. Henry say perhaps she will not. It sounds like an exchange between friendly rivals looking forward to their next competition against each other. It is also somehow reminiscent of "The Myth of Sisyphus," an essay by Albert Camus, the French philosopher associated with the Theater of the Absurd. Although *The Lion in Winter* is different in many ways from the plays that are associated with the Theater of the Absurd, most notably Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, it does share an underlying attitude with them: the notion that the universe is absurd and meaningless.

The Lion in Winter is much more conventional in style than the dramas of Beckett and others of his school; it does not indulge in nonsensical obscurities and does not abandon plot altogether. But, there is a sense of meaninglessness hanging over it. In the midst of the struggle over who will be the next king, characters ask why it matters. Eleanor notes that she and Henry will not live to see the succession, so why bother to fight over it? The young princess Alais laughs at Henry over the notion that after death he might "look down from the clouds and see who's sitting in [his] place." The play suggests that there is nothing after death. As Eleanor says, "The world stops when I die." There is just life, a life of ceaseless struggle.

This notion, however, is not a gloomy thing. In his essay on Sisyphus, Camus summarizes the story of the character in Greek mythology whom the gods had condemned to a horrible punishment: he was forced to roll a stone up a mountainside, and every time he succeeded in reaching the top, the stone would roll down to the bottom, forcing him to start over again. It is a dreadful punishment, says Camus, to be set to do such "futile and hopeless labour." Sisyphus's "whole being is exerted towards

accomplishing nothing." Yet, says Camus, there is strength and joy in the story: "The struggle itself . . . is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy."

The same can be said of Henry and Eleanor in Goldman's play. They struggle ceaselessly but do not achieve anything. At the end of the play, nothing is resolved, and all they have is a promise to resume the struggle next time, a struggle that hardly matters because they will die without knowing the final result. Yet it is the struggle that brings these two characters to life. The play does have a moral after all: life is nothing without struggle, and love neither.

Source: Sheldon Goldfarb, Critical Essay on *The Lion in Winter*, in *Drama for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Adaptations

Goldman wrote the screenplay for a 1968 film adaptation of *Lion in Winter*, directed by Anthony Harvey. The cast includes Peter O'Toole as King Henry, Katherine Hepburn as Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Anthony Hopkins as Richard Plantagenet. Goldman won an Academy Award for best screenplay for *Lion in Winter*, while Hepburn won the Academy Award for best actress.

Goldman's original screenplay adaptation of *Lion in Winter* was filmed as a made-for-television movie, broadcast on Showtime Network in 2004, starring Glenn Close as Eleanor and Patrick Stewart as Henry.

Topics for Further Study

The characters in Goldman's play *Lion in Winter* are fictional creations based on historically real figures from twelfth-century English and French royal families. Choose one of the following figures and learn more about the factual history of this person's life and role in history and politics: King Henry II of England (Henry Plantagenet), Eleanor of Aquitaine, King Philip II of France (also known as Philip Augustus), King Richard I of England (also known as Richard the Lionheart), or King John of England. This person was a part of which major social, historical, and political events, and what role did he or she play in the outcome of these events?

Research and write a report on one of the following areas of the cultural arts in medieval French or/and English society: literature, music, the visual arts, or theater. How would you characterize the aesthetic principles of this area of cultural art during the Middle Ages? Who were some of the major writers/artists/musicians/dramatists in this area and what were some of their major works? Pick one of these works (a poem, song, play, painting, etc.) to describe and discuss in more detail.

Lion in Winter is set in a royal castle and concerns the domestic relations of a medieval family. Research and learn more about the daily life of medieval people, such as living conditions, work, school, family life, clothing, food, etc. Then write an essay on "a day in the life" of an average person in the Middle Ages. Be sure to specify if this person is a man, woman, girl, or boy, and if he or she comes from the peasant classes or the landed gentry. Describe the types of work, housing conditions, food, dress, games, family life, and holiday or festival traditions of a medieval person from this social class.

Although it involves characters from a historically real royal family, *Lion in Winter* is essentially a play about the interpersonal dynamics that take place during a holiday celebration. Write your own original short play about the interpersonal dynamics of a family who have come together to celebrate a birthday, holiday, or other special occasion. Be sure to demonstrate through your characters' interactions what each character is hoping to get from the other members of the family□such as love, money, recognition, freedom, or anything else a person might want or expect from his or her family.

Compare and Contrast

1180s: King Henry II rules over a vast region, sometimes referred to as the Angevin Empire, that encompasses most of the British Isles, Normandy, and over half of France. King Philip II of France rules over the southern and eastern portions of France not included in Henry's domain. The rulers of England and France engage in continual land disputes over the French regions held sometimes by English kings and sometimes by French kings.

1960s: England, Scotland, and Wales constitute Great Britain, which, together with Ireland, constitute the United Kingdom. The nation of France includes all of the French regions once held by English kings. France is among the original six nations of the European Economic Community (EEC), a multinational alliance formed in 1957. In 1961, Great Britain bids for membership in the EEC, but France vetoes it. In 1967, the EEC is reorganized into the European Communities (EC).

Today: The United Kingdom and France are among the many member nations of the European Union, a multinational economic and political alliance that developed out of the EC.

1180s: England is ruled by a feudal kingship, passed down from generation to generation through family inheritance or transferred from one ruler to another through war. King Henry II of England rules over most of the British Isles, and over half of France.

1960s: The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. Parliament consists of the monarch, the elected House of Commons, and the appointed House of Lords. The prime minister, who is the leader of the majority political party in the House of Commons, serves as head of government. The monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, serves as head of state. Citizens of the United Kingdom enjoy universal suffrage for all men and women.

Today: The United Kingdom remains a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy with universal suffrage. Queen Elizabeth II continues to serve as head of state. As of 1999, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland each have their own national assembly of representatives, chosen by proportional representation, which have taken on some of the powers of the central Parliament of the United Kingdom, while remaining subordinate to it.

1180s: France under King Philip II is ruled by a feudal kingship, passed down from generation to generation through family inheritance.

1960s: Since the ratification of the 1958 constitution, the French system of government is a parliamentary constitutional democracy known as the Fifth Republic. The French president appoints the prime minister and serves as head of state. The French

Parliament, headed by the prime minister, consists of the National Assembly and the Senate. French citizens enjoy universal suffrage for all men and women.

Today: The French government of the Fifth Republic continues to be organized as a parliamentary constitutional democracy with universal suffrage.

What Do I Read Next?

Goldman's first play, *They Might Be Giants* (1961), is a comedy about a retired judge who thinks he is Sherlock Holmes. His brother, who hopes to have him committed to a mental hospital, sends him to a female psychiatrist by the name of Dr. Watson.

Goldman's second play, *Blood, Sweat, and Stanley Poole* (1961), co-authored with his brother William Goldman, is a comedy about army life, based on Goldman's experiences in the United States Army during the Korean War.

Goldman's *And Myself as Witness* (1980) is a historical novel about the life and reign of King John of England, who is one of Henry II's sons portrayed in *Lion in Winter*. Goldman described *And Myself as Witness* as a sort of novelistic sequel to *Lion in Winter*.

In Euripedes's ancient Greek play *Medea* (431 b.c.), Medea is a strong-willed woman who possesses magical powers and who murders her young sons as revenge against her husband Jason, who has left her for another woman.

The ancient Greek play *Antigone* (written in the 5th century b.c.), by Sophocles, is about the daughter and sons of King Oedipus. After Oedipus dies, his sons, Polyneices and Eteocles, fight one another in a civil war over who shall inherit the throne from their father.

The play *The Life and Death of King John* (1596), by William Shakespeare, offers a fictionalized account of the reign of King John of England, the son of King Henry II and brother of King Richard I.

King Lear (1605) is considered to be one of William Shakespeare's greatest plays. It recounts the story of an aging king who divides his lands among his three daughters and consequently sets the stage for a civil war between the daughters over rights to the land.

The novel *Ivanhoe* (1819), by Sir Walter Scott, provides a fictional account of events taking place in England during the period when King Richard I was away on the Crusades and his brother John (who later became King John) schemed to usurp him.

Goldman's *Lion in Winter* is often compared to the play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962), by Edward Albee, which was adapted to film in 1966. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* concerns the interpersonal dynamics of Martha and George, a married couple who, like Eleanor and Henry in *Lion in Winter*, engage in verbal sparring that expresses both their deep love and bitter resentment toward one another.

The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England (1997), edited by Nigel Saul, offers a comprehensive introduction to the history of England, from the departure of the Roman legions in the year 500 a.d. to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. The book is divided into

major sections covering such topics as identity, politics, and society in medieval England; Anglo-Saxon England; late medieval England; economy and society; piety, religion, and church; the visual arts; and language and literature.

Further Study

Bradbury, Jim, *Philip Augustus: King of France, 1180—1223*, Longman, 1998.

Bradbury offers a biographical history of King Philip II of France, also known as Philip Augustus, who was born in 1165 and reigned from 1180 to 1223. Bradbury focuses on King Philip's relationship with the Catholic Church and on the Battle of Bouvines in 1214.

Church, S. D., ed., *King John: New Interpretations*, Boydell Press, 1999.

Church provides a collection of essays by various authors presenting current reinterpretations of the controversial life and reign of King John of England. These essays cover such topics as: the early years of John's reign; his relationship to his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine; his dealings with the Norman aristocracy; his personal relationship with Isabella of Angouleme; his political dealings with Ireland, Scotland, and Wales; his problems with the Roman Catholic Church; his system of justice; and his personal and political relationship with King Philip II of France.

Clopper, Lawrence M., *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period*, University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Clopper explains the social, cultural, and political significance of theater, games, and festivals in England from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries.

Daniell, Christopher, *From Norman Conquest to Magna Carta: England, 1066—1215*, Routledge, 2003.

Daniell offers a comprehensive history of society, culture, and politics in England from the Norman Conquest in 1066 to the signing of the Magna Carta by King John in 1215. Daniell covers such topics as the Battle of Hastings and its aftermath, social and family life, court life, government and justice systems, religion, the economy, and the arts.

Gillingham, John, *Richard Coeur de Lion: Kingship, Chivalry, and War in the Twelfth Century*, Hambledon Press, 1994.

Gillingham offers biographical and historical information on the life and reign of King Richard I of England (also known as Richard Coeur de Lion, or Richard the Lionheart), who was born in 1157 and ruled from 1189 to 1199. Gillingham discusses Richard's role as King of England in the politics of his time, as well as his military engagements and his experiences fighting in the Crusades.

Parsons, John Carmi, ed., *Medieval Queenship*, St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Parsons provides a collection of essays by various authors on the social, cultural, political, and interpersonal roles of queens in England and Europe during the Middle Ages. Essays included in the volume cover such topics as family, sex, and power

among medieval queens; mothers and daughters in the Plantagenet royal family; the representation of royal women in England; and the relationship of queens to the Catholic Church.

Schlight, John, *Henry II Plantagenet*, Twayne Publishers, 1973.

Schlight provides a historical and biographical overview of the life and reign of King Henry II of England, who was born in 1133 and reigned from 1154 until his death in 1189.

Weir, Alison, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Life*, Ballantine Books, 2000.

Weir provides a historical and biographical overview of the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine, one of the most powerful women in English history, who was married first to King Louis VII of France and then to King Henry II of England.

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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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