The Night of the Iguana Study Guide

The Night of the Iguana by Tennessee Williams

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Introduction

Tennessee Williams's *he Night of the Iguana* is the last of the distinguished American playwright's major artistic, critical, and box office successes. First performed on December 28, 1961, on Broadway in the Royale Theatre, *The Night of the Iguana* won Williams his fourth New York Drama Critics Award. Like other plays by Williams, *The Night of the Iguana* focuses on sexual relationships and odd characters, including one crippled by his desires, the Reverend Shannon. Indeed, in retrospect, many critics see *The Night of the Iguana* as the link between stylistic eras (early/middle to late) for Williams. They argue that Williams reveals more of himself in this play than his previous work. Indeed, unlike many of Williams's plays *The Night of the Iguana* ends on a positive, hopeful note. However, some contemporary critics of the original Broadway production found the play lacking form and derivative of Williams's earlier successes, such as *A Streetcar Named Desire*. There has also been a lingering controversy over what the iguana, mentioned in the title, represents. The iguana, which spends most of the play tied up on the edge of the veranda, is seen as a symbol for a number of things, including freedom, what it means to be human, and Shannon. As an unnamed critic in *Time* magazine wrote, "Purists of the craft may object that, strictly speaking, *The Night of the Iguana* does not go anywhere. In the deepest sense, it does not need to. It is already there, at the moving, tormented heart of the human condition."

Author Biography

Williams was born Thomas Lanier Williams on March 26, 1911, in Columbus, Mississippi. He was the son of Cornelius Coffin and Edwina (maiden name, Dakin) Williams. Williams's father, a traveling salesman, was rarely home for Williams and his elder sister Rose. The children and their mother lived with her parents in Tennessee until 1918. That year, Cornelius Williams moved the family to St. Louis when he was hired as the sales manager for a shoe company. Williams began writing as a child, publishing poetry in his junior newspaper. In high school, he published short stories in national magazines.

After graduating from high school in 1929, Williams entered the University of Missouri, Columbia. Williams considered becoming a journalist, but he was forced to leave after two years due to financial hardship caused by the Great Depression. Williams went to work at his father's employer, the International Shoe Company, where he was miserable. Williams returned to college for a year at St. Louis's Washington University, before being forced to drop out again. Williams finally finished his degree at the University of Iowa in 1938.

Williams had begun writing plays as early as 1935, producing them locally. He dubbed himself Tennessee Williams in 1939, based on a nickname he acquired at Iowa for his Southern accent. Based on a group of his plays, Williams won the Group Theater prize in 1939. This led to wider recognition as well as a Rockefeller Fellowship in 1940. Williams made his living writing, even spending a half a year as a screenwriter for MGM in 1943. The experience and form did not suit him, and Williams turned to plays full time by 1944.

In 1944, Williams wrote *The Glass Menagerie* which firmly established his literary reputation. He won numerous accolades for the play, which had some basis in Williams's own life. Between 1944 and 1972, Williams produced over a dozen plays, many of which were extremely successful. Williams won the Pulitzer Prize for drama twice, the first for what many critics consider his best play, 1947's *A Street Car Named Desire,* and the second for 1955's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.* Williams called his style "poetic naturalism"□referring to the poetic edge present in his style of dramatic realism. Williams' s last big hit in this vein was 1962' s *Night of the Iguana.*

After *Iguana,* Williams' s plays differed in form and content, and many were not critically acclaimed nor commercially successful; many were seen as derivative of his earlier work. Williams suffered a mental collapse in the late 1960s, spending several weeks in a psychiatric hospital. His last minor success was in 1972 with *Small Craft Warnings.* Williams continued to write plays as well as novels and short stories, until his death on February 24,1983.

Plot Summary

Act I

The Night of the Iguana opens at the Costa Verde Hotel in Mexico. The hotel's proprietress, Maxine Faulk, greets her old friend, an expelled minister named Reverend T. Lawrence Shannon, as he pants his way into the hotel. Maxine tells him that her husband, Fred, has died recently. Shannon, a tour director, is distressed and has the key to his tour bus hidden in his pocket. He wants the tour to stay here because he is afraid of losing his job and he is on the verge of collapse. The reason for Shannon's distress is revealed: His tour group consists of 11 young Baptist music teachers and he has had sexual intercourse with one of them. Everyone has found out about the liaison, including the head of the group, Miss Fellowes.

Miss Fellowes gets off the bus and confronts Shannon. She insists on using the hotel's telephone to report Shannon to her local authorities and his employer. Maxine tries to give Shannon her dead husband's clothing and put him into her husband's old room. Maxine gets her employees to take the women's luggage off the bus, as Shannon has requested. Miss Fellowes returns and continues to argue with Shannon about his conduct and the tour. When she learns about the luggage, she insists that it be returned to the bus. Maxine tries to get Shannon to give up the key but he won't hear of it.

In the meantime, Hannah Jelkes, an artist of about 40 years of age, has appeared at the hotel and asked Shannon about rooms for herself and her elderly grandfather, a poet of minor reputation known as Nonno; he informs her that there are vacancies. When she returns with the old man, Maxine only gives them rooms when Shannon insists. However, they have no money to pay, because they usually work for their funds among hotel patrons: she as a character sketch artist, and he reads poems. After Maxine tells them they can stay for one night, Hannah confides in Shannon that her grandfather is not well and might have had a slight stroke. Shannon helps Hannah into her room, and Maxine returns, jealous of the attentions Shannon has paid to Hannah.

Act II

At the hotel several hours later, Maxine confronts Hannah. Maxine attempts to get Hannah and her grandfather to move to a boarding house, but Hannah makes herself useful then tries to sell her jade. Their conversation is interrupted by the return of Shannon and some other guests. Hannah asks Shannon about the boarding house, and he tells her it is unsuitable. Their conversation is interrupted by the entrance of Charlotte, the young woman with whom Shannon had a liaison. Shannon hides and Hannah covers for him. When Charlotte figures out that he is in his room, Shannon comes out. Charlotte tells him that they must get married, but Shannon informs her that he does not love anyone. Miss Fellowes approaches, prompting Charlotte and Shannon

hide. Again, Hannah covers for them, but Miss Fellowes finds Charlotte and drags her away.

Shannon emerges wearing his minister's frock. Hannah helps him with the collar, then sketches him. Shannon tells her he has been on "sabbatical" from his church for a year, because he had sexual intercourse with a Sunday school teacher and then committed an act of heresy. He was kicked out of his church and then sent to an asylum. Hannah decides to try to sell her paintings to the Baptist teachers and leaves Shannon in charge of her grandfather. In the meantime, some of the employees return with an iguana, which is tied to the veranda to be fattened for eating. Maxine enters and offers drinks to Shannon, who refuses.

Nonno takes a fall in his room, and Shannon quickly helps him up and brings him out. He begins to recite a poem when Hannah returns and helps him when his memory falters. Nonno finishes and Hannah makes him sit down, though he loudly asks about how much money they have made. Shannon helps her deal with him, calming the old man down and directing attention away from the situation. They sit down to eat, and Nonno blesses the food when prompted by Shannon. Nonno shows his dementia as Hannah explains that her grandfather was a minor poet. Maxine appears with a liquor cart, and she and Shannon get into a shoving match with it after Maxine insults Nonno. Shannon leaves momentarily, and Maxine and Hannah argue. Hannah threatens to leave, even though a storm is coming. Maxine tells her to stay away from Shannon, though Hannah denies there is any attraction. Shannon returns, and Maxine brings the liquor cart to other guests. Shannon tells Hannah she is a lady after she gives him one of her last cigarettes after he asks for it. Hannah tells him that she wishes she could help him, and he is touched. She retrieves her paintings, and they watch the storm as it hits.

Act III

This act opens in the same place, several hours later. Shannon is in his room writing a letter to his Bishop when Maxine interrupts. Maxine tells him that she is considering moving back to the United States. She also tries to coerce him to stay at the hotel with her. He leaves to mail his letter himself when he sees the Baptist teachers gathered around the bus. Jake Latta, a man from the tour company, is with them. Jake approaches Shannon and Maxine and informs Shannon that the group of Baptist teachers will now be combined with Jake's tour group. Jake demands the key, but Shannon will not give it up. Jake believes Shannon has gone crazy. The key is finally taken from Shannon by force, and he demands severance pay. Jake leaves, taking the tour group with him.

Shannon almost follows, but Maxine makes him stay. After Maxine leaves to collect her fees from the group, Shannon nearly chokes when his cross and chain get caught on something. Hannah rescues him, but he tries to leave again. Maxine returns and has Shannon tied up to control his "crackup." At Shannon's request, Hannah talks to him. She also makes him poppyseed tea. He is upset about the sketch she drew of him and

because she refuses to untie him. He is cruel to her, suggesting that she should add hemlock to Nonno's tea, and while she is bothered by it, she knows why he is acting this way. Though she still will not untie him, she does light a cigarette for him and put it in his mouth. The cigarette falls underneath him and he begins to panic. While Hannah tries to retrieve it, Maxine returns and is angered by the scene. She again tries to intimidate Hannah. Shannon promises to sleep with Maxine later if she will untie him. Satisfied, she leaves to attend to other guests.

Shannon manages to free himself from the rope and immediately heads to the liquor cart. Hannah tells him that she too nearly suffered a breakdown and survived by endurance and a will to keep on going. She also is determined to stay at the hotel. Hannah convinces him to drink a cup of poppyseed tea when he asks her about her love life. She tells him that she has had two encounters and has learned to accept what she cannot improve. Shannon tries to touch her, but she tells him to back away. Shannon tries to get her to travel with him, but she refuses this request as well. She decides to pack her things for tomorrow when the iguana's movements become loud and bother her. She asks Shannon to cut it loose. He complies after much discussion. Nonno calls her, informing her that he has finally finished his poem. Maxine returns and is upset to find that Shannon is untied. Shannon agrees to stay with Maxine. Hannah sits with Nonno, who has just died.

Act 1, Part 1

Act 1, Part 1 Summary

Maxine comes out onto the verandah, buttoning her blouse. She's heard the sound of a busload of female tourists arriving and is checking out the potential business. She's Following Maxine is Pedro, a young Mexican who is tucking his shirt into his pants.

Maxine happily shouts crude remarks of greeting to Shannon, who's climbing up the hill. He shouts back, and shortly appears, complaining of having a fever. He asks for Fred, Maxine's husband. Maxine says bluntly he's dead of a blood infection, and complains about the final few years of their marriage. Shannon tells her that the tour he's guiding is the most difficult tour he's ever had in ten years of guiding tours, and shouts down to the bus driver to get the tourists to come up to the hotel. Maxine, seeing Shannon's about to collapse from nervous exhaustion, suggests that he let them go on and he stay. He tells her he can't do that, his job is on the line.

Hank appears, tells Shannon the women on the tour aren't coming up to the hotel, and tries to convince him to move the tour on. Shannon asks for Hank's support, but Hank doesn't seem interested in giving it. He says there's a young girl in the back who keeps crying, and the women all think that Shannon's the reason. Shannon tells Hank to take one of the sample dinner menus down to the bus in an effort to convince the women to stay. Hank takes the menu and goes. As he leaves a noisy, colorful German family, the Fahrenkopfs, crosses the verandah on their way to the beach - they are singing a Nazi marching song. When Shannon asks why there are so many Nazis in Mexico, Maxine comments that they have easy access to both the States and South America.

Shannon lies in a hammock, and Maxine lies with him, teasing him about his relationship with the young girl on the tour. He tells her that the girl is desperate to get out from under the wing of her bossy chaperone, and one night she showed up in his room. He refers to "the spook" having been with him, which Maxine understands, and suggests that the reason he had the relationship with the girl was because of "the spook." He comments that he hasn't been able to sleep because "the spook" has always been around, but is hopeful about staying at the hotel because "the spook" seems to be keeping its distance. He looks down at the bus and sees that one of the women has gotten out of the bus and is slapping Hank. Shannon calls down to her to come up, saying everything's arranged, and asks for Maxine's help. She asks why he doesn't spend time with older women instead of always going after the younger ones.

Miss Fellowes soon appears and demands that Shannon give her the key to the bus so the tour can move on. He shows her the dinner menu, but Miss Fellowes asks Maxine to use the telephone. Maxine calls Pedro, who shows Miss Fellowes to the phone. Maxine follows her to make sure the call is collect.

Alone for the first time, Shannon pounds on the wall in frustration and anguish just as Hannah appears. Seeing her calms him down, and when she asks whether the hotel has room for herself and her invalid grandfather, he tells her that there's plenty of room. Hannah goes down to get her grandfather, and refuses Shannon's offer of help.

Act 1, Part 1 Analysis

This section of the play accomplishes three important tasks. Firstly, it vividly introduces the main characters. Maxine appears as blunt, pragmatic and sexual while Shannon is high strung and articulate. Hannah at this point is somewhat more enigmatic in terms of who she is, but because she has the impact on Shannon that she does, her presence is still powerful and definitive.

Secondly, we get a sense of relationships between these characters. Maxine clearly knows and understands Shannon very well, and relates to him with a blend of sexual desire and maternal compassion. Shannon seems embarrassed by Maxine's bluntness and overt sexuality and seems to resent her knowing him so well. At the same time he's clearly drawn to her - not as sexually as she is drawn to him, but as kind of a shelter and refuge. The hotel and the hammock both represent, to varying degrees, the safety he finds with her. Finally, even though Hannah and Shannon relate only briefly, her impact on him is immediate. She seems able to calm him down in a way he can't do for himself. This sets up a kind of duel between Hannah and Maxine for Shannon's affections and attention, a relatively understated but pivotal conflict throughout the play.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, this section sets up the central conflict of the play, between Shannon and "the spook." He uses this word to objectify, or make real, his inner conflict, which borders on madness. All the conflicts he faces as the play unfolds are outward manifestations of his inner struggle, the details of which also become clearer as the story continues.

The Nazi family appears at key points throughout the play and don't seem to be individualized as people. In their cruelty, indifference and almost obscene joy in their own pleasure, they represent society at large, and the way society has little time and sympathy for individuals like Shannon and Hannah who have difficulty coping with day to day life and their own drives and desires.

Act 1, Part 2

Act 1, Part 2 Summary

Shannon is again in the hammock when Maxine reappears. As she removes his shoes and loosens his collar to make him more comfortable, she asks him again why he chases younger women. He doesn't answer. She discovers he's wearing a gold cross around his neck, which she knows means that he's thinking again about going back to being a priest. He tells her this is his last tour, and that he's written to his Bishop with a complete confession. Maxine finds the letter and tells him he's sweated through it.

Hank comes back onto the verandah and tries to kick Shannon out of the hammock, telling him the girl is having hysterics. Maxine offers him another drink, and he goes off to get one. As Maxine shaves Shannon, she tells him that Fred was always a mystery to her with his patience and his night fishing. She invites him to take Fred's old room - the room next to hers. Shannon refuses, saying all he wants is to stay in the hammock; that that will provide him the strength he needs to go back into the church.

Miss Fellowes comes out of the office. Shannon tries to charm her into feeling sympathy for him, saying he's at the end of his rope and just trying to calm down enough to finish the job. Miss Fellowes accuses him of cheating them. Just then the young girl Shannon had seduced comes up the hill, and disappears as Miss Fellowes shouts at her. Shannon invites Miss Fellowes and the other women to see the accommodation for themselves, but she tells him she's already looked around and found the quarters unsuitable. They accuse each other of being responsible for the miserable trip, which has included bad food, bad rooms, and bad diarrhea. Shannon, apparently on the verge of a nervous collapse, begs Miss Fellowes to not do this to him. Before she can answer, one of the other tourists calls out that the Mexican boys are taking their luggage up to the hotel. Miss Fellowes runs off, shouting for the boys to put the luggage back on the bus.

Maxine tells Shannon to give them the bus key, let them go, and to move in to Fred's old room. He refuses.

Hannah re-appears, this time pushing her grandfather (Nonno) in a wheelchair. Maxine doesn't like the look of them, and seems inclined to not give them rooms. Shannon, however, reacts to Hannah the same way he did before, with sudden calmness. As Hannah tries to persuade Maxine to let them stay and Maxine tries to convince Hannah to move on, Shannon prevents Nonno from falling out of his wheelchair. This makes Maxine start to weaken in her resolve. Nonno tries to convince her that the wheelchair is only temporary and tells her that if she'll let them stay; he'll present her with a signed copy of one of his books of poetry. Just as Hannah reveals that Nonno is ninety-seven, Maxine disappears to answer a phone call.

Hannah begs Shannon to convince Maxine to let them stay, confessing that they're completely broke.. She says that she'll let Hannah and Nonno stay, but only if they pay a deposit and accept that only two meals are included in the price, not three. Hannah offers to make payment as money becomes available, saying that she and Nonno hire themselves out as a sketch portrait artist and poet respectively, soliciting little jobs from patrons in restaurants and hotels. She reveals that for the first time in twenty years Nonno is working on a new poem, but hasn't quite finished it yet. Maxine suddenly says she's going to call for a taxi to take them into town, but Hannah begs to be allowed to stay.

During all this Shannon has helped Nonno from his chair and into a cubicle off the verandah. Maxine sees she's got no choice, and tells Hannah that she and Nonno can stay for one night only. She leaves as Shannon shouts out to one of the Mexican boys to bring up Hannah's luggage. Shannon and Hannah have a quiet moment in which Hannah reveals that Nonno has suffered a series of small strokes. When the boys show up with the luggage Shannon puts it away, and Hannah withdraws into her cubicle.

Maxine returns and mocks Hannah to Shannon, who says he's going for a swim. Before Maxine can finish asking him to wait for her, he heads off. As Maxine angrily stares into the sunset, Nonno recites the opening lines of his new poem.

Act 1, Part 2 Analysis

By the end of this scene, it's quite clear that Hannah, Maxine and Shannon all have something in common. They're all walking a fine line between the past and the future, between the life they had been living and something new, unknown, and dangerous.

Maxine has had an unhappy but predictable life with Fred, and is desperate to move into a new life with Shannon. Shannon has had an unhappy and unpredictable life as a tour guide and is desperate to move into a new life as a reborn priest. Hannah has had an unhappy and degrading but somewhat predictable life with her grandfather, and sees the end of the relationship coming but is uncertain about what will happen to her once he dies. This makes her situation slightly different from those of Shannon and Maxine who see, or claim to see, what their future holds - but because Hannah's her life with her grandfather is all she has ever known, this lack of knowledge about her future is what makes her just as desperate as Maxine and Shannon, perhaps more so. The desperation of all three of these characters, as represented by an important symbol which appears for the first time in the next act, fuels their choices and actions through the rest of the play.

Nonno, another important symbol, appears for the first time in this scene. Exactly who and what he represents becomes clear later in the play, but at the moment it's enough that he's another manifestation of desperation - the desperation of the old, struggling to accomplish one last shout of spirit before being claimed by the silence of death. His poem is his last shout, which means that ending this act with the first verse of the poem

makes an ironic point about the way that he and the other desperate characters are all fighting to live the kind of life they want.

The poem describes an orange branch observing the close of day, the passing of time, without fear or despair. The irony is that this is exactly the opposite of what Nonno and the three central characters (Hannah, Maxine and Shannon) are doing. This irony suggests that the play is about the futility of struggles such as theirs and that nature, human as well as the nature of life itself, will ultimately surrender and therefore find freedom.

Act 2, Part 1

Act 2, Part 1 Summary

That evening, Maxine is setting the tables for dinner with help from Hannah, help that Maxine doesn't actually want. Maxine says she's made arrangements for Hannah and Nonno to go to another hotel the next day. Hannah protests she doesn't want to move, and tries to buy a few more nights with a small jade figurine. Maxine refuses, but admires Hannah's honesty. Being honest in her turn, she tells Hannah that Fred left her in deep financial trouble, and that "if living didn't mean more to me than money I might as well have been dropped in the ocean with him." She goes on to tell Hannah that she buried Fred at sea and imagines the fish he used to try to catch feeding on him. The German Fahrenkopfs march across the stage on their way up from the beach, celebrating the bombing of London.

Shannon appears, but just as Hannah asks him whether he knows anything about the hotel Maxine is sending she and Nonno to, the young woman from the bus runs up to the hotel, and Shannon hides. Charlotte, the girl, bangs on his door, pleading to speak with him. She makes so much noise that Herr Fahrenkopf, who's listening to an important radio broadcast by Hitler, moves to another verandah. Hannah follows, trying to interest him in her sketches. Shannon finally comes out and tries to convince Charlotte that there's no point in loving him since he doesn't love anybody. He goes on to say that he tried to scare her out of his room the night they made love, but she says that even though he beat her, she still loves him. She grasps at him, he pushes her into Hannah's cubicle, and Miss Fellowes comes on, shouting for Shannon. He hides in his own cubicle. Hannah says he's gone down to the beach and gone alone. At that moment Miss Fellowes hears Charlotte crying, hauls her out of the cubicle, and drags her back down to the bus, promising to send her back to Texas. Hannah returns and calls to Shannon that it's safe to come out. He stays where he is.

Hannah calls out to Nonno that it's time for supper. He complains that it's dark in his cubicle, and she goes in to turn on a light. Meanwhile Shannon comes out, carrying his clerical clothing - white collar, black bib, and an amethyst-encrusted cross. Hannah comes out of Nonno's, dressed in a smock and tie for painting. They look at each other with their respective "costumes," and Shannon asks for help in getting on his collar. As she tries to do it up, it pops a button. Shannon loses his patience, rips off the collar and climbs into the hammock.

Hannah takes out her painting equipment and starts to paint a picture of him. As she works, she asks how long he's been an inactive priest. He says he's only actually been active one year since he was ordained. Nonno's voice is heard reciting the same line of poetry over and over. Hannah comments he's suffered a memory loss, and that memory loss is his greatest fear.

Shannon tells the story of how he became defrocked. He had sex with an eager young woman the way he did with Charlotte and then beat her the way he beat Charlotte. The next Sunday he began to give a sermon, saw all the faces looking at him in judgment, and snapped, shouting that he was tired of conducting services in praise of an angry, petulant, senile old man. He says that afternoon a thunderstorm broke outside the church, and that as his congregation left, he followed them out shouting all the way. He says that afterwards he was sent to a private asylum to recover. When he got out, he got a job with a tour company in order to see the world and collect evidence in support of his theory of God, not as a "senile delinquent" but as a God of "thunder and lightning," the same thunder and lightning that's building off the coast that is going to hit the hotel later in the evening. Hannah gently suggests that when he next tries to deliver his sermon he'll look out at all the faces and see one or two with piercing eyes that are looking for him to give them something to believe in.

That makes him jump up to look at the picture she's been painting, and he seems to be impressed. Hannah asks where Maxine found accommodation for the busload of tourists, and says that at dinner they will have the opportunity to buy some of her paintings at "rock-bottom" prices. Shannon calls her a hustler, and she tells him he's exactly the same. She disappears to get Nonno just as a gust of wind comes up, Maxine returns, and the Mexican boys appear with something struggling in one of their shirts - an iguana.

Maxine and Shannon watch as the Fahrenkopf's react with disgust and the Mexican boys react with delight. An iguana means extra food. As they watch, Maxine pours Shannon a drink that he deliberately pours over the boys. It startles them and the iguana briefly escapes but is soon recaptured. Shannon makes a nasty comment about Maxine, and then a crash from inside alerts them to Nonno having taken a fall.

Act 2, Part 1 Analysis

The key figure in this section of the play is God, who is described in this scene in two contrasting ways. On the one hand we have God as described in Shannon's story, a feeble, senile old man with no real power or awareness. On the other hand we have the God as represented by the thunderstorms both outside the church in Shannon's story and approaching the hotel.

The first description gives God human attributes clearly visible in the character of Nonno, himself a senile old man. This suggests that Nonno represents God in, as Shannon might put it, all his faded and forgetful glory. This is a God who pays no real attention either to the plight of human beings or to what human beings are trying to do in praise of him or out of love for him, as suggested by the fact that Nonno pays little real attention to every-thing Hannah does. The second description gives God no human attributes but depicts Him as a force of nature - unpredictable, dangerous, and all-powerful. These two descriptions share the characteristics of unpredictability and insensitivity . This suggests that they're not as mutually exclusive as they might appear, and as Shannon might think.

The question of what Shannon thinks is central to the play. Of the three principal characters, his actions and choices, as well as his mental and emotional state that affect the others more than the others affect him. At this point in the action it's difficult to be clear on what Shannon thinks because he's behaving more and more irrationally. In fact, in spite of his being in the hammock for most of this scene, which suggests safety to him; he's actually closer to completely breaking down than he's been so far. His actions with the collar, his speech to Charlotte in which he says he's not able to love anybody, his near hysterical recounting of the story in the church ... it's clear that this is a man very close to the edge, which means it's also clear that when the struggling, excited iguana makes its first appearance at the end of this section, it's clearly intended to represent Shannon.

There are other, smaller symbols in this scene. The jade figurine and the "very old faces" watching from the congregation in Hannah's response to Shannon's God stories represent what's left of Hannah's hope. Maxine's story of Fred being eaten by the fishes represents how she herself feels eaten by the world after his death. Charlotte represents humanity's desperate need for comfort and understanding, and is therefore a mirror to Shannon of his own desperation. The Fahrenkopfs again represent the nasty side of human nature as they gloat over the destruction of London and, therefore, the pain of its inhabitants.

Act 2, Part 2

Act 2, Part 2 Summary

Shannon leads Nonno out of his cubicle. Nonno thinks that Shannon is Hannah, and says he's pretty sure he's "going to finish" here. He means the poem, but Shannon understands that it's his life that's close to being finished. As Herr Fahrenkopf reacts excitedly to the news that the firebombs have penetrated into the heart of London, Hannah appears and nursemaids Nonno into a chair. She chats with the Fahrenkopfs, and Nonno assumes she's selling them a painting. She struggles with sitting him down for supper and convincing him she hasn't made a sale. Shannon gets the old man into a chair and gives him five dollars, reassuring the old man that it's not charity.

Hannah and Shannon come close to losing patience with Nonno as he shouts out plans to move from table to table and room to room to try and make some money. Hannah tells Shannon that they had originally planned to go to the East Coast, but Nonno insisted on Mexico. Nonno makes some raunchy jokes, Shannon laughs at them, Nonno teases Shannon about being single, Shannon tells him that no sane woman would have him, Nonno tries to get Shannon to spend time with Hannah after dinner, and the whole time Hannah is shouting for Nonno to ask the blessing, which he finally does.

As Nonno mutters to himself, Hannah and Shannon have a quiet talk about the quality of Nonno's poetry and Shannon's "spook." Hannah says her grandfather is a "minor league poet with a major league spirit," while Shannon talks about hoping that the spook would leave him alone while he's at the hotel - but it hasn't happened that way.

Maxine pushes a cocktail cart towards them and offers them drinks. They both refuse. Maxine prepares a drink for Nonno. Shannon tells her to take care of the Fahrenkopfs and tries to take over the mixing of the drink. They push the serving cart back and forth into each other, spilling bottles and making a lot of noise. Finally the cart falls over and Shannon runs off into the forest. Hannah tries to get Maxine to take it easier on him but Maxine angrily tells her that she knows how to handle him. She goes on to accuse Hannah of being a deadbeat, using Nonno to get into places knowing full well she has no cash to pay for being there.

Shannon reappears and listens without them noticing as Hannah promises to go into town to earn their money, but says if Maxine really thinks she's a deadbeat she'll take Nonno down the hill right now. Maxine backs down, saying that she wouldn't want to risk danger to Nonno, who at that moment recites a few more verses of his new poem.

Maxine tells Hannah to stay away from Shannon, saying they're not right for each other. Hannah protests that she's not after Shannon but Maxine doesn't seem to hear. She says that Hannah and Nonno can stay as long as they want as long as Hannah agrees to stay away from Shannon.

At that point Shannon comes up onto the verandah and sits with Hannah. Maxine takes the liquor cart over to the Fahrenkopfs as Shannon and Hannah light up cigarettes. Shannon is impressed at how Hannah lights her cigarette in the wind, and Hannah says she knows lots of useful things such as how to help Shannon. An emotionally overwhelmed Shannon says he now knows why he came to this hotel - to meet someone who actually wants to help him. Hannah suggests that he's been too involved with his own struggle to notice when people around him want to help him, and then asks him to help her with Nonno while she puts her paints away.

The storm is building. Maxine and the Mexican boys hurry the tables away as Hannah puts away her paints and Shannon and Nonno look excitedly into the storm. Hannah comments to Shannon that his God is arrived. Shannon responds with an invitation to God to strike him with a bolt of lightning if he (God) doesn't realize that he's known.

Rain begins to fall. Everybody disappears but Shannon, who holds his hands out into the rain and lets the water pour down on him.

Act 2, Part 2 Analysis

In this section the play becomes a little lighter on the symbolism as we see the tragic comic scene of Nonno's near-dementia and the argument between Maxine and Hannah over Shannon. For a while the iguana is forgotten as the desperation of the other characters, which parallels the desperation of the iguana in the same way as Shannon's desperation does, takes over the action. In other words, we see how the journeys of the secondary characters mirror that of the hero.

Nonno's high spirited jokes and matchmaking are the result of his desperation to keep his impending death at bay long enough for him to finish his poem. Maxine's desperate struggle to keep away her loneliness after Fred's death manifests in her efforts to convince Hannah to stay away from Shannon. Hannah's desperate concern for both Nonno and Shannon leads her to take stands of principle with Maxine that are very likely new to her. The struggle over the cocktail cart represents Maxine's struggle to convince Shannon to be her lover and Shannon's struggle against that desire, which opposes his own desire to go back to being a priest.

The increasing power of the storm, however, suggests that in the face of all these struggles, the inevitable forces of nature are building and can't be withstood. In other words, Nonno's death is inevitable, the attraction between Maxine and Shannon is inevitable and so is their becoming a couple, Shannon giving up on his dreams of being a priest and defeating "the spook" is inevitable, and Hannah being left alone after the death of Nonno is inevitable. By the end of the play we see these characters submit, a climax foreshadowed by the stormy climax of this act.

In this scene, a key piece of the puzzle relating to Shannon's character falls into place. Up to this point in the play it seems that at times, his desperation and frustration and confusion are almost self-dramatizing, almost as though he enjoys the intensity of

feeling he generates in himself and in others. To put it in contemporary words, he's a "drama queen." This is not to say that his inner struggle isn't real, but rather that he seems to enjoy the excitement and drama more than he actually wants to do something about resolving the struggle.

This idea is clearly suggested in his quiet conversation with Hannah, in which we see a glimpse of self-pity in the comment about finally meeting someone who wants to help him. Hannah says to him that he's been so caught up in his struggles that he's paid little or no attention to people who actually can help him. In plain words, she's saying, "get over yourself." This statement is ironic, because even though he realizes her point is accurate and does reach out to someone, he reaches out to Maxine and not Hannah. Before that, though, he reaches out for the rain, which symbolizes both God as nature and Christian baptism, in which sins are washed away by God's mercy. Just how merciful God has actually been will become clear in the final act.

Act 3, Part 1

Act 3, Part 1 Summary

The power is out as a result of the storm, and the verandah is lit by oil lamps. Shannon sits shirtless at a table, lit by one of those lamps as he writes a letter to his Bishop. Maxine puts the hammock back up; Nonno and Hannah are in their cubicles. Shannon asks Maxine to get one of the Mexican boys to take the letter into town so it will go in the mail right away. She tells him the boys have already gone into town and won't be back until morning. Shannon seems to be unhappy with Maxine, suggesting that Fred is lucky because he's dead. After some sexual innuendo about how Fred was dead long before he died and how it's hard for Maxine to be "respected" by the Mexican boys, Maxine tells Shannon that she overheard one of his conversations with Fred in which he (Shannon) told a story of being caught practicing "the little boy's vice, [amusing] yourself with yourself," being caught by his mother and being punished and shamed. She suggests that all his angry sermons and the sex with young girls is taking out his anger on God and his mother. Shannon loses his temper. Maxine tries to calm him with a caress but he runs down the hill, saying he'll put the letter in the mail himself.

He doesn't quite make it down the hill, since a man named Latta is coming up the hill to see him. Latta represents the company Shannon guides tours for, and has come to take over for Shannon. He asks for the key to the bus, but Shannon refuses to give it to him, saying that Latta is a bad tour guide and hasn't worked in years. Latta asks again for the key, but Shannon says it's in his pocket and dares him to try and get it out. Miss Fellows appears and asks if Latta has the key yet. Latta says that Hank is going to get it by force which makes Shannon laughs hysterically. Hank appears and puts a headlock on Shannon so Latta can get the key. Shannon asks for money to get back to the States, but Latta says that the tour company has to refund half the money paid by Miss Fellowes and the other women, so there will be no money. Miss Fellowes accuses Shannon of taking money from Charlotte and of showing her whorehouses and other nasty parts of Mexico. Shannon says he showed her what she wanted to see and calls down the hill for Charlotte to come up and confirm the story.

As Maxine returns and Hannah comes to her cubicle door to watch, Miss Fellowes shouts Shannon into silence and again describes him as de-frocked, saying she spent the afternoon and several dollars checking up on him and that she learned the whole story of what happened at the church in Virginia. As Shannon accuses Miss Fellowes of lying, Latta tells her that the tour agency considers themselves deceived by Shannon and will have him blacklisted. Shannon passionately shouts out that he's given willing people on his tours the chance to see the darker sides of the places they've visited, not just the pretty tourist places, the chance to "feel and be touched, and none will ever forget it."

There is a moment of silence, and then Latta tells Shannon to go back to the hammock; he leaves with Miss Fellowes. As we hear Nonno recite another verse of his poem

Shannon runs down the hill and creates a ruckus around the bus. Maxine shouts at him to come back, and soon he does. She tells him to go into Fred's room where she can keep an eye on him or she'll send him down to where she sent him before. She suddenly remembers that the women haven't paid their bill and rushes down the hill to collect.

Suddenly left alone, Shannon quietly asks himself what he's done.

Act 3, Part 1 Analysis

In this scene it becomes clear exactly what Shannon's "spook" is - the madness of sexual desire. The story of Shannon being caught and shamed by his mother is the final piece of the puzzle.

(In the days in which this play was written, sexually explicit terms of any sort were not allowed onstage. This meant that other ways of saying what was actually meant had to be invented. In this case, the phrase "little boy's vice" is a euphemism for masturbation. This means that this story is about Shannon being caught masturbating by his mother and being shamed and punished. Later in the play another euphemism for the same sexual act appears in Hannah's story about the tourist in Singapore).

Other pieces of the Shannon/spook puzzle include the stories of Shannon's two breakdowns, one of which we hear about (following the incident in the church in Virginia) and one of which we actually see (here on the verandah). Both breakdowns follow incidents in which Shannon has sex with a young girl, beats her, and then retreats (into an asylum and to Maxine's hotel) in order to deal with his intense feelings. These breakdowns echo the anger and shame that Shannon felt after the incident of being caught by his mother.

We also know from Shannon's first appearance that his arriving at the hotel is the result of having encountered "the spook," which means that because the two circumstances are so similar it's reasonable for us to conclude that his first breakdown was also the result of a spook encounter.

There are still other factors that support reaching this conclusion. Shannon's reluctance to move in with Maxine and his seeing Hannah as someone who can save him rather than as a potential lover both suggest that Shannon is afraid of being sexual with women. His insistence that the young women initiated their encounters suggests an unawareness of his own sexual power, while his violence is a result of anger at the women who encouraged the "release" of that power," the spook." Combine all these factors and we get a fairly clear understanding of the trouble in Shannon's heart.

The story of the play, therefore, follows his coming to terms with sexuality, a key part of his nature and of nature in general. And since the coming of the storm at the end of this act represents the coming of nature, it also represents the fact that Shannon can't fight his nature as a sexual being anymore. His decision in the final moments of the play, to live with Maxine, suggests that once the storm hits, he succumbs and finally chooses to

live at peace with "the spook," his nature as a sexual being. Our job through watching and reading the rest of the play is to determine what's in the nature of the other characters that they're being challenged to accept in the way that Shannon is challenged.

Act 3, Part 2

Act 3, Part 2 Summary

When Hannah comes out of her cubicle, Shannon asks the Mexican boys coming up the hill what he did. They tell him in Spanish and run off, laughing. Furious with himself Shannon pulls at the cross around his neck, but it doesn't come off. Hannah calms him, saying that the chain the cross is on is cutting into his neck. She gets it off him, he tells her to keep it and heads for the ocean, saying he's going to swim to China. He doesn't get too far; he's grabbed by Maxine and the boys and tied to the hammock. Maxine tells Hannah that he's acting, that he does this regularly, that she's going to call a doctor from town to give him a shot, and if he's not better tomorrow she's going to send him to a mental hospital. She goes in to call the doctor and Shannon asks Hannah to sit nearby and comfort him.

The Fahrenkopfs come up from the beach, laughing at how he urinated all over the luggage of the lady tourists. As their taunting gets worse, Hannah tries to make them stop. When she can't do it herself, she calls to Maxine for help. Maxine does nothing, the Fahrenkopf's keep laughing, and Shannon rants hysterically.

When everybody's gone and the verandah is quiet, Shannon asks Hannah to let him free. She refuses, suggesting that part of him is enjoying what's going on and accusing him of indulging his feelings. He makes nasty comments about how women enjoy seeing men in a tied up situation and for a moment she's hurt by them, but she recovers and accuses him again of self-indulgence. She lights a portable gas burner and starts making some poppy seed tea which has calming qualities, saying that she, Shannon and Nonno are all going to need it to get through this difficult night. Shannon asks again to be released, but Hannah refuses. He then asks her to light a cigarette for him and put it in his mouth, which she does. He drops it, ends up lying on it, and screams as he's burned.

This brings Maxine running out, and she sits on him to calm him down. She tells him she's called the doctor and threatens him again with the mental hospital. Hannah tries to convince her that he is calming down, saying that she has had experience with someone in Shannon's condition and knows that what he needs is to be quiet and left alone. Maxine says again that she knows all Shannon's tricks and then blows out the burner, saying that nobody's allowed to cook except the chef. Shannon tells Maxine that she can't intimidate Hannah. Just then the Fahrenkopfs shout out for beer, and Maxine has to go and take care of them. Shannon says that if she lets him out of the hammock he'll visit her in the night and make love to her, and in spite of herself she finds herself flattered. She goes, thinking about what Shannon said.

Shannon takes a sip of the poppy seed tea and gags on it, it tastes so awful. Suddenly he jumps out of the hammock! The ropes were loosened in the struggle to find the lit cigarette. Hannah reacts calmly as Shannon runs to get himself a drink and doesn't

protest when he prepares his, saying his real problem isn't drink but needing to believe in something, anything. When he says she sounds hopeless she says that on the contrary, she has found something to believe in. He suggests it's God, but she tells him it's connection between people, a little understanding to help them get through the dark times.

Shannon asks her who she knew who cracked up like he did. She tells him it was herself - struggling with her "blue devil" in the same way as he struggled with his "spook". She tells Shannon that she won through endurance, and proving to the blue devil that she could endure with the help of little tricks like drink, a few deep breaths, anything. She discovers he's not really paying attention but is staring out into the forest where he says he sees 'the spook." He hurls his drink at it and says it's retreated a little ways, but adds that it will be back. He asks how Hannah got over her crack up, but she says she never did fully crack up. She came close, but found that her painting was therapeutic and helped keep the blue devil at bay. She speaks of how she catches glimpses of something honest in the eyes of the people she tries to paint and sometimes manages to catch it in her work. She talks about having been in a hospital for the dying in Shanghai where all the patients had little tokens of hope and comfort by their beds, and how she's seen nothing as beautiful as the last dim light of life left in their eyes. She adds that she's seen that same light in Nonno's eyes lately, and then suddenly asks what the scraping, scuffling noises under the verandah are. Shannon tells her it's the iguana, struggling to get away, but that it's got to the end of its rope.

Act 3, Part 2 Analysis

In the first few moments of this section we see again Shannon's tendency towards self-dramatization as he tries to rip the cross of his neck and then run out to the sea and commit suicide. Maxine, however, has had enough and ties him to the hammock - in effect, she's forcing him to be calm and deal with his issues once and for all. It's ironic, however, that given the fight between Hannah and Maxine over who will have power over Shannon it's Hannah who actually brings about the most healing in him. It begins in this section, in which she once again calls Shannon on his self-indulgence and self-dramatization, and this time seems to be getting through in spite of Shannon's resistance to the idea. This takes place as the result of her efforts with the tea, her quiet, persistent compassion, and her empathy with the core truth of his situation when she relates it to her own situation as a younger woman. In other words, Shannon's armor of self-dramatization is slowly peeled away by this woman who's able to connect with him on the deepest, truest level. As a result, he becomes able to embrace his true nature as represented by his freeing of the iguana at the end of the play.

The Fahrenkopfs once again represent the cruelty of human nature, taunting Shannon in the same way as the Mexican boys taunted the iguana and for the same reasons. There's something in human beings that takes pleasure in seeing something struggle helplessly, particularly when that something (or someone) is vulnerable in some way like Shannon or the iguana. The Fahrenkopfs at this point become an externalization, or manifestation, of Shannon's hatred towards himself.

Act 3, Part 3

Act 3, Part 3 Summary

The conversation between Hannah and Shannon turns to Hannah's life with Nonno, and Hannah describes their relationship as her home. Shannon compares her life with Nonno as a bird building a nest in a tree about to fall down, but Hannah says that when a human being builds a nest in the heart of another, the question of whether it will last isn't considered. The only point is the connection, and the sense of being home and safe and cared for. She speaks of the impermanence of her life in particular and relates it to life in general. Shannon asks what she'll do when he finally dies, and Hannah suggests that it's easy for her to make connections with fellow travelers the way she did with Shannon. Shannon comments that he never has difficulty making friends either, and Hannah makes pointed comments about his sexual relations with young women. She points out that the only person Shannon has ever really traveled with is his spook.

As she warms up the tea for Nonno, Shannon suggests he'll go down for a swim but then asks if he can ask her one more question. She agrees to be honest only if he'll lie in the hammock and drink a cup of the now properly sweetened tea. He agrees, lies down, sips tea, and asks her whether she's ever had any kind of love life. She promises to answer only after he's drunk an entire cup of the tea. He drinks it down, and she tells him about the two sexual experiences she's had. One was in a movie theatre when she was sixteen and a young man pressed his knee against hers. She moved, he followed and did it again, she screamed, he was arrested, she said her reaction was the result of being overexcited by the movie and got the police to set the youth free.

The second story is of a middle-aged man whom she met at a hotel in Singapore with whom she went out in a boat late one night after Nonno had gone to bed. The man asked if he could hold a certain article of her clothing. Hannah agreed, turned her back, and handed the man her clothing. Shannon asks whether he wanted it for his "satisfaction," Hannah says yes and tells him that he took his "satisfaction," took her back to her hotel and offered the article of clothing back to her. She told him to keep it. Shannon asks if she felt dirty or disgusted, but Hannah tells him that nothing disgusts her except unkindness, describing the man as shy, apologetic and delicate.

In a quiet moment of relative peace between them Shannon suggests that he and Hannah travel together. She tells him that the impracticality of the idea will become clear to him in the morning, and then goes inside to pack. He asks her to not leave him outside alone, and then tries again to convince her to let him travel with her, suggesting that he doesn't want to wind up with Maxine. Hannah suggests that everybody winds up somewhere and if it's with a person instead of a thing then that's a piece of good luck. She also suggests that the next morning they keep a kind of distance since Maxine is very jealous. This comes as news to Shannon, who dislikes the idea of keeping distance. He angrily offers Hannah his cross, and says she can sell it and use the

money to leave since she's so eager to have distance from him. At first she refuses, but when he threatens to throw it into the forest, she agrees to hold it for him.

She asks again what's making the noise under the verandah, and Shannon angrily tells her again that it's the iguana. She pleads with him to go down there and cut it loose, but he tells her that it's needed for food. He comments that there's hungry people in the world, and how they'll eat anything in order to stay alive and tells a story of how he saw a pair of beggars crawling over a pile of something very unpleasant smelling in the middle of the road, picking bits out of it and eating them. Hannah gags and runs out.

Shannon talks out loud to himself as he realizes that the reason he told that story was not to make a point to Hannah but to remind himself that that moment was when he realized that that was the beginning of his breakdown, the point at which it became clear - even though he fought it - that the process of nature was everywhere. This leads him to the realization that if he stayed in the hotel and lived with Maxine, it wouldn't be such a bad life and would probably end in her death before his. He talks of how a few years of living with her could very well prepare him for living without her ...

Hannah then tells him he's talking to himself. She returns and persuades him to go down and cut the iguana loose, suggesting to him that it would be impossible for him to look at it and not identify with its pain and panic. In his turn Shannon suggests that she wants to free the iguana because she can't help identifying that same pain and panic with Nonno's as he approaches death. She doesn't argue with him. He says he's going to cut the iguana free because God won't do it. Hannah thanks him, and Shannon cuts the iguana free.

Just at that moment Nonno comes shouting out of his cubicle and announces he's finished his poem. He tells Hannah to grab a pencil and paper and write it down, which she does. Nonno recites his poem, a continuation of the poem we first heard at the end of the first act. It's essentially a poem about how the branch and fruit of a mighty tree observe the passing of time without fear, and a plea for courage to rest in the heart of the speaker in the same fear-dispelling way. Hannah congratulates him and tells him it's the most beautiful thing he's ever written. Nonno, his energy all gone, tells Hannah he wants to pray and sits quietly at the back of the veranda.

As Hannah remains very still, Maxine appears, dressed for a nighttime swim. She sees that Shannon has escaped and shouts for him. He comes up onto the veranda and tells her he freed the iguana, saying that he wanted to free one of God's creatures. She reacts calmly, invites him to go for a swim with her, and when he teases her about the romance of her suggestion she says she wants him to stay and live with her. She's alone, she says, and wants someone to help her manage that place. They go down to the beach, Maxine commenting that she's only got a few more years to make the place attractive to the male tourists while Shannon does the same for the females. They laugh happily and quietly as they go down towards the sea.

Hannah is left alone, and quietly asks God if they can finally stop. "It's so quiet here." She puts her shawl around Nonno, but suddenly realizes he's dead. She looks around in a panic, sees there's no-one, then bends to kiss Nonno's head.

Act 3, Part 3 Analysis

Hannah's stories about her crack-up, her painting and the Shanghai Hospital suggest possibilities for hope, strength and beauty. The fact that we hear these stories after the storm suggests that living in an experience of our human nature, which the storm represents, releases hope and the full power of the human spirit. There is irony in these images, however. The fact that they are juxtaposed with both Hannah's glimpses of death in Nonno's eyes and the image of the iguana at the end of his rope suggests that Hannah herself is at the end of her rope, and in spite of her brave words doesn't have a lot of hope or strength left. In this way her journey parallels Shannon's, but where Shannon discovers the strength to accept his inner nature and begin to move forward, the end of the play comes for Hannah and we don't know whether she has the strength to go on or not.

On the other hand, Hannah's stories about her sexual experiences may seem to both Shannon and us to be pretty tame, but to her the second story in particular reveals some deep truths about human nature and how compassion is possible under just about any circumstances if one becomes open to it. As was the case with the Shannon masturbation story earlier, two euphemisms are employed to describe the tourist's masturbating (taking his "satisfaction") and what we assume are Hannah's panties (the "article of clothing" the tourist used to take his satisfaction). The contrast between Hannah's reaction to the tourist masturbating and Shannon's mother's reaction to Shannon's masturbating is clear vivid, and powerful - powerful because Hannah's reaction suggests to Shannon that what he was told as a child was a sin and considers as an adult to be his "spook" isn't in fact that big a deal.

In Shannon's story about the beggars by the side of the road, again we run into the non-use of graphic language. In this case, what Shannon is talking about is a pile of animal excrement, and that the beggars were picking through it for undigested bits of food.

This play's climax has two elements that basically perform the same function. Nonno's shouting out of his completed poem and Shannon's freeing of the iguana both represent the acceptance of nature, freedom after a prolonged and painful struggle. This moment is both the dramatic and thematic climax of the play. The moments afterwards, with Maxine and Shannon coming together peacefully and Nonno's death, are completions of journeys towards freedom in their own right. In other words, these three characters - Shannon, Maxine and Nonno - have surrendered to nature, to the God of thunder and lightning, and have found peace. The play's final image, of Hannah looking frantically around for help, finding none, and bending to kiss Nonno's head in a gesture that's part helplessness and part adoration, poses one question in response to all these resolutions. The question is whether Hannah will surrender to nature (her being alone) as the others surrendered to theirs, or will she continue to fight off her being alone by

continuing to go from hotel to hotel, searching for little human connections in restaurants and bars? We don't know, and at the conclusion of this night of the iguana, we're reminded that this is a question we all face at one time or another - how do we survive freedom?

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Characters

Jonathan Coffin

Jonathon Coffin is the elderly grandfather of Hannah Jelkes. He is nearly 98 years "young" and a minor poet. With his granddaughter, he travels around the world, paying his way by reciting poems to hotel guests. Coffin is somewhat senile, very hard of hearing, and uses a wheelchair and a cane to get around. His dementia increases during the night at the Costa Verde. Coffin manages to finish one last poem before he dies at the end of *The Night of the Iguana.*

Maxine Faulk

Maxine is the middle-aged padrona of the Costa Verde Hotel. She has recently been widowed; her husband Fred has died. Even before his death, Maxine was sleeping with other men, mostly local boys. Maxine is an old friend of Shannon's. Though he is suffering from mental collapse, she tries to ply him with rum-cocos in an attempt to get him under her control, sexual and otherwise. Shannon resists for the most part. Maxine is extremely jealous when Hannah arrives and bonds with Shannon. Maxine does not want Hannah and her grandfather to stay, but Shannon convinces her to change her mind. Maxine confronts Hannah over the connection she sees between Hannah and Shannon, but Hannah dominates the conversation. In the end, Maxine gets her way, and Shannon agrees to stay at the hotel indefinitely with her.

Judith Fellowes

Judith Fellowes is the leader of the group for which Shannon is acting as tour guide. She is very angry at Shannon for his involvement with one of her charges and reports him to his superiors.

Charlotte Goodall

Charlotte is the young girl whom Shannon has sex with on the tour. She is very much in love with him and wants to get married.

Grandpa

See Jonathan Coffin

Hannah Jelkes

Hannah Jelkes is a middle-aged spinster from New England. She seems about 40, but could be a few years older or younger. She travels the world with her elderly grandfather, Jonathon Coffin, a poet. Together they stay in hotels and pay their way via their respective artistic skills; Hannah is an artist who paints watercolors and sketches people in charcoal and pastels. Hannah and her grandfather stay at the Costa Verde Hotel out of desperation: they are nearly penniless. In fact, Maxine does not want them to stay, but Shannon convinces her otherwise. While at the hotel, Hannah does not sell any art, but her calm serenity helps Shannon through his breakdown. She works as the opposite of Shannon in many ways. For example, she has only had two sexual encounters in her life, yet has a greater understanding of herself and life than Shannon. Though Shannon wants them to travel together, Hannah refuses, telling him to stay with Maxine. At the end of the play, Hannah is left alone when her grandfather dies and her future is uncertain.

Nonno

See Jonathan Coffin

Reverend T. Lawrence Shannon

Reverend Shannon is the central character in *The Night of the Iguana*. He is a middle-aged minister who lost his church when he had an improper relationship with a Sunday school teacher. Shannon becomes a tour guide, leading groups in many different countries. He leads his current group to the Costa Verde Hotel after he has sex with one of his young charges. Shannon suffers a crisis verging on breakdown at the hotel. He refuses to let the group leave, fearing he will lose his job. To that end, he holds the key to the bus in his pocket. Maxine backhandedly tries to help him, by tempting him with alcohol and sex. Shannon finds his salvation in Hannah, who helps him face himself and his problems. Shannon ends up letting the group go, by force, but symbolically frees himself when he frees the iguana tied up by the veranda. At the final curtain, it is implied that Shannon will stay at the hotel with Maxine and help her run the establishment.

Themes

Sex and Sexual Desirev

Many of the characters and much of the plot of *The Night of the Iguana* is driven by the desire for and the consequences of sexual relations. Shannon is the primary focus of these tensions. He is a minister who has lost his church, and a tour guide who, during the course of the play, loses his group and his job. In both instances, Shannon acted inappropriately towards a young woman. In the latter, for example, Shannon had sex with a young Baptist girl who was part of the group he was leading. Maxine, the padrona of the hotel, tells Shannon that many of his problems stem from the fact that his mother caught him masturbating as a child and beat him because she believed it was wrong. She believes that Shannon gets back at her by engaging in such behaviors.

Shannon is not the only character driven by lust. Maxine also engages in numerous affairs□and did so while married to her now-deceased husband. When Shannon arrives at the hotel, she immediately begins trying to seduce him with her body and rum-cocos. She wants to control Shannon through sex. Maxine becomes extremely jealous when Shannon shows interest in Hannah, the spinster from New England. Unlike Maxine and Shannon, Hannah is not motivated by sexual desire. She has only had two sexual encounters in her life. Hannah helps Shannon through his crisis, but refuses his sexual advances. After the worst has passed, Shannon decides to stay and live with Maxine, seemingly the only option, sexual or otherwise, that he has left open.

Alienation and Loneliness

Underlying the theme of sex and sexual desire, is alienation and loneliness. Both Maxine and Shannon fear being alone, in their own way, while Hannah has a seemingly secure relationship with her grandfather that prevents true alienation from the world. Maxine desperately wants Shannon to stay with her and help her run the hotel that her recently deceased husband left her. She tries everything in her power to control him: leaving her shirt half open; plying him with rum-cocos, knowing he has a problem with alcohol; tying him up when he seems really crazy. She wins in the end because Shannon is just as alone as she is. He lost his church and his status as minister long ago. His job is not conducive to forming positive long-term relationships: the groups come and go, and he is left alone. Shannon has no real friends except Maxine and her now-dead husband. They join forces at the end because this is the only solution to their loneliness.

Hannah's fortunes turn counter to Maxine and Shannon's. Hannah's only companion is her elderly grandfather, the poet Jonathon Coffin. The old man is practically senile and requires her constant care. But, unlike Shannon and Maxine, Hannah is not really lonely. She has someone to take care of, someone who loves and depends on her. While she may be sexually alienated, she is not lacking what seems to be a permanent

human relationship. However, Hannah's grandfather is old, and he dies at the end of play. Having already refused Shannon's offer to be traveling companions, Hannah has a future as uncertain as Shannon's was at the beginning of *The Night of the Iguana*.

Permanence

Each of the characters in *The Night of the Iguana* lack permanence. Only Maxine desires it from the beginning, in her quest to convince Shannon to stay with her to run the hotel. The fact that the play is set in a hotel□a place filled with temporary residents□epitomizes this condition. Shannon has lived a transitory life since he was expelled from his church. Being a tour guide involves dealing with different groups of people, leaving him little opportunity for a lasting relationship. Even when Shannon tries to make a connection□by sleeping with one of his tourists□it is an impermanent gesture. He does not want to marry the girl, though she wants so marry him. Shannon refuses Maxine's sexual overtures throughout the play for similar reasons: he almost fears permanence. Hannah and her grandfather live an analogous life. Though they have an unspecified home base in New England, they choose to travel the world, living in hotels. They pay their way by selling Hannah's art and reciting Nonno's poetry to hotel patrons. They are an independent entity that does not seek or embrace permanence, except in each other. But even this situation is only temporary. Jonathon Coffin dies at the end of the play, leaving Hannah in a situation that is even less permanent than it was before. There is no indication of her next move, but Shannon chooses to embrace permanence by staying with Maxine and running the hotel.

Style

Setting

The Night of the Iguana is a drama set in Mexico in 1940. All the action takes place in one location: the veranda of the Costa Verde Hotel and several rooms that open up on to it. The veranda serves as a passageway between guests' rooms and the beach, and many characters walk through. The veranda also has several components key to the story: the hammock, the railing, and its underside. The hammock is Shannon's favorite spot and where he is placed when he is tied up. Shannon's cross gets caught in the railing, and he is nearly choked to death. The iguana is tied up underneath the veranda, thrashing about, until Shannon frees him. The rooms that open up on the veranda are separate cubicles with screen doors. During the night scenes, when the veranda is illuminated, the action inside the rooms is highlighted. Such illumination and separation, which occurs primarily in the second half of the play, emphasizes the loneliness of the room's occupants.

Symbolism

The events in *The Night of the Iguana* are underscored by symbols. The most prominent is found in the title: the iguana. The iguana is caught by local boys who work at the hotel and tied up underneath the veranda for fattening. When the time is right, the local boys will kill and eat the animal. This does not happen, however. By the end of the play, Shannon has cut the reptile loose, at the request of Hannah. The iguana could represent a number of things. Many critics believe that it represents Shannon, who is also tied up during the course of the play. Like the animal, Shannon is straining against the bonds of society and fighting a losing battle. The iguana could also be seen as a symbol of the human condition. There are other symbols at work in the play. The spook that Shannon claims is following him can be seen as his conscience. The rum-cocos, which Maxine constantly tries to push on Shannon, are a symbol of her sexuality. The storm that threatens throughout the play parallels Shannon's life-changing dilemma.

Costumes

Several of the characters in *The Night of the Iguana* are described wearing specific kinds of clothing that underscore their actions. In Act II, Shannon dons his long-unused minister's shirt and collar, as well as a cross. He wants to symbolically reconnect with his past as well as prove to the tour group that he was once a minister, but the button on the collar is so worn that it immediately pops off. He cannot even wear the garb. Later, he nearly chokes himself to death on the cross. At the end of the play he gives Hannah his cross to fund her journey back to the United States.

At the same time Shannon puts on his minister's clothes, Hannah emerges from her cubicle wearing an artist's smock with a silk tie. It is carefully daubed with color to

complete the look of a working artist. Hannah wears this smock when she tries to convince hotel patrons to allow her to sketch them for a fee. It makes her look "authentic," though she is an artist no matter what she wears. The outfit defines her for others, rather than for herself. Unlike Shannon, she is fairly secure in her identity. Costumes also define Maxine who wears a half-unbuttoned shirt when she first sees and tries to seduce Shannon.

Historical Context

The early 1960s marked a transitional time in American history. In 1961, for example, President Dwight D. Eisenhower left office. The new president was the youthful, more liberal John F. Kennedy. Change was not limited to the United States: political and cultural turmoil could be found worldwide and the United States was often involved.

One of the biggest threats to the American mainland in the 20th century was Cuba after Fidel Castro rose to power. In 1961, the United States cut off diplomatic relations with Cuba. Cuban exiles, backed by the American government, led an invasion into Cuba at the Bay of Pigs the operation was a dismal failure. The Soviet Union, the United States' most formidable enemy, placed missiles aimed at the United States in Cuba. The Soviets later remove their missiles from the island after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The Soviet Union and the United States eventually began discussing disarmament in Geneva later in the decade.

In the early 1960s, the United States also became involved in the on-going conflict in Vietnam. Military aid and advisors were sent to American allies in the region. By the end of the decade this involvement would become extremely controversial and create a rift in American society.

Despite these conflicts, the United States became dominant in the political and cultural climates of the world. The economy boomed, and American businesses grew rapidly at home and abroad. Americans were prosperous. Disposable goods were developed and the youth market boomed. While America developed a reputation for technical innovation (for example, Telstar, a satellite owned by AT&T transmitted television signals for the first time), the Soviet Union put the first man, Yuri Gagari, in space in 1961. Such incidents drove home the fear that the American education system was not up to the demands of the modern society that was emerging.

One of the biggest changes in the United States concerned women. There was mounting tension due to the schism between women's traditional roles and changing society. More women entered the workforce, many of whom were married. During World War II, many women joined the workforce to support the war effort as many men went off to fight in the war. When men returned home, they took back most of the jobs, but women continued to work, though only part-time or in traditional women's professions. By 1960, 36% of women were in the workforce, accounting for 32% of total workers. The feminist movement gained momentum when Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. In this book, she argued that women should seek self-fulfillment. Though they may have found such fulfillment in the workforce, they were still responsible for the majority of household chores.

The lives of women did not only change in the workforce. Women's fashion also became looser. In the 1960s, it became acceptable for women to wear pants in more formal social situations for the first time. In general, women dressed less formally overall, and younger women embraced fashion that changed from season to season.

Women also married at a later date, and the divorce rate grew. There was more sex outside of marriage, and premarital sex became more common. In 1961, the birth control pill became available on the open market, making contraception easier than it had ever been for both single and married women. Such changes marked the emergence of modern society in America.

Critical Overview

Many critics believe that *The Night of the Iguana* was Tennessee Williams's last great play. Howard Taubman of the *New York Times* writes, "For Mr. Williams, *The Night of the Iguana* marks a turning point. When compared with the best of the preceding plays, this work of subtle vibrations reflects a profound change. It goes beyond the elimination of the explosive and shocking gestures, which have given some of the other works the fillip of being sensational and scandalous, and reaches into the playwright's attitude towards life." A concurring critic, Harold Clurman of *The Nation,* finds Williams's writing to be superb. He says, "The writing ... is lambent, fluid, malleable and colloquially melodious. It bathes everything in glamour."

Numerous critics believe the character of Hannah is key to the play's success. An unnamed critic in *Life* argues, *"The Night of the Iguana* is Williams's best play in many seasons, and Hannah drives home more explicitly than any of his other characters ever has the heart of his writing." Taubman agrees when he writes, "No character of Mr. Williams' invention has had the heartbreaking dignity and courage of Hannah Jelkes...." Even an unnamed critic in *Time,* who calls the plot "sketchy," finds something to like. This critic writes, "It is Hannah's kindness to be cruel."

The other main character, the fallen Revered Shannon, is seen by most critics as more typical of Williams, but he still has some distinctive attributes. Clurman of *The Nation* argues that "There is very little indulgence in the portrait of Reverend Shannon." Glenn Embrey in his essay "The Subterranean World of *The Night of the Iguana,*" believes Shannon's fate defines him quite differently than other tortured souls in Williams's plays. He writes, "The main character of *The Night of the Iguana* seems to escape the violent fate usually in store for Williams's heroes. True, desire has been ruining Shannon's life for the past ten years, but at the climax of the play he manages to form what promises to be a lasting sexual relationship with a mature woman. This optimistic ending appears to make *Iguana* very different from the serious plays that precede it; for the first time hope breaks across Williams's bleak world."

One source of controversy among critics is the function and power of the minor characters. Some see the group of German tourists who pop in and out of the story as extraneous. These critics believe the Germans serve no real function in the plot but to give it a sense of time and some comic relief. Other critics like them for their reactions to the main plot.

Some critics dislike the play overall, but find moments of merit. Richard Gilman in *he Commonweal* writes "The talk is that the play is Williams's best since Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and the talk, for once, is right. But it seems doubtful that is right for the best reasons. . . . [T]wo things have mostly been ignored. The first is that *The Night of the Iguana* perpetuates nearly all of Williams's failings as a dramatist...." Similarly, an unnamed critic in *Newsweek* writes "At no time does *Iguana* achieve the single, dramatic clap of thunder that will clear the troubled air...."

Other critics who dislike the play find it too similar to previous plays written by Williams. Robert Brustein in *The New Republic* writes "In *The Night of the Iguana,* Tennessee Williams has composed a little nocturnal mood music for muted strings, beautifully performed by some superb instrumentalists, but much too aimless, leisurely, and formless to satisfy the attentive ear.... [H]e has explored this territory too many times before□the play seems tired, unadventerous and self-derivative." John McCarten of *The New Yorker* finds fault in the use of the characters. He writes "The Williams genius for making assorted bizarre types believable is in evidence, all right, but our interest in them is aroused only sporadically." Later in his article, Brustein of *The New Republic* writes, "let us put down *The Night of the Iguana* as another of his innumerable exercises in marking time."

Criticism

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

In this essay, Petrusso examines the so-called "happy" ending of Williams'splay via the motivations of its three main characters.

One source of controversy among critics of Tennessee Williams' s *The Night of the Iguana* is the decision of Reverend T. Lawrence Shannon to stay at the hotel with Maxine Faulk at the end of the play. Glenn Embrey, in his essay "The Subterranean World of *The Night of the Iguana,*" argues "the ending isn't as believable as it is formally pleasing and optimistic. Even according to the overt level of drama, the ending sounds suspiciously like the product of wishful thinking. For one thing, it comes rather suddenly and unexpectedly; an hour's exposure to human compassion, a cup of poppy tea, and a bit of Oriental wisdom hardly seem sufficient to eradicate habits and attitudes hardened over ten years." Embrey misses the undercurrents of the play. Shannon has no choice but to stay at the hotel, and the events of the play□particularly his interaction with Hannah, which leads to personal growth□ make the decision seem like the right one. By looking at each corner of the primary character triangle□Shannon, Hannah, and Maxine Faulk, the hotel owner□the reasons for Shannon's decision and the seemingly happy ending become much more clear.

When Shannon arrives at the hotel at the beginning of Act I, he is a desperate man looking for a friend; that friend is Fred Faulk, Maxine's husband. Unfortunately, Fred is recently deceased, and Maxine is more interested in a companion to keep her company and help her run the hotel than in being Shannon's friend. Shannon's problems are numerous. Ten years earlier, he was an Episcopalian minister leading a church in Virginia. He was locked out of his church after he seduced (or was seduced by, according to Shannon) a Sunday school teacher and gave a sermon the following Sunday that was full of heresy. Shannon became a tour guide, traveling around the world. Over the years, he continued to lose jobs as he acted inappropriately towards female clients. He comes to the Costa Verde Hotel while working for Blake Tours, the only company he has not been fired from. But he has recently seduced (or been seduced by) Charlotte, a sixteen-year-old Baptist school teacher, who was a member of his latest tour group. The head of Charlotte's group, Miss Fellowes, has found out about the affair and is furious. Costa Verde is to be Shannon's refuge from this storm. He is not altogether mentally well, and he keeps the key to the bus in his pocket so the group has to stay there while he sorts out this mess. His intentions are not clearly thought out.

Shannon places the blame for his problems on everyone but himself. He believes he is followed by a "spook"□his past which haunts him. He does not even take responsibility for the seductions: he blames the girls for the affairs. He does this despite the fact that after at least two of these sexual encounters he hits the women involved, perhaps an acting out of his own guilt. Shannon is a weak man who constantly associates with weak, immature women. He is fundamentally lonely as well. By leading tour groups, he makes few real, long-term connections with people. Tourists come and go, and he never sees them again. Shannon is desperate for real contact, but does not have the means or the capacity to find it. He has to stay in control, but he cannot do it very well. When

he first arrives at the hotel, Maxine immediately tries to control him and make him into Fred by putting him into Fred's clothing and Fred's room. Shannon pulls away from these offers; He is not ready to accept such a fate just yet.

Soon after Shannon's arrival, Hannah Jelkes appears, trying to find rooms for herself and her elderly grandfather, the minor poet Jonathon Coffin. The first person she meets is Shannon, who helps convince Maxine that they should stay, if only for one night. Hannah is the opposite of every woman with whom Shannon has had any type of relationship□she is a New England born and bred spinster, about 40 years of age. In many ways, Hannah has been and still is as desperately lonely as Shannon, but she handles it with serenity. Unlike Maxine, she does not try to seduce him from the first. Instead, she wants to help him. Hannah is a saint, the answer to prayers Shannon should have said.

Hannah does for Shannon what Maxine (and apparently the young women he has slept with) could never do: give of herself unconditionally in a helpful, non-sexual manner. For example, she covers for him when Miss Fellowes and Charlotte are looking for him. But one event is particularly telling. Near the end of Act II, while engaged in conversation with Shannon, Hannah reaches into her pocket for her cigarettes. She only has two left, and returns the packet to save the smokes for later. Shannon asks for a cigarette, and Hannah selflessly gives him the packet. He throws them away and gives her a tin of better quality cigarettes. Shannon questions her about the act, but Hannah does not think the moment is much of anything. She tells Shannon, "Aren't you making a big point out of a small matter?" Shannon replies, "Just the opposite, honey, I'm making a small point out of a very large matter." This event gives Shannon hope and a certain closeness with the serene woman.

In the events that follow at the end of Act II and throughout Act III, Hannah continues to bolster Shannon's sense of self and give him life-changing advice. She tolerates his histrionics. To help Shannon help himself, Hannah has him help Nonno (her grandfather) on several occasions. She gets Shannon to admit that what he did to those girls in his charge was wrong, though he denies it to almost everyone else. After Shannon is tied up for fear that he might hurt himself, Hannah is the only one he will speak to calmly. She tells him, without judging him, that he is enjoying the penance involved in being tied up on the hammock, suffering like Christ for his sins. No one else, not even Maxine, can tell him such things.

Hannah takes it further. She even admits that she respects him□something that no one to that point has said. This gives him the strength soon after to break out of the ties that bind him. Hannah also feels sympathy, even empathy for his loneliness, which he fully appreciates. One piece of advice that she gives to him is "Accept whatever situation you cannot improve." This advice changes the course of his life, though he does not realize it at that moment. Because of this connection, Shannon wants to travel with Hannah, but she refuses the offer. She is only there to help, not serve as a crutch. She only asks that he free the iguana, as she has freed him. She can only give so much of herself.

Shannon logically turns to Maxine, the woman who has pursued him from the moment he set foot in the hotel. Maxine is the opposite of Hannah in many ways, though they share common traits. She, too, is desperate, but is sexually aggressive and insulting to Shannon. As mentioned earlier, Maxine tries to literally get Shannon to take the place of her dead husband by giving him Fred Faulk's shoes, clothing, and room. Knowing that Shannon has had problems with alcohol in the past, she continually tries to get him to drink rum-cocos, which he always turns down. Maxine wants to control him, but her methods alienate Shannon. Maxine does not respect Shannon for much of the play, yet she admits at the beginning of Act III "it's . . . humiliating□not to be ... respected." Further, Maxine senses the connection between Shannon and Hannah and is extremely jealous. Maxine wants to be rid of her rival, but she has met her match in Hannah. Even Shannon points out that she will not win such battles.

When Shannon threatens to get totally out of control, Maxine is the one who has him tied up. She says that she has dealt with his breakdowns before and threatens to send him to the nuthouse. Yet despite such problems and Maxine's own flaws, by the end of the play she is exactly what Shannon needs. She is the rest of his cure, the part that Hannah cannot provide. After Hannah has refused him and he has set the iguana free, Maxine can finally give him that rum-coco. She can finally get him to go swimming with her, something he has also refused to do. Maxine is aware of his past, but now that Shannon has been able to give up control□free his iguana as it were□he can live with it.

Shannon stays at the Costa Verde not just because he has nowhere else to go (he gave his crucifix with an amethyst in it to Hannah to provide for her return to the States), but because the hotel is the sight of his healing. Shannon will get what he needs there: a cure for loneliness, mature sexual companion or companions, a stable place to live. It makes sense as he has examined his soul and may be still vulnerable to the world. He also has no money or job, and there may be a warrant for his arrest in Texas. The hotel and Maxine are about the only place Shannon can safely live in. Hannah's protection was only short term. This ending is not necessarily the "positive" one that some critics make it out to be. Shannon has lost everything and is living with a woman who has been both mean and helpful to him. His future has numerous uncertainties: How long will the relationship with Maxine last? Will he have another breakdown? If nothing else, Shannon has grown during the play and become a man that understands himself. At least he has more at the end then he did at the beginning of *The Night of the Iguana,* which is about as happy as the ending gets.

Source: A. Petrusso, for *Drama for Students,* Gale, 2000.

Critical Essay #2

*Tueth reviews a 1996 revival production of Williams 'splay. Comparing the 1961 play to recent revivals of other playwrights' works, the critic found*Night of the Iguana *to have weathered the decades quite well, calling it a "beautiful and compassionate play."*

The American theater is now at the stage of maturity in which a theater season needs to include some revivals of what might be considered American classics. Not all such revived plays bear up well under the test of time. For instance, two recent Broadway revivals of popular plays by William Inge, "Picnic" and "Bus Stop," have come across almost as period pieces from the pre-sexual-revolution era of the 1950's. Tennessee Williams, however, seems to be faring much better, especially in one current production.

The Night of the Iguana, which opened in 1961, is generally considered to be Williams' s last Broadway success. It enjoyed considerable attention at the time, running for almost a year and winning the Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play and a Tony award for its leading actress, Margaret Leighton. A popular film version followed in 1964, starring Richard Burton, Deborah Kerr and Ava Gardner. It has now returned to Broadway at the Roundabout Theater, starring Cherry Jones, who won the Tony Award and several other honors as Best Actress last season in another Broadway revival, "The Heiress." Also in leading roles are the Chicago actor William Petersen and the Broadway and Hollywood actress Marsha Mason. The production is in the reliably sensitive hands of Robert Falls, who guided a juicy revival of another Williams play last season, *"The Rose Tattoo."*

The story is set in the jungle, the lush tropical setting of a Mexican tourist hotel□but also in the tangled, interior landscape of Williams's favorite people, his company of the lost, lonely and frightened. The Rev. T. Lawrence Shannon (Petersen), an Episcopalian priest who has been locked out of his church for his heretical views of God and his behavior with young women of his congregation, now leads bus tours through "God's landscape." Suffering from fever, nervous exhaustion and the threats of his angry customers, he has guided his tourists to a hotel run by his old friend, Maxine Faulk (Mason), a brassy, recently widowed woman. Soon after his arrival, he meets Hannah Jelkes (Jones), a New England spinster who travels about with her 97-year-old philosopher-poet grandfather. Psychologically they are all at the end of their rope, like the iguana that Maxine's Mexican houseboys have caught and tied up until they can slaughter it for dinner. They spend one night together fighting off their demons and maneuvering for new chances at life.

William Petersen's portrayal of the priest emphasizes his erotic helplessness and the pain of his doubts about God, whom he calls "his oblivious majesty." Marsha Mason wisely avoids too much "earth-mother" posturing, conveying instead a sexual playfulness and genuine concern, as a woman who realizes that she misses her deceased husband more than she suspected and now sees an attractive replacement in their old friend, Shannon. Cherry Jones's controlled movement and diction first express the necessary self-reliance and desperate discipline of her situation, then the bravado of

a poker-game bluffer and eventually a heart as vulnerable and knowing as Maxine's and as hungry and frightened as Shannon's.

The first act can be a bit off-putting simply because of its noise. Petersen, as Shannon, has the opportunity to express anxiety about his fate, regret for his misbehavior and doubts about divine benevolence, but he insists on declaiming all of these matters at top volume. Also the grandfather is supposed to be so hard of hearing that Hannah and others have to shout much of their dialogue toward him. The arguments between Shannon and the lady-tourists, too, could be played more lightly (and more quietly). They have much more comic potential than is exploited in this production. Newcomer Paula Cale, as the young tourist currently infatuated with Shannon, exhibits every nervous quality and none of the charm of a 16-year-old girl, adding to the general mayhem and prompting one to ask how someone even as confused as Shannon could succumb to her whining and twitching. Finally, the presence of German tourists at the hotel (the action of the play is set in 1940), as examples of the Nazi master-race mentality to contrast with the fragile human beings who fascinate Williams, serves mostly to provide a series of interruptions. Someday perhaps a director will feel free to eliminate these caricatures from this otherwise beautiful and compassionate play.

Act two is the payoff in this production, to which perhaps the noise of Act One is a necessary prelude. Shannon is eventually strapped into a hammock to prevent him from committing suicide, and Hannah prepares him some poppy tea. It is night, the tourists have departed, a lightning-storm has ended, and the place has quieted down. There then ensues a soul-baring conversation between these two lost travelers that expresses for the spell-bound audience every hope and fear Williams sought to examine in his whole dramatic career. Their intimate conversation becomes a duet of longing and questioning, culminating in the classical benevolence of Hannah's observation, "Nothing human disgusts me unless it's unkind, violent." The spiritual "one-night stand" of the minister and the spinster achieves the kind of universal sympathy for our wounded lives that we have always found in great theater.

This is not about life in 1940 or 1961 or 1996. This play is timeless in its expression of our deepest yearnings for connection, for assurance, for hope and maybe even for God.

Source: Michael Tueth, "Return of the Iguana" in *America,* May 4, 1996, pp. 24-25.

Critical Essay #3

In this essay, Gilman reviews a 1962 production of Williams's play, stating calling it the playwright's best work since Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. *Gilman concludes that* Night of the Iguana's *better points make up for Williams's less stellar dramatic offerings.*

By now it should be clear that Tennessee Williams' real subject is the painfulness (not the tragedy) of existence, and the fate of human dignity (not of the soul) in the face of suffering. It should also be clear that however neurotic Williams himself may be and however widely neurosis enters into and affects his work, there is little point in looking for the roots of his art, and less in searching out the meaning of any particular play, on one or another categorical Freudian plot of ground; because to Williams *everything* is painful□sexuality, touch, communication, time, the bruteness of fact, the necessity to lie, the loss of innocence. And finally it should be clear that toward his material Williams has alternately been elegist, soothsayer, mythmaker, immolator, exorcist or consoler□none of the incarnations final and no one incarnation carried through to finality.

Unfortunately, nothing is clear. The state of Williams criticism is a jungle, in which every hot opinion flourishes. You may find the three or four or seven critics you most respect each sending up a different species of leaf. No American playwright, except possibly O'Neill, has been so much praised or damned for the wrong reasons, just as none has so successfully (and to the exacerbation of the problem) straddled the popular and elite camps. And no playwright has so helped to muddy his work's image by coyness, obfuscatory pronouncements, false modesty and inability to accept that when you eat the cake it is gone.

Thus Williams' new play came to us and was greeted with the familiar irrelevancies and extraneous considerations, and the familiar embarrassment. It was dismal to read his breast-beating acceptance of the Chicago critics' unfavorable notices. (The Chicago critics indeed! Can anyone imagine Brecht, O'Casey, Giradoux or even O'Neill deferring to Claudia Cassidy?) And now that the supreme court has reversed the verdict, what has the playwright to say? What, for that matter, does the new verdict, the New York talk, have to tell us about *"The Night of the Iguana?* "

The talk is that the play is Williams' best since " *Cat on A Hot Tin Roof,"* and the talk, for once, is right. But it seems doubtful that it is right for the best reasons or that it tells the whole story. In the general eagerness to rediscover a humane or optimistic or elegaic or non-apocalyptic Williams, the Williams of' *'Streetcar"* and' *'The Glass Menagerie,* " two things have mostly been ignored. The first is that *"The Night of the Iguana"* perpetuates nearly all of Williams' failings as a dramatist; the other is that the renewal, the moving up from the depths of M*"Sweet Bird"* and *"Period of Adjustment,"* is precisely of a kind to throw light on what those weakness are.

Essentially, it is the never-settled dilemma of what kind of playwright to be. The problem divides here into three. The decor: a detailed, exact reproduction of a seedy Mexican hotel near Acapulco, circa 1940; realism at the zenith (flakiness of walls, lushness of

vegetation, *real* rain), yet also attempts at "poetic" atmosphere, suggestions of symbolic values. The text: an amalgam of hard realism, expert and winning, and sloppy lyricism; the dialogue used conflictingly to advance the plot or create character or establish vision or as abstract self-sufficiency. The structure: two nearly separate plays, a first act of tedious naturalism filled with supererogation and subsidiary characters of strictly commercial lineage (a Nazi family, a lesbian, Mexican boys lounging darkly); and a second wherein much is stripped away and a long central anecdote with its attendant effects rests securely on a base of true feeling and dramatic rightness.

The anecdote, neither so long nor nearly so shocking as that in *"Suddenly Last Summer,"* but having much the same purpose, to establish and compel assent to the play's central difficult proposition, is only partly detached from the main flow of action, struggling to issue from it, correct it, illuminate it and give it permanence. It is an example of what Williams does best, as so much of the earlier business exemplifies what he does worst.

Told by a forty-year-old woman who has lived a life of celibacy while shepherding, on a nomadic, Vachel Lindsay-like existence, her aged grandfather, a minor poet who will read his work for coins and is fighting against failing powers to complete his last mysterious poem, a prayer for courage, the story constitutes a revelatory experience to set against the despair over the inexorability of erotic compulsion with which the play is otherwise largely concerned. There is a possibility that it would lose much of its splendor without the incandescent purity of Margaret Leighton' s performance as the woman, but one tends to think that it would be hard to destroy.

What is so new in it, and in the play, for Williams, is the announcement of chastity as a possibility, as well as unromantic pity for the sensually driven. For the man to whom it is told, and who exists on the stage as wound for Miss Leighton's ministrations and arena for her victory (sadly, he is played unclearly and with spurious force by Patrick O'Neal), is an Episcopalian priest who has been defrocked for committing "fornication and heresy in the same week" and has become a tourist guide in Mexico, where he maintains an unbroken line of lust and self-pity.

At the play's end he is not healed nor are his circumstances altered□his last act is in fact to accept ruefully his condition, marked out for him by the person of the female hotel-owner, a woman of absolute appetite and primitive sensuality□acted with great gum-chewing, buttocks-wriggling, nasty élan by Bette Davis. But what has happened to him, and to the audience whose surrogate he is as Val or Brick or Chance Wayne could not be, not even Blanche or Maggie, is that there is now a sense of destiny continued under a placating star, that the painfulness of what we are and are driven to do is eased by being faced and by being given a counter-image, tenuous but lasting; and the whole thing has managed to work because for once there are no false moves, no violence seeking meaning but exhausting it, no orgasmic aspirations and no proliferation from a center without its own center.

It is almost enough to compensate for all those other things, that ephemeral, debased theater, that Williams hasn't yet ceased to give us. Indeed, as memory pares away the inessential, it does compensate.

Source: Richard Gilman, "Williams as Phoenix" in the *Commonweal,* Vol. LXXV, no. 18, January 26, 1962, pp. 460-61.

Critical Essay #4

While Brustein says that Williams'splay offers some enjoyment, he ultimately finds Night of the Iguana *to be "too aimless, leisurely, and formless to satisfy" a discerning theatregoer.*

In *The Night of the Iguana,* Tennessee Williams has composed a little nocturnal mood music for mutved strings, beautifully performed by some superb instrumentalists, but much too aimless, leisurely, and formless to satisfy the attentive ear. I should add that I prefer these Lydian measures to the unmelodious banalities of his *Period of Adjustment* or the strident masochistic dissonances of *Sweet Bird of Youth;* for his new materials are handled with relative sincerity, the dialogue has a wistful, graceful, humorous warmth, the characters are almost recognizable as human beings, and the atmosphere is lush and fruity without being outrageously unreal (no Venus flytraps snapping at your fingers). With this play, Williams has returned once again to the primeval jungle, where□around a ramshackle resort hotel near Acapulco□the steaming tropical underbrush is meant to evoke the terrors of existence. But he has explored this territory too many times before□the play seems tired, unadventurous, and self-derivative. Furthermore, the author's compulsion to express himself on the subjects of fleshly corruption, time and old age, the malevolence of God, and the maiming of the sensitive by life has now become so strong that he no longer bothers to provide a substructure of action to support his vision. *The Night of the Iguana* enjoys no organizing principle whatsoever; and except for some perfunctory gestures towards the end, it is very short on plot, pattern, or theme.

One trouble is that while Williams has fully imagined his personae, he has not sufficiently conceived them in relation to one another, so that the movement of the work is backwards towards revelation of character rather than forwards towards significant conflict. "The going to pieces of T. Lawrence Shannon," a phrase from the play, might be its more appropriate title, for it focuses mainly on the degradation and breakdown of its central character□a crapulous and slightly psychotic Episcopalian minister, very similar to the alcoholic Consul in Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano.* Thrown out of his church for "fornication and heresy"□after having been seduced by a teenage parishioner, he refused to offer prayers to a "senile delinquent"□ Shannon now conducts guided tours in Mexico, sleeping with underage girls, coping with hysterical female Baptists, and finding evidence of God in thunder, in the vivesection of dogs, and in starving children, scrabbling among dungheaps in their search for food. Other characters brush by this broken heretic, but they hardly connect with him, except to uncover his psychosexual history and to expose their own: The Patrona of the hotel, a hearty lecherous widow with two Mexican consorts, out of *Sweet Bird of Youth;* Hannah Jelkes, a virgin spinster with a compassionate nature, out of *Summer and Smoke;* and Nonno, her father, a ninety-seven-year-old poet□deaf, cackling, and comatose□out of *Krapp's Last Tape.* The substance of the play is the exchange, by Hannah and Shannon, of mutual confidences about their sexual failures, while the Patrona shoots him hot glances and the poet labors to complete his last poem. When Shannon goes berserk, and is tied down on a hammock and harassed by some German tourists, the iguana is hastily

introduced to give this action some larger symbolic relevance: the lizard has been tied under the house, to be fattened, eaten, and to have its eyes poked out by native boys. Persuaded by Hannah to be kinder than God, Shannon eventually frees the iguana, tying its rope around his own neck when he goes off, another Chance Wayne, to become one of the Patrona's lovers. But though Shannon is captured, Nonno is freed. Having completed his poem about "the earth's obscene corrupting love," he has found release from such corruptions in death.

The materials, while resolved without sensationalism or sentiment, are all perfectly familiar: the defeated perverse central character, punished for his perversity; the Strindbergian identification of the human body with excrement and defilement; the obsessively sexual determination of every character. But by keeping his usual excesses to a minimum, Williams has provided the occasion for some striking performances. Margaret Leighton, especially, has endowed the stainless Hannah with extraordinary sensibility and tenderness, plumbing depths which Williams himself has been unable to reach since his earliest work. Bette Davis, playing the Patrona in flaming red hair and blue jeans, bats her pendulous lids on her laugh lines and is always on the surface of her part, but she is still a strongly felt personality; Alan Webb's Nonno is humorously senescent; and Patrick O'Neal plays Shannon with suppressed hysteria and a nagging, relentless drive which sometimes reminds one of Fredric March. Always on hand to produce rain on the stage, Oliver Smith has stifled his passion for opulence in the setting, within which this gifted ensemble seems to find its way without directorial eyes (Frank Corsaro's name is still on the program but I detect his influence only in a couple of Method Mexican extras).

For all its virtues, though, the play is decidedly a minor opus. A rich atmosphere, a series of languid scenes and some interesting character sketches are more than Williams has offered us in some time, but they are still not enough to sustain our interest through a full evening. Perhaps Williams, identifying with Nonno, has decided to think of himself as only "a minor league poet with a major league spirit," and there is enough fatigue in the play to suggest that, again like Nonno, he feels like "the oldest living and practicing poet in the world." But even a minor poet fashions his work with more care and coherence than this; even an aged eagle occasionally spreads its wings. I am inclined to persist in my heresy that there is at least one more genuine work of art left in Williams, which will emerge when he has finally been able to objectify his personal problems and to shape them into a suitable myth. Meanwhile, let us put down *The Night of the Iguana* as another of his innumerable exercises in marking time.

Source: Robert Brustein, "A Little Night Music," in the *New Republic*, Vol. 146, no. 4, January 22,1962, pp. 20,22-23.

Adaptations

The Night of the Iguana was adapted as a film in 1964. This version was directed by John Huston and starred Richard Burton as Shannon, Ava Gardner as Maxine, and Debra Kerr as Hannah.

Topics for Further Study

Research the history of American and German expatriates in Mexico during World War II. Why were people like Shannon, Hannah, and Maxine drawn there?

Compare and contrast Shannon with another sexual character, Stanley Kowalski from Tennessee Williams's play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Why are both emotional cripples? How do they deal with their sexual desires?

Explore the psychology behind Shannon's story of his mother and how it affects the sexual choices he makes with women.

Research the iguana and its habits. What does the animal's characteristics add to its symbolic meaning in *The Night of the Iguana?* Where else has the iguana been used in art?

Compare and Contrast

1940: The United States watched the beginnings of World War II and considered intervention. Eventually the country was drawn into the conflict.

1961: The United States watches the beginnings of the Vietnam conflict. Eventually, the country was drawn into the war.

Today: While there are no widespread wars, the United States retains a position as the world's peacekeeper and considers intervention in numerous localized conflicts.

1940: The growth of war-related industry drew nearly 12 million women in the workforce. However when the war ended, women's pay went down and they earned much less than men.

1963: The beginnings of the modern feminist movement take root, with the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique.*

Today: Women struggle to balance the demands of work and home life. There is still a significant disparity in pay: women earn much less than men for the same work. The feminist movement is on the decline.

1940: Some methods of birth control have been available for several years, though many are still restricted. Attitudes towards sex are becoming more liberal.

1961: The birth control pill is introduced, giving women more control than ever over their bodies.

Today: Birth control has become even more convenient. Devices such as Norplant can be inserted into a woman's arm and work for up to six months.

1940: Nazi Germany forces the beginnings of Jewish repression. This takes many forms in different countries, including restriction of movement and denial of basic human rights. The Auschwitz concentration camp is built.

1961: Nazi official Adolph Eichmann is convicted in Israel for his role in the death of six million Jews during World War II.

Today: Efforts to keep alive the memory of the Holocaust are widespread. Movies on the topic, such as *Schindler's List* and *Life is Beautiful,* are popular and win numerous awards.

What Do I Read Next?

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, a play by Tennessee Williams first performed in 1955, also concerns a character, Brick, who is plagued by self-deception of a sexual nature.

The Male Experience, a nonfiction book published by James A. Doyle in 1983, explores male psychology, focusing on their sexuality and masculinity.

'The Night of the Iguana," in *One Arm, and Other Stories,* is a short story by Tennessee Williams published in 1948. The play is based on this story, though many of the elements are very different.

The American Expatriate: No Land's Man, a nonfiction book published by John Fowles in 1964, discusses Americans living and working in foreign countries, including Mexico.

Our Lady of Babylon, a novel published by John Rechy in 1996, explores relationships between the sexes, women's sexual behavior, and sex roles in history.

Further Study

Boxill, Roger. *Modern Dramatists: Tennessee Williams,* St. Martin's Press, 1987.

This book covers Williams's career as a playwright, focusing on his major plays, including *The Night of the Iguana.*

Hardison Londre, Felicia. *World Dramatists: Tennessee Williams,* Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1979.

This book critically discusses each of Williams's plays in-depth and includes a chronology of his life.

Hayman, Ronald. *Tennessee Williams: Everyone Else is an Audience,* Yale University Press, 1993.

This is a critical biography of the playwright, covering his entire life and career.

Williams, Dakin and Shepherd Mead. *Tennessee Williams: An Intimate Biography,* Arbor House, 1983.

This is a biography of the playwright, written by his younger brother.

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Clurman, Harold. A review of *The Night of the Iguana,* in the *Nation,* January 27, 1962, pp. 86-87.

Embrey, Glenn. "The Subterranean World of *The Night of the Iguana* " in *Tennessee Williams: A Tribute,* University Press of Mississippi, pp. 325-40.

Gilman, Richard. "Williams as Phoenix," in the *New Republic,* January 26, 1962, pp. 460-61.

McCarten, John. "Lonely, Loquacious, and Doomed" in the *New Yorker,* January 13, 1962, p. 61.

Taubman, Howard. "Changing Course: Williams and Rattigan Offer New Styles," in the *New York Times,* January 7,1962, sec. 2, p. 1.

"Tennessee in Mexico" in *Newsweek,* January 8, 1962, p. 44.

"Tough Angel of Mercy" in *Life,* January 22, 1962, pp. 67, 70.

"The Violated Heart" in *Time,* January 5, 1962, p. 53.

Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana,* in *Three by Tennessee,* Signet Classic, 1976, pp. 1-127.

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.

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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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