One Day When I was Lost: A Scenario Study Guide

One Day When I was Lost: A Scenario by James Baldwin

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

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

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

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

James Baldwin's screenplay *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario* was adapted from Alex Haley's *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965). Although *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario* was written as a movie script, it has never been produced solely on its own merits. *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario* came closest to being realized on the screen in the documentaries *Malcolm X* (1972), co-written by Baldwin and Arnold Perl and the rewritten version by Spike Lee, *Malcolm X* (1992).

Malcolm X had been a friend and hero of Baldwin's, so it was with relish that Baldwin immersed himself in Haley's *Malcolm X* in his attempts to extrapolate a dramatic representation. At first, the script was supposed to have been written as a stage play in conjunction with Haley and Elia Kazan, a famous Broadway director. However, before the writing had begun, Columbia Pictures bought the movie rights of Haley's book and asked Baldwin if he would be interested in writing the screenplay.

Although urged by friends and family not to accept the Hollywood offer, Baldwin, who had always wanted to write a script for a movie and who also believed that he owed it to the memory of Malcolm X to write it, decided in Columbia's favor. He would regret his decision, as the movie studio's demands for changes in his script would frustrate his creative spirit and his sense of loyalty to his friend, Malcolm.

Baldwin's belief that Hollywood was ready for a truthful encounter with the facts of Malcolm X's life was soon diminished. One of Baldwin's strongest battles with the studio was fought over the starring role in the film. At one point, Columbia supposedly went so far as to suggest a white actor, who would be, according to Baldwin's biographer, David Leeming, "darkened up a bit" to portray the character of Malcolm X. After repeated communications from Columbia suggesting revisions in his script, Baldwin proclaimed that he would write it in his own words or not at all. In reaction, Columbia sent another writer, Arnold Perl, to collaborate with Baldwin. Baldwin resented this, believing that only he could be true to Malcolm X's story.

Adding to his depression and anger with Columbia was the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., which occurred in the middle of Baldwin's attempts to write the script. Shortly after King's assassination, Leeming states, Baldwin "took an overdose of sleeping pills." Upon recovering, Baldwin abandoned the dream of a Hollywood movie. Baldwin went on to finish *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario* which was published in text form only.

Author Biography

James Baldwin, author of the screenplay *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario*, was also a preacher, novelist, essayist, screenwriter, playwright, and freedom fighter. He was born in Harlem in New York City on August 2, 1924. During the 1960s, at the peak of his political activism and his literary influence, he was considered, writes John Stevenson for the *Boston Book Review,* "a prophet of the decade's black liberation struggle."

Baldwin not only aided the Civil Rights Movement by helping with the voter registration crusade in Jackson, Mississippi, he was also one of the most widely read authors during that decade, influencing both white and black audiences. Baldwin considered Martin Luther King, Jr. a friend. Like King, Baldwin had a dream for those turbulent but inspiring times. He was fueled by a vision that the 1960s were the most opportune time for all the races in America to come together. Toward this aspiration, he wrote numerous essays, trying to define the problems that had kept his dream from materializing. Because of his inspired vision, he also became a great admirer of Malcolm X, despite the fact that Malcolm's radical views sometimes ran contrary to Baldwin's beliefs.

Baldwin's hopes, if not dashed, were definitely tempered when the fight for civil rights became more militant in the black community and deflated by the assassinations of King and Malcolm. Baldwin, from the age of fourteen until he turned seventeen, fervently believed that the problems of racism began within the heart and soul of oneself. That's why, when a fit of rage burst from him one day, an outburst that could have cost a life, Baldwin decided to leave the States and permanently established himself in Europe. There he felt more accepted and could view American culture more objectively. In Europe, Baldwin found that racial, as well as homosexual, lines were not so radically defined.

Baldwin's personal anger began at an early age and resulted in his leaving the home of his mother, Emma Berdis Jones, and his stepfather, David Baldwin, when he was seventeen. Emma was distracted by a household full of children. Baldwin's stepfather, who suffered from a mental disorder, was often abusive. After leaving home and while working at poorly paid, menial jobs, Baldwin continued to cultivate his love of reading and writing. He eventually sought out Richard Wright, an author whom Baldwin highly respected. Both were self-educated. Wright encouraged the young Baldwin and helped Baldwin win a Eugene Saxton Fellowship, an acknowledgement that was to foster the beginning of Baldwin's professional writing career.

Although Baldwin's first attempts at fiction were turned down by many different publishers, his published book reviews and essays eventually gained him respect as a serious and skilled writer.

Through the continuing support of Wright, Baldwin's writing improved. While living in Paris, he finished his first and most successful novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), a recounting of his experiences as a youthful preacher. In 1956, Baldwin published his

second novel, *Giovanni's Room*, a story in which he explores issues of his homosexuality. Baldwin would go on to write several more novels, two somewhat successful plays, the movie script based on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X,* and several respected collections of essays. The critic Stevenson claimed of Baldwin, "for a few years in the early 1960s he lit up the cultural landscape like a bolt from the heavens." On December 1, 1987, Baldwin died of stomach cancer at the age of sixty-three in St. Paul de Vence, France.

Plot Summary

Part 1

One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario opens in a parking garage, in New York City, with a man (Malcolm X) walking toward, and finally getting into, a car. When the man starts the car, the radio comes on with an announcement that Malcolm X will be speaking at the Audubon Ballroom that evening. The camera then shifts to the side-view mirror and an image of a fire and hooded men on horseback is seen. A young mulatto, pregnant woman tries to run away from the men on horseback, while a male voice shouts: "Our homeland is in Africa!" Next scene in the mirror is a "beaten, one-eyed black man," who is lying on the tracks of an oncoming streetcar.

The scene then jumps to another time. Malcolm X is in Africa, being welcomed by an enthusiastic crowd. An African ruler gives Malcolm a new name: Omowale, which means, "the son who has returned." Another quick scene shows Malcolm receiving yet another name: El Hajj Malik El Shabazz, his Muslim name. Then a shot to a family Bible in which is inscribed a fourth name: Malcolm Little.

There is another flashback in the side-view mirror. This time it is a dance hall in which Malcolm, who was then referred to as "Red," is dancing with Laura, a young black woman. Another quick flashback shows Malcolm with a white woman, Sophia. They are in bed. There is a third quick flashback scene in which Malcolm is in jail, fighting, with the crowd calling him Satan.

A more detailed flashback shows Louise and Earl Little, Malcolm's parents. Louise is pregnant. Earl, a preacher, talks about the movement of black people back to Africa to establish their own nation. In quick succession, the hooded men on horses threaten the Littles, smashing all the windows of their house. Action moves forward. Malcolm is a young child, watching with his brothers and his parents as their house burns down. Also watching from a distance is a group of firemen who have not attempted to put the fire out.

Another scene has Malcolm on a beach, walking with Laura. Malcolm tells Laura that for them to be together, he would have to kidnap her, because her parents want her to marry someone respectable. The flashbacks continue, switching back and forth from Laura and Malcolm to Malcolm's parents. In one scene, Malcolm's mother attempts to collect on her husband's life insurance policy, which is denied her. The insurance agent insists that Earl Little committed suicide. Earl's body was found on the streetcar tracks. Louise loses her job, and then her children are taken away by a welfare agent. Next, Louise is shown in an asylum.

Malcolm is now in a foster home. He does well in school and is elected president of his class; but when he asks a counselor about becoming a lawyer, the counselor, Mr. Ostrovski, tells him that "colored people" shouldn't aspire to jobs they'll never have. With

a jump in time, Malcolm is in Boston, learning how to be a good "darky" to win big tips, as he and his friend Shorty work as porters in the men's restroom of a fancy hotel. Shorty attempts to citify Malcolm, helping him to buy clothes and showing him how to straighten his hair. Malcolm works at various, menial jobs.

Another scene shows Malcolm in a bar in New York, where he meets West Indian Archie, a man old enough to be Malcolm's father. Archie takes an interest in teaching Malcolm the way of the streets. Archie is a numbers runner, a person who takes bets on certain numbers, an early and illegal form of a lottery.

In a later scene in another bar, Malcolm runs into Laura who is with a white man named Daniel. Laura has grown up, gained confidence. She and Malcolm talk briefly before the scene changes and Malcolm is with Sophia. The scene switches again, this time to Malcolm and Archie laughing at how Malcolm pretended to be crazy to avoid the draft.

Scenes move quickly again: Malcolm selling drugs, stealing, acting as a pimp. Malcolm is then shown out celebrating. He's won big money on the numbers. Later, Archie questions the legitimacy of Malcolm's win and accuses Malcolm of cheating. Archie threatens to kill Malcolm, so he and Shorty move back to Boston. Shorty, Sophia, and Malcolm pull off several big burglaries and eventually are caught and sent to jail.

Part 2

Malcolm is in prison, where he meets Luther, an older man who takes Malcolm into his care. He encourages Malcolm to control his anger, to take better care of his health, and to read. He tells Malcolm that white people want black people to fight against one another, want black people to use their fists instead of their brains. He also asks Malcolm why he wants to straighten his hair. Does he think that makes him white? He encourages Malcolm to be proud that he is black. Malcolm comes to trust Luther. He starts eating better, stops putting chemicals on his hair, and reads every book he finds in the library. He signs up for correspondence courses. Luther tells Malcolm that God is black and that white men are the devil.

After much indoctrination, Luther tells Malcolm that he has written to "the Leader" about Malcolm, and that Malcolm should expect to receive a letter from him soon. Later, Malcolm practices his writing skills by responding to the Leader's correspondence. Shortly after, Luther leaves jail, a free man. Soon to follow him is Malcolm.

Part 3

Malcolm meets Sidney, Luther's son. Sidney is trying to start a newspaper for the Black Muslims. Luther asks Malcolm to help Sidney in this effort. Once, when they are out on the streets of Harlem delivering the newspaper, Malcolm goes to Archie's apartment only to find the man suffering from memory loss and doing very poorly.

At this point, there is a scene that introduces Betty, who is teaching a class. Luther introduces her to Malcolm. This scene is short and immediately breaks away to a street scene in which two black men are fighting. White policemen arrive, and when the crowd tries to manage the fight for themselves, telling the policemen that they are not needed, one of the policemen hits a Muslim man across the head. Sidney is there and immediately runs across the street to telephone Malcolm. The next scene takes place in front of the police station where Malcolm controls a group of Muslims who refuse to leave until they have seen the Muslim minister who was hit over the head. The Muslims win their case and because of their insistence that the Muslim minister be taken to the hospital, the man's life is saved. The incident is broadcast in the news, giving Malcolm credit, placing media focus on him.

Malcolm runs into Laura again. This time she looks haggard and old. She's become a drug junkie under the influence of her white boyfriend who has since deserted her. Malcolm tries to convert her to Islam, but he is unsuccessful. Laura says it is too late.

Malcolm and Betty are married. There are several brief scenes of Malcolm talking to the press, while intermittent shots portray racial bigotry and Civil Rights activities. Malcolm's popularity is growing.

Sidney is shown talking on the phone to his father. He does not like what his father is telling him. Sidney defends Malcolm but is disillusioned by the time he hangs up the phone. Next, in another scene, Betty softly complains that Malcolm is spending too much time away from his family. She is also growing suspicious about Luther and the Muslim movement. She wonders why all the papers carry stories about Malcolm except the paper that Sidney and Malcolm created, the Black Muslim newspaper. She questions Malcolm about Luther. Malcolm is oblivious of any dissention. He tries to convince Betty not to worry.

Betty is not convinced by Malcolm's lack of concern. She goes to Sidney in the next scene to confront him. He admits that he has heard some talk in the movement that could be defined as jealousy over Malcolm's popularity. Betty tells Sidney that she's heard people say that Malcolm is a danger to the movement and that he should be expelled.

The news that President Kennedy has been shot is acknowledged. The dictum goes out that no Black Muslim should make an official comment about the incident. In the next scene, Malcolm is answering questions from the press. He talks about the assassination, calling it "a terrible kind of justice." In the following scene, Luther is angry with Malcolm for having broken the rule of silence. This is yet another example that Malcolm is not working within the dictates of the Leader, or Honorable Messenger. Malcolm, as punishment, is told he cannot speak publicly for ninety days. In the next scene, Sidney tells Malcolm that he was told to place a bomb in Malcolm's car.

Malcolm confronts Luther and has his suspicions confirmed. Luther is ambitious. He is not as passionate as Malcolm about saving the people. Luther is more hypocritical

about his faith. After meeting with Luther, Malcolm tells Betty that he is going to start his own branch of the Muslim faith. Sidney joins him.

Malcolm travels to Mecca. Up until that time, Malcolm had preached hatred of white people. But in Mecca, he befriends people of all races and sees people from all over the world coming together. He returns to the United States a changed man with a new vision. Sidney hears that Malcolm now loves white people, and he thinks that Malcolm has sold out. Sidney turns to armed robbery to support himself since leaving both his father and Malcolm. He eventually is sentenced to prison. Malcolm visits him there.

Malcolm is at home with Betty when a Molotov cocktail crashes through the window, setting the house on fire. Malcolm calls the fire department, but the truck never comes. The next scene returns to where the script started, the day that Malcolm is to speak at Audubon Ballroom. After telephoning Betty and asking her to attend, he is shown standing on the stage as a volley of bullets hit him.

Part 1

Part 1 Summary

One Day When I Was Lost: A Scenario is James Baldwin's screenplay of Alex Haley's book *The Autobiography of Malcolm X.* The screenplay, which was never produced as a film, portrays the events of Malcolm X's life within the context and limitations of text which is ready for the screen. The screenplay is divided into three parts to address Malcolm's life: first, his youth; second, his time spent in prison and the beginnings of his rise to leadership; and finally, his full immersion into the Muslim religion and ascension as a leader in civil rights in America.

The screenplay begins in the parking garage of the New York Hilton Hotel in New York City in February 1965. A man enters his car, hesitates a moment before turning the ignition and then starts the engine. As the radio announces the appearance of Malcolm X at the Audubon Ballroom tonight, the man's eyes are seen in the rearview mirror, revealing the driver to be Malcolm X himself.

The car's side view mirror becomes a screen upon which appear flashback images of fire and violent hooded men smashing windows of a house where a young pregnant mulatto woman screams in terror.

A male voice is heard inside Malcolm's head shouting, "Brothers, sisters, this is not our home! Our homeland is in Africa! In Africa!" Immediately after, the sound of a trolley car is heard, and the scene on the side mirror displays a one-eyed black man, badly beaten and lying on the trolley car tracks.

As Malcolm drives, he watches the people on the streets of New York City and remembers being greeted by young black students in Dakar, located in western Africa. The students drape Malcolm in an African robe, and he is bestowed with a new name, Omowale, meaning the son who has returned.

Immediately following this scene is the image of a hand writing the name El-Haji Malik El Shabazz in the Book of the Holy Register of True Muslims. The last image in the sequence is of a black hand writing the name Malcolm Little, May 19, 1925, into a family Bible. The action returns to present day, and Malcolm's voice is heard to say, "So many names..."

The side view mirror becomes the screen for another scenario, this time at a dance where the young Malcolm dances with a girl named Laura while onlookers call to him to "Go on, Red!"

Malcolm sits in traffic in New York. He sees a beautiful blonde woman and thinks of a white woman named Sophia whom he once loved. Another flashback shows Malcolm and Sophia in bed, and Malcolm asks Sophia how she intends to explain him to her white boyfriend. An immediate transition to another flashback shows Malcolm involved

in a prison fistfight while the inmates call Malcolm "Satan." Back now in the present, Malcolm muses about all the names he has had.

The action now turns to the scene of a Malcolm's childhood home in Omaha, Nebraska where his mother, Louise Little, the pregnant mulatto woman, walks from the clothesline to the house. Interspersed with images of Louise are brief scenarios of her husband, Earl Little, a preacher speaking about a prophet named Marcus Garvey whose "Back-to-Africa" movement urges black people to return to Africa so that they may enjoy their own heritage and ancestry.

The action now focuses on Louise, who hears the sound of approaching horses and realizes that the Ku Klux Klan has converged on her home. Louise, who is a mulatto and almost as white as some of the men who threaten her, tells the riders that her husband is not at home. One of the men tells Louise that Earl is in danger if he does not stop inciting Negroes with his sermons. The men smash the windows of the house before riding off into the night.

In another scene, Earl runs to catch a streetcar but misses it. He is forced to walk home, where he surveys the damage done by the Klan. Louise tearfully begs Earl to move the family away from the violence, but Earl will not be pushed away from his home until he is ready to go. Earl tells Louise that they need to go to Africa, and Louise bemoans the fact that she has the blood of a white man who raped her mother running through her veins. Earl calms Louise and tells her that they will leave for Africa as soon as the new baby is born.

The next scene shows Louise pointing out Omaha on a map so that Malcolm can see where he was born. The family leaves Omaha for Milwaukee where Klansmen set fire to the Little house, and Earl, Louise and their children watch the destruction of their possessions as the white fire fighters stand and watch. The family moves to Lansing, which is their final destination.

The action moves forward to Malcolm as a young man, strolling with a young woman named Laura on a beach at Cape Cod. Malcolm speaks of marrying Laura, but he teases her that in order for that to happen, he will have to kidnap her because her grandmother wants Laura to marry a proper black boy from Boston, not a rebel from Lansing, Michigan.

The scene reverts to a scene from Malcolm's childhood. His father's badly beaten body lays on the trolley car tracks. Unable to move from his extensive injuries, Earl Little can only watch in horror as the trolley car bears down upon him.

In the next scene, Louise enters an insurance company office where the agent tells her that Earl's life insurance policy will not be paid because the evidence of the accident proves that Earl committed suicide. Louise contends that Earl could not have inflicted the wounds on the back of his own head, but the agent will not pay because Earl's body was lying across the tracks, indicating a suicide attempt. Shortly after this, Louise fends off the verbal attacks of a social worker who has come to the Little home because of

repeated delinquency reports about the Little children. The Little children are eventually taken away from Louise, who is sent to an insane asylum.

Malcolm is sent to a Detroit foster home in the care of a woman named Mrs. Swerlin who is keeping five other boys. Malcolm perseveres in his chores at home and at school and is elected class president. Mrs. Swerlin allows Malcolm to travel to Lansing on the weekends to see his old friends, including his cousin Shorty, who shares that he is moving to Boston because he cannot find work or women to advance his life.

One day, Malcolm visits the school principal, Mr. Ostrovski, to discuss career options for his future. Malcolm would like to become a lawyer, but Mr. Ostrovski tells Malcolm that colored people cannot become lawyers and advises Malcolm to pursue carpentry or some other work suitable for a Negro man. Malcolm thanks the man and leaves the office.

The next scene shows Malcolm and Shorty walking in Boston, and Malcolm tries to explain the significance of Paul Revere when they encounter a statue of the historic figure. Malcolm also tells Shorty that there is a statue of black men symbolizing the slaves who fought in the Revolutionary War. Malcolm teases Shorty by saying that Paul Revere actually yelled, "The niggers is coming! The niggers is coming!" on his famous midnight ride. Soon Malcolm and Shorty come upon the Harvard Law School building, and Malcolm watches the students with hatred in his eyes.

Shorty finds Malcolm a job working with him as a men's restroom attendant at a Boston hotel and guides Malcolm on the ways to make the most tips by playing the role of the happy nigger. Shorty introduces Malcolm to the ritual of "conking" his hair, which is a dangerous method of pouring lye on nappy hair to straighten it so that it can be styled more like the hair of white men.

On appointed nights, black people are allowed to dance in the hotel's ballroom, and Malcolm sees Laura and asks her to dance. They dance to the delight of the onlookers. Malcolm is unaware of a white woman named Sophia, who has set her sights on him. She approaches Malcolm when Laura excuses herself briefly. Sophia tells Malcolm to take Laura home and come back to the ballroom for her, insinuating the promise of intimacy. Laura can sense that Malcolm is distracted when he takes her home but says nothing as Malcolm bounds down the steps away from her house. Malcolm rushes back to Sophia, and they move to her car, where they embrace ravenously as the car radio announces the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

The action transitions to Malcolm working as a train porter, selling sandwiches and coffee to travelers. The train arrives in downtown New York, and Malcolm is seen in a zoot suit entering a bar called Small's Paradise, where he meets a street-wise man named West Indian Archie. Archie mentors Malcolm on becoming a numbers runner on the streets of Harlem and outfits him in stolen clothes so that Malcolm will look successful.

One night soon after meeting Archie, Malcolm ducks into a bar to escape the rain for awhile and encounters Laura with her boyfriend, Daniel. Since Laura has moved to New York from Boston, she has taken on a more worldly air, and Malcolm is still attracted to her lively nature. Daniel leaves to let Malcolm and Laura visit, but Laura does not linger because she knows that Daniel will be expecting her to cook dinner very soon.

As Malcolm watches Laura run down the rainy sidewalk, the scene transitions to a dark room where Malcolm and Sophia lie in bed. Malcolm wants to know what Sophia will tell her fiancy about her sleeping with a black man, but Sophia tells Malcolm to shut up. Malcolm slaps her face. Ultimately, Sophia validates that she belongs to Malcolm even though she will soon be married to a white boy.

One day, Archie and Malcolm sit in Malcolm's room discussing Malcolm's recently received draft notice. Malcolm has no intention of serving in the army and manages to convince an army psychiatrist that he is crazy by feigning zeal to "organize every nigger in this man's army and blow them crackers' heads off, like we should of done a long time ago, and you know it as well as me."

Malcolm is able to avoid the draft, and his life on the streets drives him to drug use. One night he is followed into a bar as he carries a box of marijuana cigarettes to sell. Malcolm senses that he is being followed and drops the box into the gutter before entering a bar where two plain-clothes police detectives interrogate him. Not finding any evidence of drugs, the detectives vow to catch Malcolm in possession of illegal substances one day. Malcolm returns to his apartment, which has been ransacked. Malcolm sniffs some cocaine, packs his few clothes and leaves the apartment for good.

During the next few rapid scenes, Malcolm avoids the police while selling drugs, working as a pimp and doing other lowlife hustler activities. One night, Malcolm treats Archie and Sophia to a night on the town with his $300 winnings from running numbers. The next morning, Archie arrives at Malcolm's apartment brandishing a gun and accusing Malcolm of cheating Archie out of the $300.

Archie gives Malcolm a day to get his money. Sophia offers to give it to him, but Malcolm knows that he did not cheat, and if he gives money to Archie now, it will be like an admission that he did. Malcolm orders Sophia to return to Boston because there will soon be trouble, and she dresses and leaves quickly.

Malcolm dresses, sticks a gun in the waistband of his slacks and heads out to his favorite bar, where the bartender warns him about the plain-clothes detectives who have been asking about Malcolm. Malcolm goes outside for a little while to collect his thoughts and ends up in a fight that the bartender breaks up. The bartender whispers for Malcolm to give up his gun, and Malcolm hands it over to the bartender, who stashes it behind the bar just as two police officers enter the bar. The police officers usher Malcolm outside and frisk him up against the patrol car. Finding nothing, they release Malcolm with a warning.

Malcolm reenters the bar to retrieve his gun and sits with his head in his hands as memories of Ostrovski's voice flood over him telling him that a colored boy cannot be an attorney. Later that night, Archie finds Malcolm in the bar and points a gun at Malcolm threatening to kill him. The bartender pleads with Archie not to shoot Malcolm, and Archie finally relents, leaving Malcolm alone to walk out of the bar.

Shorty is driving through Harlem at the time, and seeing Malcolm, he begins to honk the car's horn. Malcolm does not turn around but senses the presence of a car bearing down on him. Finally, Malcolm turns and draws his gun to defend himself, sure that he is about to be killed. Shorty stops the car and jumps out, and Malcolm falls into his arms exhausted from fear.

Shorty and Malcolm return to Boston, where Malcolm assumes leadership of a small group of thieves. Malcolm and Shorty are ultimately caught and sentenced to eight to ten years in prison.

Part 1 Analysis

Because the book is written as a screenplay, the author provides visual and graphic directions to drive the plot. This provides much more scenic description and visual direction than found in a basic novel. This format also allows for more drama and foreshadowing elements. This section relies heavily on the literary technique of flashbacks to provide information about Malcolm's past and to help the reader understand his thoughts and motivations.

The novel begins with Malcolm X on the day of his death as he drives to the Audubon Ballroom to deliver a speech. Much of the plot at the beginning is delivered through flashbacks and memories. For example, the side view mirror of Malcolm's car becomes a screen upon which scenes from his past are viewed. "As the car begins to move again, the side view mirror begins to reflect inexplicable images, swift, overlapping, blurred. A fire fills the screen. Then, hooded men, on horseback, smashing in the windows of a country house; a fair mulatto woman, pregnant, flinching as the horsemen ride between her and the house; and between her and the camera."

The author also uses many types of descriptive language, such as the simile when he writes the scene when Malcolm and Shorty encounter the students leaving class at Harvard Law School. "Bells begin ringing. They are dismissal bells, resounding now across the campus, as the students, all of them white, pour out of the building. They scarcely see Malcolm and Shorty - they descend on the boys like waves breaking, and pass them with the same indifference - but they leave in their wake a very human resentment and wonder." Baldwin describes the group of students like waves breaking to help the reader understand Malcolm's feeling of drowning in his disappointment and resentment at being denied a world and profession he had wanted.

The visual descriptions provided by Baldwin help to indicate the intensity and pace of the action, as in the scene when a gunshot is heard on a Harlem street one night.

"Children being hurried indoors, being hurried up the steps, and thrown into bed; windows being slammed, locked from the inside. Doors being locked from the inside. A police officer's horse rearing. A plate glass window. The tenement window. The objects in the plate-glass window. The tenement window. The plate-glass window. The plate-glass window is smashed. Then, another. Then, another. The hooves of rearing horses." The quick cuts in the visual direction let the reader understand the frantic pace of the plot in a way that a mere description could not.

The author also uses foreshadowing to hint at Malcolm's character traits and ultimate fate. In the scene when Malcolm gives direction to his band of thieves, he points a gun at his head and pulls the trigger in front of the group to show that he is not afraid of consequences. "Now. Remember: I did that to let you know I'm not afraid to die. I know all of you have better sense than to mess with a man who's not afraid to die. - Now, get out of here, all of you, and let me get myself straight."

There is also foreshadowing in Malcolm's momentary hesitation when starting the car. Toward the end of the book, it is revealed that orders are given to plant a bomb in Malcolm's car, and at this time, he is never sure when the order will be fulfilled and he will be killed.

The primary theme of the search for identity will run throughout the book and can be seen in several instances in this section. Primarily, black men such as Malcolm's father believe in the teachings of Marcus Garvey, who preaches that black men are native to Africa and need to return there. This philosophy sets up young people like Malcolm with an inherent sense of not belonging where they are forced to live. During Malcolm's early years, he experiences the conflict of being black in a white world and adopts the practice of emulating white people in order to be accepted.

Shorty even teaches Malcolm how to conk his hair to make it straight so that he can look as white as possible. Malcolm has the perceived advantage among his friends of being a light skinned black man, which is appealing to Negro girls. This mulatto skin tone is not enough to sway Laura's family, who would prefer that Laura be involved with someone white or someone who has more white characteristics than Malcolm does. This is Malcolm's first experience with prejudice from within his own race.

A secondary theme of violence takes root in this section and will continue throughout the book. The scenarios of the Ku Klux Klan terrorizing Malcolm's young mother and the stalking and murder of Malcolm's father at the trolley tracks are obvious violent sequences. The stress of the violence also surfaces within the Little household with the physical abuse inflicted on Malcolm's mother by his father.

In one instance in this section, Mr. Little swings a rabbit by its neck to kill it and then throws the dead animal at his wife's feet, ordering her to prepare it for dinner. Mrs. Little is horrified by this act because the rabbits that they raise are usually sold to white people for pets. This violent act drives Mrs. Little to a fury at her husband, and she runs after him with a knife but stops herself from perpetuating the violence even further.

Another important theme is white prejudice against black people. The obvious situations include the harassment by the Ku Klux Klan, Mr. Little's murder and the terror Malcolm experiences as an adult when he suspects his imminent assassination. Unfortunately, the most poignant instance of prejudice occurs when Mr. Ostrovski dissuades Malcolm from applying to law school because, according to Ostrovski, black people cannot become attorneys.

This is the pivotal point in Malcolm's life because he knows he has the aptitude to succeed as a lawyer but is denied the opportunity because of prejudice and ignorance. The entire scope and destiny of Malcolm's life would have been changed had this high school teacher provided a positive direction instead of falling back on preconceived notions and societal standards for the day.

Part 2

Part 2 Summary

This section opens with Malcolm being restrained and beaten by prison guards as the other inmates yell from the sidelines. The only exception is a thirty-year-old man named Luther, who tells the others that Malcolm makes trouble because he is not fit for a confined life like some other men who like to be locked up because it is a relatively easy life.

Luther befriends Malcolm and attempts to persuade Malcolm to overcome racial barriers with his head, not his fists. Luther wants Malcolm to embrace his heritage and accept his physical characteristics as beautiful, even his nappy hair, which Malcolm has spent years straightening. Luther's premise for black success is that white men will always have power over black men as long as black men attempt to become white.

Malcolm has never viewed his plight in this manner before and adopts Luther's philosophies of black power. Luther advises Malcolm to stop eating pork and stop smoking to purify his body. Luther also wants Malcolm to access the prison's library to attain education that will enable him to compete in the white world when released from prison.

During this time, Luther informs Malcolm about a messenger from Allah who has been sent to rescue black men from their dire fate at the hands of white men, who are all devils. Luther tells Malcolm that black men have been alienated from their true language and heritage because they have learned the white man's language and culture. According to Luther, the time is coming when the white man will pay for his sins and will suffer just like black men have suffered for many years.

Luther's hatred stems primarily from the lynching death of his brother in Georgia a few years ago, and Luther vows vengeance on all white men, who are devils. Malcolm is moved to action by Luther's influence and studies at night to improve his mind in order to wage a smart battle with the white devils when he is released from prison.

Luther accelerates Malcolm's education in the ways of Allah, and soon Malcolm receives a letter from Allah's Messenger telling him that the key to being a Muslim is submission. Before long, Luther is released from prison and vows to stay in contact with Malcolm. Malcolm continues to pray to Allah and maintain his regimen of healthy eating and no smoking. Malcolm even writes to Shorty, who is incarcerated at another prison, about the truth of Allah, but Shorty thinks that Malcolm is gullible for falling for such a sham.

When Malcolm is released from prison, he visits Luther's home and speaks with Luther's son, Sidney, and his wife, Lorraine, while he waits to see Luther. Lorraine has heard about Malcolm from Luther and confirms the fact that Malcolm will now be part of

The Movement. When Luther arrives home, he tells Malcolm about The Movement's newspaper, which is the main communications vehicle for spreading the word about the devil that is the white man.

One day when Sidney and Malcolm are distributing the paper on the streets, Malcolm stops at the apartment of his old friend West Indian Archie, who is now sick and feeble. Archie will soon be returning to his island homeland and is pleased to see Malcolm out of jail because Archie feels as if Malcolm is his own son.

The action transitions to a classroom, where a young woman named Betty is teaching a class on the Meaning of Marriage to young girls. Sidney, Luther and Malcolm listen outside the room until the end of the class, when Betty chastises them for distracting her students. Luther introduces Betty to Malcolm, and Betty teases Malcolm by telling him that her students want to know if Malcolm is married or not.

The scene abruptly switches to a Harlem street where white police officers attempt to break up a fight between two black men. Someone in the crowd phones Malcolm, who arrives at the scene of the fight and intervenes on behalf of a Muslim man who has been seriously injured. Malcolm proceeds to the jail where the Muslim man is locked up. Malcolm's demands to see the man reveal that the man is seriously injured, and Malcolm demands that the man be sent to the hospital.

The crowd of black people that has been gathering outside the police station follows Malcolm to the hospital where the man is treated. Malcolm addresses the crowd, assuring them that the injured man is being properly cared for. He urges them to return home. The incident gains the first media attention for Malcolm as a public leader.

As Malcolm walks home, he encounters a shabby woman swearing at the patrons in the bar she has just vacated. Malcolm is shocked when he realizes that the woman is Laura and learns that Laura's boyfriend is also her pimp, turning Laura toward a life of drugs and alcohol abuse. Malcolm shares the fact that he is a Muslim minister and urges Laura to investigate the religion for herself, but she declines saying that she is too far gone for any type of redemption. Malcolm provides his contact information and leaves Laura on the street.

Part 2 Analysis

Baldwin uses the literary device of foreshadowing in Malcolm's rejection of Christian beliefs when Baldwin writes, "I hate every one of you - every one of you - and your dirty white God sitting in heaven on his white behind - and that cunt, the Virgin Mary, and that punk Jesus - and all the little white children - if I could - if I could - I'd beat your brains out and tear out your hearts - reach up your asses and tear out your guts with my hand." This intensity directed toward Christianity is a precursor to Malcolm's imminent conversion to the Muslim faith.

Through Luther, Malcolm learns about the Honorable Messenger sent from Allah to release black men from the bondage that keeps them subservient to white men in all

aspects of life. This messenger is a man called Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the black Nation of Islam, or Black Muslims, during the mid-twentieth century in America. Later in the book, Malcolm will separate from Elijah Muhammad, primarily for Muhammad's reputation for adultery. Malcolm also reproaches Luther for his adulterous behavior, for which Luther claims no responsibility because the women were not forced, simply lured by the aura of power.

Baldwin continues to use flashbacks to help add dimension to the story. For example, when Luther shares the story about his brother's lynching, it not only provides information about Luther's past but also insight into Luther's hatred of white men.

The author also uses the literary device of symbolism in this section when Luther tries to get Malcolm to understand how to unlock his life with religion and not violence. "To learn submission to the will of Allah. We all must learn to bow." Malcolm says, "The only times I ever went on my knees was to pick a lock - something like that." Luther replies, "Well. This is the biggest lock you'll ever have to pick." "You said you were going to tell me how to get out of prison," says Malcolm. "Pick the lock," Luther answers.

The theme of the black man's search for identity continues in this section but now as opposed to being ashamed of being a Negro, Malcolm learns from Luther that black men should be proud of their race and ancestry. Luther says, "You don't even know who you are. You don't even know, the white devil has hidden it from you - we're a race of people of ancient civilizations, rich, rich, in gold and kings. You don't even know your true family name, you wouldn't recognize your true language if you heard it. You have been cut off by the devil, the devil white man, from all true knowledge of your own kind. You have been a victim of the evil of the devil white man ever since he murdered and raped and stole you from your native land in the seeds of your forefathers. He strangled us in the mind, man, in the mind - and made us love him, while he was butchering us, made us ashamed of ourselves and made us try to be like him - to be like him!" Luther is the pivotal character who helps Malcolm realize both his heritage and his future by providing Malcolm with a positive sense of himself.

The author also uses the literary device of irony with Laura's character. At the beginning of her romance with Malcolm, Laura is not free to continue a relationship with Malcolm because he is "too black" to be accepted by Laura's family. Now Laura is living with a black man who beats her and forces her to work as a prostitute, quite a leap from the life she would have led had she been allowed to stay with Malcolm.

Part 3

Part 3 Summary

Betty agrees to marry Malcolm and is anxious to become a good, subservient Muslim wife. Very soon after the wedding, Malcolm and Betty part at the airport, where Malcolm leaves to fly to a city to deliver another speech on behalf of The Movement. Malcolm apologizes to Betty that they must be separated, but Betty encourages her husband's work on behalf of Allah.

The screenplay then transitions to a rapid sequence of images and events covering the inequality and violence toward black people, such as police dogs used on children and black children smoking reefers in Harlem schools while white men play golf at luxurious courses. There are also scenes of Betty teaching classes on the Muslim religion and black people reading The Movement's newspaper.

As racial tensions heat up in the 1960's, Malcolm's visibility increases, and Luther and some of the other leaders in The Movement grow to resent Malcolm's high profile. One evening, Malcolm returns home after a long day and tells Betty that he must leave for Boston the next morning to deliver a speech at Harvard Law School. Betty shares with Malcolm their children's disappointment that Malcolm is not home very much, but she tells him that she consoles them by saying, "I tell them you are present when you are away."

Betty can sense that The Movement is not as supportive about Malcolm's efforts and tries to get Malcolm to understand his own vulnerability. Malcolm pushes away Betty's concerns, preferring to focus on his work. Betty encourages him to think a little less about black people in general and concentrate a little more on providing for his own family. Malcolm does not want to profit from his ministry, but Betty is worried about the family's future if anything should happen to Malcolm.

Malcolm tries to get Betty to understand that Luther and the Honorable Messenger will provide for her and the children if Malcolm cannot, but Betty visits Sidney the next day to ascertain the mood of The Movement. Betty questions Sidney about the rumors of jealousy she has been hearing about Malcolm's publicity.

Betty also broaches the idea that Malcolm may be killed in order to silence him forever, but Sidney denies knowing anything of that nature. Sidney was asked to not cover Malcolm in The Movement's newspaper for a while due to Malcolm's abundant coverage in mainstream media. Sidney tries to calm Betty's fears, and Betty invites Sidney to dinner the same evening.

Later that day, the news that President John Kennedy has been shot and killed in Dallas floods the media. A directive to Muslim ministers orders them to stay silent about the assassination. Malcolm deliberately defies the order by telling a crowd in New York that

the hate that has infused America has not been addressed until it killed a white man like Kennedy. Luther reprimands Malcolm for speaking out, and Malcolm defends his right to free speech. Luther punishes Malcolm by ordering him to stay silent for the next ninety days for his insubordination.

In the next scene, Malcolm and Sidney are riding in a car at night because Sidney wants to speak to Malcolm with no possibility of their conversation being tapped. Sidney reveals that he was ordered to plant a bomb in Malcolm's car, which would explode upon ignition. Malcolm is incredulous that The Movement would order his death, but Sidney explains the rationale from Luther's perspective. Luther was happy to mentor Malcolm in prison and shortly after, but when Malcolm's popularity rose higher than Luther's own, Luther had no one left to train. His jealousy of Malcolm has driven his vengeance.

Malcolm determines that he will leave The Movement, create his own branch of the Muslim faith and establish a new mosque in New York City called The Muslim Mosque, Inc. Malcolm then travels to Mecca to immerse himself in the Muslim religion at its geographical source. Malcolm has a surprising revelation when interacting with other Muslims at this holy place because many of those assembled are blue-eyed white people. Until now, Malcolm had associated being Muslim with being black, and he begins to understand that Muslim is a religion, not a race.

Malcolm shares his revelation that he has been guilty of broad strokes of condemnation of all white people, a position that he now regrets. "The true Islam has shown me that a blanket indictment of all white people is as wrong as when whites make blanket indictments against blacks." Soon after, Malcolm delivers a speech to the Nigerian Muslim Students Society, which bestows on Malcolm the honorary name of Omowale, meaning "the son who has come home."

Malcolm returns to America and faces much press coverage on his reversal of position, but he contends that the Muslims and Africans consider black Americans to be their lost brothers and are pleased that blacks are asserting their human rights in America.

The next scene shows disgruntled black people in a bar discussing Malcolm's press coverage and bemoaning the fact that Malcolm must be selling out because he is making money on the bleak circumstances of blacks in America. The bar patrons believe that Malcolm should not have left The Movement and is in danger out on his own. Sidney is sitting alone in the bar and tells the other patrons that Malcolm had to leave The Movement because he did not have the necessary discipline to follow their rules.

Soon after this, Malcolm visits Sidney, who is in prison for robbery. Sidney shares his disappointment that Malcolm is tolerant of white people and accuses Malcolm of changing his position for political gain. Malcolm defends his position by declaring that there are not as many white people in America who support racial equality, but perhaps there are not many people who like any type of change at all.

Malcolm later visits Luther at Luther's home and learns that Luther has disowned Sidney because of his alignment with Malcolm. Malcolm questions Luther about the move to kill Malcolm, but Luther cannot intervene with fate. That night, a Molotov cocktail is thrown into Malcolm's home, setting fire to the house. Malcolm's call to the fire department goes unheeded, and the family escapes with only the clothes on their backs. The following morning, Malcolm tells the press that The Movement is responsible for the fire at his home. Luther also holds a press conference stating that The Movement would never bomb property that they own.

Malcolm is followed by threatening-looking men after this and tells Betty that it is not only The Movement that would like to see him dead. Betty urges Malcolm to secure protection, and he agrees.

The action transitions to the opening scene, as Malcolm drives to the Audubon Hotel to deliver his speech. Betty and the children sit in the back of the ballroom waiting for Malcolm's entrance. Finally, a tense Malcolm enters the stage and soon notices a big commotion among the audience. Malcolm attempts to calm the furor in the audience and is suddenly struck by several gunshots. He falls to the floor. Betty rushes to Malcolm's side, screaming in terror.

The final scene depicts Malcolm's funeral and burial with Malcolm's voice ending the scene with the words, "And if I can die, having brought any light, having helped expose the racist cancer that is malignant in the body of America - all of the credit is due to Allah. Only the mistakes have been mine."

Part 3 Analysis

Baldwin uses the literary device of foreshadowing throughout the screenplay and again in this section when Betty asks her husband, "Malcolm, what's going to happen to us if anything happens to you?" Later in the section, Betty discusses Malcolm's vulnerability within The Movement and her fears that he may be killed.

After Betty leaves, "Sidney walks to the window, and stands there. We look, with him, into that sky; and at this moment, we hear a shot." Although Baldwin addresses the issue of President Kennedy's assassination, it is assumed at this point in the dialogue that the sound of the gunshot is intended for Malcolm.

The author also uses symbolism in this section when he describes Betty and the children waving goodbye as Malcolm boards a plane in New York bound for Mecca. "Betty takes her white headband from her head and waves it like a banner. Malcolm, starting up the steps. He sees Betty's banner, and his face changes. He waves and smiles. Close-up: the banner, flying. Malcolm is looking backward, slowly ascending. Then he is at the door, and the shadow of the interior falls over his face. He waves one last time, hands the stewardess his boarding pass, and disappears. Close-up: Betty, smiling, weeping. Betty waves the banner. Close-up: the banner, waving."

Betty's white headband is used like a white flag of surrender as she waves it. This gesture can be interpreted in two ways: as Betty's message to her husband to stop his activities because he is in mortal danger, or as Betty's inevitable submission to the world which will soon kill her husband.

There is also symbolism in the shadow that falls upon Malcolm's face as he enters the plane. The danger that follows him casts a pall upon his life from which he cannot escape, in spite of the fact that he is entering a jet which will carry him to the other side of the world.

Baldwin uses the device of irony when Sidney takes Malcolm on a drive in the country to tell him that he has been ordered to plant a bomb in Malcolm's car. Sidney wants to insure privacy of his conversation with Malcolm and chooses the vehicle as the setting. The author also wants the reader to understand Sidney's devotion to Malcolm by allowing himself to enter a car with Malcolm, putting his own life at risk should someone from The Movement take action on the bomb order.

Throughout the story, Baldwin mentions current people and places to root the action in a certain time period. In the beginning of the book and several places throughout, the author mentions Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican hero, who was a high profile leader in the black community in the early twentieth century. Garvey championed the "Back-to-Africa" movement encouraging people of African heritage to return to the continent to reclaim their ancestry and culture.

Baldwin also mentions Cassius Clay when a man seated next to Malcolm on the trip to Mecca says, "You are a kind of hero here for the young people - you and Cassius Clay." Cassius Clay is an iconic sports figure in the world of American boxing. Clay converted to the Black Muslim religion and changed his name to Cassius X, just as Malcolm changed his name from Malcolm Little to Malcolm X to symbolize the lost heritage of their slave ancestors. The "X" was adopted by both men, not to appear generic, but to reject the last names given to them and their families by some slave owner at some point in time. Eventually, Cassius X received the name Muhammad Ali from the leader of the Black Muslims just as Malcolm X received his Islamic name, El-Haji Malik El-Shabazz.

The theme of the black man's search for his identity can be seen in the sequence of names adopted by Malcolm as his life progresses. Malcolm is born Malcolm Little and retains the name until his teenage years in Detroit when he becomes known as Detroit Red because of the reddish cast to his skin and hair. For a short time during his incarceration for robbery, Malcolm is known as Satan to the other inmates because of his demonic behavior and innate anger. Then, in addition to his Islamic name, the Nigerian Muslim Students Society bestows on Malcolm the honorary name of Omowale, meaning "the son who has come home."

This brings to closure the sequences regarding Malcolm's name at the beginning of the screenplay, "...the image of a hand writing the name El-Haji Malik El Shabazz in the Book of the Holy Register of True Muslims. The last image in the sequence is of a black

hand writing the name Malcolm Little, May 19, 1925, into a family Bible. The action returns to present day and Malcolm's voice is heard to say, 'So many names...'" Malcolm is probably most remembered as Malcolm X, but it can certainly be said that he retained the personas reflected by all his names.

In the end, Malcolm still struggles for identity, having been betrayed by Luther, who Malcolm realizes has a lust for power, not a drive to free black people. Symbolically, this is the second time that Malcolm loses a father, Luther having assumed that role during Malcolm's incarceration. To make the betrayal even more hideous, Malcolm senses that it is Luther who has ordered Malcolm's death.

With no paternal guideposts in place, Malcolm relies on his instincts to establish his own mosque, but the roots of jealousy and hatred run too deep among both white people and those blacks who formerly declared love for him. Malcolm is too vulnerable to survive.

Characters

Archie

West Indian Archie is an older man who takes Malcolm under his wing and teaches him how to make a living running numbers, an early (and illegal) form of the contemporary lottery system. Archie thinks of Malcolm as his son. However, when Malcolm claims that he has a winning number, and There is one more scene with Archie later in the script. He is much older and is losing his memory. Although he remembers Malcolm, he cannot recall what happened to force Malcolm to leave New York City.

Honorable Messenger

Although this character never appears in the story, he is often referred to as the head of the Black Muslim Movement, the Nation of Islam. He sends letters to Malcolm while Malcolm is in prison. He dictates most of the circumstances of Malcolm's life once Malcolm is out of jail. It is suggested that the Honorable Messenger arranges that Malcolm be assassinated.

Laura

Laura is one of Malcolm's first loves. She is a young black woman, living in Boston, who in the beginning of the script represents innocence. Malcolm thinks she is too young and inexperienced for him. He leaves her for Sophia. Later, Malcolm runs into Laura at a bar in New York City. She is with a white man, who eventually leads her to drugs. Toward the end of the script, Laura is a drug junkie when Malcolm meets her again. He tries to convert her to Islam, but Laura says it is too late. Laura always tells Malcolm that he is smart enough to become whatever he wants to be.

The Leader

See Honorable Messenger

Earl Little

Earl is Malcolm X's father. He is a preacher living in the rural South. He preaches the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, a nationalist who believed that all African Americans should move back to Africa and create a new nation. The Ku Klux Klan continually harassed Earl. He eventually moves his family to the North. However, due to his outspokenness, his home is burned to the ground, and he is allegedly beaten and killed.

Louise Little

Louise is Malcolm's mother. She is a light-skinned woman who wishes she had darker skin because she hates what the white people around her are like. She is pregnant with Malcolm when she insists that her husband move the family to the North. She is tired of the children living in fear of the Ku Klux Klan. Upon her husband's death, the insurance company refuses to pay off the life insurance premium. Because of an inability to provide for her children, they are taken away from her. Louise has a mental breakdown and ends up in an asylum.

Malcolm Little

See Malcolm X

Luther

Luther is another father figure to Malcolm. They first meet in prison. Luther guides Malcolm, helping him to temper his anger, then encouraging him to become educated. Luther converts Malcolm to Islam. Luther is a high official in the Black Muslim Movement. He encourages, and is supportive of, Malcolm until Malcolm becomes too popular. Then Luther becomes jealous of him. It is suggested that Luther may have been the one who, under the dictates of the Honorable Messenger, plotted Malcolm's death. Luther is the father of Sidney, and it is through Sidney that Malcolm discovers Luther's disloyalty to him. Luther's hypocrisy is exposed in the end. He is unfaithful to his wife and is a seeker of power rather than a seeker of truth that he had initially claimed.

Malcolm X

Malcolm X is the main character of this screenplay, a character who is based, sometimes loosely, on a real person. Malcolm was born in the rural South, and as an adult he lives in New York and Boston. He is a country boy who learns the ways of the city through the examples of pimps and number runners. When he graduates to petty theft and then burglary, he is caught and sent to jail. In jail, he meets Luther, who converts him to Islam.

Both an intelligent and passionate man, Malcolm, through his presence and ability to instill enthusiasm of new ideas into those around him, quickly gains power. He embarks on a national tour, converting thousands of disenfranchised African Americans to Islam.

As his personal appeal and power increase, so does the jealousy of the leaders of the Black Muslim Movement. Malcolm becomes so impassioned about his beliefs that he often speaks his thoughts rather than foster the beliefs of the Black Muslims, as dictated by the ruling clerics. In an attempt to control him, stories about him are removed from

the Black Muslim newspaper. Later, the leaders force him into silence. Finally, he is told that people in the Movement have placed threats on his life. When he learns of this, he breaks away from the main branch of the Nation of Islam and starts his own mosque. In the end, he is assassinated by alleged members of the Black Muslims as he is giving a speech, with his wife and children looking on.

Omowale

See Malcolm X

Mr. Ostrovski

Mr. Ostrovski is Malcolm's school counselor. When Malcolm goes to Mr. Ostrovski to ask how he might enter college to study law, Mr. Ostrovski tells Malcolm that because he is black, he should not expect to be a lawyer. This causes Malcolm to lose all interest in attending college and shortly after, he leaves with Shorty to move to Boston.

Betty Shabazz

Betty becomes Malcolm's wife. She is teaching at the mosque when he meets her. Luther blesses their marriage. Betty is extremely supportive of Malcolm. She worries about his being away from home so much. Later, she becomes suspicious of Luther's jealousy of Malcolm, and she warns her husband. When Malcolm travels to Mecca and comes home a changed man, she understands him better than any one else can. She tells him that it is hard for the people to accept his changes because they have not witnessed the things that he has experienced. Malcolm changes his mind, at the last minute, and invites her to hear the speech he planned to deliver at the Audubon Ballroom the day that he is assassinated.

El Hajj Malik El Shabazz

See Malcolm X

Shorty

Shorty is a friend of Malcolm's. Malcolm meets him while he is still in high school. Shorty is a little older than Malcolm, and when he meets him, Shorty is a pimp. Malcolm becomes disillusioned with New York, and Shorty takes him to Boston. Shorty teaches him how to be a good "darky," to get bigger tips from white people. Shorty also takes Malcolm to the barbershop to have his hair chemically straightened. Later, Shorty works with Malcolm in a series of big-time burglaries. He ends up in jail at the same time that Malcolm is sentenced.

Sidney

Sidney is the son of Luther. He befriends Malcolm, who helps him expand the circulation of the Black Muslim newspaper. When Malcolm becomes too popular, Luther orders Sidney to stop publishing stories about Malcolm in the newspaper. Luther is concerned that Malcolm is getting too much coverage already. Sidney respects his father's wishes, although he does not agree with them. Eventually, Sidney is told to place a bomb in Malcolm's car. Sidney cannot go this far. He defies whomever it was who gave this order. (It is not clear if it was Luther.) When Malcolm decides to start his own branch of the Black Muslim religion, Sidney leaves his father and goes with him. After Malcolm travels to Mecca, Sidney believes that Malcolm has sold out to white society when Malcolm declares that black people should not hate white people. Sidney then leaves Malcolm's new mosque and ends up in jail when he turns to burglary. Malcolm visits him in prison, then goes to Luther in support of Sidney.

Sophia

Sophia is a white woman who loves Malcolm. She is sophisticated and well off financially. She does not love Malcolm enough to marry him, but she does become involved in his ring of thieves, casing the homes of wealthy people, telling Malcolm where their money is kept and how to get inside. Sophia ends up being sentenced to jail at the same time that Malcolm is.

Mrs. Swerlin

Mrs. Swerlin is Malcolm's foster parent. She runs a home for orphaned children and for children who are taken from their parents. She sees promise in Malcolm and encourages his studies. However, one of the final conversations that Malcolm overhears betrays Mrs. Swerlin's prejudices.

West Indian Archie

See Archie

Themes

Alienation

Baldwin's screenplay *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario* begins with the theme of alienation. Earl Little, Malcolm X's father, is a preacher who is alienated from white society. Earl fully believes in the philosophy of Marcus Garvey: the only way that black people can successfully find their freedom is to come together, pool their resources, and move back to Africa to begin a new nation. After Earl's death, Malcolm's mother, Louise, becomes alienated from life and suffers a mental breakdown upon the loss of her children.

Malcolm graduates from high school. Despite the fact that he has done well in school, he is alienated from furthering his education because of the comments of his counselor. The counselor tells Malcolm that he has expectations that far exceed the limits of his race. Later, in prison, Luther preaches a philosophy held by the Black Muslim Movement that praises the benefits of African Americans alienating themselves from white people. Then, in the course of Malcolm's rise in the Movement, Luther and the other leaders alienate themselves from Malcolm, believing that he has gained too much power.

Malcolm, because he is so outspoken about his belief that black people should arm themselves to protect their homes and families from white attacks, alienates himself from the white media and the white portion of American society. Finally, when Malcolm returns from Mecca where he witnesses the benefits of all races working together, he alienates himself from many of his followers because they think his radical transition is a sign that he has sold out to white society.

Crime

There are many different types of crimes that are perpetrated during the course of this screenplay. Some are petty; some are lethal. Some go unsolved; others are ignored. Only a few are brought to justice. First there are the crimes of the Ku Klux Klan in harassing the Little family by breaking the windows in their house, striking fear in Louise Little and her children, and demanding that Earl Little stop preaching about uniting the black people in his community. When the Littles move to the North, their house burns while fireman look on, making no effort to smother the flames. Earl is later found dead, having been run over by a trolley car. His death is deemed a suicide even though the back of his head had been bashed in with a blunt instrument. The insurance company then refuses to pay the premium that Earl had struggled to keep up to date, leaving Louise Little with no financial means of keeping her children. Because she cannot feed her children, they are taken away from her. Some of these are not crimes against a specific law but crimes against humanity and decent morality.

Malcolm tires of the menial jobs he must take that force him to swallow his pride and kowtow to whites who look down upon him. In an effort to improve his financial situation and remove himself from the dealings of white people, Malcolm learns to run numbers, an illegal lottery system that once thrived in many large cities, especially among the inner-city poor. He also learns to deal drugs and commit petty thievery. He is never caught as long as he keeps his crimes on a small scale. However, once he moves to Boston and organizes a group that steals money and valuables from the wealthy people in Boston's upper society, Malcolm is caught and sent to prison.

The screenplay also covers the assassination of John F. Kennedy, president of the United States. Crime also occurs in the scene with Sidney, during which he admits to knowing how to tie a bomb to Malcolm's car and blowing it up, implying he has done this before. Finally, Malcolm is shot to death at the close of the play.

Prejudice

Prejudice comes in many forms in this screenplay. Rampant prejudice exists in the minds of the Ku Klux Klan. Louise Little, a light-skinned woman, loses her job after her husband is murdered; her employer discovers through the news coverage that Louise is not white. More subtle prejudice follows Malcolm through high school when his counselor dashes Malcolm's hopes of ever becoming a lawyer based on Malcolm's race. Malcolm also overhears prejudiced statements coming from his foster mother, who refers to black people as "niggers," a prejudice that she had previously hidden from him.

When Malcolm moves to Boston, Shorty teaches him how to be a good "darky." This means that if Malcolm learns to act like white people want African Americans to act, he'll earn bigger tips. There is reverse prejudice when Malcolm converts to Islam. He is taught to hate white people. When he writes the Honorable Messenger, Malcolm states: "I see how the devil is the white man." He believes that by harboring this hate and understanding it, he will cure all the evils in his life. When he gets out of prison, he uses his newly discovered prejudice to preach a hatred of all white society. However, when he goes to Mecca, he thinks he was wrong. He sees a society in which racial prejudice appears to be nonexistent. His followers do not easily understand his new conversion in thought. It was much easier for them to comprehend prejudice and hate, concepts they'd grown used to.

Search for Identity

To be black in Malcolm's time meant to be impoverished, to be different, and to be excluded. Therefore, many black people believed that the whiter they looked, dressed, or acted, the more successful they would be. Baldwin brings this theme into the play in different ways. First there is the discussion between Laura and Malcolm. Malcolm implies that Laura's family tries very hard to be white. Malcolm ridicules the way Laura's people dress and take on airs, relating to white people in every manner available to them.

There is another dialogue between Malcolm and Shorty in which Shorty claims that women are crazy for Malcolm because he is light skinned. There was a time when prejudice within the African-American community existed: the lighter a person's skin was, the higher the value they received in black society. This led to darker skinned people trying to bleach their skin. It also became a common practice of both men and women to chemically straighten their hair to make it look more like white people.

Luther makes Malcolm look at himself, makes Malcolm see how he is trying to be white. Luther instills in Malcolm a pride of being who he is, a black man. This was also one of the overall themes in the Black Muslim Movement that made it so popular—giving African Americans a reason to be proud to be black.

Style

Flashback

Through the continual use of flashback, Baldwin fills in the history of Malcolm X's life as Malcolm drives his car from a parking lot in New York City to the Audubon Ballroom on the day of his assassination. In the first few lines of the opening scene of *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario*, Baldwin uses the side-view mirror of Malcolm X's car to flashback to historical scenes in Malcolm's life. As the screen fills with fire, Baldwin takes the audience to the threatening image of hooded men on horseback, destroying a home and scaring a pregnant woman, who turns out to be Malcolm's mother.

As Malcolm drives along the city streets, this flashback process continues as certain images, such as the "cupola, at the topmost height of a New York building," stir memories in Malcolm's mind. Without warning, the audience is taken to Africa, Omaha, Milwaukee, Boston, and New York. Some of these flashbacks are very brief—a few descriptive lines, a couple exchanges of dialogue. Some of the flash-backs are repeated to fill in more details. Some of them are so extended they take up whole scenes. The audience forgets they are flashbacks until Baldwin quickly brings them back to the present. The flashbacks do not appear in any specific chronological order.

In essence, the whole screenplay covers only one day (as suggested by the title). The flashback concept is an adaptation of the theory that right before people die, their lives flash before them. Baldwin's use of flashback, as Malcolm drives toward his death, elongates that process, slowing down Malcolm's drive across town to give the audience a comprehensive look at the circumstances that lead to Malcolm's assassination.

Foreshadowing

Baldwin often intersperses short scenes of Malcolm X's father's life into the story of Malcolm's evolution as a national figure. By doing this, he foreshadows incidents and circumstances that will shortly mark Malcolm's life. For instance, Earl Little, Malcolm's father, was a preacher who tried to organize African-American people. Earl's message was considered very controversial, especially by white people. Earl also believed that African Americans would find answers to their problems in Africa. Because of his beliefs, Earl's house was set afire. While watching the house burn, Earl counts his children to make sure they are all safe. Although the fire truck appears, no one attempts to stop the fire. In the end, Earl is killed.

Each one of these events is played out in Malcolm's life. Malcolm also becomes a preacher, reaches out to his African roots, watches his house burn while counting his children, and is, in the end, murdered.

Stream of Consciousness

Stream of consciousness is a technique that is used by novelists in an attempt to mimic the flow of impressions, thoughts, and feelings as they pass through a character's mind. Baldwin uses this style cinematically by presenting images as Malcolm X might be viewing them in the present moment, then quickly shifting to a new set of impressions. For instance, in the beginning of *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario*, while Malcolm is driving down a New York City street, he "watches a very attractive blond girl striding along the avenue." From this real image in the present time, Baldwin then presents a quick flashback scene, as if Malcolm were remembering it. From watching the blond girl, Malcolm is reminded of Sophia, a blond woman he used to know. In the flashback scene, Malcolm is making love to her.

Immediately following the brief love-making scene, Baldwin rapidly imposes another image, as if Malcolm's mind were following a string of thought (or stream of consciousness) that takes him from the memory of making love to Sophia to a fight scene in prison. Since Sophia was involved in the crime that eventually led to Malcolm's imprisonment, Baldwin surmises that Malcolm's mind might have naturally made that leap, flowing from one memory to another interconnected one. As the play progresses, so do Malcolm's thoughts, leaping from one scene to another, sometimes only connected by the thinnest of filaments. As the audience is drawn more deeply into the story, the stream of consciousness becomes more complex as Baldwin slowly works his way deeper into Malcolm's life and then slowly back to the present moment of the play.

Historical Context

Universal Negro Improvement Association

In 1918, in Liberty Hall in the Harlem district of New York City, Marcus Garvey created the U.S. headquarters of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Garvey, born in Jamaica and a world traveler before situating himself and his organization in the States, believed that as long as black people remained in a minority they would never gain freedom. He preached the merits of black people coming together to create their own nation. To promote his beliefs, he established the *Negro World,* a newspaper that attracted the attention and eventual membership of over eight million people at the height of his nationalist movement.

Garvey rejected all concepts of integration and in its place, he promoted self-sufficiency and racial pride among all black people of the world. Toward this end, he raised money and created a shipping line entirely owned and run by black people. His vision was to promote international trade among all black nations. He also encouraged African Americans to move to Liberia, an African country originally established (in 1821) to support freed slaves. Garvey is also credited with creating the red, black, and green flag that symbolized black power.

In 1925, Garvey's shipping line suffered economic losses and Garvey was convicted of mail fraud. He was sentenced to jail but released two years later and deported to Jamaica. Although he tried to continue his movement, his separation from the masses of his followers in the United States diminished his influence. In retrospect, he has been called one of the most influential black leaders of the 1920s. Garvey was named the first national hero of Jamaica and is considered the impetus for both the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica as well as the development of the Nation of Islam (the Black Muslims) in the States.

Black Muslim Movement

In 1930, a man by the name of Wali Farad had a loose organization of followers of the Islamic faith. When Farad mysteriously disappeared in 1934, Elijah Mohammad took over the leadership of the group, which became known as the Black Muslims. Elijah moved the headquarters from Detroit to Chicago and spread his concepts of nationalism to communities of poor black people and those in prison. Elijah believed that African Americans would never attain freedom in the United States unless they created an autonomous state of their own.

Elijah's group of followers numbered only about eight thousand until the 1950s and 1960s when Malcolm X's charismatic and inspiring speeches began to attract a wider audience of devotees. However, tension grew between Malcolm and Elijah, forcing Malcolm to break away and create his own branch of Islam. Malcolm's assassination

caused great dissention in the Movement, and upon Elijah's death in 1975, his (Elijah) son Wallace D. Mohammad, in an attempt to deradicalize the organization, created the American Muslim Mission, which was open to anyone regardless of race.

The more militant and nationalistic faction of the Black Muslims refused to follow the softer tone of Wallace's leadership and in 1977, Louis Farrakhan broke away from the newly formed American Muslim Mission to create his own organization. Farrakhan's group favors the old philosophy of Elijah Mohammad, that of racial segregation.

Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement in the United States had several leaders but none as popular as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. Whereas both men fought against racial prejudice and did so from a religious philosophy, the two leaders progressed down different roads, which came surprisingly close to one another in the end.

Malcolm X grew up in poverty and in the midst of crime. He found religion, as well as a self-education, while serving a prison sentence. His religious beliefs proclaimed a strict segregationist policy as he preached a hatred of all white people. Martin Luther King, Jr., on the other hand, grew up in a middle-class family and received a full institutional education through a doctorate's degree. King preached non-violence and believed in a fully integrated society.

Although Malcolm and King were contemporaries, the only time that they met was during the debates in Congress over the Civil Rights Bill in 1964. King and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) considered Malcolm too radical for the good of the Civil Rights Movement. Malcolm X, meantime, believed that King was too heavily influenced by the white people who supplied financial resources to the NAACP. However, toward the ends of their lives, Malcolm, upon his visit to Mecca, began to understand the merits of integration. King, tired of the slow progress of the leaders of the black southern churches, was considered too radical by his fellow ministers. Malcolm and King had a planned second meeting, scheduled two days after Malcolm's assassination.

Critical Overview

Baldwin's *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario* was published as a screenplay in text form but was never produced as a movie. In a collaborated form, co-written by Arnold Perl, a similar screenplay was produced as a documentary in 1972. Also, in 1995, Spike Lee very loosely based his famous adaptation, *Malcolm X,* on Baldwin's screenplay. However, since the play was only published as text, it has received very little critical attention.

Patsy Brewington Perry's article "One Day, When I was Lost, Baldwin's Unfulfilled Obligation" is an exception. The title of her essay foreshadows her attitudes about Baldwin's dramatic adaptation of Alex Haley's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X,* as well as Baldwin's own obligation to write truthfully and fairly about his friend Malcolm. Perry concludes that Baldwin fell short of the duty and trust that Baldwin claimed. "Does Baldwin fulfill his obligation, or does 'lost' of the title refer more aptly to Baldwin's purpose than to his subject, Malcolm?" She believes that Baldwin, who believed that he would undertake the project as a writer and not an interpreter of Malcolm's life, did just the opposite.

Perry states, "Baldwin undermines Malcolm's complex nature" by eliminating important details of his life, adding characters that did not really exist, and combining other characters into one simple figure. One of Baldwin's more damaging omissions, according to Perry, is Malcolm's "interracial, international, and political perspectives" that would eventually lead to "Malcolm's crowning achievement—his work to internationalize the struggle for human rights." Perry goes on to write that Baldwin's "single-minded efforts toward developing the theme of violence" completely obliterates "the positive spirit of *The Autobiography*" as well as Malcolm's reversal of philosophy at the end of his life toward ending violence.

Fred L. Standley, in his "Introduction" to his collection, *Critical Essays on James Baldwin,* writes that Baldwin's screenplay "was not particularly well-received; in fact one respondent labeled it 'no substitute for the original.'" Most critics agree that Baldwin's strength was not in writing dramatic pieces either for the stage or the screen. His most potent voice was heard first in his essays and second in his fiction. Tom F. Driver, in talking about Baldwin's role as a dramatist in general, writes in his essay "The Review That Was Too True to be Published," that the characters in Baldwin's plays are often portrayed as stereotypes, a criticism that many reviewers comment on. However, Driver does not see this as a fault but rather he believes that Baldwin does this on purpose. He compares Baldwin to the great German dramatist, Bertolt Brecht.

> Though Baldwin is no Brecht, the temper of his play is Brechtian. . . in that it uses what people will think are stereotypes for the deliberate purpose of challenging received ideas. It asks us to reconsider whether the 'stereotypes' may not be nearer the truth than the theory that explains them away.

In other words, Driver believes that Baldwin's plays, on the whole, tend to challenge the status quo.

Although specific reviews of Baldwin's *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario* are hard to find, his writing has been praised for its clarity, articulation, passion, and prophetic understanding of human nature and the race situation in the United States. He has been deemed the most significant and influential writer of the turbulent 1960s. His voice was often tempered with an undertone of love that would inspire the more militant movement of African-American writers who followed him; the writers involved in what would be later referred to as the Black Arts Movement.

Criticism

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

Critical Essay #1

Hart has written literary essays, books on the study of language, and a soon-to-be-published biography of Richard Wright. In this essay, Hart examines Baldwin's portrayal of Malcolm X's search for a father figure in the screenplay.

Despite the fact that James Baldwin stated that he felt it was his duty to write the screenplay *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario* as a writer and not an interpreter of Malcolm X's life, when the screenplay is compared to Alex Haley's *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (from which it was adapted), it is easy to point out incidents of Baldwin's use of poetic license. For this reason, this essay will examine Baldwin's screenplay not as a biography of Malcolm X but as a work of dramatic fiction, a work of Baldwin's creative intelligence.

Shortly after the opening moments of his screenplay, Baldwin develops a flashback to a scene of Malcolm X's father. This same scene, or a slight variation, is woven throughout the play, emphasizing the influence of Earl Little, Malcolm's father, on his son. The use of flashback is a creative device that cinematically demonstrates that Earl is forever present in Malcolm's life in spite of the fact that he died when Malcolm was quite young. The flashback also acts as a window into Malcolm's mind, making it appear as if the audience could see into Malcolm's thoughts.

By continually referring back to Earl, Baldwin also creates an obvious theme—an almost mythological search for a father figure. Since the screenplay is written more like a work of fiction than as a documentary, it is not known whether this quest for the father is a reflection of Baldwin's own deep psychological need or is a passion that Baldwin perceived in the real life of Malcolm. It is not crucial to know the reason why Baldwin established this theme but rather to use the theme in order to grasp a more complex meaning of the play.

In Baldwin's script, two developments occur. First, he has events in Malcolm's life that appear to mimic, or mirror, his father's life; and second, he has Malcolm experience significant encounters with adult men who want to take Malcolm under their wing as a father figure might do. In reference to the first development, Baldwin's supposition is that a boy who never knew his father might foster a sense of void as he is growing up. Subconsciously, that young child, in an attempt to define who his father was, might take upon himself to live out parts of the father's life as he remembers it, or as his mother might have related it to him in the form of stories. To this end, Baldwin inserts numerous flashbacks of Earl being harassed by the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan is angry with him because he preaches the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, the leader of the so-called Back to Africa Movement. This aspect of Earl's life mirrors Malcolm's life as a preacher of the Nation of Islam, which also causes Malcolm to be harassed because he also believes in creating a separate nation for African Americans. Whereas Earl is harassed by the KKK, Malcolm is harassed by the white press and eventually by the leaders of the Black Muslims.

Another incident that the father and son share is the fire that destroys their homes, and the firefighters who, in the father's case, stand by and watch the house burn down; and in the son's situation, never show up. The third, more dramatic similarity is the fact that both men are murdered for their beliefs.

The parallels between the two men's lives are interesting, but it is the creation of the father figures in Baldwin's script that is more fascinating, because by following the development of Malcolm's supposed search for a father, as Baldwin dramatizes it, the reader can surmise that Malcolm might have fully realized the answers he was seeking.

The first substitute father that Malcolm finds, or more literally, who finds Malcolm, is Archie. Baldwin even spells out the relationship by having Archie refer to Malcolm, upon first seeing him, as being about the same age that Archie's son would be. Archie feels sorry for Malcolm, who is obviously dressed as a man newly arrived to the city from the country would be. Archie immediately (and somewhat unnaturally, given the short span of time between their initial meeting and Archie's summation) senses Malcolm's potential and takes him into his care. He teaches Malcolm how to make a living in the city without having to humble himself to white people. Under Archie's directions, Malcolm becomes more street-wise and more independent. He becomes so good, as a matter of fact, that he eventually challenges Archie, something that a son might do in order to progress from the role of a child to that of an adult.

The challenge, although somewhat convoluted, reflects the psychological relationship between a father and a son. Malcolm beats Archie at his own game, that of numbers running. Archie, as the father figure, can't believe that his so-called son could have done that without cheating. This incident marks a turning point in their relationship; and the son must leave home. Much later, Malcolm returns home to see Archie, who shows not only signs of physical old age but also of mental deterioration. This vindicates Malcolm, demonstrating that he did not cheat Archie, that he was a good son. Instead, it was Archie's loss of memory that led to Archie's downfall. Malcolm visits Archie as a son might visit a father in a nursing home, caring enough to take the time to see the old man, but not so devoted as to offer much assistance.

At the turning point of Archie and Malcolm's relationship, although he has outgrown Archie and must leave home, Malcolm is not yet fully mature. Almost as soon as he leaves Archie's side, Malcolm gets into trouble with the law and is sent to prison. He still has lessons to learn. In prison, however, another older man is attracted to Malcolm. This time it is Luther who takes Malcolm to heart. Luther, like Archie, immediately sees Malcolm's potential. He senses that underneath Malcolm's immature anger is a man crying out for direction. Luther's direction is to get Malcolm to embrace his identity as a black man, to encourage him to read, and to guide him toward spirituality. Luther also teaches Malcolm to focus and intensify his dislike of white people. It is through the discipline that Luther teaches Malcolm that Malcolm finds his way out of prison. It is also through Luther's direction that Malcolm leaves prison as a better-educated man. When Malcolm is released, he goes directly to Luther's home.

Malcolm learns about Islam under Luther's tutelage, much as he learned about petty crime under Archie's instructions. Once again, he advances so quickly and so successfully that he challenges his new father figure, Luther. Like Archie before him, Luther is uneasy with Malcolm's achievements and contrives a showdown with him. Like Archie's confrontation, Luther's challenge threatens Malcolm's life.

Malcolm must again conclude that it is time to leave the home of the father. He cannot live under Luther's house rules. So he strikes out on his own. First, he establishes his own mosque, separate from his so-called father's. This is much like a son going out into the world and finding his own job, his own identity. Instead of having to bow to the dictates of his father, he can now create his own rules. Malcolm uncovers the weaknesses and hypocrisies of Luther, much as a son, when he grows up, sometimes sees the frailties of his father. However, despite the fact that Malcolm leaves Luther, he continues to be influenced by him. He continues to preach the same philosophy that he has learned under Luther's guidance. Although Malcolm is growing up, he is not yet fully mature.

Malcolm experiences a new conversion. During his pilgrimage to Mecca, he witnesses the world, especially the Middle Eastern world of Islam. He sees people through much different lenses than the ones that Luther had given him. When Malcolm travels to Africa and the Middle East, he hears Muslims preach a love of mankind regardless of race. At this point, he senses that the hate that the Black Muslims inspire is no more progressive than the hate that white Americans practice through their racial bigotry. With this new realization, Malcolm reflects on the influence of all the fathers who have raised him. He questions Earl's allegiance to Marcus Garvey's philosophy of Nationalism. He rids himself of Archie's con games and petty criminal attitude. More significantly, he examines the underlying premise of the Nation of Islam, the viewpoint that Luther had taught him.

By the time Malcolm returns to the United States, he has begun to create a belief system of his own. He has also all but freed himself from all his fathers' influences and is starting to realize a new identity, one that he has put together on his own. Now he can go forward unheeded. As Baldwin has him say, in an attempt to explain to his wife the dramatic changes in his outlook, "I'm trying to turn a corner."

Having attained new insights into himself and the beliefs that drive him, Malcolm faces Luther one more time, much as he had faced Archie upon being released from jail. During their confrontation, Luther, in essence, tells Malcolm that he is a dreamer. Luther says that Malcolm has lost his way because he wants to change the world, wants to change people. Luther, on the other hand, believes that people are more like him: they don't want to be changed. Malcolm listens to Luther but remains strong in his newfound beliefs. He knows that Luther is wrong. If Malcolm can change, he knows that anyone can change. "I don't believe you," he says to Luther. "I know better. Like I know I'm better than you—I know people are better than that." This cuts the remaining strings between Malcolm and Luther and marks the full maturation of the son.

In the last segments of the play, Baldwin shows a new development in Malcolm's psychology. Baldwin has Malcolm appear with his children. First, there is the scene in which Malcolm's house is fire bombed. After running out of the house, Malcolm has his wife count the children. This scene is a reflection of a previous one, which showed the fire that Malcolm experienced as a child. In the prior incident, Malcolm's father also asked Malcolm's mother to count the children, as they watched their house burn down. Then, in the final scenes of the script, Baldwin has Malcolm call his wife and ask her to come with their children to hear him make his speech at the Audubon Ballroom, the day of his assassination. With these two scenes, Malcolm has become the father. Baldwin brings his script to a close by ending Malcolm's search. Malcolm is no longer a boy. He has fully taken on the paternal role. The father of Malcolm's quest now resides within him.

Source: Joyce Hart, Critical Essay on *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario,* in *Drama for Students,* The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

Wallace's stories, poems, and essays appear in publications around the country. In this essay, Wallace considers Baldwin's use of names and naming to chart the way in which Malcolm X's identity, both public and private, shifted over the course of his life.

Satan. Homeboy. Red. El Hajj Malik El Shabazz. Malcolm Little. Malcolm X.

Over the course of his short, dramatic life, the man most commonly known as Malcolm X was known by many names and went through as many changes. He was a class president and a drug dealer, a thief and a prisoner, a minister, an agitator, a peacemaker—and with each new identity, he seemed to take a new name. In *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario*, James Baldwin's screen adaptation of Alex Haley's landmark *Autobiography of Malcolm X,* Baldwin plays with these names and the larger question of naming, to understand and chart the course of Malcolm X's transformations, both in the public eye, and in his very personal life.

In the opening pages of *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario*, Malcolm begins the reverie that frames the retelling of his life with the line "So many names." In the scene that immediately follows, the reader is confronted with one of the central naming issues of the screenplay: the fact that, for much of the action, the character Baldwin refers to as Malcolm is called something else by the other members of the cast. In this case, that name is "Red"—a nickname given to Malcolm by his young black friends, called out to him over the dance floor of a black dance hall in which Malcolm escapes the all-white school he attends by day. In the next scene, Malcolm names himself for his white girlfriend, asking, "What you going to tell your white boy about your black boy? Your fine black stud? Your nigger?" But in her world, she tells him, he'll remain nameless, saying "I am not going to speak about you at all." Baldwin introduces one final name for Malcolm before he ends the montage: Satan, given to Malcolm by his guards and fellow inmates in prison, in reference to his violent tendencies. In closing, Malcolm's voice-over repeats again, "So many names."

In this montage, and throughout the play, others will assign Malcolm different names, and he himself will announce various changes. But Malcolm's names are not the only ones Baldwin engages. Baldwin is concerned with questions of naming, and identity, on a larger scale. He uses Malcolm's search for a true name to describe and understand two races, and a nation, in search of identity.

Baldwin's concern with issues of identity is first hinted at in the very next scene, a memory from Malcolm's childhood. Louise, Malcolm's mother, stands on the front porch, barring her door to a pack of KKK riders. Baldwin describes her as "nearly as white as they are," adding that this "lends her a very particular bitterness and a contemptuous authority." Louise, whom the riders refer to as a "half-white [b——]," throws into relief the issue of what makes a person "black" or "white." In appearance, she is very much like the men she is defending her children against, a fact that she doesn't let them forget, telling them that "I might be your daughter, for all you know . . . or your sister . . ."

In reality, she is "blacker" than the members of her race who might prize her light skin, saying later that she hates even the part of herself that is white, "every drop of that white rapist's blood that's in my veins!" She also drops one of Baldwin's first statements on the theme of true identity, when she calls one of the riders by name, saying "You can veil your face, but you can't hide your voice, Mr. Joel. I know every one of you." Change as much of the exteriors as you like, Louise claims. What is fundamental about a person, good or bad, remains the same—and is tied up in a person's true name.

Baldwin quickly expands on Louise's statement that, regardless of name, the fundamentals of identity don't change. In the following scenes, Baldwin explores the way naming both reveals and obscures the reality, not just of an individual's identity, but of the true nature of the entire world. When Malcolm's father, Earl, meets his death on the railroad tracks, after being badly beaten by the same whites who harassed his wife earlier, the white-owned insurance company names the death a "suicide." Again, Louise renames reality for what it is, asking, "How a man going to beat in the back of his own skull?"

His father's death and mother's institutionalization leave Malcolm in the hands of the state, where he is, for the first time, directly confronted with the dissonance between the harsh realities of his life and the way in which the authorities play with names to obscure the truth. "You lucky," a white official tells Malcolm on the drive to the home that will replace his own. "This ain't the reform school. This is just a nice private home." In the same conversation, another official attempts to rename Malcolm's mother's sickness, telling Malcolm that Louise is "just tired," and that "she'll be all right." Interestingly, Malcolm's stony silence elicits the only grain of truth from either official. Uncomfortable with the long pause, the second official finally admits, "Okay. It's rough."

On arriving at the home of his well-meaning foster mother, Malcolm is confronted with another case in which the named truth conflicts sharply with reality. "This is Malcolm," Mrs. Swerlin says, introducing him. "He's just like all the rest of us." For Malcolm, whose father died because of the difference in skin color between Malcolm and his foster "brothers," that lie would be impossible to forget. And it would be impossible for the white world to truly forget it, either. Despite the fact that Malcolm excels at his school, even becoming class president, when he confides in a favorite teacher that he'd like to be a lawyer, the teacher informs him that he'll never achieve that ambition, and that he should look for work he can do with his hands.

Disillusioned, Malcolm turns to the company of his black friend, Shorty, who teaches Malcolm to use the names the white world has given to them against it. For the time being, Malcolm accepts Shorty's assertion that his teeth, revealed in an insincere, subservient grin, are worth "more than a college education," and sets about acting the profitable caricature of a "happy darky." Shorty, who has always been insistent on Malcolm's identity as a black man, calls Malcolm "homeboy," and Malcolm gives himself another, new name, the first in a what will become a long string: "Detroit Red." But he almost always stays a step removed from the name he's given himself, telling customers and friends that "People call me Red," rather than "I'm Red," or "My name's Red."

This change of name allows Malcolm to play with other details of his identity, like his age. "Honey," a woman at the dance hall tells Malcolm, "I know you ain't twenty-two, like you claim. But you sure is big for your age." Malcolm's namings of himself, interestingly, are not the complete fabrications of the white world, but somehow reflect a larger truth. He may not be twenty-two, but the 'lie' does, in some ways, more accurately reflect his true identity than his actual age. Even as a teenager, Malcolm is both more physically mature, and has more life experience than other boys his age.

But when Malcolm starts dating Laura, his first love, he begins again to try to name things for what they are, telling her "I'm not nice at all.... Maybe everything I ever told you was a lie." But, like his mother, Laura insists that she can see through names to true identity, responding that she knows him, and that he's "smart, and distinguished," and "nice." Laura retains this ability to see through to Malcolm's true identity for much of the play. Years later, when his identity as Detroit Red is fully solidified, and far darker than when they first met, Malcolm and Laura meet again, and she immediately identifies him by a name no one else has spoken for years: "Malcolm. Malcolm Little."

But although Laura still recognizes him as the star-student she knew as a young girl, "Red's" lifestyle leads into an almost inevitable downward spiral, and Malcolm lands in prison. There, he's given another name, "Satan," in reference to his violent tendencies. Despite the demonic nickname, it is in prison that Malcolm finds salvation, which, interestingly, comes partly through a name. Luther, a fellow inmate and disciple of the Nation of Islam, approaches Malcolm and calls him "Red." "How'd you know my name?" Malcolm asks, and then adds, "You the first person ever to call me by my name . . . in this joint." Touched, Malcolm becomes friends with Luther, who eventually learns his "true name," Malcolm, and begins to call him by it.

Malcolm quickly becomes a disciple of Islam. Studying scripture, he runs across the story of history's most famous name change—Saul, who became Paul after his dramatic conversion to Christianity. As Malcolm undergoes a similarly profound transformation, both prisoners and authorities are baffled. But none of them know his name. "What's wrong with Satan?" the prisoners ask. "What's the matter with you, boy?" the prison doctor inquires. But since they never knew any of his real names, they can't understand the current transformation.

In fact, for the first time, things seem to be going right for Malcolm, a fact that Baldwin again marks by the use of his name. When Malcolm makes it out of prison and joins the Nation of Islam, for the first time in his life someone asks him for permission to use his name. Malcolm grants the permission to Luther's son Sidney graciously, but negotiating the tangled web of names in his past is not so easy. Shorty still calls Malcolm "Homeboy," and writes his conversion off as a new hustle. Archie, a buddy from his life of crime, will never know Malcolm as anyone other than "Red." And Malcolm himself seems to know that even his given name doesn't quite fit the new man he's become. As he grows in power as a leader in the nation of Islam, he drops his last name, replacing it with an "X"—a protest against the "white rapist" who gave his family it's name, but also a gesture that suggests that someday a truer name may replace the spot X marks.

As a leader in the nation of Islam, Malcolm begins to more boldly play with names and naming to create and reveal identity. During a peaceful standoff outside a police station where another leader is being held, a captain tries to push Malcolm back into the facelessness the white world has forced on the black race, calling Malcolm "Mac," as if his name and identity are not really worth knowing. But with the Nation of Islam at his back, Malcolm is free to correct him. Interestingly, he does not entrust the policeman with his true name, but tells him only that he's wrong in his assumptions: "My name ain't Mac." Malcolm then retaliates with a name of his own, calling the policeman a "dog," and then revising that statement, saying that the captain doesn't even share the identity of a dog, that "a dog wouldn't do this."

But even strict adherence to the Nation of Islam doesn't seem to be a perfect path for Malcolm, who, through all the public work and organizational intrigues, is still searching for his own, personal truth, a sense of his true identity—his real name. As the organization he's served begins to implode around him, Malcolm makes the traditional Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, discovering a world he'd never dreamed of, where white, black, yellow, and brown worship together in seeming peace. And there he is also given a new name: "El Hajj Malik El Shabazz," or "the son who has come home."

When Malcolm does return home, though, the world that has always misnamed him, and missed his true identity, is still a step behind. He's won a victory of sorts in that America has accepted Malcolm X, the most recent name he'd chosen. Reporters, guards, and colleagues still refer to him as "Malcolm," "Mr. X," and "Malcolm X." But El Hajj Malik El Shabazz is already a step beyond them, struggling, as he says, with the fact that every time he tries to turn a corner "the old Malcolm X stands there, barring the way." Only his wife, who adopts the name "Betty Shabazz," seems to grasp the significance of Malcolm's Mecca-driven shift in vision.

In the end, his enemies' perception of "the old Malcolm X" leads to Malcolm's famous assassination. But it may be in death that he finds his true identity. Malcolm, Homeboy, Red, Satan—throughout his life, the character Baldwin calls "Malcolm" has answered to, and chosen, many names. But he is imbued from childhood with his mother's insistence that what is fundamental about a person never changes, Malcolm continually reached for his true identity, and for the accompanying name. The inscription on his grave reads, "El Hajj Malik El Shabazz." And in that, Baldwin seems to suggest, the great man found his true nature, and his true name.

Source: Carey Wallace, Critical Essay on *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario,* in *Drama for Students,* The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #3

Guyette is a graduate from the University of Pittsburgh with a bachelor's degree in English and is a longtime journalist. In this essay, Guyette talks about racism and the spiritual journey made by Malcolm X.

The purpose of the novelist, James Baldwin explained in a 1962 *New York Times Book Review* essay, "involves attempting to tell as much of the truth as one can bear, and then a little more." His "scenario" based on Alex Haley's *The Autobiography Of Malcolm X* achieves that goal, revealing one extraordinary man's remarkable journey through the dark heart of American racism. Although based on a true story, it contains all the hallmarks of epic fiction, with the hero overcoming tremendous hardship to reach the promised land of enlightenment.

It is not surprising that Baldwin found inspiration in the story of Malcolm, whose struggle against bigotry propelled him along a journey of self-discovery similar to that found in much of the author's other work. As Louis H. Pratt notes in his book, *James Baldwin:* "Malcolm X, like the characters that abound in Baldwin's fiction, is a man in search of himself." Baldwin uses the title of the screenplay itself to suggest that this journey of Malcolm's is being viewed from the perspective of someone who has finally found his way: "One day when I *was* lost." That concept of looking backward is reinforced in the scenario's first few lines, which offer a glimpse of events through a car's side-view mirror "that fills the screen." Malcolm has already arrived. But before it is even completely clear exactly where he is, flashes of the racial hatred that set him to wandering in a sort of wilderness begin to appear.

While still in the womb, Malcolm Little was subjected to the kind of terror frequently experienced by African Americans during much of the twentieth century. In a chilling scene, Baldwin depicts white-hooded horsemen smashing windows, a pregnant young Louise Little flinching as they stampede past. This is the America of Malcolm Little's boyhood. And by the time he is a teenager, his father—an outspoken proponent of black nationalism—is dead, his skull crushed by a bigot's hammer and his still breathing body tossed on the tracks of an on-coming trolley. It is an image that haunts Malcolm throughout his life.

This is the kind of hard truth Baldwin said the writer must tell, no matter how painful. It's the kind of truth that shaped the direction of Malcolm's life. Also tragic is that fate of Malcolm's mother, who, unable to carry on without the courageous husband she loved and respected, is locked away in an insane asylum. That, too, leaves Malcolm with an image that will continue to haunt him. After running afoul of the law, he catches what appears to be a break and is placed in the care of a kindly white woman, who says she loves Malcolm like a son. But, during what should be one of his happiest moments—the day a judge comes to say it's been determined Malcolm has "reformed" himself and become an upright young man, he overhears a conversation that leaves another deep emotional scar. This woman, too, reveals herself to be yet another racist.

Despite these setbacks, Malcolm's natural intelligence and outgoing personality allow him to prevail. He earns top grades in school, and is elected class president. Like his fellow students, he has vision of a bright future, but when he approaches a trusted guidance counselor, the man quashes Malcolm's dreams of pursuing a career in law, saying that's not an option for a black boy. His dreams crushed, Malcolm Little disappears.

The person who emerges in his place is a street hustler who goes by the nickname "Red." It is, as the character Malcolm notes, one of many names he would adopt throughout his life, each one serving as a milepost marking a different point in his life's journey. Red is an abandonment of all of young Malcolm's highest ideals and aspirations. This person is a womanizer, hard-drinker, thief and drug user who's clever enough to avoid the draft and stay one step ahead of the law—for a while. Despite a growing hatred of whites, he has no real pride in being black. This is evidenced by his willingness to undergo the near-torturous process of using lye treatments to have his hair "conked," or straightened.

By the end of the scenario's first act, a debauched Red has run out of fast talk and clever ploys, and has nothing more to look forward to than spending the foreseeable future behind bars on robbery charges. It is in prison, where his violent ways earn him the new nickname of "Satan," that Malcolm experiences what Pratt describes as the first of two "epiphanies." He meets a fellow inmate named Luther, who takes a liking to young Malcolm and begins trying to convert him to a black nationalist form of Islam that demonizes whites. Pointing to Malcolm's conked hair, Luther asserts, "You go to all that trouble and all that pain and sweat and put all that poison in your hair, what for? Because you ashamed of being black and you want to be white." Luther keeps working on Malcolm, convincing him to give up cigarettes, alcohol, and pork, all the while preaching his brand of Islam: "You don't even know who you are. You don't even know, the white devil has hidden it from you." By the time Luther is released, Malcolm is a convert. He's no longer Satan; he's become Malcolm X, the slave-name Little discarded in favor of a mark that represents his stolen heritage.

When he's finally set free, Malcolm finds a home with Luther and his fellow followers in the Nation of Islam. Once again, his intelligence propels him, and he advances quickly, taking charge of the sect's newspaper to spread its views to masses of African Americans. That sense of purpose and fulfillment carry over into the start of the third act, which finds Malcolm as happy as he's ever been. He's leading a morally upright life, providing meaning to his life by committing himself to a cause he totally believes in. He's also fallen in love and married an attractive, intelligent woman named Betty, a fellow church member. They have children, and his success grows.

Malcolm's combination of natural charisma and intense belief pay off in a way he never imagined, with thousands of people turning out to hear him speak. The church's militancy inspires followers fedup with the second-class treatment suffered by African Americans, and Malcolm's angry speeches and fiery, no-compromise writings promise change by any means necessary.

But there's a downside to this success: before long, his mentor Luther and the church's leader grow jealous. Betty sees trouble brewing, but Malcolm refuses to heed her warnings. Then he is told of a murder plot. As hard as it is for him to believe, the people at the top levels of the church he wholeheartedly committed himself to want him dead. That threat, coupled with a desire to visit the birthplace of Islam, compel Malcolm to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. It is there, seeing masses of Muslims representing all races, that he experiences what Pratt describes as a second epiphany. In a letter to Betty he writes, "I have never before seen true and sincere brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color." "True Islam," he adds, "has shown me that a blanket indictment of all white people is as wrong as when whites make blanket indictments against blacks. Yes, I have been convinced that some American whites do want to help cure the rampant racism which is on the path to destroying this country."

Writes Pratt: "Here in the Muslim world, Malcolm witnesses the true fellowship and goodwill of men of all races and color, and his enlightenment is developed and reined into a state of perception." Alex Haley, in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X,* also notes the profound effect of the experience, noting that Malcolm came to realize that "both races . . . had the obligation, the responsibility, of helping to correct America's human problem."

Like a loop, Baldwin's screenplay takes readers full circle. As it comes to the end, it returns to where the story began, with Malcolm looking into the rear-view mirror of his car as it pulls up to the Harlem ballroom where he is scheduled to speak. He has arrived home once again, but now he's preaching a message altered by the experiences of his pilgrimage. And, like any number of other prophets, his return to spread a new word in a land not yet fully ready to hear it leads to both tragedy and, ultimately, triumph. He no longer believed in the essential message of the church that he'd devoted himself to, and it's leaders feared his popularity would drain away followers and resources. Just as he looked across America and saw few white people willing to look with honesty at the terrible hardships their racism has caused, he also realized that his former allies weren't prepared to accept the broader vision he now wanted to share. As he told a friend, "Maybe, you know, there are never very many people, no matter what their color, who are dedicated to change."

This marked the completion of a long spiritual journey. Through hardship and loss, degradation and suffering, he'd made the passage from darkness into the light of understanding. And with that knowledge, he was ready to go out anew and create a better America. His wife and children sat in the audience, joining the packed house in that Harlem ballroom. But instead of hearing Malcolm X speak, they saw black men rise up, draw their guns, and shoot him dead. And that is the tragedy of his life. Like his father before him, he was taken far too soon. The triumph is found in the words of his wife, Betty. Baldwin closes out his screenplay by having her say to everyone all the same thing she always told Malcolm as he prepared to leave on a trip: "You are present when you are away." His message, like his spirit, has become eternal.

Source: Curt Guyette, Critical Essay on *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario,* in *Drama for Students,* The Gale Group, 2002.

Adaptations

Spike Lee directed, co-produced, wrote, and starred (as Shorty) in the 1992 Warner Brothers film *Malcolm X* that was loosely based on Baldwin's screenplay.

Brother Minister (1995), directed by Jack Baxter and narrated by Roscoe Lee Brown, is a seven-part video inquiry into the assassination of Malcolm X.

In 1993, Black Audio Film Collective produced John Akomfrah's *Seven Songs for Malcolm X,* a filmed homage to this Black Muslim leader. The video includes an interview with Betty Shabazz and Spike Lee.

Malcolm X—Make It Plain was produced by PBS Video in 1994. It is an extensive look at Malcolm X's life.

The collaborative work between James Baldwin and Arnold Perl was produced in 1972 and called *Malcolm X.* This is a video documentary staring Ossie Davis and narrated by James Earl Jones.

Archie has to pay him a large sum of money, Archie accuses Malcolm of cheating. In Archie's mind, this means that he must kill Malcolm to save face. Because of this, Malcolm leaves New York City and organizes a ring of thieves, which eventually leads him to a prison term.

Topics for Further Study

James Baldwin's *One Day, When I Was Lost: A Scenario* is based on Alex Haley's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X.* Read Haley's book and write a paper on the similarities and the differences between these two works. What liberties did Baldwin take? What characters did he change? Did these changes strengthen or weaken Baldwin's work in your estimation?

Baldwin worked with Columbia Pictures for a while, in an attempt to turn *One Day, When I was Lost: A Scenario* into a movie. Columbia became impatient with him and asked Arnold Perl to collaborate with Baldwin. The two men worked on a script together that was later produced as the documentary *Malcolm X.* Find a video copy of this film (or substitute Spike Lee's later film by the same name, which was loosely based on Baldwin's work) and compare it to *One Day, When I Was Lost*. Which did you find more powerful? Make a presentation to your class about the cinematographic techniques employed in Baldwin's work and those later used in the documentary (or the film). Which do you think was the most creative? Which told a better story? Which made you empathize more with Malcolm X?

Research the history and development of the Black Muslims. What was their approach to improving the lives of African Americans? What was their role in the Civil Rights Movement? How did they affect African Americans? What was their connection, if any, to Martin Luther King, Jr.? The Black Panthers? Write a paper about your findings.

Baldwin wrote fiction and plays. However, it was his nonfiction collections of essays that earned him the reputation of a prophet. Read his *Fire Next Time* (1963) in which he predicted that American race relations were in danger of becoming violent. Then, research the riots that occurred throughout the late 1960s. Write a paper about your findings. Do you think that Baldwin correctly identified the causes of those riots? Had people heeded his warnings, do you think the riots could have been avoided? Conclude with your thoughts about the future of race relations in the United States. Have they improved? Or do conditions continue to exist that could cause future riots?

Compare and Contrast

1940s: Although interracial marriages occur in the United States during this decade, a statistical record is not made of them. The exception is the occasional famous marriage, such as the black novelist Richard Wright who marries Ellen Poplar, a white woman, in 1941. Twenty-nine out of the forty-eight states consider interracial marriage a crime.

1960s: Nineteen states continue to observe their laws against interracial marriages. However, there are 51,000 interracial marriages recorded in the United States.

Today: Over twelve percent of the African-American population is involved in interracial marriages, with recorded marriages standing at over 300,000. Although specific records are not kept, it is estimated that one in every twenty children under the age of five is the product of interracial parents. This does not include African Americans who may have a white grandparent or great-grandparent.

1940s: Ten percent of the African-American population receives a high school diploma, compared to twenty-five percent of the white population. Two percent of African Americans graduate from college compared to five percent of whites.

1960s: Twenty percent of the African-American population receives a high school diploma compared to forty-five percent of the white population. Four percent of African Americans graduate from college compared to eight percent of whites.

Today: Sixty-five percent of the African-American population receives a high school diploma compared to seventy-five percent of the white population. Twelve percent of African Americans graduate from college compared to twenty-three percent of whites.

1940s: African Americans in the arts include Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington, and Ella Fitzgerald in the field of music. Richard Wright's *Black Boy* becomes a bestseller. Marginal movie roles are played by Lena Horne (*Stormy Weather*), Hattie McDaniel, and Butterfly McQueen (both in *Gone with the Wind*).

1960s: During this decade, black artists enjoy commercial success. In music, singers such as the Supremes, Gladys Knight and the Pips, James Brown, Jimi Hendrix, and Aretha Franklin influence new standards in popular music. In literature, books by James Baldwin, Maya Angelou, and Ralph Ellison win popular acclaim. Lorraine Hansberry's play *Raisin in the Sun* wins awards, and Sidney Poitier becomes a familiar and popular face in the movies.

1990s: George Walker wins the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for his classical music composition, "Lilacs," a milestone for black musicians. In 1993, novelist Toni Morrison wins the Nobel Prize in literature. In film, movie-maker Julie Dash wins the 1992 Sundance Film Festival's first prize in cinematography for her *Daughters of the Dust.*

Today: Halle Berry receives the Oscar for best actress in a leading role in *Monster's Ball* (the first African American to win this award in the seventy-four-year history of the Academy Awards), Denzel Washington receives the Oscar for best actor in a leading role in *Training Day* (the second African American to win this award, following Sidney Poitier for *Lilies of the Field* in 1963), and Sidney Poitier receives an Oscar for lifetime achievement.

What Do I Read Next?

To gain a deeper understanding of Malcolm X's life, read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965). This was written in collaboration with Alex Haley and fills in more details and truth in this charismatic and controversial man's life.

James Baldwin's *Another Country* (1962) is set in New York's Greenwich Village, Harlem, and France. It is a searing tale that captures the emotions and the sensuality of relationships stripped of definitions of gender and race during the 1970s.

Go Tell It on the Mountain (1953) is Baldwin's first and most popular book of fiction. The story follows one day in the life of a fourteen-year-old boy, who recounts the harsh realities of his past.

Baldwin wrote two successful plays. *The Amen Corner: A Play* (1968) is a play about family. Margaret Alexander must face her estranged husband, a jazz musician, when he suddenly returns home because he is dying. Margaret must not only bridge the gap between herself and her husband, but between her son and his father. She must also bridge the different roles she plays between her home and her church. This is an emotional and inspiring work. Baldwin's other play, *Blues for Mr. Charlie* (1964), takes place in a small Southern town and opens with the murder of a black man. Unflinchingly, Baldwin portrays the agonizing pain and fear that most African Americans had to face in growing up in the South, especially in the 1950s.

Baldwin's second book, *Giovanni's Room* (1956), was very controversial for its time. It tells the story of a young man David, struggling with his sexuality, torn between his love for his fiancé and a male Italian bartender. The setting is Paris during the 1950s. When David's fiancé returns from Spain to find out that he has had an affair with a man, his life spins out of control.

The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr. (2001) was edited by Clayborne Carson, a noted historian, who researched all of King's essays, notes, letters, speeches, and sermons to write this book. By reading about King's life, one gains not only a fuller understanding of the times and struggles that faced the nation during the 1960s but also a more balanced look at the Civil Rights Movement. King and Malcolm X were contemporaries, but they were often on opposite sides.

For a feminine point of view of what it's like to be black in America, read Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf* (1977), which was produced as a play on Broadway and won the Obie award. The play is really a long poem, written in dialogue form in which spirituality, rage, fear, love, female sexuality, and cultural roots are discussed.

Further Study

Brown, Jamie Foster, ed., *Betty Shabazz: A Sisterfriends' Tribute in Words and Pictures,* Simon & Schuster, 1998.

Malcolm X's wife, Betty Shabazz, was left with the task of raising six children after her husband's death. She was a strong woman and is remembered by friends and colleagues in this tribute to her life. Betty died tragically in 1997 from burns suffered in a fire set by her grandson.

Campbell, James, *Talking at the Gates: A Life of James Baldwin,* Viking, 1991.

Campbell provides an insightful look into the life and the significance of the times of James Baldwin.

Cleaver, Eldridge, *Soul on Ice,* Cape, 1969.

Cleaver spent much of his youth in jail. While there, he educated himself and wrote his memoirs. Once released, he became a follower of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam. After Malcolm's assassination, Cleaver joined the Black Panthers. He eventually escaped the United States and lived abroad. Upon returning, he went through a religious transformation and conversion to Christianity, recording his changes in another book called, *Soul on Fire* (1978).

Foner, Philip S., *The Black Panthers Speak,* Da Capo Press, 1995.

The Civil Rights Movement was a time of varying philosophies and tactics. Malcolm X was not the only radical voice during those times. This book presents a history of the Black Panther movement, their philosophy of separatism, their court battles, and what they stood for.

Lincoln, C. Eric, *The Black Muslims in America,* Africa World Press Inc., 1994.

This is a sociological study that details the development of the Black Muslim Movement in the United States. It covers the leadership of Elijah Muhammad as well that of Louis Farrakhan.

Standley, Fred L., and Louis H. Pratt, eds., *Conversations with James Baldwin,* University Press of Mississippi, 1989.

This collection of interviews with Baldwin includes one by Studs Terkel in 1961 and another in which Henry Louis Gates Jr. asked Josephine Baker to join Baldwin in 1985. From the height of his fame to the last moments of his death, these interviews offer a different, more personal insight into this great author.

X, Malcolm, *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements,* edited by George Breitman, Grove Press, 1990.

This book follows the development of Malcolm X's evolution as a minister of Islam, from his time under the supervision of Elijah Mohammad to his break with the Nation of Islam. Many scholars try to explain Malcolm X's philosophy. This book offers his beliefs in his own words.

Bibliography

Baldwin, James, "As Much Truth As One Can Bear," in *New York Times Book Review,* January 14, 1962, p. 14.

Driver, Tom F., "The Review That Was Too True to Be Published," in *Negro Digest,* Vol. 13, 1964, pp. 34-40.

Leeming, David, *Baldwin: A Biography,* Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.

Perry, Patsy Brewington, "*One Day, When I Was Lost,* Baldwin's Unfulfilled Obligation," in *James Baldwin, A Critical Evaluation,* edited by Therman B. O'Daniel, Howard University Press, 1977, pp. 213-27.

Pratt, Louis H., "The Darkness Within," in *James Baldwin,* G. K. Hall & Co., 1978, pp. 98, 100.

Standley, Fred L., and Nancy V. Burt, "Introduction," in *Critical Essays on James Baldwin,* G. K. Hall & Co., 1988.

Stevenson, John, "James Baldwin: An Appreciation," in *Boston Book Review,* December 1995.

X, Malcolm, with the assistance of Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X,* Grove Press, 1966, p. 456.

BOOKRAGS

Copyright Information

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

Project Editor
David Galens

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

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

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

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

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

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

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

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

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

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

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

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

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

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

Selection Criteria

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

How Each Entry Is Organized

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

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

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

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

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

Other Features

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

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

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

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

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

Citing Drama for Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We Welcome Your Suggestions

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

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