

The Lion in Winter

A historical play
by James Goldman

playing from 31 August 2018 until 18 October 2018



This teachers' resource pack includes factual information as well as tasks and topics to be dealt with in the classroom. Cut and paste as you please, and please consult the official programme for additional information. Difficulty levels are graded for your convenience.

English Theatre Frankfurt
Teachers' Resource Pack

Brief Synopsis:

Sibling rivalry, adultery, and dungeons — *The Lion in Winter*, by James Goldman, is a modern-day classic. Comedic in tone, dramatic in action — the play tells the story of the Plantagenet family, who are locked in a free-for-all of competing ambitions to inherit a kingdom. The queen, and wealthiest woman in the world, Eleanor of Aquitaine, has been kept in prison since raising an army against her husband, King Henry II. Allowed out only for holidays, the play centers around the inner conflicts of the royal family as they fight over both a kingdom and King Henry's paramour during the Christmas of 1183. As Eleanor says, "Every family has its ups and downs," and this royal family is no exception.

Extended Synopsis

The Lion in Winter explores themes of dysfunctional family, political maneuvering, war and peace, as well as aging, death, inheritance, and posterity. As the principle characters plot, scheme, conspire, and counter-plot between each other, the deep-seated emotional ties between them get played out in the political arena, such that sibling rivalry and marital jealousy translate into civil war, treason, and perhaps even murder among the members of a royal nuclear family. *The Lion in Winter* concerns the interpersonal dynamics and political wrangling of King Henry; his wife Eleanor, whom he has kept imprisoned in a tower for the past ten years; and their three sons, who are vying for the privilege of being named heir to the English throne. Eleanor, who has been let out of prison to celebrate Christmas with her family, favours Richard as heir, while Henry favours John. To complicate matters, the young King Philip II of France has arrived to remind Henry of a treaty he signed many years earlier, promising to marry his heir to Philip's sister Alais. However, Alais has been Henry's mistress for the past seven years, and Henry is hesitant to marry her off to any of his sons.

Characters:

Henry II: The king of England, Henry is the husband of Eleanor of Aquitaine and the father of Richard, Geoffrey, and John. He also has taken Alais Capet as his mistress. In his fifties, Henry is nearing the years when most men of that age died; however, he still has remarkable vigor and wit, as well as physical prowess. His clear favorite for his successor is his son, John, but his main desire is to keep his kingdom together after his death.

Alais Capet: The sister of Philip Capet, Alais is of the royal blood of France and would thus, through a contracted marriage with Richard, ally the two strong countries of France and England. She was raised as a child by Eleanor, and is the mistress of Henry. She is no less a pawn in the machinations of Henry and Eleanor than are their sons.

John: The youngest of the three sons of Henry and Eleanor, John is described as pimply and an immature boy. He is, however, his father's choice for the crown, and he uses this knowledge in taunting his two brothers.

Geoffrey: The middle son of Henry and Eleanor, Geoffrey has no one fighting for his right to any throne, and he usually accepts his fate, but it does rankle him that he usually is not considered—in any matters of the heart or family. He is described as the most cerebral of the three boys.

Richard: The oldest of the three sons of Henry and Eleanor, Richard in later life becomes known as Richard the Lion Heart. He is his mother's choice for the next king, and is probably the best warrior of the three sons.

Eleanor of Aquitaine: The wife of Henry II and mother of Richard, Geoffrey, and John, Eleanor is a strong and powerful woman in her own right. She is still beautiful and still in many ways in love with her husband, although he keeps her in prison most of the time. She is a danger to Henry because of her strength and intelligence; and she champions the fight for Richard to be the next king.

Philip Capet: The king of France, Philip is also the brother of Alais. He is young, but has already become a strong monarch, although no match for Henry. His desire is to marry Alais to Richard and have Richard crowned king, thus cementing a relationship between the two countries.

THEMES

Dysfunctional Family

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

Political Maneuvering

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

War and Peace

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

Exercise: Exploring a Scene

The following pages contain the second scene from *The Lion In Winter*. Have your students read it out loud. One student should read the stage direction (the parts in *italics*). The non-reading students should just listen and try to imagine the parts they can't see.

Afterwards hold a discussion and try to find answers to the questions below. This can be done all together or in smaller groups.

Finally have the students (or different ones) read the scene aloud again. They should try to consider the answers they now have. Afterwards, ask the others if they were able to understand and imagine the scene more clearly.

Difficulty: **flexible**, based on ability

Questions

(Answer these questions and explain what information leads you to your answers.)

1. Where are the characters? What is the time period (today, 1890s, WW2, Middle Ages)?
2. Who are the different characters: Richard, Geoffrey, John, Eleanor, Alais, Henry, Philip? What do we learn about their relationships and personalities?
3. What do the characters want in general? What do they want specifically in this scene?
4. What characters, places or events are mentioned in this scene but don't appear?
5. What do you think is going to happen next?

Model Answers to "Exploring a Scene" Exercise

Students probably won't have understood or remembered all of this information. If they are struggling to answer a question, you might give them hints to help them find it.

Where are the characters? The reception hall at Henry's home: Chinon Castle. Henry welcomes Philip to Chinon.

What is the time period? Except for the historical names in the text, there is no direct indication of the time period. They decorate the hall for Christmas. Henry talks about holding Aquitaine and Vexin in France, which indicates that the time period is not the present or any time in the recent past. Philip is the King of France. France does not currently have a king and hasn't had one since the revolution, which means that the time period is even further in the past.

For those who know some of the history of England and France, Henry Plantagenet was born in 1133 and king from 1154 until his death in 1189. Philip II (born 1165) became King of France in 1180, which must be close to the time of the play. It is mentioned that Philip has been king for three years, so it must be 1183, at Christmas-time.

Who are the characters? What do we learn about their relationships and personalities?

Henry Plantagenet is the King of England. Although he is 50 years old, he is still very healthy and fit. He is the father of Richard, Geoffrey and John, the husband of Eleanor, the lover (and guardian) of Alais and the rival of Philip. The way he interacts with Philip suggests that he is powerful, confident and very familiar with statesmanship. The things Richard and Geoffrey say make him sound like a cold and distant father, though he claims to love his children. John seems to admire him. He treats Eleanor with a mixture of contempt and admiration. It isn't clear how he feels about Alais, except that he doesn't seem ready to give her up. (In the first scene we see how much he loves her.)

Eleanor of Aquitaine is the Queen of England. Like Henry, she is still very healthy, attractive and active despite her age. The way her family talks about her suggests she is ruthless and calculating. She is Henry's wife and the mother of Richard, Geoffrey and John. She talks as though she was once like a mother to Alais. She has no relation to Philip, but she was formerly married to Philip's father, Louis (VII). She appears to have a love-hate relationship with Henry and her own sons distrust or revile her.

Richard Coeur de Lion is 26 years old and the eldest (living) son of Henry and Eleanor. "He is taller than his father, thick and powerful, but at the same time handsome, impressive and exquisitely dressed. He has been a famous soldier since his teens and is thoroughly at home with power and politics." He is the brother of Geoffrey and John and the 'intended' of Alais, which means that Richard and Alais are supposed to get married according to an agreement between Henry and Louis, King Philip's dead father. From what he says, he is determined to be the next king after Henry dies and to marry Alais.

Geoffrey, Count of Brittany, is 25 years old, "tall, thin, darkly attractive, quick of speech and movement. The best brain of a brainy family." He is the middle son of Henry and Eleanor, and the brother of Richard and John. He has no relationship to Alais or Philip. We learn that Henry intends to make John king and Geoffrey his chancellor (the person responsible for running the kingdom when the king is away or busy). Geoffrey voices that he is discontent with this decision and says he always feels like an afterthought.

John, at 16 years old, is "shorter than his brothers and pudgy without being fat". "He has a round open face and a sweet smile" and pimples. He is the youngest son of Henry and Eleanor, and the younger brother of Richard and Geoffrey. His behaviour is much more childlike than that of his brothers. He plays games silly games with them and teases them about being the next king because "father likes me best". We learn that Henry is considering marrying Alais to John (instead of Richard). Henry intends to make John the next king after he dies.

Alais Capet is Henry's mistress. This she says herself in the text. The stage direction says that she is "twenty-three and serenely beautiful". She loves Henry. Henry says that her brother Philip is now king of France. This makes her the sister of Philip II, both children of Louis VII by different mothers. (Historically, her name is sometimes spelled *Alys*.) She is supposed to marry Richard (by agreement with King Louis) but Henry is thinking of marrying her to John

instead. She says she doesn't want to marry John, but she knows she will have to marry one of the sons to keep the peace with Philip.

Philip Capet is King of France. According to the script, "He is indeed gorgeous. He is tall, well-proportioned, and handsome without being at all pretty. His manner is open, direct and simple, and he smiles easily. He has been King of France for three years and has learnt a great deal." Eleanor, who was formerly married to Philip's father, mentions that Philip is a "boy of seventeen". He is the half-brother of Alais (both children of King Louis VII by different mothers). He doesn't speak to Alais when he comes to the meeting with Henry, which suggests that the brother and sister are not close or affectionate. During the meeting between Henry and Philip, Henry's sons also do not say a word. This might be because there is no relationship between them or out of respect for the meeting between monarchs.

What do the characters want in general? What do they want specifically in this scene?

King Henry wants peace, so that he can do what he has discovered he loves: rule the kingdom instead of fighting. To keep the peace, he needs to hold his lands together, not anger France and satisfy his sons, who are all hungry for power. In this long scene, he wants to convince everyone (except perhaps Alais) that he is still very powerful so that neither Philip nor his sons will dare to start a war.

Queen Eleanor wants to return to power. (We don't know this from the scene but she was born into power and has already aided one attempt to overthrow Henry.) In this scene, she wants to stay out of imprisonment (in her own castle) and find out what Henry's plans are, so that she can oppose them in future.

Richard wants Henry to name him as the next king and agree to his marriage with Alais. In this scene he wants to show Henry that he is willing to wage a war to get these things.

Geoffrey wants Henry to take him seriously and think of him more highly. In this scene he wants to determine his position and discover others' weaknesses.

John wants to be king and show up his brothers. In this scene he wants to impress Henry, Eleanor and his older brothers.

Alais wants to stay with Henry, whom she loves. In this scene she wants to protect herself, especially against Eleanor, whom she distrusts deeply.

Philip wants to force Henry to execute the terms of the sixteen-year-old agreement with Louis, meaning he will either marry Alais and Richard or return the County of Vexin to the French crown. In this scene he wants to show Henry that he is not a 'pushover' when it comes to diplomacy or strategy.

What characters, places or events are mentioned in this scene but don't appear?

King Louis VII: Eleanor talks about Philip's (and Alais') father. "Simon pure and simon simple. Good, good Louis."

Channel: Henry asks Eleanor if the Channel parted for her crossing. Eleanor's castle is in England while Henry lives in Chinon, France.

Chinon: Henry welcomes Philip to Chinon. He lived in his castle in Chinon, France. (In real life, Henry understood English but usually spoke either French or Latin.)

Vexin: Philip tells Henry "It's their wedding or the Vexin back." He is referring to the County of Vexin in France. Henry says it's only a "day's march from Paris".

King Lear: Henry tells the story of King Lear splitting his kingdom among his three daughters, which caused its destruction. He is referring to legend of King Leir, which was related by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th century and better known now from the play *King Lear* by William Shakespeare.

Rosamund Clifford: Henry and Eleanor bicker about her. She was an earlier mistress of Henry while he was married to Eleanor. She was a real person and probably the greatest love of King Henry.

Civil wars: Henry tells Eleanor that she "led too many civil wars against me". This is perhaps an exaggeration, but Eleanor was clearly a major player in the Revolt of 1173-1174, in which Henry and Eleanor's son "Young Henry", aided by Richard and Geoffrey, tried to overthrow the king and she was probably involved in Young Henry's campaign against his father and Richard in 1183, during which he took ill in the summer and died.

What do you think is going to happen next?

Once we know what the characters want, we can guess whether the next scenes will resolve these desires. How will Eleanor (and Richard) convince Henry to leave the kingdom to Richard and not to John? How will Philip convince Henry to marry Alais and Richard?



Full cast of The Lion in Winter at Francis Marion University, Florence USA (2004)

The Lion in Winter by James Goldman
Act One: Scene Two

A reception hall in the British castle in France. It is a bright and spacious room. When the lights come up, the young Plantagenets, Richard, Geoffrey and John, are discovered bowing each other through a doorway. RICHARD COEUR DE LION, at twenty-six, looks like his father and his legend. He is taller than HAenry, thick and powerful, but at the same time gracefully handsome, impressive and exquisitely dressed. He has been a famous soldier since his teens and is thoroughly at home with power and politics. GEOFFREY, Count of Brittany, is twenty-five, tall, thin, darkly attractive, quick of speech and movement. The best brain of a brainy family. JOHN, at sixteen, does indeed have pimples. Shorter than his brothers and pudgy without being fat, he has a round open face and a sweet smile.

JOHN: After you.

GEOFFREY: No; after you.

RICHARD: No; after you.

JOHN: Oh, have it your way; after me.

John skips into the room, delighted with himself. Richard follows, then Geoffrey.

RICHARD: You do keep growing, Johnny.

JOHN (*agreeing cheerfully*): Every way but up. Look: holly.

John moves to the boughs and picks two up.

JOHN: I love Christmas.

GEOFFREY: Warm and rosy time. The hot wine steams, the Yule log roars and we're the fat that's in the fire. She's here, you know.

JOHN: Who?

RICHARD: Mother.

GEOFFREY: Since this morning.

RICHARD: Have you seen her?

GEOFFREY: Haven't you?

RICHARD: We're not as friendly as we were.

GEOFFREY: Does she still favour you?

RICHARD: Does she or doesn't she?

John places the holly on two columns.

JOHN: If I'm supposed to make a fuss and kiss her hairy cheek, I won't.

RICHARD: What you kiss, little prince, is up to you.

John takes another bunch of holly.

JOHN: I'm Father's favourite; that's what counts.

RICHARD: You hardly know me, Johnny, so I beg you to believe my reputation: I'm a constant soldier and a sometime poet and I will be king.

JOHN: Just you remember: Father loves me best.

Eleanor sweeps into the room. At sixty-one ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE looks nothing like her age. She is a truly handsome woman of great temperament, authority and presence. She has been a queen of international importance for forty-six years and you know it. Finally, she is that most unusual thing—a genuinely feminine woman thoroughly capable of holding her own in a man's world.

ELEANOR: The way you bicker it's a wonder that he cares for any of you.

GEOFFREY (*delighted*): Mother.

ELEANOR (*kissing Geoffrey*): Geoffrey—oh, but I do have handsome children. John—you're so clean and neat. (*She kisses John.*) Henry takes good care of you. And Richard. Don't look sullen, dear. (*She kisses Richard.*) It makes your eyes go small and piggy and your chin look weak. Where's Henry?

RICHARD: Upstairs with the family whore.

ELEANOR: that is a mean and tawdry way to talk about your fiancée.

John places the holly on a column.

JOHN: My fiancée.

ELEANOR: Whosever fiancée, I brought her up and she is dear to me and gentle. Have we seen the French king yet?

GEOFFREY: Not yet.

ELEANOR: Let's hope he's grown up like his father—
Simon pure and Simon simple. Good, good Louis;
if I'd managed sons for him instead of all those
little girls, I'd still be stuck with being Queen of
France and we should not have known each other.
Such, my angels, is the role of sex in history.
How's your father?

JOHN: Do you care?

ELEANOR: More deeply, lamb, than you can possibly
imagine. Is my hair in place? I've given up the
looking-glass; quick-silver has no sense of tact.

RICHARD: He still plans to make John king.

ELEANOR: Of course he does. My, what a greedy little
trinity you are: king, king, king. Two of you must
learn to live with disappointment.

*Henry enters, followed by ALAIS CAPET
(pronounced ah-LES cah-PE). She is twenty-three,
serenely beautiful and unmistakably in love with
Henry. HENRY PLANTAGENET has just turned fifty,
an age at which in his time men were either old or
dead. Not Henry. Though arthritis comes
occasionally and new battle wounds don't heal the
way old ones did, he is still very nearly all he ever
was. He is enjoying that final rush of physical and
mental vigour that comes to some men not before
the end but just before the start of the decline. As
always, he wears plain, dull, unimpressive clothes.*

HENRY: Ah—but which two?

ELEANOR (*curtsying*): Let's deny them all and live
forever.

The boys bow.

HENRY: Tusk to tusk through all eternity. How was
your crossing? Did the Channel part for you?

ELEANOR (*kissing his hand*): It went flat when I told it
to; I didn't think to ask for more. How dear of you
to let me out of jail.

HENRY: It's only for the holidays.

ELEANOR: Like school. You keep me young. Here's
gentle Alais.

Alais starts to curtsy.

ELEANOR: No, no; greet me like you used to. (*She
embraces Alais lightly.*) Fragile I am not: affection
is a pressure I can bear.

HENRY: I've had the French king sent for. We will have
a tactile conversation, like surgeons looking for a
lump. We'll state positions and I'll make the first of
many offers. He'll refuse it, naturally. I'll make a
better one and so on through the holidays until I
win. For the duration of this joyous ritual, you will
give to your father your support.

RICHARD: Why will I?

ELEANOR: Out of duty, dear. (*To Henry.*) Tell me,
what's Philip like? I hear he's quite impressive for
a boy of seventeen. . . .

*Philip enters. PHILIP CAPET is indeed gorgeous.
He is tall, well-proportioned, and handsome
without being at all pretty. His manner is open,
direct and simple, and he smiles easily. He has
been King of France for three years and has learnt
a great deal.*

HENRY (*seeing Philip*): My lord.

ELEANOR: . . . and you are. I'm Eleanor, who might
have been your mother. All the others here you
know.

PHILIP (*bowing*): Queen Eleanor—Your Grace.

HENRY: My Lord. Welcome to Chinon.

PHILIP: Sir.

HENRY: Your grievances, as we have understood
them, have to do with Princess Alais and her
dowry.

PHILIP: Sixteen years ago you made a treaty with us.
It is time its terms were executed.

HENRY: We are willing to discuss it.

PHILIP: Our position comes to this: that you will either
hold the marriage or return the Vexin. Alais
marries Richard or we'll have the county back at
once.

HENRY: That's clear, concise and well presented. My
position is—well, frankly, Philip, it's a tangle.
Once I'm dead, who's to be king? I could draw
papers 'til my scribes drop or the ink runs out,
and once I died, unless I've left behind me three

contented sons, my lands will split three ways in civil war. You see my problem?

PHILIP: Clearly, but it's yours, not mine.

HENRY: Two years ago, the Queen and I, for reasons passing understanding, gave the Aquitaine to Richard. That makes Richard very powerful. How can I give him Alais, too? The man she marries has you for an ally.

PHILIP: It's their wedding or the Vexin back. Those are the terms you made with Louis.

HENRY: True but academic, lad. The Vexin's mine.

PHILIP: By what authority?

HENRY: It's got my troops all over it: that makes it mine. Now here me, boy. You take what memories you have of me and mark them out of date. I'm not your father's friend, now; I'm his son's opponent.

PHILIP: I'm a king: I'm no man's boy.

HENRY: A king? Because you put your ass on purple cushions?

PHILIP: Sir.

Philip turns on his heel and starts to go.

HENRY: Philip, you haven't got the feel of this at all. Use all your voices: when I bellow, bellow back.

PHILIP: I'll mark that down.

HENRY (*moving to Philip*): This, too. We are the world in small. A nation is a human thing; it does what we do, for our reasons. Surely, if we're civilised, it must be possible to put the knives away. We can make peace. We have it in our hands.

PHILIP: I've tutors of my own. Will that be all?

HENRY: Oh, think. You came here for a reason. You've made demands of me. Now don't you want to ask me if I've got an offer?

PHILIP: Have you got an offer?

HENRY: Not yet—but I'll think of one.

Philip starts off again.

HENRY: Oh, by the way—(*grinning at Philip*) you're better at this than I thought you'd be.

PHILIP (*grinning back*): I wasn't sure you noticed.

Philip exits.

HENRY: Well—what shall we hang? The holly or each other?

ELEANOR: You can't read your sons at all. That isn't anger they're projecting; it's anxiety.

HENRY: I read them. I know Richard's moods and Johnny's faces and the thought behind the pitch of Geoffrey's voice. The trouble's at the other end; they don't know me. There is a legendary king called Lear with whom I have a lot in common. Both of us have kingdoms and children we adore and both of us are old. But there it stops. He cut his kingdom into bits. I can't do that. I've built this house and it will stand. What I have architected, you will not destroy.

RICHARD: Would you say, Father, that I have the makings of a king?

HENRY: A splendid king.

RICHARD: Would you expect me, Father, to be disinherited without a fight?

HENRY: Of course you'll fight. I raised you to.

RICHARD: I don't care what you offer Philip. I don't care what plans you make. I'll have Aquitaine and Alais and the crown. I'll have them all.

JOHN: You're going to love my coronation.

RICHARD: I won't give up one to get the other. I won't trade off Alais or the Aquitaine to this—(*indicating John*)—this walking pustule. No, yourloving son will not.

Richard exits.

JOHN: Did you hear what he called me?

HENRY: Go and eat.

JOHN: Did I say something wrong? I'm always saying something wrong.

Henry glares at John.

JOHN: All right, I'll eat.

John exits.

ELEANOR: And that's to be the king.

GEOFFREY: And I'm to be his chancellor. Has he told you? John will rule the country while I run it. That's to say, he gets to spend the taxes that I get to raise.

ELEANOR: How nice for you.

GEOFFREY: Not as nice as being king.

HENRY: We've made you Duke of Brittany. Is that so little?

GEOFFREY: No one ever thinks of crowns and mentions Geoffrey. Why is that? I make out three prizes here—a throne, a princess and the Aquitaine. Three prizes and three sons; but no one ever says, "Here, Geoff, here Geoff boy, here's a bone for you."

HENRY: I should have thought that being chancellor was a satisfying bone.

GEOFFREY: It isn't power that I feel deprived of; it's the mention that I miss. There's no affection for me here. You wouldn't think I'd want that, would you?

Geoffrey exits.

ELEANOR: Henry, I have a confession.

HENRY: Yes?

ELEANOR: I don't much like our children. (*She turns to Alais.*) Only you—the child I raised but didn't bear.

ALAIS: You never cared for me.

ELEANOR: I did and do. Believe me, Henry's bed is Henry's province; he can people it with sheep for all I care. Which, on occasion, he has done.

HENRY: Still that? When Rosamund's been dead for seven years?

ELEANOR: Two months and eighteen days. I never liked her much.

HENRY: You count the days?

ELEANOR: I made the number up. (*To Alais.*) He found Miss Clifford in the mists of Wales and brought her home for closer observation. Liking what he saw, he scrutinised her many years. He loved her deeply and she him. And yet, my dear,

when Henry had to choose between his lady and my lands. . . .

ALAIS: He'll leave me if he has to; I know that.

ELEANOR: Poor Alais.

ALAIS: There's no sport in hurting me; it is too easy.

ELEANOR: After all the years of love, the hair I've brushed and braided and the tears I've kissed away, do you think I could bring myself to hurt you?

ALAIS: Eleanor, with both hands tied behind you.

Alais exits.

HENRY: She is lovely, isn't she?

ELEANOR: Yes, very.

HENRY: If I'd chosen, who could I have picked to love to gall you more?

ELEANOR: There's no one.

Eleanor moves to the holly boughs.

ELEANOR: Come on; let's finish Christmassing the place.

HENRY: Time hasn't done a thing but wrinkle you.

ELEANOR: It hasn't even done that. I have borne six girls, five boys and thirty-one connubial years of you. How am I possible?

She picks up three boughs of holly.

HENRY: There are moments when I miss you.

She gives Henry two bunches of holly.

ELEANOR: Many?

HENRY: Do you doubt it?

She rumples his hair.

ELEANOR: That's my woolly sheepdog. So wee Johnny gets the crown.

HENRY: I've heard it rumoured, but I don't believe it.

ELEANOR: Losing Alais will be hard, for you do love her.

HENRY: It's an old man's last attachment; nothing more. How hard to you find living in your castle?

Eleanor places holly on a column.

ELEANOR: It was difficult in the beginning, but that's past. I have seen the world enough. I have my maids and menials in my courtyards and I hold my little court. It suits me now.

She takes a bunch of holly from Henry and places it on a column.

HENRY: I'll never let you loose. You led too many civil wars against me.

ELEANOR: And I damn near won the last one.

She takes the last bunch of holly from him and places it on a column.

ELEANOR: Still, as long as I get trotted out for Christmas Courts and State occasions now and then—for I do like to see you—it's enough. Do you still need the Vexin, Henry?

HENRY: Need you ask?

ELEANOR: My strategy is ten years old.

She picks up the last bunch of holly and paces it on a column.

HENRY: It is as crucial as it ever was. My troops there are a day away from Paris, just a march of twenty miles. I must keep it.

ELEANOR (*surveying the holly*): I'd say that's all the jollying this room can stand. I'm famished; let's go in to dinner.

HENRY (*extending his arm*) Arm in arm.

ELEANOR (*taking his arm and smiling at him*) And hand in hand. You're still a marvel of a man.

HENRY: And you're my lady.

They start to exit, then she stops.

ELEANOR: Henry, dear, if Alais doesn't marry Richard, I will see you lose the Vexin.

HENRY: Well, I thought you'd never say it.

ELEANOR: I can do it.

HENRY: You can try.

ELEANOR: My Richard is the next king, not your John. I know you, Henry. I know every bend you've got and I'll be waiting round each corner for you.

HENRY: Do you truly care who's king?

ELEANOR: I care because you care so much.

HENRY: I might surprise you. Eleanor, I've fought and bargained all these years as if the one thing I lived for was what happened after I was dead. I've something else to live for now. I've blundered on to peace.

ELEANOR: On Christmas Eve.

HENRY: Since Louis died, while Philip grew, I've had no France to fight. And in that lull I've found how good it is to write a law or make a tax more fair or sit in judgment to decide which peasant gets a cow. There is, I tell you, nothing more important in the world. And now the French boy's big enough and I am sick of war.

ELEANOR: To come to your question, Henry, make the plea. What would you have me do? Give out, give up, give in?

HENRY: Give me a little peace.

ELEANOR: A little? Why do modest? How about eternal peace? Now, there's a thought.

HENRY: If you oppose me, I will strike you any way I can.

ELEANOR: Of course you will.

HENRY (*extending his arm as before*): We have a hundred barons we should look the loving couple for.

They stand regally, side by side. Eleanor gives Henry a terrible smile.

ELEANOR: Can you read love in that?

HENRY (*nodding, smiling back*): And permanent affection.

They start to exit, grandly and stately.

ELEANOR: Henry?

HENRY: Madam?

ELEANOR: did you ever love me?

HENRY: No.

ELEANOR: good. That will make this pleasanter.

Eleanor and Henry exit. The lights dim to a black-out.

Exercise: Personal Pronouns

A game to help actors locate the drama in a playwright's choice of vocabulary.
Difficulty: **easy-medium** (grammatical terms)

This is a simple game in which the text is broken up into its constituent parts and dramatized, in order to find detail in the language.

Arrange your class into groups of seven. Everyone should have a copy of the scene printed on the last seven pages. If they have not done the previous exercise, they should begin by acting the scene in the normal manner, to get the sense of the journey and establish the basics of the scene. This time, no one has to read the stage directions out loud, but they should be acted where appropriate.

Then ask the students to play the scene again, but this time every time the actors hit a *personal pronoun*—for the purposes of the game that means any mention of a person or character, absent or present (I, you, he, she, they, we, Mr Spencer, Celia, the cow)—they must emphasize it and make a gesture to place the emphasis on that person, for example:

'Gallop apace, *you* fiery-footed steeds'.

They can point to them if they are in the scene, or offstage to wherever they might be if they are not, whilst letting the rest of the line go; not so it's inaudible, of course, but so the emphasis is on these specific words. Observe whether the characters use a similar number of personal pronouns, and look specifically at what they are and what that tells us about them. If a character mentions him or herself in almost every sentence (look at Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as an example), it can tell us an awful lot about their personality.

Now, repeat the exercise but this time, instead of personal pronouns, the actors emphasize all the *adjectives* and *adverbs* (descriptive words). Any descriptive language counts, no matter where it is used in the sentence, for example:

'Gallop *apace*, you *fiery-footed* steeds'.

And, of course, mark each adjective with a gesture. This is where the game becomes dramatic. Look at the sort of language each character uses. Are they simple and to the point? Or flowery and gushing? How do they use description—and why? Are they trying to seduce, or impress, or rebuff? Perhaps they don't use any descriptive language at all. And if so, why not?

Finally, repeat the exercise but this time the students should emphasize all the *verbs* (doing words), marking each with a gesture:

'*Gallop* apace, you fiery-footed steeds'.

Encourage them to be bold and move with the gestures to capture the physical drama in the text. Each actor should observe how active their character is, and whether their language is exaggerated or simplistic.

A character's words are their tools. No one talks without an objective, so each actor should consider what their character intends to achieve by exploring how they speak. Over the three rounds of this exercise, the active, descriptive and personal language of each character will have come into focus. By the end, each actor should have a much better idea of how their character's mind works. They should continue to observe the frequency and style of these verbal characteristics throughout the text as they work on each scene. It will tell them a great deal about their character's personality.



The Lion in Winter, Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis (2016)

Exercise: Interpreting a Theatre Review

In groups have your students read the following review of *The Lion in Winter* from The Telegraph and answer the questions at the end.

Difficulty: **hard** (authentic language)

The Lion in Winter, Theatre Royal Haymarket: review

By **Charles Spencer**

Nov. 16, 2011

This revival of James Goldman's creaky but still enjoyable play, best known for the film version starring Peter O'Toole and Katharine Hepburn, has been brilliantly timed for the festive season.

For however terrible your own yuletide celebrations prove; however vicious the rows and recriminations over the turkey and mince pies, they will be as nothing when compared to Henry II's Christmas party at his castle Chinon in 1183.

The whole family's been invited. Henry II, old but still vigorous, is there with his nubile young mistress. But to add a piquancy, he's granted his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, a brief release from the prison, in which he has kept her for the previous 10 years, to join in the fun. Meanwhile, his three sons, all deeply unlovable in their different ways, quarrel, connive, and form shifting alliances to become his successor.

It's historical hokum but high-class hokum, stylishly designed by Stephen Brimson Lewis, and much funnier on stage than in the overblown film.

Here, an almost Black Adder-ish atmosphere prevails, along with melodramatic, carpet-chewing performances that seem deliberately designed to provoke titters rather than awe. For once that solemn, beard-stroking director Trevor Nunn seems to be having a bit of fun.

The scene in which the furious Henry arrives in the bedroom of the king of France for a political chat, only to discover that all three of his sons are concealed behind tapestries and plotting against him, has more in common with Feydeau farce than Shakespeare's history plays. And the comedy becomes particularly piquant when it emerges that the macho Richard the Lionheart, all bristling aggression in Tom Bateman's performance, has been having a gay fling with the French monarch.

But what really powers the play is the relationship between Henry II and his once beloved Queen, and Robert Lindsay and Joanna Lumley don't disappoint.

The play was written a few years after Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and Goldman clearly learned a lesson or two from that much greater play.

The sparring between Henry and Eleanor has much in common with Albee's George and Martha, and Lindsay and Lumley really strike sparks off each other, whether in furious rows or sudden moments when it becomes touchingly clear that some of their old love and tenderness survives. Lindsay is in terrific form, despite a worrying mullet hairstyle, dominating the stage with a mixture of rage and engaging wit. Lumley movingly suggests a woman all too well aware that she is past her prime as she steels herself to look in the mirror, but who refuses to surrender an inch to her husband. The play itself may be a touch arthritic but when Lindsay and Lumley are tearing chunks out of each other, it stills packs a powerful punch.



The Lion in Winter, Theatre Royal Haymarket, London UK (2011)

Fill in the gaps with the words below. All of the words are used and all are only used once (with one indicated

Exercise: Fill in the Gap

Have your students fill in the missing words from the choices given at the top. On the following page is an easier version of the exercise with hints about the meanings of the missing words.

Difficulty: **medium**

exception).

BELLOW	CUSHIONS	FRAGILE	TAWDRY
BICKER	DISINHERITED	GRIEVANCES	TRINITY
CHANCELLOR	DOWRY	LOOKING-GLASS	WHORE
CORONATION	FIANCÉE	SULLEN	YULE LOG

GEOFFREY: Warm and rosy time. The hot wine steams, the _____ roars and we're the fat that's in the fire.

ELEANOR: The way you _____ it's a wonder that he cares for any of you.

ELEANOR: Don't look _____, dear; it makes your eyes go small and piggy and your chin look weak. Where's your father?

RICHARD: Upstairs with the family _____.

ELEANOR: That is a mean and _____ way to talk about your _____.

ELEANOR: Is my hair in place? I've given up the _____; quick-silver has no sense of tact.

ELEANOR: My, what a greedy little _____ you are: king, king, king. Two of you must learn to live with disappointment.

ELEANOR: No, no, greet me like you used to. _____ I am not; affectionate pressure I can bear.

HENRY: Your _____, as I have understood them, have to do with Princess Alais and her _____.

HENRY: A king? Because you put your ass on purple _____?

HENRY: Philip, you haven't got the feel of this at all. Use all your voices: when I _____, _____ back. [*Same term, used twice.*]

RICHARD: Would you expect me, Father, to be _____ without a fight?

JOHN: You're going to love my _____.

GEOFFREY: And I'm to be his _____. Has he told you? John will rule the country while I run it. That's to say, he gets to spend the taxes that I get to raise.

VERSION WITH HINTS

Fill in the gaps with the words below. All of the words are used and all are only used once (with one indicated exception).

BELLOW	CUSHIONS	FRAGILE	TAWDRY
BICKER	DISINHERITED	GRIEVANCES	TRINITY
CHANCELLOR	DOWRY	LOOKING-GLASS	WHORE
CORONATION	FIANCÉE	SULLEN	YULE LOG

GEOFFREY: Warm and rosy time. The hot wine steams, the _____ (something you burn in the fireplace at Christmas time) roars and we're the fat that's in the fire.

ELEANOR: The way you _____ (argue) it's a wonder that he cares for any of you.

ELEANOR: Don't look _____ (sulky), dear; it makes your eyes go small and piggy and your chin look weak. Where's your father?

RICHARD: Upstairs with the family _____ (prostitute).

ELEANOR: That is a mean and _____ (vulgar) way to talk about your _____ (wife-to-be).

ELEANOR: Is my hair in place? I've given up the _____ (mirror); quick-silver has no sense of tact.

ELEANOR: My, what a greedy little _____ (group of three) you are: king, king, king. Two of you must learn to live with disappointment.

ELEANOR: No, no, greet me like you used to. _____ (easy to break) I am not; affectionate pressure I can bear.

HENRY: Your _____ (complaints), as I have understood them, have to do with Princess Alais and her _____ (marriage settlement).

HENRY: A king? Because you put your ass on purple _____ (pillows)?

HENRY: Philip, you haven't got the feel of this at all. Use all your voices: when I _____ (yell), _____ back. [*Same term, used twice.*]

RICHARD: Would you expect me, Father, to be _____ (cut out of your will) without a fight?

JOHN: You're going to love my _____ (accession to the throne).

GEOFFREY: And I'm to be his _____ (second in command to the king). Has he told you? John will rule the country while I run it. That's to say, he gets to spend the taxes that I get to raise.



The Lion in Winter, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, USA (2010)

Answers to Fill in the Gap

Fill in the gaps with the words below. All of the words are used and all are only used once.

GEOFFREY: Warm and rosy time. The hot wine steams, the Yule log roars and we're the fat that's in the fire.

ELEANOR: The way you bicker it's a wonder that he cares for any of you.

ELEANOR: Don't look sullen dear; it makes your eyes go small and piggy and your chin look weak. Where's your father?

RICHARD: Upstairs with the family whore.

ELEANOR: That is a mean and tawdry way to talk about your fiancée.

ELEANOR: Is my hair in place? I've given up the looking-glass; quick-silver has no sense of tact.

ELEANOR: My, what a greedy little trinity you are: king, king, king. Two of you must learn to live with disappointment.

ELEANOR: No, no, greet me like you used to. Fragile I am not; affectionate pressure I can bear.

HENRY: Your grievances, as I have understood them, have to do with Princess Alais and her dowry.

HENRY: A king? Because you put your ass on purple cushions?

HENRY: Philip, you haven't got the feel of this at all. Use all your voices: when I bellow, bellow back. [*Same term, used twice.*]

RICHARD: Would you expect me, Father, to be disinherited without a fight?

JOHN: You're going to love my coronation.

GEOFFREY: And I'm to be his chancellor. Has he told you? John will rule the country while I run it. That's to say, he gets to spend the taxes that I get to raise.

Exercise: Writing your own theatre review

Have your students read the following instructions and write their own review of The Lion in Winter at the English Theatre Frankfurt. Submit the reviews to our Education department at education@english-theatre.de for a chance to have their reviews recognized and shared.

Difficulty: **medium**

How to Write Your Own Theater Review

It's not as hard as you might think. Just keep the following ideas in mind:

Purpose

The purpose of a theatre review is two-fold:

- (1) to give the reader a sense of the play and
- (2) to let them know what you liked or didn't like about the production.

Structure

Follow this clear structure to write your first theatre review (the basic examples are from *Jekyll & Hyde*):

Paragraph 1 Introduce the production: What did you see? Where did you see it?

Last Thursday I saw Jekyll & Hyde at the English Theatre Frankfurt. It's a musical thriller with music by Frank Wildhorn and a book and song lyrics by Leslie Bricusse, who has written songs for many famous movies. The production has a small cast of very powerful singers and talented musicians.

Paragraph 2 Give a short summary of the plot: What happens when or how?

The story is based on the novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson. It's about a scientist who uses chemistry to separate the "evil" and the "good" within humankind. The evil side takes control of him and destroys him. It takes place in London during the Victorian era, when people were focused more on appearing respectable than actually behaving that way. It's a warning to us that, if we do not pay more attention to our real feelings, we could allow darkness to grow within us until it takes control. That's very relevant today when many of us use social media to create a false image of our lives as happy, lucky, beautiful people and do not accept that sometimes we are sad or angry, unlucky and unattractive.

Paragraph 3 Discuss the acting and directing: How were the performances?

First I have to say that the cast is full of very strong singers. I was especially impressed by John Addison in the lead roles of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Matt Bond as Spyder and Lord Savage. The two female leads, Clodagh Long and Samantha Dorsey, sounded best when they were singing duets with Dr. Jekyll. The action was sexy and moved quickly but it was sometimes funny when it should have been serious. It was an odd choice to have the murdered priest walk back onstage and lie down after the interval.

Paragraph 4 What did you think of the lighting, costumes, set, sound, music?

The set was very impressive. It made Dr. Jekyll look like he was an experiment of all the others, who looked down onto him. The lighting was good for setting the right mood: dark, erotic, scary. There's a good lighting effect when Hyde takes control, but I won't give it away. The costumes made it clear who was part of the upper class and the lower class and this was important information to the story.

Paragraph 5 Summarize your overall impression of the experience, maybe giving it a star rating.

This show does not have any songs that get stuck in your head like some shows (Hamilton, Tanz der Vampire). However, the atmosphere is good, the story moves along quickly and the performers are all very strong singers. I would therefore recommend the show and give it three stars out of five. (★★★ - -)

Now you've read a complete sample review. After you see *The Lion in Winter*, write your own review of the show. But don't wait too long; it's much easier to do when the impressions are all fresh in your minds!

WHO SAID IT?

The Lion in Winter has some very memorable lines.
Read the quotes below and decide who said what.

1. "What shall we hang first? The holly or each other?"
2. "Of course he has a knife! I have a knife. We all have knives. It's 1183 and we're all barbarians!"
3. You stink, you know that? You're a stinker and you stink.
4. "I know. You know I know. I know you know I know. We know Henry knows, and Henry knows we know it. We're a knowledgeable family."
5. Kings, queens, knights everywhere you look and I'm the only pawn.
 - a. I haven't got a thing to lose: that makes me dangerous.
6. No-it's all false. You know what I am? I'm the family nothing. Geoffrey's smart and Richard's brave and I'm not anything.
7. You love nothing. You are incomplete. The human parts of you are missing. You're as dead as you are deadly.
8. And if I were Father, I'm not sure I'd keep the three of us at all.

You don't take prisoners, no, you don't. And with good reason. Dungeon doors can swing both ways, but caskets have no hinges. ,f
9. Henry II: The day those stout hearts band together is the day that pigs get wings.

-----: There'll be pork in the treetops come the morning."
10. "We have so many wars. Which one is this?"

Answers:

1. Henry
2. Eleanor
3. John
4. Geoffrey
5. Alais
6. John
7. Richard
8. Geoffrey
9. Eleanor
10. Philip

Exercise: Doing your own dramaturgy

Have your students read the following instructions and write their own dramaturgical research on the characters and events in *The Lion in Winter*.

Difficulty: **medium to difficult**

In groups or individually, go online and research the real-life people and events

- Henry Plantagenet
- Eleanor of Aquitaine
- Richard Coeur de Lion
- Geoffrey Plantagenet
- John Plantagenet
- Alais (Alys) Capet
- Philip Capet
- Civil war between Eleanor and Henry
- Relationship between England and France around 1183
- French society around 1183
- James Goldman (playwright of *The Lion in Winter*)

Report the relevant information you find to the rest of your class. In this case, relevant means that it gives you and the others more insight into the personality and situation of the characters and the importance or impact of the events. For example, things Richard does when he's 50 and Henry is dead might not be relevant to the play, when he's only 26 and his father is still alive.

