

# THE LION IN WINTER

by James Goldman
Directed by Edward Stern

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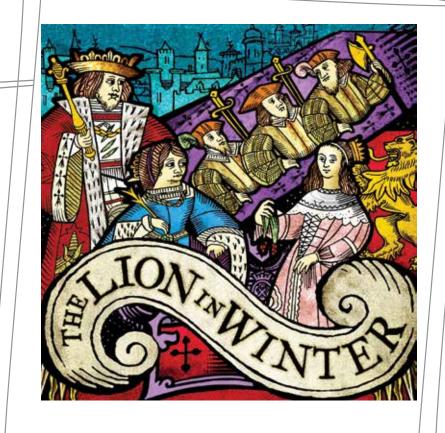














At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some things are worth

slowing down for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together **WU? @ THE REP**—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions **(A/S/L)**, a plot summary **(FYI)**, biographical information **(F2F)**, historical context **(B4U)**, and other bits and pieces **(HTH)**. Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means **IRL**, anyway.



The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials accessible to students and easy for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study

guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, www.repstl.org, for additional information including activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom.



As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

# **WELCOME!**

The desire to learn, insatiable when awakened, can sometimes lie dormant until touched by the right teacher or the right experience. We at The Rep are grateful to have the opportunity to play a role supporting you as you awaken the desire for learning in your students.

Today's political intrigues and machinations are nothing new. Throughout history those who want power have schemed to get it while those with power have plotted to keep it. England in 1183 was no different, with the added factor that most of the folks contriving were in the same family. Intrigue, conspiracy, estrangement, collusion and bickering—it is all part of Henry II's family reunion as he makes plans to announce who is next to wear the crown.

It would be a good idea to take a minute to give your students these quick theatre etiquette reminders:

- This show has one intermission; there will be time for bathroom breaks before the show and halfway through.
- The actors can hear the audience and appreciate the laughter, gasps and quiet attention to action. However, talking, moving around and eating is very distracting to others and can dampen the energy on stage.
- Pictures, phone calls and texting are not allowed at any time during the performance.

Live theatre won't allow your students to take a passive role—they must work with us to create the experience which takes the learning deeper. Our unique ability to fuse words and images onstage allows your students to explore new ideas as well as excites their imaginations. We will do our part so your students will be stirred to understandings and self-awareness while delving into new and familiar worlds. You are doing your part by using The Rep to extend your intellectual and aesthetic curriculum. Thank you!

Marsha Coplon

Director of Education

#### REP EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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KING HENRY II: 50 years old; the aging but still vital and mentally sharp King of England who has yet to name an heir to his throne.

ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE: 61 years old; Henry's wife who has been a queen for nearly 50 years and is a force to be reckoned with in the political game, a rarity for a woman of her time.

JOHN: 16 years old; the youngest son of Henry and Eleanor who is prone to sulkiness and bratty outbursts, but is still Henry's favorite and feels a sense of entitlement to the throne.

GEOFFREY: 25 years old; the middle surviving son of Henry and Eleanor who feels passed over by both his parents, and as a result, has a cold and amoral demeanor.

RICHARD THE LIONHEART: 26 years old; Henry and Eleanor's eldest surviving son who has proven himself the strongest leader with his successful career on the battlefield and is Eleanor's favored son to be named heir.

ALAIS CAPET: 23 yeas old; the beautiful mistress of Henry who is deeply in love with him and has a ruthless streak of her own despite being viewed as a pawn by most of the other characters.

PHILIP II: 17 years old; the King of France who has been on the throne for three years and is not nearly as accomplished as Henry in the political game due to his lack of experience, but shows himself to be a willing and quick learner.



# **READ MORE ABOUT IT**

Want more information? Explore the following resources, chosen just for you by our friends at the St. Louis County Libraries.

#### **BOOKS**

The Demon's Brood: A History of the Plantagenet Dynasty by Desmond Seward

Exploring English Castles by Edd Morris

Eleanor of Aquitaine: The Mother Queen of the Middle Ages by Desmond Seward Kings & Queens of Great Britain by David Soud

Not in Front of the Corgis: Secrets of Life Behind the

Royal Curtains
by Brian Hoey

The Rough Guide to the Royals by Alice Hunt FILMS

The Lion in Winter

The Royals

#### E-MEDIA

Clash of Crowns: William the Conqueror, Richard Lionheart and Eleanor of Aquitaine by Mary McAuliffe



## **SPOILER ALERT!**

IT'S CHRISTMAS in 1183 at the English royal palace in Chinon, France, and King Henry is in the castle chamber of his beautiful mistress Alais Capet, who is deeply in love with the King. They discuss how Henry has yet to name an heir to his throne. His eldest son, also named Henry, died the previous summer, and now King Henry plans to name his youngest son, John, who is still a teenager, as heir. Henry's wife, however, has other plans.

THE QUEEN, Eleanor of Aquitaine, has been imprisoned by her husband in a tower for the past 10 years and is being temporarily released for the holiday. She wishes to see their oldest surviving son Richard, who has already proven himself a leader on the battlefield, inherit the throne. Henry says his primary goal in naming an heir is ensure his empire lives on after his death.

RICHARD AND JOHN, along with their brother Geoffrey, have gathered the castle's reception hall for the Christmas Eve festivities. They have a conversation about which of them will become king. Geoffrey complains about being looked over. Eleanor, Henry and Alais soon join them.

AFTER THE GROUP exchanges pleasantries, King Philip II of France enters to discuss the treaty his deceased father, King Louis VII, made with Henry 16 years ago. As part of the treaty, Alais, who is Philip's sister, was promised to whichever son Henry names as heir to his throne, therby making her the future Queen. In exchange, Henry was given

the French region of Vexin. If Henry fails to see Alais married to his heir, he must return Vexin to French rule.

HENRY EXPLAINS that he cannot currently marry Alais to his heir because he has not yet chosen one. He also points out that if he dies without an heir, a civil war is likely to break out between the sons for a fight for the throne. Philip tells Henry that Alais must be married immediately, thus forcing Henry to choose an heir sooner, otherwise Vexin will be returned to France per the treaty's terms.

AFTER PHILIP DEPARTS, Eleanor

mentions how much she loves
Alais (though Alais seems hesitant
to believe it). Eleanor raised the
young woman from the time she was
seven years old, when she first arrived
at Henry's court after the treaty was
signed. However, the women remain rivals
for Henry's affections. Eleanor asks Henry
why he cannot simply return Vexin, but he
responds that it is a strategically important
territory and forfeiting it would cost England

LATER, HENRY ANNOUNCES to everyone that he has named Richard as his heir, and thus, Alais is to be wed to him. However, Eleanor, who knows how deceitful Henry can be, believes he is only bluffing. Richard agrees because he does not believe Henry would suddenly give him everything without an ulterior motive. After assuring everyone that he is serious because it will give what he wants (to prevent civil war and keep his kingdom intact), Henry leaves. John is furious and barges out. Eleanor tries to convince Geoffrey and Richard to scheme with her against Henry, but they refuse as

considerable power.



neither one trusts their calculating, though intelligent and powerful, mother. Geoffrey convinces John to side with him and Philip in waging war against Henry. Henry goes to Alais, telling her in confidence he has no intention of marrying her to Richard or making him the heir.

SOON AFTER, when alone with Eleanor, Henry tells her he wishes to take the region of Aquitaine from Richard to give to John as consolation for making Richard king. However, Eleanor insists he give it back to her, as it was her land before she and Henry married. They're briefly as a standstill as Henry needs Eleanor's permission to transfer the land. He then offers Eleanor her freedom in return for her signature. Eleanor agrees but only on the condition that Alais and Richard marry immediately.

HENRY ACQUIESCES and calls all of his sons plus Alais and Philip into the hall and asks for a priest to perform the wedding. Alais loudly protests and begs Henry not to do it. Just as the priest is to begin the ceremony, Richard learns that he will lose Aquitaine in marrying Alais. He instantly calls off the wedding. John learns that

he is still Henry's chosen heir and rejoices. Philip calls Henry out for never intending to marry Alais and Richard in the first place and demands that Henry honor the treaty now by either seeing Alais married to the heir or returning Vexin. Henry refuses both options, and Philip leaves in anger. Richard informs his father that he is willing to go to war against him for the throne. Henry responds by saying he will imprison Richard until he agrees to surrender the throne to John.

BACK IN HER CHAMBER, Eleanor learns that since he believed Richard was to be made heir, John had planned to wage war against Henry. She tells Richard, currently imprisoned in the castle, to ask for Philip's soldiers to help him escape from the castle before she informs Henry of John's betrayal.

MEANWHILE, GEOFFREY visits Philip in his chamber and insists that he will be named heir after Henry finds out John has betrayed him. If this happens, he asks Philip for France's military support in return for all of England's land holdings in France. Philip agrees right before John jumps out from behind a tapestry and calls Geoffrey a traitor. Geoffrey tries to convince his younger brother he was only bluffing, but John declares he can trust no one.

RICHARD THEN knocks on the door, and John and Geoffrey immediately hide behind the tapestry together. Richard enters and asks for Philip's military support as well. In return, he will give Philip the Vexin territory as well as the region of Brittany. The two discuss their friendship over the years, strongly implying that they had a romantic relationship two years ago in France.

HENRY KNOCKS at the door, and Richard hides behind the bed curtains. After Henry enters, he inquires about Philip's strategy. Philips states his plan is merely to be patient—he is young and has time on his side. With Henry's age and the fighting between his sons and wife, he's bound to politically weaken or simply die over time. Philip also tells Henry about his romantic relationship with Richard and states that he only pretended to love Richard so that he could exploit his homosexuality as a scandal.

RICHARD LEAPS OUT, declaring that Philip is lying and truly does love him. Geoffrey emerges from behind the tapestry and also reveals John, making it known to Henry that he cannot trust any of his sons. Defeated, he disowns all of them.



LATER IN HIS CHAMBER, Henry discusses with Eleanor all the political scheming in their family. Henry informs her that he wants to have their marriage annulled so that he can marry Alais and have a son with her for a new heir. In fact, he plans to embark on a trip to Rome that night to have the Pope himself annul the marriage. Eleanor, although always plotting against her husband, is clearly still in love with Henry and is upset by this news. She tells him that she and their sons will join together against Henry to take his throne. He tells her he will lock all of their sons in a cellar while he travels to Rome so that they are powerless while he is gone.

AFTER HENRY LEAVES Eleanor, he joins Alais in her chamber and tells her of his plan to have his marriage to Eleanor annulled so that he marry her and have a child. She tells him she will not marry him unless he kills all three of his sons or imprisons them for the rest of their lives. Otherwise, she believes the three of them and Eleanor will conspire to murder her future child. Henry agrees.

MEANWHILE, ELEANOR brings a breakfast tray to her sons who are locked in the castle's wine cellar. However, rather than carrying food, the tray is actually full of daggers to help them all escape. Instead, they tell her they don't want to simply escape—they want to kill Henry. Their father then enters with Alais prepared to sentence all of them to death for treason. Henry even raises his sword to kill Richard but finds that he cannot go through with it. Richard, Geoffrey and John all grab the knives and run out to their freedom, also unable to follow through with their plans of killing Henry. Eleanor and Henry embrace to mark a temporary truce. Before Eleanor leaves to go back to being imprisoned, she tells Henry she will see him next Christmas, but he tells her he will allow her to come back to join the family for Easter. Everything is as it was.





Costume renderings by costume designer Mathew J. LeFebvre



Keep an eye out for themes and symbols in any work you read or view.
These elements can signify an idea or emotion the writers were trying to convey and can lead to a greater understanding of the work as a whole.

#### **POWER STRUGGLES**

Everyone has power at some point in the story depending on the leverage they possess at any given time. Alais is powerful because she can give Henry a new heir, Eleanor holds power over Aquitaine, Richard has military power, etc. However, that power is usually fleeting depending on the shifting value of said leverage. For example: what if an heir from Alais becomes unnecessary? Or Richard's military support wavers? Because power does not last long with any one person, each character must remain on his or her toes and continually scheme.

#### **MORTALITY**

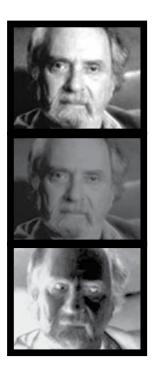
King Henry may only be 50 years old, but that was considered an advanced age in the 12th century. Most of the story's drama revolves around the King's struggle to name an heir, the main effect of which won't occur until after he's died. One would think Henry wouldn't care so much about who his heir is because they won't take power until he's dead. However, his kingdom is his legacy, which is something he can hold on to as his future becomes uncertain. Also interesting is that many characters reference Henry's death not so much as the sacred end of a person's life but as the birth of a new political era that offers many opportunities for power. This was typical in the lives of royals.

#### **TRUST**

Alliances form and shift multiple times in the play, sometimes all within one conversation. Familial ties seem to be irrelevant, as none of Henry and Eleanor's sons trust their parents or each other. John may trust Henry at first, but that seems to derive more from entitlement than a close emotional tie. And, surprisingly, even though Eleanor shares the same cause with Richard, for him to be made heir, he still doesn't trust her at first because he doesn't believe her motives are what she says them to be. Because Geoffrey constantly shifts his allegiance based on who has the most power at any given minute, he cannot be trusted for long.

#### **HISTORY**

There are several references made to events prior to when the play takes place. The past haunts every relationship and interaction between the characters. Family relations are always complicated, and people are usually judged by their previous actions, but with lives at stake, not to mention power on a global scale, the bonds between Henry, Eleanor, Richard, Geoffrey, John, Philip and Alais are made up of especially tangled webs of love, betrayal and secrets. Every decision they make on this particular day in 1183 is based on of decades of emotions.



## **JAMES GOLDMAN**

Playwright, novelist and screenwriter James Goldman was born in Chicago in 1927. After graduating from the University of Chicago, he began postgraduate work at Columbia University in music criticism until he was drafted into the army in World War II. After his discharge, Goldman pursued a career in playwriting. He drew on his army experience for his first play on Broadway, a comedy titled Blood, Sweat, and Stanley Poole (1961), which he co-wrote with his brother William. The two also collaborated on the Broadway musical A Family Affair (1962). Goldman's play The Lion in Winter premiered on Broadway in 1966, and Goldman has recalled the common misconception that the play was immediately successful.

"Most everyone...is totally convinced the play has always been a great success. Even people who actually saw it during its run on Broadway are apt to mention what a hit it was or that they caught it in its second year," he has said. "In point of fact, Lion opened... to highly contradictory notices, including a thunderous dismissal in The New York Times. Eighty-three performances later, it closed and sank from sight for what I was convinced would be forever. Then came the film."

The film Goldman referred to is the 1968 movie starring Peter O'Toole as Henry, Katharine Hepburn as Eleanor (in an Oscarwinning performance), and Anthony Hopkins as Richard. The adaptation was a commercial and critical success and even won Goldman an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay. Interestingly, his brother William would go on to enjoy his own Oscar success the following year when he won Best Original Screenplay for the classic *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969).

Goldman has spoken about how the film was not only a surprise success but also seemed to reinvigorate interest in the play.

"I still can't quite believe what happened," he has said. "There are many plays that fail and then become successful movies...

And there are other plays that attain a brief new lease on life from being filmed, only to disappear again. But *Lion*, as a stage piece, was more than reprieved by the movie. It was transformed into a theatre work that has been performed all over the world."

Goldman found further success in writing books for musicals, having collaborated with famed composer Stephen Sondheim twice—first with the TV musical *Evening Primrose* (1966) and then again on Broadway with *Follies* (1971), which revolves around a reunion of Ziegfeld Follies actresses.

In 1976, Goldman dove back into medieval times by writing the screenplay for *Robin and Marian* (1976), starring Sean Connery and Audrey Hepburn as the older, wiser Robin Hood and Maid Marian. In 1980, he would re-visit King John as subject matter in his third novel *Myself as Witness*. Goldman also returned to writing for TV in the 1980s by adapting two classic novels into CBS specials: *Oliver Twist* (1982) and Anna *Karenina* (1985).

In 1998, Goldman passed away from a heart attack at age 71 in New York

# BTW

James Goldman's brother, William, is also well known as the author of *The Princess Bride*.



**FUTILE:** ineffective or useless

**COURTESAN:** a paramour who associates

with men of nobility or wealth

**GORGON:** a mean or ugly woman; name comes from mythological Greek monsters who had claws, wings and snakes for hair

**MEDUSA:** one of the three Gorgons in mythology

**STONEHENGE:** a prehistoric monument in England made of large standing stones

**DOWRY:** the money or goods given to a husband from her wife's family at marriage

**DEPRAVED:** corrupt or wicked

**THOMAS BECKET:** Archbishop of Canterbury and former close advisor to King Henry, who is murderd after a conflict with the king

**ROSAMUND CLIFFORD:** a mistress of King Henry II who was famous for her beauty

**KING LEAR:** the eponymous character from one of Shakespeare's tragedies

**CHANCELLOR:** head of parliamentary government

**TACTILE:** having to do with the sense of touch

**CONNUBIAL:** of marriage or wedlock

**MENIAL:** lowly or degrading

**HELEN OF TROY:** a great beauty from Greek mythology whose abduction sparked the Trojan War

**PERFORATE:** to make a hole or to pierce through

**MEDEA:** a sorceress from Greek mythology who killed her children as vengeance against her husband

**DUNCE:** a dull-witted or unintelligent person

**DIPLOMAT:** someone who conducts negotiations or maintains relations

**ALCHEMIST:** a person who studied alchemy, the medieval forerunner of chemistry, based on the supposed transformation of matter and concerned particularly with attempts to convert base metals into gold

**DORMEZ BIEN:** French for "sleep well"

**CHARLEMAGNE:** the emperor of the Holy

Roman Empire, 800-814

**INTERMINABLE:** seemingly endless

**LARK:** an amusing prank or joke

**ULTIMATUM:** a final demand involving specific conditions

**AGOG:** highly excited by eagerness or curiosity

**STALEMATE:** a situation in which no progress can be currently made

**TREASON:** the offense of acting to overthrow one's government

**PETER ABÉLARD and HÉLOÏSE:** a famous love affair between two 12th century French scholars

**ANTIGONE:** a character from Greek mythology who was punished severely for defying her uncle, the king

**VIVAT REX:** Latin for "long live the king"





# **REAL-LIFE ROYALS**

Although the plot in *The Lion in Winter* is fictional, all of its main characters are based on actual people who lived in medieval England. Knowing the historical background of the royal family and the ties that bound them will help you more fully grasp the story and the political and personal circumstances surrounding it.

1122/24: Eleanor of Aquitaine (whose exact birth year is not known) is the first child born to William X, Duke of Aquitaine.

1133: Henry of Anjou is born in 1133 to

Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou, and Matilda, daughter of King Henry I of England.

1135: Despite Matilda being named by her father as heir to his throne, it is taken over instead by Matilda's cousin Stephen.

1137: William X dies, leaving Eleanor a vast inheritance and making her the "most eligible heiress in Europe." That

same year, she marries French heir Louis VII, whose own father King Louis VI died shortly after the wedding, making Louis VII and Eleanor King and Queen of France.

1152: Eleanor and King Louis VII's marriage is annulled after years of being unable to produce a male heir, though they did have two daughters. Two months later, Eleanor marries Henry of Anjou.

1154: Henry succeeds to the throne and becomes King Henry II of England. Especially interested in government and law, Henry enforces the use of juries and sends justices on regular tours of the country to try cases on behalf of the crown. It is believed that through his legal reforms, Henry becomes a major founder of common law in England. A well-educated, intelligent and charismatic

woman, Eleanor plays an active role in Henry's empire, especially in French-English relations.

1155: Henry II and Eleanor's first son to survive infancy, Henry, is born.

1157: Eleanor gives birth to a third son, Richard.

1158: Eleanor gives birth to a fourth son, Geoffrey.

1166/67: Eleanor gives birth to a fifth son, John, who becomes his father's favorite.

1170: A major disagreement over churchstate relations between King Henry II and his close advisor Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, results in Becket's murder

by military knights.

1173: Eleanor and her sons revolt against Henry, after which he imprisons her.

1183: Eleanor and Henry II's eldest son Henry dies, making Richard the supposed heir to the throne.

1189: Richard, who refuses to give Aquitaine to John per his father's request, joins forces with King Philip II of France against Henry II, who dies soon after. After taking the throne, King Richard I releases Eleanor.

1190: Again becoming closely involved in English government, Eleanor acts as regent (a substitute for the monarch) in England when Richard joins the Third Crusade.





captured in Austria and eventually transferred to the custody of German Emperor Henry VI, who holds him for a very large ransom. In the absence of Richard, John tries to seize control of throne, but his plans are thwarted, largely by the actions of Eleanor. John is banished.

1193: Upon returning from

the Holy Land, Richard is

1194: After the ransom is paid, Richard is released. He returns to England briefly to reassert himself as king. A month after returning home, Richard goes to Normandy

and spends the remaining years of his life in warfare with King Philip II.

1196: John and Richard reconcile, and Richard names his younger brother as heir.

1199: King Richard I dies and his brother John inherits the throne. As a result, Eleanor's political influence diminishes. Relations between King John and King Philip II sour, and England and France break out into war.

1204: After spending her final years in Aquitaine, Eleanor dies and is buried next to Henry II.



1206: King John loses several important English territories including Normandy and Anjou to France. Determined to win them back, he raises taxes considerably for financial support, and his popularity plummets even further.

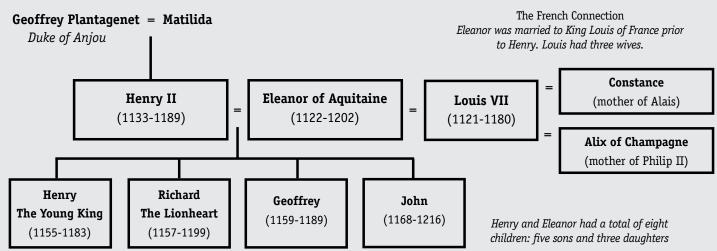
1209: After several disputes with the Church, including the argument over Pope Innocent III appointing his friend Stephen Langton as the Archbishop of Canterbury, John is excommunicated.

1215: Because of strong disagreements between King John and his discontented barons, civil war breaks out. On the losing

side, John is forced to accept the terms of the Magna Carta, a charter that limits royal power, and protects Church and feudal rights. At its core, the Magna Carta states that the monarch is as much under the rule of law as his people, and their rights should be upheld even against the wishes of the sovereign. However, John breaks the contract, claiming it was signed while under duress. Civil war again breaks out, and the rebels call for the aid of Prince Louis VIII of France (son of Philip II), who invades England.

1216: John dies. His son Henry III, only nine years old, inherits the throne.

#### THE ROYAL HOUSE OF PLANTAGENET



11



The category of historical fiction includes titles such as:

Gladiator
The Patriot
Troy
The King's Speech
Gangs of New York
Dances with Wolves
The Sound of Music

and many more!

### **HISTORICAL FICTION**

The Lion in Winter might be based on real-life historical figures, but it is still a work of fiction. Make sense? A story like this actually belongs to a specific genre called historical fiction, which is made up of narratives that take place during a significant time period in the past and often take imaginative liberties with historical events and personages.

#### In the Writer's Own Words...

Playwright James Goldman explained his creative process when developing his story revolving around the real-life King Henry, Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine and their sons. "I know that I have never met these characters; I made them up," he has said. "I read about the things they did. I studied them and then imagined what they felt and thought and said and wanted from their lives. What they were really like, of course, no one will ever know. This is, I am convinced, a blessing, and I feel dismay for all the people, who, a thousand years from now, will have our times on tape and film to study. They will see our faces, hear our voices, know it all and be deceived. They will be dealing with the surface, and the truth of things is always underneath. It has to be imagined."

#### Fiction's Fine Line

As shown in the timeline, Goldman's characterizations are based on facts. Eleanor and her sons did rebel against Henry, and as a result, Henry imprisoned Eleanor for years. Based on their actions, it does indeed seem that Henry favored John, and Eleanor favored Richard. But who knows if John was actually as bratty as he is portrayed or if Richard was as tender-hearted in his conversations with Philip? Eleanor was known to be a strong and revered woman of her time, but no one but her knows if she remained in love with Henry even after he imprisoned her.



#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

- Think of some of your favorite movies, books, TV shows, comic books, etc., that are examples of historical fiction. What appeals to you about them? Have you done more research on their time periods or real-life characters? What are some of the things you learned?
- It should be noted that historical fiction can often times be confused with historical fantasy, which incorporates magical or metaphysical elements into the story, or alternate/speculative history, in which events deviate significantly from reality, i.e. if a major historical event had unfolded differently. Can you think of examples of these subgenres? What makes them interesting?
- Unlike the medieval times, the present day has film and photographs to capture our times. However, Goldman said that despite this evidence, people who study it a thousand years from now will still "be deceived." Why do you think he felt this way? What did he mean when he said "the truth of things is always underneath?"