

## **THE LION IN WINTER**

by James Goldman

directed by Susan Myer Silton

**Jewel Theatre Company**

February 7 – 25, 2024

Susan Myer Silton, dramaturge

Solange Marcotte, dramaturge

## **GLOSSARY**

**Key:** **AD**=Anno Domini, Latin for “the year of the Lord”, the traditional representation of calendar year 1 and onward; **BC**=Before Christ, the traditional representation of the years before calendar year 1; **BCE**=Before Common Era, used in the same way as the traditional abbreviation BC; **CE**=Common Era, used in the same way as the traditional abbreviation AD.

## **Notes**

*When directly quoting a source, including the text of the play, it has been my convention not to change the original spelling, grammar, or punctuation, regardless of errors. In addition, if the source uses either the abbreviations AD and BC, or CE and BCE, I'll quote it as written.*

*References pertain to the Random House script, © 2004, and the Samuel French, © 1964/66.*

**The Time:** Christmas, 1183. In his “Historical Note” for the play, James Goldman writes that his play combines “a meeting of the French and English Kings in 1183 with a Royal Court held at Windsor the following year into a Christmas Court that never was”.

**The Place:** The action of the play takes place in “Henry's palace at Chinon, France ... famous for its grace and beauty”. The photo below shows what currently remains of the palace.



Chinon is a picturesque Loire Valley village, located at the juncture of three French provinces: Anjou, Poitou, and Touraine. An important defensive location since Gallo-Roman times, the first real castle was erected in the 10<sup>th</sup> century on the site, which extends nearly a third of a mile along the ridge overlooking the Vienne River.

Chateau de Chinon became Henry's main residence in 1154, when he succeeded the English King Stephen per the Treaty of Wallingford. The wranglings for power and position and inter-familial wars that lead to Henry's coronation were just as fraught as those that came after.

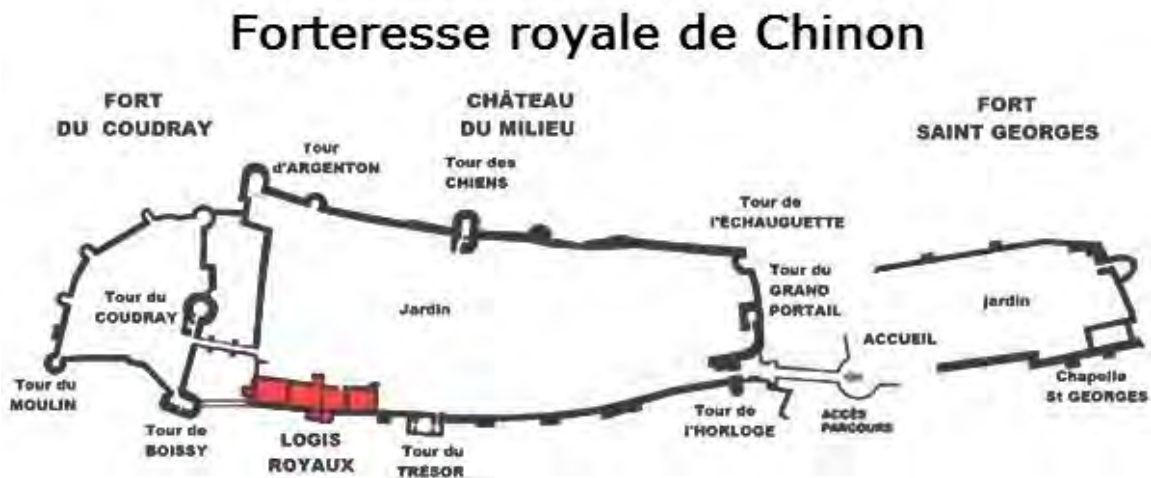
Among all his castles, Chinon was Henry's favorite. It remained the home of the Plantagenet clan until 1189, when Henry died. His earliest construction was Fort St. George, an outer fortification that housed a garrison to protect the most vulnerable part of the fortress. The fort was connected to the central part of the complex via a wooden drawbridge, which has now been replaced by a stone bridge per the photo below. Nearly all of it is gone; what remains is now the site of the modern visitor center and the entrance to the fortress.



Remains of Fort St. George, now the entrance and visitor center at Chateau de Chinon

How the original construction may have looked is unknown, except that it had three different strongholds separated by dry moats, as seen in the illustration below.

The official website of the castle, [FortressChinon.Fr](http://FortressChinon.Fr), provides background, history, photographs, and interesting facts about characters and events associated with Henry's palace at Chinon, France. Another source is the article "[Chateau de Chinon in the Loire Valley](#)" found on [ExperienceLoire.com](http://ExperienceLoire.com).



James Goldman described life at the fortress in "A Word About Castles", his notes for the screenplay for the 1968 movie:

Almost nothing is known about the castle at Chinon as it was in Henry's time; and little enough is known about 12th century castles in general. One thing is clear, however, and important for our purposes: only that such castles looked nothing like what we expect.

The stone fortresses that remain today were only the shell of castles as they were lived in. Most of the shelter for most of the staff, all of the workshops -- the armories, forges, stables and so on -- were made of wood. A castle courtyard was a crowded, teeming, dirty place with much more wood than stone to greet the eye.

A major castle, as Chinon was, was like a miniature town. Everything necessary to the life of the establishment existed inside the walls. Poultry, livestock, looms and tailors, mills for grinding grain, vast storerooms, water wells, boot makers, gardens - - everything vital to life under siege was somehow packed in.

At special times, like the Christmas Court during which the film occurs, the congestion was even worse than usual. All guests, the visiting nobles and clergymen, traveled with trains of varying size. So that, in addition to the usual crowding, we find hundreds of soldiers and servants living outdoors, jammed together in tents, huddling for warmth around dozens of fires.



Living conditions, even for royalty, were crude and rough. The castle rooms were spartan: a bed, a few chairs, chests for storage, clothes hung in the open on racks. Floors were covered with straw, which was swept away and replaced only occasionally. Interiors at high noon on a clear day were always dark, illumination coming from extremely smoky torches and candles. In winter, wind whistled through the open slit windows and the place was freezing cold.

## **ACT I**

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**HENRY II:** Please see Henry's biography by Solange Marcotte.

**JOHN:** Please see John's biography by Solange Marcotte.

**ALAIS CAPET:** Please see Alais' biography by Solange Marcotte.

**You're like the rocks at Stonehenge; nothing knocks you down:** Stonehenge is "perhaps the world's most famous prehistoric monument. It was built in several stages: the first monument was an early henge [ancient earthwork consisting of a circular bank and ditch] monument, built about 5,000 years ago, and the unique stone circle was erected in the late Neolithic period about 2500 BC" ("[History of Stonehenge](#)", EnglishHeritage.org).



Located on the Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, England, Stonehenge consists of blocks of artificially shaped sarsen stones, which date back to the Ice Age and once covered much of southern England. The stones are arranged post and lintel, where the massive horizontal stones are held up by equally strong vertical stones with large spaces between them. Most of the sarsen uprights weigh about 25 tons and are about 18 feet high. Alais' comment that nothing knocks Henry down ascribes to him the permanence, heft, and immovable mass of the stones. ([Brittanica.com](#))

**Rosamund:** An offstage character mentioned several times in the play, and in the timeline and biographies written by Solange Marcotte, Rosamund Clifford was Henry's mistress

from 1166 to 1174 or 1176. Although she died in 1176 before reaching the age of 30, she is still very much present in the story of the play.

Henry began his affair with Rosamund in 1166 when Eleanor was pregnant with John; Eleanor had at least eight pregnancies with Henry. Henry did not make the affair public until 1174, after he had imprisoned Eleanor for treason in 1173 for joining their sons Henry, Richard, and Geoffrey and their rebel supporters in The Revolt of 1173–1174.

Rosamund became a romantic figure even before her early death. Afterwards, the legends grew, and they continue to this day. Rosamund has been featured in, or the subject of, art, literature, cinema, theatre, and opera.

Folktales have her perishing at the hands of Eleanor. One story is depicted below in Evelyn De Morgan's Pre-Raphaelite painting, *Queen Eleanor and Fair Rosamund*.



*Queen Eleanor and Fair Rosamund* by Evelyn de Morgan, ca 1901-1902

*Google Arts and Culture* offers a [detailed analysis](#) of the painting and recounting of the legend:

Rosamund was the mistress of Henry II, who built a house for her at Woodstock in Oxfordshire. Legends say that he tried to keep her safe by installing her in a house

called Labyrinthus, which was in effect a maze. But Queen Eleanor found her way through by using a thread and poisoned her. The maze can be seen through the door behind the Queen. The stained glass window above Rosamund shows two lovers in an embrace. The Queen carries a small flask of poison, plus the thread that has led her through the maze. She brings with her shadowy evil forms – dragons, apes, and blood red roses lie at her feet. In contrast, winged cherubs and shadowy doves of peace accompany Rosamund and white roses, symbolising purity and innocence, lie at her feet. Rosamund stares at the flask of poison held by the Queen, recognising her doom.

Note - this legend makes an attractive picture, but is contradicted by historical fact. Henry imprisoned Queen Eleanor from 1174-1189 for supporting the rebellion of two of her sons against their father. Rosamund entered a nunnery in 1174 or 1176 and died there in 1176. At the time of Rosamund's death, Queen Eleanor was a prisoner in Winchester.

Further reading: "[Fair Rosamund, Mistress of Henry II](#)"; "[Eight myths about Fair Rosamund](#)"; "[Rosamund Clifford](#)"; and "[Rosamond: English mistress](#)" (Her name is also spelled "Rosamond", though it's less common.)

**Medusa ... gorgon:** From [GreekMythology.com](#):

Medusa was one of the three Gorgons, daughters of Phorcys and Ceto, sisters of the Graeae, Echidna, and Ladon – all dreadful and fearsome beasts.



Marble sculpture of Medusa by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1630

A beautiful mortal, Medusa was the exception in the family, until she incurred the wrath of Athena, either due to her boastfulness or because of an ill-fated love affair

with Poseidon. Transformed into a vicious monster with snakes for hair, she was killed by Perseus, who afterward used her still potent head as a weapon, before gifting it to Athena.

Medusa – whose name probably comes from the Ancient Greek word for “guardian” – was one of the three Gorgons, daughters of the sea gods Phorcys and Ceto, and sisters of the Graeae, Echidna, and Ladon. All of Medusa’s siblings were monsters by birth and, even though she was not, she had the misfortune of being turned into the most hideous of them all.

From then on, similarly to Euryale and Stheno, her older Gorgon sisters, Medusa was depicted with bronze hands and wings of gold. Poets claimed that she had a great boar-like tusk and tongue lolling between her fanged teeth. Writhing snakes were entwining her head in place of hair. Her face was so hideous and her gaze so piercing that the mere sight of her was sufficient to turn a man to stone.

**PHILIP, KING OF FRANCE:** Please see Philip’s biography by Solange Marcotte.

**The Vexin is a little county but it’s vital to me:** As seen on the map on the next page, the Vexin of the 12<sup>th</sup> century was small, as Henry tells Alais, but strategically located. It played a major role in Henry’s struggle with Philip, as well as the French and English kings who succeeded them. It was highly valued because of its proximity to Paris and its access to the coastal cities of Normandy.

In his essay, “[The Vexing Question of the Vexin](#)”, L. E. Williams explains further:

Wars have been fought over land – and sometimes over smaller parcels of land than the Vexin – but there are few places that were more contested than this stretch of land between four rivers [Seine, Epte, Andelle, and Oise]. Location is the guiding principle of real estate, and the location of the Vexin made it one of the most highly sought after lands in western Europe.

Williams details how the Vexin came to land in Henry’s hands:

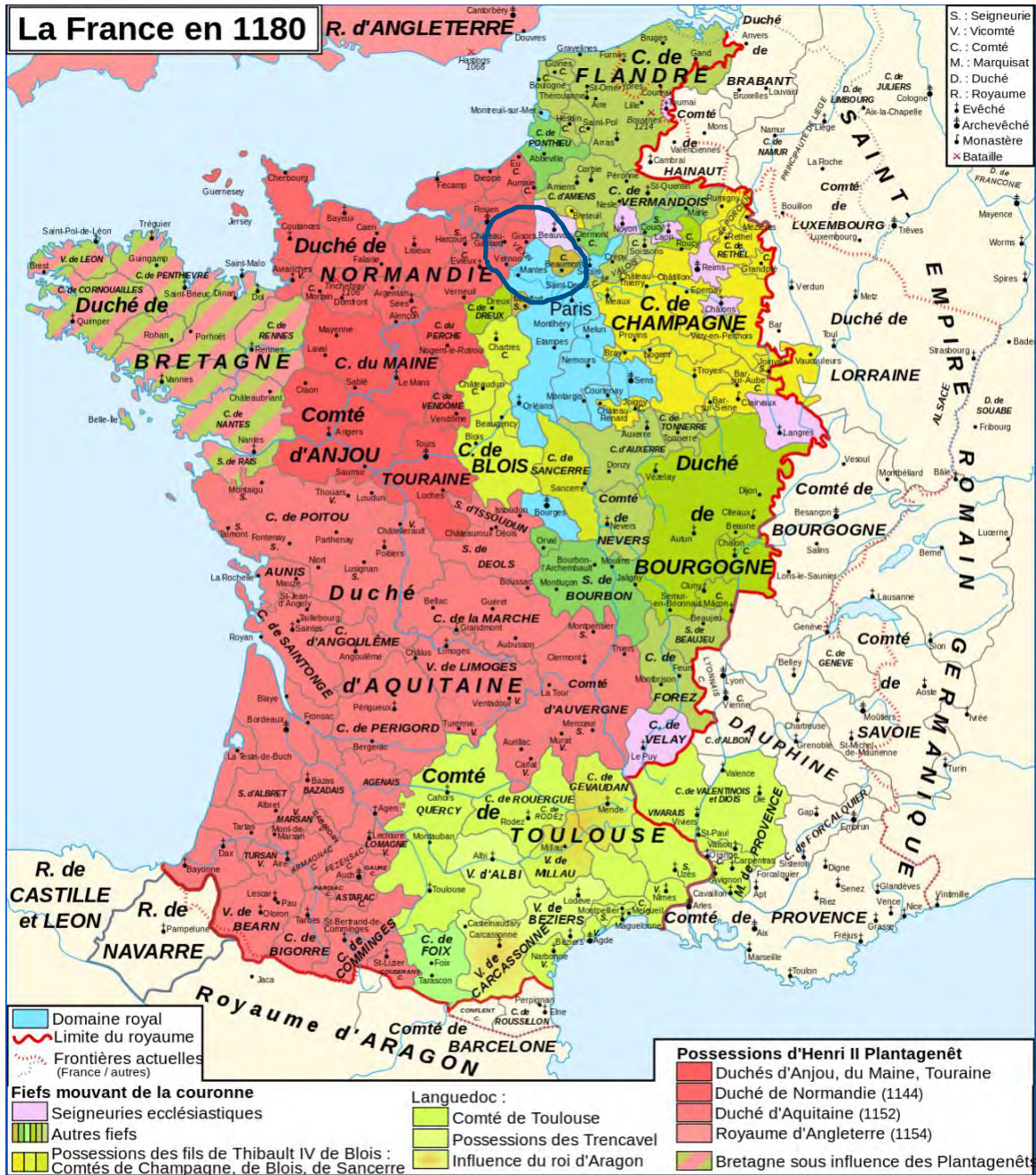
In 1158, Hal, the oldest surviving son of Henry II (later crowned as the Young King), was married to Margaret, daughter of Louis VII – with the French Vexin as her dowry. While Louis had scored minor points by the tacit statement that the Vexin was his to give away, it was Henry and the kingdom of England that now held the entire county.

Though the Young King died in 1183, Henry managed to keep the Vexin, this time on the understanding that Alys, sister of the young Philippe II, finally be married to Henry’s eldest surviving son, Richard, count of Poitou – the couple had been engaged since 1169.

What followed post-dates the play. Through a circuitous route that included Henry’s death,



the end of Alais' and Richard's engagement, Richard's purchase of the Vexin from Philip, Philip's seizure and Richard's subsequent recapture, the county was finally returned to France when John lost it to Philip following Richard's death.



Map of France in 1180. The Vexin, visible between Paris and Rouen, is circled in blue.

**With mace and chain?** A mace and chain, also called a chain mace or a flail, is a variation on the medieval weapon and agricultural tool called a flail. It usually has a chain wrapped in leather or other material with a spiked steel ball on the end.





Medieval flail or mace and chain

**The priests write all the history these days:** In medieval times, the ability to read and write was limited to a small percentage of the population, including clergy members. As a result, historical records and documents were often created and controlled by religious institutions, which could potentially influence the narrative of history to align with their beliefs and perspectives. This could have led to certain events or individuals being portrayed in a particular light or omitted from historical accounts. However, it's important to note that over time, historians, and scholars have worked to uncover diverse perspectives and fill in gaps in our understanding of history through archaeological evidence, oral traditions, and the study of non-traditional sources. While there may have been some bias in historical records, the field of history is constantly evolving as new evidence is discovered and interpreted. ([Quora](#))

**RICHARD Lionheart:** One of the monikers for Richard. Please see the biography of Richard written by Solange Marcotte.

**GEOFFREY:** Please see the biography of Geoffrey written by Solange Marcotte.

**ELEANOR:** Please see the biography of Eleanor written by Solange Marcotte.

**quicksilver:** liquid mercury, used until the 1940s as the reflective coating for mirrors. Aluminum is now used instead, as quicksilver is highly toxic. ([MoyesGlass.com](#))

**Did the Channel part for you?** Henry is referring to the English Channel, also called the Channel, which is an arm of the Atlantic Ocean that separates Southern England from northern France. Eleanor was imprisoned in several various locations in England. Her barge would have had to cross the Channel, then travel south towards the Bay of Biscay to reach the southwest coast of France where she would have taken the Loire River to the Vienne River to Chateau de Chinon, per the map on the following page.



**I'm Eleanor, who might have been your mother:** Eleanor was married to Philip's father, Louis VII, but the marriage was annulled when she did not bear him sons. Eleanor married Henry immediately after the annulment. Louis married his second cousin, Constance of Castile, but a male heir was still not forthcoming. Five weeks after Constance died in childbirth with their second daughter, Louis married Adela of Champagne. She gave birth to Louis' only son, Philip, on August 21, 1165. When Louis died in 1180, Philip succeeded him, and became known from then on as Philip II.

**scribes:** a scribe is a person who copies out documents, especially one employed to do this before printing was invented.

**There is a legend of a king called Lear with whom I have a lot in common. Both of us have kingdoms and three children we adore and both of us are old. But there it stops. He cut his kingdom into bits. I can't do that:** Per [IMBD's article, \*The Lion in Winter\*](#):

Henry compares his situation to that of King Lear. Although Shakespeare published "King Lear" in 1605, it was based on the legend of Leir of Britain as recounted by

Geoffrey of Monmouth, who was alive in Henry's day.

Several reviewers have called the play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolff?* meets *King Lear*.

**chancellor:** I'm supplying a rather long description of the office of chancellor because it's germane to the play in two important ways. One, it shows how very intelligent and educated Geoffrey must have been to be entrusted by John – and Richard, for that matter – to act as his chancellor. Two, it shows the scope of Thomas Becket's responsibility as Henry's chancellor and how close and trusted a relationship that must have been for Henry. (See entry for Thomas Becket on pp. 14-17 in this glossary.) Per [Stephen Tempest](#):

In early mediaeval times, the Chancery or Chancellery was the royal writing-office. It was in charge of preparing the written documents required by the King's administration -- which, in those largely-illiterate days, were not very many in number.

The most important documents were charters: these were written confirmations of a grant of land or legal privileges to a royal subject or organisation, often in return for rent or other services which were laid out in the charter. In addition there were writs, which were royal commands addressed to an individual or group ordering them to perform some task; and letters patent, which covered the rest of the King's public correspondence. The Chancery prepared and sent out these documents, perhaps kept copies of them, and handled any incoming communications. Since literacy was such a rare talent, the clerks of Chancery were almost always churchmen. The person in charge of the Chancery was the Chancellor, and he was usually a senior bishop or archbishop. He normally kept the Royal Seal in his possession, since this was used to authenticate the charters and writs which were sent out.

The Chancellor was thus a key figure in the royal administration; he was at the centre of events, and all the royal paperwork passed through his office. Since he was also quite often the senior religious official regularly present at court, he frequently served as the royal chaplain and confessor, the 'keeper of the king's conscience'. In some countries, the position of Chancellor became formally tied to a specific office - for example in France the Archbishop of Reims almost always held the role, while the Archbishop of Mainz was ex officio the Chancellor of the Kingdom of Germany as part of the Holy Roman Empire. In England, however, the appointment was more directly in the King's hands.

In France and England (though not so much in Germany) the Chancellor also acquired a significant judicial role. This was an evolution and specialisation rather than a major shift in their responsibilities. A mediaeval King was the supreme judge of his people; many kings actually heard lawsuits and held trials in person [Henry tells Eleanor, "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.] If they lacked the time, knowledge or interest, they could delegate this duty to people who could act in their name and with their authority: and this was how the concept of the judiciary emerged.



The Chancellor was always involved in this aspect of the King's business: partly because they were a senior royal advisor and so likely to be called upon to give advice, but also because their specific duties made them especially involved in this aspect of government. The vast majority of mediaeval legal cases were over land -- its ownership, boundaries, legal obligations of tenants, and questions of inheritance and dowry. Since the Chancery was the royal organisation responsible for preparing and archiving the records of land grants by the king, the Chancellor was the one with the best knowledge of who owned what. When it came to enforcing the King's decisions, as well, this would be done by a royal command written out by the Chancellor's clerks and sent to the relevant local government officials (the sheriffs or baillis). As such, if the King was going to delegate the administration of justice to anyone, the Chancellor was the logical person.

**Only you—the child I raised but didn't bear:** See Solange's biography of Alais.

**He found Miss Clifford in the mists of Wales and brought her home for closer observation. Liking what he saw, he scrutinized 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 –**

Rosamund and Henry's affair ended in 1176, only two years after he made it public. Although he had imprisoned Eleanor for attempted treason, she still had strong influence. No doubt that Rosamund's presence was humiliating for Eleanor. She might have threatened Henry with divorce if he did not give up Rosamund. Divorce would have cost him the Aquitaine and all the lands Eleanor had inherited from her father, as they would have been restored to her. Losing those holdings would have significantly reduced his power and domain.

**I have borne six girls, five boys and thirty-one connubial years of you:** Henry and Eleanor married in 1152, so by 1183, they would be wed 31 years. Her children by Louis VII of France were Marie, Countess of Champagne and Alice, Countess of Blois. Her children by Henry II were William IX, Count of Poitiers; Henry the Young King; Matilda, Duchess of Saxony; Richard I, King of England; Geoffrey II, Duke of Brittany; Eleanor, Queen of Castile; Joan, Queen of Sicily; and John, King of England. These total 10 – I have not been able to substantiate the six girls and five boys of the text.

**I have my maids and menials in my courtyard and I hold my little court. It suits me now:** Amy Kelly writes about Eleanor's self-described "little courts" in her article, "[Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Courts of Love](#)". Eleanor held them in Poitiers, France, from 1168-1173, with Marie, Countess of Champagne, her eldest daughter by Louis Capet. The two women "meshed and encouraged the ideas of troubadours [the musicians and poets of the Middle Ages], chivalry, and courtly love into a single court". Another purpose may have been to teach manners, something the French courts would be known for in later generations.

According to [an account written by royal chaplain and author Andreas Capellanus](#), Eleanor and one of her daughters, Marie, Countess of Champagne, would also host regular public hearings, judged and juried by the noblewomen of the court in the city. Lovers would present their dilemmas, and the women deliberated amongst themselves on solutions. Poitiers was a cultural capital, but also where the legendary medieval notion of “chivalry” – a behavioral code of conduct for knights and men courting women – was discussed, practiced, and embraced. Despite its influence, disagreements between people in love still occurred. Capellanus recorded 21 cases that were adjudicated, with the most famous being a problem posed to the women about whether true love can exist in marriage. The consensus among the women, recorded by Capellanus, was that it was improbable.

Some historians believe that Eleanor’s “court of love” didn’t exist, since Andreas Capellanus’ book is the only record of it.

**We haven’t been alone, the two of us, in–How long has it been, lamb?** Richard is widely acknowledged as Eleanor’s favorite, and their closeness is a matter of record. He spent his childhood in England without much contact with his father while he was growing up. Henry was gone most of the time, visiting his lands from Scotland to France. Richard’s first recorded visit to the European continent was in May 1165, when his mother took him to Normandy. He was eight years old.

In 1171, at Eleanor’s request, Henry gave Richard the Aquitaine. and he set off with his mother to tour the province and be formally invested as its duke. He was 14 years old. Two years later, he, Eleanor, and Geoffrey joined the eldest brother, Henry the Young King, in the Revolt of 1173-74, with the purpose of overthrowing their father and his government. Henry had Eleanor captured in France, and then imprisoned in England. As Richard would have gone to battle in 1173, it was likely the last time they would have been together.

**When you were little, you were torn from me: blame Henry:** John was born in 1166, which would have made him eight years old when Henry imprisoned Eleanor. However, Eleanor separated from Henry in 1168, when John was two years old, and there is no evidence that she took him with her to Poitiers. Records also attest that it was her choice to separate, so in that case, John could not necessarily blame Henry. However, Henry could have driven her to separation because of his notorious philandering. He was purported to have started his affair with Rosamund when Eleanor was pregnant with John – her last pregnancy of the eight that she had as Henry’s wife.

**I was torn from you by midwives and I haven't seen you since:** Pregnancy and childbirth were the purview of midwives in the Middle Ages. Many mothers, except for those in the lower classes, had the assistance of midwives, nurses, and wet nurses while birthing and raising their young. Giving birth at 44, and as queen, Eleanor would have had a whole village.

If Henry’s affair with Rosamund did indeed begin when Eleanor was pregnant with John, Eleanor may have relinquished care of John to escape Henry and the humiliation of the affair. In any event, she was separated from Henry when John was only two years old – not

an infant, but still a baby.

... we'll see the second coming first: Per [Wikipedia](#):

The Second Coming (sometimes called the Second Advent or the Parousia) is the Christian and Islamic belief that Jesus will return to Earth after his ascension to heaven (which is said to have occurred about two thousand years ago). The idea is based on messianic prophecies and is part of most Christian eschatologies. Other faiths have various interpretations of it.

**I wanted poetry and power and the young men who create them both. I even wanted Henry, too, in those days:** During the time she was married to Louis, there were rumors about Eleanor's many affairs. [Paula R. Stiles](#) debunks them: "We should take with a large chunk of rocksalt the stories that circulated about Eleanor's alleged sexual exploits. Such stories were rather commonly spouted about strong-willed, capable Queens, especially if they were Ruling Queens rather than Consorts or Regents".

Stiles adds: "Henry and Eleanor appear to have married, at least in part, out of passionate love (a rarity for that class and time)".

**Henry was eighteen when we met and I was Queen of France. He came down from the North to Paris with a mind like Aristotle's and a form like mortal sin. We shattered the Commandments on the spot. I spent three months annulling Louis and in spring, in May not far from here, we married. Young Count Henry and his Countess. But in three years' time, I was his Queen and he was King of England. Done at twenty-one:** Eleanor is both eloquent and accurate. See her biography by Solange Marcotte.

**Thomas Becket:** Thomas Becket was born in London around 1118 to Norman French parents. For seven years, he was Henry's Chancellor and confidant, and partook of the pleasures of courtly life, surrounded by riches and famously garbed in resplendent fabrics. In 1162, he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest position in the Church of England. As he was not a priest at the time, he was ordained instantly. Henry, who had been close friends with Becket for many years, made the appointment as a political maneuver with the hope of gaining control over the church. However, Becket made an about-face: he became a powerful proponent of the rights of the church, defying Henry's attempts for control. He also became ascetic, embracing his spiritual side and rejecting the luxury and pomp he once relished. Rumor has it that after he was killed, the monks at Canterbury found a hair shirt infested with lice under his vestments. ("[Thomas Becket: his miracles and relics](#)")

As described by William of Newburgh in Vol. IV - Part II of [The Church Historians of England](#), which he wrote in 1200, conflict quickly arose between Henry and Beckett when Becket resigned his chancellorship in favor of his role as Archbishop. Many bitter disputes ensued about taxation and the salvation of Henry's immortal soul, but the most acrimonious concerned the "relative rights and responsibilities of Church and state over clergymen who were convicted of crimes, as well as the freedom of the English Church to



appeal to the Pope against the monarch's wishes. The positions of King and archbishop became entrenched; the other bishops were divided in their views" ("[Who was Thomas Becket?](#)"). Newburgh points out the similarity in their natures, with each "perhaps overzealous in the pursuit of justice". "Moreover", Curtis Runstedler writes in "[The Trouble with Thomas: The Controversies of St Thomas Becket](#)", "it probably did not help matters that both Henry II and Becket had such strong, adamant personalities. Henry II was known for his volatile tempers and wanted absolute power over his realm. Becket was proud and arrogant, standing his ground despite regal impositions. He was also disobedient, refusing to obey even the king".

Henry's and Becket's battles came to an uproar when the archbishop refused to conform to the Constitutions of Clarendon, which limited the power of the Church and increased the king's influence over the bishops and the Church courts. Henry demanded that the prelate stand trial for his disobedience, as well as for the embezzlement of ecclesiastical funds when he had been chancellor. Becket's response was to escape to France without Henry's permission, a serious offense.

Eight years later, after relentless entreaties by Pope Alexander II for his return, Henry released Becket from exile in France. Just before Becket returned, he wrote a letter excommunicating the bishops who had participated in the recent coronation of Henry the Young King, which had been performed by the Archbishop of York. Although it was a tactic gesture by Henry to assuage young Henry and didn't give him any additional power, it insulted and angered Becket because coronations were traditionally performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Regardless of his exile, it was still his role. ("[Who was Thomas Becket and why did he clash with the king?](#)")

The king was in Normandy at the time, and when told of Becket's letter, he shouted in frustration and fury, "Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" His words were reckless and almost certainly unintentional, but they were overheard by four knights of his court, which led directly to Becket's murder at Christ Church, Canterbury (now Canterbury Cathedral) on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 1170.

What happened next is described by [TheBecketStory.org.uk](#):

The knights secretly hurried across the Channel to England, believing they were doing the King's will.

Arriving in Canterbury during the early evening of 29 December 1170, they came upon the archbishop in a side chapel of the cathedral. They demanded the absolution of the excommunicated bishops, but Becket refused. It seems that the knights left the cathedral for a short time, then returned with a band of armed men and tried to drag the archbishop outside but could not manage it. They eventually killed him where he stood. Becket is said to have died like a true saint. According to his cross bearer, Edward Grim, who was an eyewitness to the crime and was himself wounded in the struggle, Becket commended his cause to God and accepted death 'for the name of Jesus and in defence of the Church'.



The martyrdom of St Thomas Becket appears in a fourteenth-century stained glass interpretation, known as the Becket Window, in Christ Church, Oxford.

Henry was horrified when he heard the news, as he believed that it was his words that had been the cause of Becket's death. As an act of penitence, he donned sackcloth and ashes, and starved himself for three days. ("[Murder in the Cathedral](#)")

Regardless, the repercussions were unprecedented:

Thomas Becket's murder in the cathedral was seen as martyrdom, which resonated with the medieval people. An immense following built up after his death, with reports of miraculous healing occurring near his place of death, and ecclesiastical writers hastened to promote his cult with a flurry of hagiographical writings. The cult became so widespread, in fact, that it overtook St Cuthbert's cult in Durham as the most popular saint cult in England during the late Middle Ages, eventually reaching an international level of fame. ([Runstedler](#))

On February 21, 1173, Pope Alexander III made Becket a saint, officially endorsing his rising cult.

Although it was a murder that was never intended, Henry began to see the growing tumult

in his kingdom and threats to his rule as divine punishment. How he responded is related in [“The Penance of a King: Henry II of England”](#):

In the Spring of 1174, Henry II faced a storm of revolt across his empire which began with the betrayal of his family. His sons Henry and Richard along with their mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine had turned against him.

Scottish king, William I “the Lion” had invaded northern England and Henry feared England would be lost. It’s at this time that he realized the “ghost” of Becket is what haunts his now tempestuous reign – he must do something to correct the wrong and get the English subjects once again on his side.

On 12 July 1174, Henry II headed to Canterbury, England. Just outside the city he stopped and removed his boots. He walked barefoot through the muddy road, dressed as a pilgrim. He walked through broken shards of pottery, mud and whatever you can imagine on the streets of medieval England in 1174. As he walked he left behind bloody footprints.

Henry walked 3 miles to Canterbury Cathedral. When he arrived he walked to the shrine of Becket in the crypt of the cathedral. Once there he knelt down in front of Becket’s tomb and commanded the monks to whip him. They were some of the same monks who watched Becket be murdered just three years earlier. By being whipped, in front of Becket’s tomb, by the monks who witnessed the murder, Henry II was spilling his own blood for penance. He received nearly 300 lashing. The monks who participated, who witnessed the whipping were responsible for spreading the word about what Henry had done. This was Henry’s plan. To seek forgiveness from God and all his subjects, and it seemed to work.

The next morning, Henry II found out that the Scottish king had been captured and the northern invasion was over. He took this as a sign that his penance was accepted by God.

**Young Henry:** Per [Britannica.com](#):

Henry The Young King, (born February 28, 1155, London—died June 11, 1183, Martel, Quercy, France), second son of King Henry II of England by Eleanor of Aquitaine; he was regarded, after the death of his elder brother, William, in 1156, as his father’s successor in England, Normandy, and Anjou.

In 1158 Henry, only three years of age, was betrothed to Margaret, daughter of Louis VII of France and his second wife, on condition that Margaret’s dowry would be the Vexin, the border region between Normandy (then held by England) and France. Henry II took advantage of Pope Alexander III’s political difficulties to secure the Pope’s permission for the children to be married in 1160. On June 14, 1170, the young Henry was crowned king (theoretically to rule in association with his father) at Westminster by Archbishop Roger of York. York’s officiation, usurping



a prerogative of the archbishop of Canterbury, exacerbated the dispute between the latter, namely, Thomas Becket, and Henry II, which ended with Becket's murder six months later. Crowned again on Aug. 27, 1172 (this time with Margaret), the Young King received no share of his father's power. (He was nevertheless called by contemporaries and by certain later chroniclers King Henry III.)



The Coronation of Henry the Young King, from *Becket Leaves* (c.1220-1240)

With his mother and his brothers Richard (the future Richard I) and Geoffrey, he nearly overthrew Henry II in 1173. Forgiven for this revolt, he intrigued further against his father with Louis VII. In 1182–83 he waged war against Richard over Poitou, and he was preparing to fight Richard again when he died in France of dysentery.

The Young King was so popular that the people of Le Mans and Rouen almost went to war for the custody of his body, and in his mother's hereditary lands he was immortalized in the "Lament for the Young King" by the troubadour Bertran de Born.

**lute:** A plucked string instrument having a pear-shaped body, a (usually) bent neck, and a fretted fingerboard. ([MedievalLifeAndTimes.info](http://MedievalLifeAndTimes.info))

The show's composer, Rody Ortega, has incorporated lute music in his original compositions.

See illustration on the following page.



**Look: you know that hunting trip we're taking on my birthday?** John was born 1166, on Christmas Eve, December 24, the day this scene is taking place.

**You need me, Henry, like a tailor needs a tinker's dam:** A tinker's dam is "a small piece of dough or putty that was fashioned to hold molten solder in place while the tinker was repairing pots and pans. After use, the 'dam' was tossed away as worthless; thus, [the expression] 'not worth a tinker's dam'". (["A Tinker's Dam Worth a Wad of Dough"](#))

**Ask any sculptor, ask Praxiteles:** Praxiteles, who lived from 375-335 BCE, was one of the most famous and greatest sculptors of ancient Greece. His career bridged the Late Classical Period and the Hellenistic Period of Greek art. His goal was to introduce as much realism as possible into his work, which came to define the direction of Greek Sculpture. He is famous for smaller scale works of female subjects, including *Hermes with the Infant Kionysos*, which is in the Olympia Archaeological Museum, and *Aphrodite of Cnidus*, aka Knidos, which is in the Vatican Museum. He is also the presumed creator of the *Venus de Milo*, which is displayed in the Louvre. ([Visual-Arts-Cork.com](#))

The sculpture *Aphrodite of Cnidus* is pictured on the following page. It is a Roman copy of the Greek original by Praxiteles. *Aphrodite of Cnidus* is regarded to be the first life-size female nude. The sculpture is Late Classical Greek Sculpture from the 4th century BCE.



*Aphrodite of Cnidus*, a Roman copy of the Greek original by Praxiteles

**Is it to be torture? Will you boil me or stretch me, which? Or am I to be perforated?**



In a scene from *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman (James' brother), Inigo Montoya and Fezzik bring Wesley to Miracle Max to revive him after he dies on the rack.



In the Middle Ages, according to [MedievalLifeAndTimes.info](#), “there were no laws or rules to protect the treatment of prisoners who faced torture or punishment. No matter what the type of torture or punishment was used it was seen as a totally legitimate means for justice to extract confessions, obtain the names of accomplices, obtain testimonies or confessions or to impose a penalty, sanctioned by law for a wrong committed”.

Eleanor mentions [boiling](#), being [stretched on the rack](#), and being [perforated](#).

**ma jolie:** In French, it means “my pretty”.

**I even made poor Louis take me on Crusade. How's that for blasphemy? I dressed my maids as Amazons and rode bare-breasted halfway to Damascus. Louis had a seizure and I damn near died of windburn but the troops were dazzled:** See Eleanor's bio by Solange Marcotte

**ELEANOR I wonder, do you ever wonder if I slept with Geoffrey?  
HENRY With my father?**

Sarah Cockwell, in her 2021 essay, “[The real Eleanor of Aquitaine: 5 myths about the medieval queen](#)” for the BBC's *History Extra* site, debunks any reports about this supposed liaison:

It's claimed that [Eleanor] slept with her second husband Henry II's father, Geoffrey 'the Handsome' of Anjou – either on crusade or at court.

The Geoffrey of Anjou story surfaces at just the time when Henry II was unsuccessfully seeking to divorce Eleanor – in the fall-out from her siding with their sons during the revolt of 1173–74 – and can be traced straight back to him. In short, it just doesn't add up: Geoffrey was not on the crusade and no source at the time gives any whiff of such a scandal.

True or not, it is another weapon in Eleanor's arsenal that she uses to torment Henry.

**What's it to be? The broadsword when I'm eighty-five?** The broadsword was the earliest of the Medieval swords, dating from the 6th Century. Its length ranged from 30 to 45 inches, and it weighed between three and five pounds. It had a two-edged blade measuring two to three inches wide at the base which tapered to a point. It was used as a close contact weapon, primarily for cutting or slicing an opponent and could cut off the limbs or head of an enemy in one stroke. ([Medieval Life and Times.info](#))

Henry is asking if Richard intends to execute him by lopping off his head.

**Poitiers:** A city mentioned many times in the play, Poitiers is a city in center-west France, some 210 miles south-west of Paris. Its location on the Poitevinian Plateau, which is a natural corridor between the south and the north of the country.

From “[Geography is Destiny](#)”:

Poitiers had in effect a monopoly over north-to-southwest transportation and travel. This natural position helped Poitiers develop a strong textile and trading economy in the medieval period, with its fairs being nearly as renowned as those of Champagne (which stood astride the main north-southeast corridor), and its drapery being sold internationally. Poitiers also was major center of production of weaponry and armor in the early Middle Ages, again abetted by its geography which made it both an important trade corridor and a focal point of armed conflicts. The wealth of the Counts of Poitiers derived similarly from this situation, and helped them position themselves as the dominant powers of the entire southwest for some three centuries, recognized by their being also Dukes of Aquitaine.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was crowned in Poitiers. She held her “Court of Love” in the “Salle des Pas Perdus” (Hall of the Lost footsteps) in Poitiers and married Henry in Poitiers Cathedral, which she commissioned. Eleanor also commissioned the ramparts around Poitiers. She died in Poitiers in the spring of 1204 at the age of 82. She is buried not far from the city, north of her territory, in the magnificent Fontevraud Abbey, on the border between Poitou and Val de Loire.

A more recent building, Poitiers City Hall, has a stained-glass window in its Hall of Honour. Made in the 19th century, it depicts Eleanor handing the charter of township to the bourgeois of Poitiers. It is pictured below.



*Vitrail Aliénor* by Daniel Proux at the Ville de Poitiers

**I was thinking earlier of Peter Abelard. I was a queen of fifteen in those days and on dull afternoons I'd go watch Heloise watch Abelard spread heresy like bonemeal in the palace gardens. Here the Seine and there the cypress trees and how it bored me. Thought, pure thought; flashed clear as water all around me and all I could think about was how to make a Caesar of a monkish husband. I'd like to hear the old man talk again; I'd listen now:**

The article, "[Louis VII of France](#)" explains what Eleanor meant by "all I could think about was how to make a Caesar of a monkish husband":

As a younger son, Louis VII had been raised to follow the ecclesiastical path. He unexpectedly became the heir to the throne of France after the accidental death of his older brother, Philip, in 1131. A well-learned and exceptionally devout man, Louis VII was better suited for life as a priest than that of a monarch.

In the same year he was crowned King of France, Louis VII was married on July 22, 1137 to Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122 – March 31, 1204), heiress of William X of Aquitaine (1126–37). The pairing of the monkish Louis VII and the high-spirited Eleanor was doomed to failure; she once reportedly declared that she had thought to marry a King, only to find she'd married a monk.

Peter Abelard was an esteemed philosopher, theologian, and logician of the 12th century. He was born in 1079 into a minor noble family living in le Pallet, a town near Nantes, Brittany. His father, Berengar, was a knight who encouraged Peter to pursue his scholarly leanings.

Peter decided to give up a career in the military and his inheritance to become an academic. During his lifetime, he made remarkable strides in the field of ethics, specifically moral philosophy. He sought to reconcile faith and reason with a groundbreaking approach that prioritized the person's intent behind an action over the action itself. His teachings and writings had a significant impact on medieval thought and continue to be studied today.

In popular culture, he is best known for his torrid and tragic love affair with Heloise d'Argenteuil (1101 – 1164), a brilliant scholar and renowned beauty, which resulted in their separation and his castration. In the early 1130s, Peter and Heloise composed a collection of their love letters which became very popular. Their relationship has been the subject of many artistic works based on their story.



A scene from the Heloise and Abelard puppet show in the movie, *Being John Malkovich*, 1999



Eleanor talks of hearing Abelard spread heresy in the palace gardens in 1037, when she was 15 years old. Soon after, he would be silenced when William of St Thierry, another French theologian, accused him of heresy in his writings. As a result, Abelard fell from favor with Pope Benedict IX and the church. He was forced to stop teaching and writing and spent his last days at the Priory of St Marcel near Chalon-sur-Saone.

Details of his life and work as a philosopher, theologian, logician, and teacher can be found in his entry in the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). Details about his love affair can be found [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

**wormwood:** a bitter herb used in absinthe and vermouth, purported to have medical benefits. Taking it is the equivalent of swallowing a bitter pill or forcing oneself to accept an unpleasant or unwanted situation.

**what if angels sat on pinheads?** This comes from the question “How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?” [GotQuestions.org](#) calls it a “seemingly flippant question” that has “historical roots in the Middle Ages”, where, according to [YourDictionary.com](#), it was cited to debunk mediaeval angelology in particular and scholasticism in general. It defines the question as “a metaphor” that is “used as an example subject of enquiry the pursuit of which is of no value” and “the subject of arcane intellectual speculation. Since angels are non-corporeal and do not occupy space, an infinite number of them could be present at a single point in space simultaneously”.

The query is also worded: “How many angels can dance on the point of a needle?”

**Our alchemists have stumbled on the art of boiling brandy. It turns to steam and when it cools we call it brandywine:** Simply, brandywine is brandy. Amber DeGrace writes about it in “[A brief history on brandywine and a beer not aged in a brandy barrel](#)”:

Brandy as we know it today is wine that has been distilled. It can be made from any type of wine — grape, apple and pear are a few ... Because of this distillation, brandy has a range of alcohol by volume between 35 to 40 percent, while wine normally has an alcohol by volume of 10 to 15 percent.

So what’s the process for making brandy?

First, the desired fruit is crushed and pressed to extract the juice. The juice gets fermented, then that liquid is distilled to remove moisture (which increases the alcohol content), and it is often aged in wooden barrels.

The heat of distillation and the aging process in barrels causes numerous chemical reactions that greatly change the aromatics and flavor between the beginning wine and the completed brandy.

There are several kinds of brandy with names like Cognac, Armagnac, Calvados and Pisco, to name a few. The first three are regional French variations and employ

specific methods of production, and the latter is made in Peru. Cognac, Armagnac and Pisco are distilled from grape wine, while Calvados is distilled from apple wine (or hard cider).

All of these are different from each other, but all are brandies.

**I keep looking for your father in you:** See Soly Marcotte's biography of Philip, as well as the entry, third below, for "You-you made my father nothing ...".

**They were boiling it in Ireland before the snakes left:** According to legend, St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, rid Ireland of snakes during the fifth century CE. The story goes that he "chased the slithering reptiles into the sea after they began attacking him during a 40-day fast he undertook on top of a hill". (["Did St. Patrick Really Drive Snakes Out of Ireland?"](#))

**Dormez bien:** A common French expression equivalent to "good night" in English, it means "Sleep well". Dormez is the present tense plural "you" of the verb "dormir", meaning "to sleep", and the adverb "bien", which means "well".

**You-you made my father nothing. You were always better. You bullied him, you bellied with his wife, you beat him down in every war, you twisted every treaty, you played mock-the-monk and then you made him love you for it. I was there: his last words went to you:** Philip saw his father, Louis VII, as weak against the formidable Henry, whose father, Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou, and ruler of Normandy, bequeathed to him his French lands and titles shortly before his death in 1151.

Louis "didn't like this and tried to establish Stephen I's son, Eustace, as the heir to the duchy. Louis also gathered an army together to remove Henry from Normandy. No fighting broke out and a peace treaty was agreed in 1151. Henry agreed to pay homage to Louis as his feudal lord in return for Louis recognising him as the Duke of Normandy" (["Who was Henry II?"](#)). Although this sounds like Henry is relinquishing control as Louis' vassal, at that time, it only applied to Normandy. When he married Eleanor a year later, he also became Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Anjou, Maine, and Nantes. Under the feudal system, all the land in France belonged to the king, so Henry was technically a vassal of the French crown. However, when Henry became King of England and Lord of Ireland and Wales two years later, the laws and customs of the time gave Louis no say in what Henry did in England, Wales, and Ireland. Henry ruled them independently of his holdings in France. Furthermore, as King of England, he was Louis' social equal and inveterate enemy.

As you can imagine, this was a rather delicate social and political situation. Henry held more land than the French King, both directly and indirectly, and as a King and thus the King of France's social equal he held himself to be independent.

The French Crown insisted repeatedly that Henry was a French subject, and that at the very least he owed fealty for his lands in France. They often went so far as to argue that, as he was a French subject, England and Normandy were, by extension,

now part of France.

They resolved this, as part of the final peace treaty between him and Louis II, by Henry swearing to Louis for those lands in France, but not for England or Normandy. But for most of his life Henry refused to do this, and it was only poor health and the constant rebellion of his sons (particularly Richard, who actually fought against his father with the support of the French King) that brought him low enough to actually admit it and go through the ceremony. ([“How/why was King Henry II of England a vassal of King Louis VII of France. How did this work in practice?”](#))

Hence the beginnings of “making [Philip’s] father nothing”.

Then there’s the “bellying with his wife”. In 1137, Louis VII married Eleanor, Duchess of the Aquitaine. When Philip’s grandfather, Louis VI, died weeks later, he became king of France and she became queen, a title she held for the next 15 years. “Beautiful, capricious, and adored by Louis, Eleanor exerted considerable influence over him, often goading him into undertaking perilous ventures” ([Britannica.com](#)). By many accounts, Eleanor did not requite her husband’s adoration. She found him too pious and lacking in ambition.

Eleanor met Henry when he was traveling with his father while she was on a crusade with Louis. The crusade turned out to be a disaster, with Louis proving a weak and ineffectual military leader while Eleanor was lauded for her strength and wisdom ([EnglishHeritage.org.uk](#)). Furthermore, it was speculated that Henry had an affair with Eleanor at that time.

When returning home to France from the crusade in 1149, Eleanor put plans in motion to divorce Louis. She pleaded with Pope Eugene III to annul her marriage but was unsuccessful. The pope, swayed by Louis’ continuous entreaties, sent the couple off to reconcile, ordering them to sleep in the same bed. Their rapprochement was brief, but resulted in the birth of a second daughter, Alix of France, younger sister to Marie.

Louis VII, seeing the birth of a second daughter as a sign that God disapproved of the union, and “facing substantial opposition to Eleanor from many of his barons and her own desire for divorce ... bowed to the inevitable” ([“The Death of Eleanor of Aquitaine”](#)). On March 21, 1152, the four archbishops of Sens, Bordeaux, Rouen, and Reims, acting “with the approval of Pope Eugene, granted an annulment on grounds of consanguinity within the fourth degree” ([“Consanguinity and Medieval Marriages”](#)). Once their divorce was granted, Eleanor sent a messenger to Henry asking him to meet her in Aquitaine if he was interested in marriage.

Henry rushed to her side, and the couple were married on 18 May 1152. Eight weeks before, Eleanor had been Queen of France. Now she was the Duchess of Aquitaine and Normandy, as well as the Countess of Anjou, Maine, and Nantes. Two years later, she became a queen once more when she was crowned at Henry II’s side in England.



Henry was 19 and Eleanor was 30 years old. “Tensions between Louis and Henry reignited after his marriage as Louis was insulted. He was also worried as Eleanor was the ruler of the Duchy of Aquitaine in southern France. This meant that Henry and Eleanor now ruled over a larger portion of France than Louis. They also ruled England” ([“Who was Henry II?”](#)).

“Soon after his accession Henry came into conflict with Louis ... and the two rulers fought, over several decades, what has been termed a ‘cold war’. Henry expanded his empire at Louis’s expense, taking Brittany and pushing east into central France and south into Toulouse; despite numerous peace conferences and treaties, no lasting agreement was reached” ([“Henry II of England”](#)). The tensions and “cold war” are what Philip meant when he said, “you beat him down in every war, you twisted every treaty”.

Philip’s “You played mock-the-monk” can simply refer to its idiomatic meaning – a taunt of monks for their perceived impotence and that they are not “real men”. When Louis’s and Eleanor’s marriage didn’t produce offspring for many years, many people – and likely Henry – ridiculed the French king. Eleanor considered her former husband insufficiently virile, once declaring that she had thought to marry a king, only to find she had married a monk. ([“Dwelling on Dreams”](#)). Digging deeper, another interpretation might center around the feud between Henry and Thomas Becket, discussed on pp. 14-17 of this glossary. Becket’s newfound asceticism in 1162 and ordination as a monk instigated his resignation as Henry’s chancellor. This started a feud that came to a head in July 1163. At a council held at the palace of Woodstock, Thomas attacked a proposal of Henry’s that was essentially “a reform of taxation with little if any conflict with ecclesiastical law”. Becket “had moved from being a supporter of Henry’s plans to outright opposition”:

This ill-tempered approach pervades the archbishop’s relations with the king throughout the rest of his life – and Henry, renowned for his violent temper, responded in kind. The king’s actions, however, smack of a cold and resolute determination to humiliate the archbishop. Thomas had insisted on what we now call ‘benefit of clergy’, the right of anyone in holy orders to be tried in a church court, and only in a church court. Such ‘criminous clerks’, as they were called, could not be imprisoned by the king or put to death. In response, Henry attacked Thomas personally. The king raked up claims against him from his time as chancellor, claiming huge sums from him that the archbishop could not possibly pay.

This was Henry’s weakest moment in many ways: he was responding to an issue that struck at the heart of the differences between the church’s new ambitions and the royal agenda with a personal attack on Thomas. It was as if he sought to prove that even the archbishop could be arraigned in a royal court. ([“How Thomas Becket’s feud with Henry II led to murder”](#))

Louis attempted a reconciliation between Henry and Becket, but sided with Becket “as much to damage Henry as out of piety—yet even he grew irritated with the stubbornness of the archbishop, asking when Becket refused Henry’s conciliations, ‘Do you wish to be more than a Saint?’” ([“Louis VII of France”](#))

I am unable to find a record of Louis VII's last words to support Philip's contention that "his last words went to you", unless he is speaking of Pope Alexander III's attempt to bring the two monarchs to terms of peace at Vitry-en-Perthois in 1177. Although two years before Louis' death, he was suffering from paralysis, and could conceivably have lost his ability to speak soon after. Louis wanted peace, so his final words may have been an entreaty to Henry.

**Richard finds his way into so many legends:** Henry is referring to the speculation that Richard was gay. The Internet History Sourcebooks Project, which is located at the History Department of Fordham University, New York, has published the *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, which I have found very useful in my research. They have included the work of Roger of Hoveden, a royal clerk who compiled a History of England in the early years of the thirteenth century. As a royal clerk he was well-placed to gather information from members of the royal court, and he also included many documents, especially letters, into his history.

The Project's LGBT History division, *The People with a History: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Trans\**, has cited passages from Hoveden's [Annals, Vol II, pp. 63-64](#), and [Vol II, pp. 356-357](#) to raise the possibility that Richard the Lionheart and Philip II Augustus had a homosexual affair.

The *Sourcebook* observes that "Other commentators think that the passages refer to political or 'friendship' arrangements" but maintains that "to hold this position requires that one see neither of the passages as having any relationship to homosexuality".

**chancred whore:** a chancre is the initial lesion of syphilis ([Merriam-Webster.com](#))

**roquefort smile:** Did Young Henry have moldy teeth? Roquefort cheese, pictured below,



has a distinct blue mold, as described by [GourmetWorld.it](#):

... a popular French blue cheese made from the milk of the Lacaune breed of sheep, the cheese is aged for around five months in the natural Combalou caves of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon in the south of France, where the mould is found in the local soils. Roquefort is a tangy, crumbly and slightly moist cheese with distinctive veins of blue mould.

Perhaps Richard thinks the surface of his brother's teeth looks like the walls of the Combalou caves, shown below.



Could he mean that Henry has broken, pocked teeth? [This website](#) has some examples, but they are not for the faint-of-heart ...

Chances are that Richard is just picking on his deceased brother. The article, "[What Was Dental Health Like in the Middle Ages?](#)", says that "during the Middle Ages, a white smile and pleasant breath were admirable attributes. During the Middle Ages, there's evidence that people used toothpastes, powders, treatments, and even mouth washes for halitosis!"

**spoon-edged mind:** Richard may mean that of the utensils used for eating and/or preparing food, the edge of a spoon is not as sharp as that of a knife, or its shape is not pointed like a fork. Both "sharp" and "pointed" are used to describe keenness of mind, so



Richard could be suggesting that the younger Henry was not the sharpest utensil in the drawer.

**May all your children breech and die:** Henry's curse is a legitimate one.

[SmithsonianMag.com](http://SmithsonianMag.com) explains:

Giving birth during the medieval ages was a decidedly daunting task. Without modern medicine to protect against infectious disease and other complications, both mothers and children faced high mortality rates ...

In the medieval era, medical problems that might be considered minor today—such as a breech birth, in which the infant's feet, buttocks or both are positioned to be delivered before the head—could prove fatal for the mother and child, as Alixe Bovey wrote for the British Library in 2015. According to the Guardian, historians posit that childbirth was the main cause of death for English women between the late 5th and 11th centuries; the study notes that the neonatal mortality rate during this period was between 30 and 60 percent.

As described by [AmericanPregnancy.org](http://AmericanPregnancy.org), a manual procedure, External Cephalic Version, or EVC, is used to help guide the baby to a safe position for birth:

External Cephalic Version (EVC) is a non-surgical technique to move the baby in the uterus. In this procedure, a medication is given to help relax the uterus. There might also be the use of an ultrasound to determine the position of the baby, the location of the placenta and the amount of amniotic fluid in the uterus.

Gentle pushing on the lower abdomen can turn the baby into the head-down position. Throughout the external version the baby's heartbeat will be closely monitored so that if a problem develops, the health care provider will immediately stop the procedure. ECV usually is done near a delivery room so if a problem occurs, a cesarean delivery can be performed quickly. The external version has a high success rate and can be considered if you have had a previous cesarean delivery.

In the Middle Ages, some skilled midwives (see p. 14 of this glossary) were able to perform the procedure.

## Act II

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**mulled wine:** Per [Wikipedia](#):

Mulled wine, also known as spiced wine, is an alcoholic drink usually made with red wine, along with various mulling spices and sometimes raisins, served hot or warm. It is a traditional drink during winter, especially around Christmas.

Eleanor calls it spiced wine later in the scene.



Cheers!

**Uncle Raymond:** see Solange Marcotte's biography of Eleanor.

**ALAIS** And so you had her poisoned.

**ELEANOR** That's a folk tale. Oh, I prayed for her to drop and sang a little when she did but even Circe had her limits. No, I never poisoned Rosamund.

In Greek mythology, Circe, the daughter of Helios, the sun god, and of the ocean nymph Perse, is a sorceress. She was known for her vast knowledge of potions and herbs which, along with her magic wand, staff, and incantations, she was able to change humans into wolves, lions, and, as she did with Odysseus' crew, swine. ([Britannica.com](#))

Also see the glossary entry for Rosamund on pp. 4-6.

**Maman, oh, Maman:** French for Mom or Mama. Early in 1169, when she was eight years old, Alais was sent to England to live at the court of Henry and Eleanor, who raised her. (See Soly Marcotte's biography of Alais.)

**Henri à la mode de Caen:** This is Henry's play on tripes à la mode de Caen, a traditional dish of the cuisine of Normandy, France, dating back to the Middle Ages.



Tripes are intestines. The dish also has other ingredients that you can read about [here](#). One of the ingredients was *outlawed* in France in 1996. More ingredients are listed in this [article](#).

As for the fork pictured, in Henry's time, they likely ate the dish with their fingers, per James Goldman's screenplay notes: "Tables were set with fine linen and napkins of a kind were used; yet most of the eating was done with fingers". Yuck.

**like Antigone in Sophocles' [imagination]:** Antigone is the daughter of Oedipus, the king of Thebes, about whose family Sophocles wrote in a trilogy of plays in fifth century BCE: *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*.

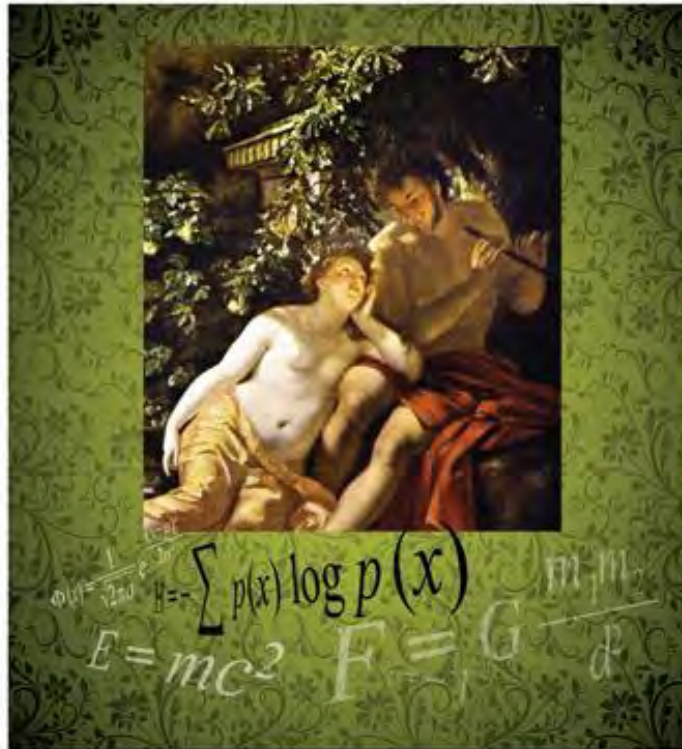
*Oedipus the King* is also known as *Oedipus Tyrannos*. "Tyrannos" signifies that the throne was not gained through an inheritance. If you think of how that wreaked havoc on Henry's family, hold up. Oedipus' clan was even worse. It took *three* plays to cover all the atrocities.

**Arcady:** aka Arcadia, an ideal rustic paradise. Here's my definition from the glossary I made for Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, which I directed for Jewel in 2013:

**Arcadia.** A region of ancient Greece in the central Peloponnesus. Its inhabitants, somewhat isolated from the rest of the world, proverbially lived a simple, pastoral life. It now refers to any region offering rural simplicity and contentment. The term Arcadia is used to refer to an imaginary and paradisaical place – the pagan Eden. In Roman times, Arcadia fell into decay. It was a scene of conflict during the War of

Greek Independence (1821-1829), in which Lord Byron was a key player. [Lord Byron was a significant offstage character in the play.]

Below is Ray Bauer's extraordinary logo for Jewel's 2013 production of *Arcadia*.



# *Arcadia*

by Tom Stoppard

**Conquer China, sack the Vatican or take the veil:** Eleanor is listing Henry's options, but to take the veil means to join a nunnery. Maybe she means become a monk? Or be like Eric Idle and Robbie Coltrane in the picture on the next page?





Eric Idle as Brian Hope/Sister Euphemia of the Five Wounds  
Robbie Coltrane as Charlie McManus/Sister Inviolata of the Immaculate Conception

**poetaster:** A writer of verse who does not deserve to be called a poet, despite his or her pretensions; an inferior poet lacking in ability. Trivial or worthless verse may sometimes be called poetastery. ([OxfordReference.com](https://www.oxfordreference.com))

**Caesar, seeing Brutus with the bloody dagger in his hand, asked, "You, too?":** The line to which Henry refers is, in Latin, "Et tu, Brute?". The Roman dictator Julius Caesar asked it of his dear friend, Marcus Junius Brutus, as he stabs him, recognizing Brutus as one of the co-conspirators in the assassination plot against him.

The scene is in Act 3, Scene 1 of William Shakespeare's 1599 play *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*.

**Like warts and goiters—and I'm having them removed:** We all know what warts are. Goiters are defined by [Thyroid.org](https://www.thyroid.org):

The term "goiter" simply refers to the abnormal enlargement of the thyroid gland. It is important to know that the presence of a goiter does not necessarily mean that the thyroid gland is malfunctioning. A goiter can occur in a gland that is producing too much hormone (hyperthyroidism), too little hormone (hypothyroidism), or the correct amount of hormone (euthyroidism). A goiter indicates there is a condition present which is causing the thyroid to grow abnormally.



**I have caught him lying and I've said he's young. I've seen him cheating and I've thought he's just a boy. I've watched him steal and whore and whip his servants and he's not a child. He is the man we've made him:** Did John do these things? After all, history has named him the worst king in British history.

In his introduction to the Random House *Lion in Winter*, the version that that we're using, Goldman writes about revisiting the Plantagenet family in works that followed: his screenplay *Robin and Marian* and his book, *Myself as Witness*. John appears in the former, and the final years of his life comprise the latter.

I have no answer to why it has been John who keeps recurring. Possibly because, of all the characters in *Lion*, he came off least well.

Not least well in the sense that he is poorly written, which, for all I know, is true enough, but rather in the way biographers must feel at having missed the shape or core or essence of their subject.

This glossary has several addendums: biographies of the characters by Solange Marcotte, a timeline she assembled, and other relevant papers. One is "Myself as Witness Readers Notes", which includes Goldman's introduction to *Myself as Witness*, "A Note to the Reader", as well as information about his sources from the copyright page.

In "A Note to the Reader", Goldman acknowledges that John's "reputation as one of the most sinister, corrupt and vicious kings in Western history has been, for centuries, both a popular belief and an academic tradition". He admits that, in *The Lion in Winter* and *Robin and Marian*, he followed "the mainstream", conceiving John as a "violent, unstable person with no principles at all". He began to wonder at the actuality of "this completely villainess

King John”, so he returned to the history books. “The more I read”, he writes, “the more it seemed apparent that tradition had it wrong: a very different John must have existed”. Goldman found that in the previous twenty years (he wrote *Myself as Witness* in 1979), several historians had begun to make a new assessment of King John:

Remarkably little survives that was written while John was alive, and the picture of him that emerges from these scattered sources is surprisingly complimentary. The evil monarch we have come to know begins to appear in chronicles, written a generation or more after his death. On top of which, the writing of history was a curious procedure in those days, and the chroniclers on whom we have relied give us reports of devils and dragons with the same conviction and seriousness that they accord verifiable political events.

Why these chroniclers made John into a monster is an unanswerable question. Possibly because England had had enough of Henry, and his children, possibly because John’s reign saw more defeats than victories, possibly in response to political pressure of the moment. (“[Myself as Witness by James Goldman, 1979](#)”)

**gammy-handed:** Gammy is an adjective used in Great Britain to describe “a body part and especially a limb that is usually permanently impaired in function”. ([Merriam Webster](#)) Gammy is also what my grandson first called me when he started talking and I hope he never stops calling me that. He stopped saying Tebby Bears for Teddy Bears and broke all our hearts.

**they'll sing out Vivat Rex for someone else:** From [Latin-is-Simple.com](#), “The acclamation is ordinary translated as ‘long live the king!’. In the case of a female queen, ‘vivat regina’ (‘long live the queen’)”.

**I've put more horns on you than Louis ever wore:** To put horns on someone is to cuckold, to be unfaithful to. ([Wiktionary.com](#))

**the French king against the English king and the French king won. That is something our father could never do:** It’s not that Louis VII *never* won ... (See the glossary entry for “You–you made my father nothing ...” on pp. 27-29), but Philip seems to have convinced himself of that.

**Should I ask Henry out for a friendly game of jeu de mail?** From the article “French Jeu de Mail (Medieval Croquet)” in [HealthandFitnessHistory.com](#):

*Jeu de mail* was a French ball-and-mallet sport that led to the development of croquet and may have influenced the development of billiards. The goal of this medieval sport was to pass a ball through a series of upright hoops in as few strokes as possible. Though often associated with golf and perhaps tangentially related to it, jeu de mail is not thought to have played a role in the development of golf. Given the use of mallets instead of clubs, large balls instead of small, man-made courses

instead of natural landscapes, and upright hoops instead of holes in the ground, this game bears much more similarity to croquet than to golf.

The term *jeu de mail* is Middle-French, translated as “game of the mallet” or “game of straw;” both feasible translations, as the use of mallets is apparent and, in some variations, the upright hoops were made of woven straw. The game was enjoyed by young and old alike, and was touted as an agreeable and sophisticated sport lacking in violence.

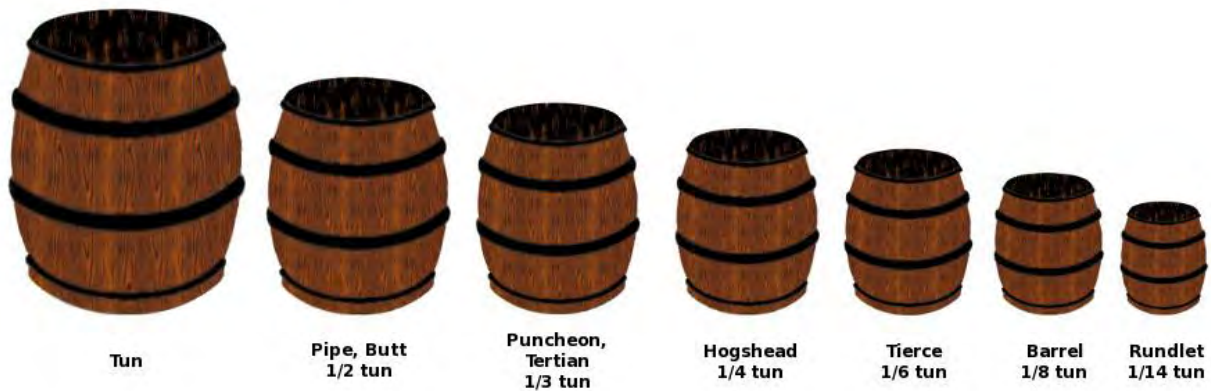


print from Joseph Lauthier’s “Le Jeu de Mail” (1717)

**mesnie:** Henry does a perfect job of describing a mesnie to Alais: ‘You know what a *mesnie* is? It’s a train, an entourage. It’s made of soldiers, cooks and clerics, wagons, barrows, linen, treasure, chickens, butts of wine and spices. I’ve been all night making one’.

**butts of wine:** a “butt” was a Medieval unit of measure for wine. Technically, a buttload of wine is about 475 liters, or 126 gallons. ([Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/askhistorians/comments/1000000/what_is_a_butt_of_wine/))





**He's excommunicated you again:** Henry wasn't excommunicated, but Thomas Becket excommunicated the bishops who participated in the coronation of Young Henry. Becket (see pp. 14-17 of this glossary) handed out excommunications like T-shirts shot from a cannon into the stands at halftime at a basketball game.

Excommunication is a religious censure used to deprive or suspend membership in a religious community. The word literally means out of communion, or no longer in communion. In some churches, excommunication includes the spiritual condemnation of the member or group. Other censures and sanctions sometimes follow excommunication; these include banishment, shunning, and shaming, depending on the group's religion or religious community.

Excommunication is the most grave of all ecclesiastical censures. Where religious and social communities are nearly identical, excommunication is often attended by social ostracism and civil punishment, sometime including death if the associate crime is serious enough. In Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church especially retains the practices of excommunication, as do several other denominations. The church maintains that the spiritual separation of the offender from the body of the faithful takes place by the nature of the act when the offense is committed, and the decree of excommunication is both a warning and formal proclamation of exclusion from Christian society. In Catholic tradition, those who die excommunicated are not publicly prayed for; but excommunication is not equivalent to damnation. Excommunications vary in gravity, and in grave cases readmission may be possible only by action of the Holy See [the papacy or the papal court]. Excommunicates are always free to return to the church on repentance. ([NewWorldEncyclopedia.com](http://NewWorldEncyclopedia.com))

**I've corked him up ... He's in the cellar with his brothers and the wine. The royal boys are aging with the royal port:** According to [Definitions.net](http://Definitions.net), to cork up means to seal or close something tightly, often to prevent anything from escaping or entering, similar to how a cork is used to seal a bottle. Henry uses the expression to introduce his conceit for his imprisonment of Richard and his brothers, doomed to age in the wine cellar with the wine.

**Medea:** Per [WorldHistory.org](http://WorldHistory.org):

Medea is an enchantress and the daughter of King Aeëtes of Colchis (a city on the coast of the Black Sea). In Greek mythology, she is best known for her relationship with the Greek hero Jason, which is famously told in Greek tragedy playwright Euripides' (c. 484-407 BCE) *Medea* and Apollonius of Rhodes' (c. 295 BCE) epic *Argonautica*.



*Medea about to Murder Her Children,*  
oil on canvas by Eugène Ferdinand Victor Delacroix. 1862, Louvre Museum, Paris.

Medea famously murdered her own children to enact vengeance on her husband/their father, Jason – yes, that Jason, Jason of the Argonauts – for scorning her and marrying someone else. Her story has continued to fascinate through the ages. This [article](#) lists the numerous cultural depictions of Medea in art, literature, theatre, music, cinema and television, and even video games.

**bung:** A bung is a round piece of wood, cork, or rubber which you use to close the hole in a container such as a barrel or flask. ([CollinsDictionary.com](http://CollinsDictionary.com))

**The fortress at Vaudreuil has dungeons down two hundred feet:** Per [The Guthrie's Study Guide for The Lion in Winter](#), p. 20:

Vaudreuil is a castle in Normandy in a valley created by the confluence of the Seine and its tributary the Reuil.

It seems to date to the Romans at least in part, and appears to have been a vital link in a chain of fortresses in the region to protect Normandy. It's about 60 miles from Paris.

**turnkey:** a person who has charge of the keys of a prison; jailer. ([Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com))

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