



Understanding King Lear: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents (The Greenwood Press "Literature in Context" Series)

Donna C. Woodford

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Considered one of Shakespeare's most powerful dramas, *King Lear*, with its combined elements of political and domestic tragedy, is as interesting to today's readers as it was to Elizabethan audiences. While the play's intricate plot and timely themes can be challenging to students, studying the play in its historical contexts sheds a great deal of light on important dramatic elements and topical references. This casebook was prepared to help students understand the literary and historic issues in *King Lear*, as well as its contemporary applications. Readers are introduced to the work with a Dramatic Analysis focusing on genre, character archetypes, themes, and sources. Excerpts from actual historical and literary sources demonstrate how *King Lear* incorporates elements of fairy tale, legend, and history as it alludes to the political controversies of Shakespeare's day. The final chapter in the casebook helps readers appreciate the thematic relatedness of *King Lear* to contemporary issues by focusing on the treatment of the elderly in our own society.

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