



Student Companion to Arthur Miller (Student Companions to Classic Writers)

Susan C. W. Abbotson

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This critical introduction to Arthur Miller provides an indispensable aid for students and general readers to understand the depth and complexity of some of America's most important dramatic works. Beginning with a discussion of his life, this work traces not only Miller's theatrical career, but his formative experiences with the Great Depression, the Holocaust, and the House Un-American Activities Committee. Detailed discussions of eight important plays are organized around the social and moral themes Miller derived from such events; these themes are evident in such works as *Death of A Salesman*, *The Crucible*, *A View from the Bridge*, and *All My Sons*. By placing Miller, within the context of his times, this discussion reveals how he was influenced by and reacted to the major events in his own life and in American culture. Analysis of his more recent works such as *The American Clock*, *Broken Glass* and *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* illustrate the consistency of Miller's strong moral vision, and his continuing innovative contributions to American theatre.

A fascinating biographical chapter takes readers from Miller's childhood, through the Depression years, through three marriages; and from his theatrical apprenticeship, to eventual fame and critical acclaim for his plays and other literary and cinematic projects. The literary heritage chapter outlines Miller's literary and dramatic precursors, and considers the major aspects of his dramatic impact. The six chapters discussing his major plays are systematically presented to allow the reader to easily grasp the intricacies of their plots, characterizations, stylistic devices, and themes. In addition, each chapter offers a view of the social and/or historical context that influenced the plays' thematic development, as well as an alternate critical reading that demonstrates the richness of Miller's work. Lastly, the bibliography provides information on Miller's published works, including his screenplays and essays, biographical information, selected general criticism, and both contemporary reviews and critical studies of the plays discussed.

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