

# I M.A BRITISH LITERATURE - I

## 18PEL1

### Summary of Edward II

The play opens with Gaveston, who had been exiled by Edward II's father, Edward I, reading a letter from Edward II. Edward I had exiled Gaveston because Edward II had become extremely close to Gaveston, to the point where the prince ignored his duties and angered the nobles by lavishing Gaveston with gifts and attention. Edward I has died, the letter says, and Gaveston's exile is no more. Gaveston rejoices, soliloquizing begins giving Gaveston titles, the keys to the royal treasury, and tells all who will listen that Gaveston (despite his very not-noble birth) is better than the common person and deserves all of this attention. The nobles (particularly Lancaster, Warwick, and Roger Mortimer, who confusingly shares the about the Bacchanalian celebration he will bring to Edward II upon his return.

Immediately upon their reunion, Edward same name with his nephew and shall hereafter be referred to as Mortimer Senior), as well as Queen Isabella of France, Edward II's much-ignored wife, are furious. They call for Gaveston to be exiled again.

The nobles corner Edward and Gaveston and present Edward with a written demand for the exile. They rail against his neglect of the kingdom, his poorly performing military (especially against Robert the Bruce in Scotland), and how he keeps the coffers nearly empty in order to shower Gaveston with gifts and titles. Edward is forced to agree to the exile and, after a highly emotional farewell with Gaveston (during which Isabella accuses Gaveston of alienating her husband's affections, and Gaveston calls her out for her affair with Mortimer Senior), Edward and Gaveston depart so that Gaveston can begin his exile in Ireland.

Soon afterward, Isabella has an apparent change of heart and suggests to the nobles they ask for Gaveston's exile to be lifted once more. They protest, but she insists. She pulls Mortimer Senior aside to tell him it would be easier to ensure Gaveston would no longer be a problem if they kept him in court. There he could be killed and removed from the king's life entirely. She hopes Edward will pay her attention once more (which must have surely been awkward for her paramour to consider).

Edward rejoices at this change of heart and doesn't really stop to question why the nobles, who had pushed so hard for the exile, are suddenly suggesting Gaveston's return. He plans all manner of tournaments and fetes to celebrate, even arranging for Gaveston's marriage to the king's cousin Margaret. The nobles waste no time in killing Gaveston after his return, devastating Edward. Edward has Warwick and Lancaster, the two nobles who he felt persecuted Gaveston the most, to be executed, and he seeks comfort in the counsel of Spencer, a court favorite who had served Gaveston. Isabella is enraged by the king's lack of attention and takes her son, Edward III, to France where her brother is king and seeks aid against Edward there.

## The Home and the World

The Home and the World by Rabindranath Tagore is an interesting allegory of Indian politics in the early twentieth century. As a means of encouraging his wife, Bimala, to emerge into the outer world, Nikhil introduces her to Sandip, an active leader in the Swadeshi movement. Bimala soon becomes immersed in the revolutionary fervour of Swadeshi and finds herself torn between the duties of home and the world. The Home and the World is a tragic example of the conflict between realism and idealism.

Though Nikhil and Bimala enjoy a peaceful marriage, Nikhil wants her to enter the outer world, believing their love is true only if they recognize one another in the outer world. When Bimala attends a Swadeshi rally led by Sandip Babu, she insists he visit Nikhil's estate. Bimala and Sandip are attracted to one another, so Sandip decides to make his headquarters at the estate.

Bimala becomes intimately involved with the Swadeshi movement because of her desire to work with Sandip. Sandip is obviously interested in Bimala, and Bimala begins to question her marriage to Nikhil because Sandip represents everything she wants in a man. At Sandip's request, Bimala steals 6000 rupees from Nikhil's safe for the Cause, but Sandip's subsequent behavior makes her feel torn as though she is two people, one who is appalled by Sandip and one who is attracted to him.

Though Nikhil is distraught at losing Bimala, he grants her the freedom to choose her own life. Guilt-ridden about her theft, Bimala sends Amulya, a young disciple of Sandip's, to sell her jewels so she can replace the 6000 rupees, but instead, Amulya steals the money from Nikhil's treasury. Nikhil forgives Bimala's deceit, causing her to realize her husband is the one who truly loves her. When there is a Swadeshi riot in Bengal, Sandip flees the city while Nikhil goes into town to try to calm matters. Nikhil is shot in the head, and Amulya is killed by a bullet through his heart.