



Abe Lincoln in Illinois

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Characters Discussed

Abe Lincoln, who, at the age of twenty-two in 1831, is an awkward, melancholy young backwoodsman with no particular ambition. By 1861, he is a man of dedicated political principles whose personality and career have been shaped by friendship, love, loss, marriage, his reactions to the Dred Scott decision, and the great debates with Stephen A. Douglas.

Ann Rutledge, Lincoln's great love, who agrees to marry him after her engagement to another man has been broken. She dies of a sudden fever.

McNeil, Ann's fiancé, who is unable to return from his home in New York State to marry Ann.

Mary Todd, an ambitious young woman who sees in Lincoln the means of fulfilling her own frustrated desires. After their marriage, she bears four children, but her jealousy and tantrums make his life so miserable that he is forced to shut her out of his election triumph.

Seth Gale, Lincoln's friend. When the possible death of his son Jimmie threatens the Gales' plans to move west, Lincoln, seeing in his friend's predicament a symbol of what could happen to his countrymen's hopes after the Dred Scott decision, finds his political convictions shaped and strengthened.

Mentor Graham, the New Salem schoolmaster who taught Lincoln grammar and encouraged his love of poetry and oratory.

Ninian Edwards, Lincoln's political mentor and Mary Todd's brother-in-law. Admiring Lincoln, he urges him to become a candidate for the Illinois State Assembly.

Judge Bowling Green, the New Salem justice of the peace.

Joshua Speed, a New Salem merchant.

Berry, Lincoln's whiskey-drinking partner in a general store. His drinking bankrupts the partnership and leaves Lincoln with a debt of fifteen hundred dollars.

Judge Stuart, with whom Lincoln opens a law office in Springfield.

William H. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner.

Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln's political opponent.

Jimmie Gale, Seth's young son.

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