



## Betrayal

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### Characters Discussed

Emma, Robert's wife. Thirty-eight years old at the beginning of the play, which moves backward in time, Emma is dissatisfied in her marriage and ready to separate from her husband. Her marriage has failed because of an affair she had with her husband's friend Jerry, a writer. Emma apparently also has been intimate with another writer, Roger Casey. Emma is angry because she believes that Robert has been unfaithful to her, yet she ascribes little importance to the fact that she has betrayed both Robert and Jerry. This obliviousness to the consequences of her own actions is a main facet of her character.

Jerry, a forty-year-old writer. Jerry is inherently a romantic, and it is this impulse that leads him to betray Robert, his best friend. Jerry's affair with Robert's wife, Emma, also betrays his own wife, Judith. Jerry instigated the affair with Emma while a party was in progress at Robert's house in 1968; he made a drunken pass at her. Jerry is the more romantic of the two men and the more naïve. He does not realize that Robert discovered the affair at least as early as 1973. Jerry comes to understand the situation four years later, when the play begins.

Robert, the cuckolded husband of Emma, also forty years old in 1977. He is a publisher; in fact, he publishes the work of both of Emma's lovers, Jerry and Roger. He is a realist and something of a detective; he seems to be the play's most clever character. He discovers Emma's infidelity while on holiday with her in Venice in 1973, when he finds a letter Jerry has written to her. From that point on, he has the upper hand. He baits Jerry with insinuations that the unsuspecting Jerry is incapable of understanding. Jerry does not discover until 1977 that Robert has been observing him for years with this knowledge of betrayal.

### Sources for Further Study

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