



## The Lion and the Jewel

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### Characters Discussed

Baroka (bah-ROH-kah), the “Bale” of Ilujinle, the “Lion” in the title of the play. This village chief is sixty-two years old, very proud, deceptive, and cunning. His attempt to win the village belle, Sidi, through deception is the central focus of the play. The Bale manipulates the other characters by feigning sexual impotence.

Sidi (SEE-dee), the village belle, about eighteen years old, very pretty and coquettish. She distracts the young schoolteacher, Lakunle, attracts a traveling photographer who wants her picture to be in a magazine, and passively flirts with the Bale, unaware of the Bale’s vast experience in romance. Sidi is tricked into making love with the Bale at the end of the comedy.

Lakunle (lah-KEWN-lay), a young, “modern,” and stylishly dressed liberal. He is in fact a conservative who pretends to be interested in social revolution; his real concern is for Sidi or any other available young woman in the village. Lakunle’s supposed platonic love for Sidi is no match for the Bale’s cunning and experience, and Lakunle proves to be a poor adversary.

Sadiku (sah-DEE-kew), the primary wife of the Bale. One of her principal jobs is to woo younger wives for the Bale. She convinces Sidi that the young woman should marry the Bale by telling her that the Bale is old and that Sidi will have the honor of being the senior wife of the new Bale.

The favorite, the Bale’s present young woman. She tries to please him, but she is informed by the Bale that she has no time to improve her affection because he is taking a new wife. She represents another conquest by the Bale.

The surveyor, an outsider who is planning to build a road through the village. He is easily bought off by the Bale, who offers gifts if he will build the road in another place, thus preserving the land and the traditions of his people.

### Sources for Further Study

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