Blood Wedding

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA

García Lorca's father was a successful farmer married to a teacher. Together they raised four children, of which Federico García Lorca was the eldest. When the author was ten years old, the family moved to Granada, where García Lorca enrolled in a Catholic school as well as a secular institute run by the Roman Catholic Church. Later, García Lorca attended the University of Granada, where it took him nine years to earn a degree on account of his unimpressive schoolwork. An impassioned pianist, he traded music for writing when he was a young man, eventually befriending several artists, including filmmaker Luis Buñuel and painter Salvador Dalí. In 1919 he wrote his first play, *The Butterfly's Evil Spell*, which was composed in verse. Unfortunately, it was largely made fun of by critics and thus only ran for four shows. In the 1920s García Lorca became associated with Spain's avant-garde scene, publishing both poetry and plays, including *Gypsy Ballads*, his most popular poetry collection, which came out in 1928 and is largely about life in Andalusia—a theme he explored throughout his career. After a brief stint in New York City in 1929, the author returned to Spain during Primo de Rivera's dictatorial rule, at which point he began touring as an actor and director of a theater troupe that brought plays to rural communities throughout the country. It was during this period that he penned three plays now known as the "rural trilogy," which includes *Blood Wedding*, *Yerma*, and *The House of Bernarda Alba*. As he presented these plays, he became known for his socialist beliefs. Because of the Spanish government's fascist government at the time, though, he was arrested in 1936 on the same day that his brother-in-law was assassinated after having accepted the position of mayor in Grenada. It is said that García Lorca himself was assassinated for political reasons the following day, though some people uphold that there were other factors that contributed to his execution.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Although *Blood Wedding* presents itself as a work of realism, it becomes progressively symbolic as the play goes on. This is likely due to the influence on García Lorca's work of Symbolism, which emerged in the early twentieth century. Symbolism was largely a reaction to Naturalism, which had dominated literature and the theater throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century, when playwrights like Anton Chekhov and Henrik Ibsen wrote many texts that examined the effect of the external world on humans. Under Symbolism, though, artists began exploring more abstract and figurative methods of depicting the human experience. What's more, the turn of the century also brought Cubism, Expressionism, Dadaism, and—eventually—Surrealism. García Lorca was undoubtedly affected by all of these movements, especially because he became close friends with the surrealist painter Salvador Dalí and a number of other artists who were experimenting with how to present perspective and subjectivity in the arts. Given these influences, it's unsurprising that the most climactic scenes in *Blood Wedding* draw upon highly symbolic and surreal techniques, with characters appearing onstage to represent the moon and death. In this sense, *Blood Wedding* is a combination of Naturalism and other more expressive literary techniques, as the play blends realist elements with abstraction and figuration.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Blood Wedding is the first play in what's commonly referred to as Federico García Lorca's "rural trilogy." As such, it's helpful to consider this text alongside the other two works, *Yerma* and *The House of Bernarda Alba*. In *Yerma*, García Lorca explores the pressure women felt in the early twentieth century in rural Spanish communities to have children, ultimately examining themes of passion and inheritance, both of which also factor into *Blood Wedding*. Furthermore, *The House of Bernarda Alba* resembles elements of *Blood Wedding* because it looks at the effect of tragedy on a family, as the titular character forces her daughters to continue mourning her husband's death. Also, given that *Blood Wedding* is a play about feuding families and forbidden love, there is a clear parallel between it and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, which is perhaps the most famous work about revenge and clandestine affairs.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Blood Wedding*
- **When Written:** 1932
- **When Published:** First staged in 1933
- **Literary Period:** Modernism
- **Genre:** Drama, rural tragedy
- **Setting:** Andalusia, Spain
- **Climax:** Moments after Leonardo and the Bride slink away in the dark woods, an old beggar woman who represents death appears and screams twice, turning her back to the audience and opening her ragged coat like "a great bird with huge wings."
- **Antagonist:** Violence and the characters' obsession with revenge.

EXTRA CREDIT

Trouble Onstage. Because it was rather uncommon for a play to switch between prose and verse, the original cast of *Blood Wedding* found it challenging to deliver their lines in the way García Lorca intended. Unfortunately, this was exacerbated by the fact that several of the actors weren't particularly talented to begin with, making it even harder for them to convincingly speak lines in verse.

Dictatorship. After García Lorca's assassination—which took place in the first year of the Spanish Civil War—his plays weren't staged in Spain for twenty years, a time during which the fascist regime that murdered him strictly controlled the country.

PLOT SUMMARY

A young man referred to simply as the Bridegroom enters his home and tells his mother that he's going out to their vineyard to cut grapes. This makes his mother anxious, as she curses the invention of **knives** and anything that "can cut a man's body." Going on in this manner, she reminisces about the death of the Bridegroom's father and brother, both of whom were murdered by members of the Felix family. She complains about the fact that the murderers have only been imprisoned and thus are still alive, a punishment she finds unsatisfactory. "Are you going to stop?" the Bridegroom asks, wanting to change the subject, though she continues to talk about violence and death, saying she doesn't like it when he leaves the house because she fears something will happen to him. Eventually, the Bridegroom succeeds in distracting her by talking about his plans to get married. When he brings this up, his mother expresses her happiness for him, though she points out that she doesn't know the young woman and that the entire ordeal is moving quite fast. Still, she says she knows the Bride is "good," and she agrees to meet her and her father that Sunday to make the wedding plans official.

When the Bridegroom leaves, a neighbor enters and speaks to his mother, who asks if she knows anything about the girl her son is about to marry. The neighbor explains that the Bride is an attractive young woman who lives far away with her father. The girl's mother is dead, the neighbor says, adding that the Bride's mother never loved her husband. Lastly, she informs the Bridegroom's mother that the Bride was in a serious relationship with Leonardo Felix. In fact, they almost got married, but then Leonardo ended up marrying the girl's cousin. Hearing this, the old woman is distraught, bemoaning the fact that her son's Bride has been associated with the Felix family, but the neighbor tells her to be reasonable, pointing out that Leonardo was only eight years old when the violence between their families took place.

In the following scene, Leonardo's wife and mother-in-law try to quiet Leonardo's baby by singing a lullaby about a horse who refuses to drink from a stream because its hooves are bleeding into the water. Not long after the baby finally goes down, Leonardo enters and claims that he's been at the blacksmith's getting new horseshoes, since his horse frequently ruins his shoes. When his wife suggests that this happens because he overworks the horse, Leonardo claims he "hardly ever ride[s] him." However, his wife says that her neighbors claimed to have seen him the previous day on "the other side of the plains," which is quite far away. Nevertheless, Leonardo denies this, though his mother-in-law catches a glimpse of the horse and points out that it looks as if it has "come from the end of the world." Seeing her husband's anger mount, the wife changes the subject by telling him that the Bridegroom is asking for her cousin's hand in marriage. Unfortunately, though, this only puts him in a worse mood. When his mother-in-law suggests that the Bridegroom's mother isn't "very happy about the wedding," he says, "That one needs watching," referring to the Bride. Just then, a young girl enters and tells them that she saw the Bridegroom and his mother buying extravagant gifts for the Bride, and when she begins to describe the stockings they bought, Leonardo snaps at her, saying, "We couldn't care less." He then storms out of the house, waking the baby as he goes.

On Sunday, the Bridegroom and his mother travel four hours to meet with the Bride and her father. When the father enters, he immediately begins talking about his land, proudly saying that he has had to "punish it" in order to make it yield esparto crops, since it's so dry. Hearing how interested in land he is, the Bridegroom's mother assures him they won't be asking for anything in the way of a dowry, since their vineyards are already so prosperous. The father then fantasizes about joining their land, saying he'd love to see all of their property "together," which would be "a thing of beauty." Going on, the two parents agree that the wedding should take place on the following Thursday, which is also the Bride's twenty-second birthday. "That's what my son would have been if he were still alive," the mother notes, but the father tells her not to "dwell" on such morbid matters, though she assures him she'll think about it "every minute" until she dies.

Before long, the Bride enters and accepts the gifts from the Bridegroom's mother. As she does so, the mother notices that she's quite solemn, so she takes her chin in her hand and says, "You know what getting married is, Child?" When the Bride says she does, the Bridegroom's mother lists what she believes marriage entails, saying, "A man, children, and as for the rest a wall that's two feet thick." Agreeing with this, the Bride says, "I know my duty," and the Bridegroom and his mother take their leave. Alone, the Bride's servant urges her to open her gifts, but the Bride is uninterested in these material items. "For God's sake!" the servant cries. "It's as if you have no wish to get married." She then reveals that she saw Leonardo on his horse the night before, saying that she saw him by the Bride's window. At first, the Bride denies this, calling the servant a liar,

but she soon gives up this act and admits that the servant is right—Leonardo was there.

On the morning of the wedding, the servant helps the Bride get ready. When she tries to affix a wreath of **orange blossoms** (which the Bridegroom got her) to her hair, though, the Bride tosses the flowers on the floor. "Child! Don't tempt fate by throwing the flowers on the floor!" the servant says. "Don't you want to get married?" Instead of answering, the Bride only references a "cold wind" moving through her, though she then says she loves the Bridegroom. "But it's a very big step," she adds. Shortly thereafter, Leonardo arrives and enters the room. He is the first wedding guest to come, and the servant tells the Bride not to let him see her in her undergarments, though she ignores this and has an intense conversation with her former lover, who notes that the Bridegroom should have gotten her a smaller orange blossom, which would "suit her better." They then fall into an impassioned argument about the fact that the Bride refused to marry Leonardo when they were together because he wasn't rich enough. As a result, Leonardo married her cousin, but he has never stopped thinking about her. Now, though, he knows he must tell her how he feels, since she's about to marry. "To keep quiet and burn is the greatest punishment we can heap upon ourselves," he says when she tells him her plan to "shut [herself] away" with the Bridegroom and "love him above everything." And though she wants to remain strong, she admits that the mere sound of his voice weakens her willpower, at which point the servant forces Leonardo to leave.

Soon enough, the Bridegroom and the wedding guests stream into the house. Going to her future husband, the Bride expresses her desire to speed the wedding along, saying, "I want to be your wife and be alone with you and not hear any other voice but yours." She also says she wants him to "hold" her so tightly that she won't be able to free herself even if she wants to. With this, the couple sets out for the church, and the guests sing about the joyous occasion as they follow. When everybody is gone, Leonardo's wife expresses her frustration that he doesn't seem to care about her, indicating that she knows she's been "thrown aside," though he does nothing to make her feel better.

After the ceremony, the married couple and their guests return to the Bride's father's house, where they dance and make merry. As the party begins, the Bridegroom's mother talks to the Bride's father about the prospect of having grandchildren. The father, for his part, is especially excited for his son to have children, since this will mean he'll have more people to work on his farm. As happy conversations like these take place, the Bride remains sullen and unenthused, eventually excusing herself to lie down because she has a headache. Shortly thereafter, Leonardo's wife comes rushing through the party looking for Leonardo, and the crowd discovers that the two ex-lovers have eloped, riding off into the woods on a horse.

Hearing this, the Bridegroom's mother urges the Bride's father to round up his family members to chase Leonardo down. "The hour of blood has come again," she says.

Deep in the woods, several woodcutters talk about the runaway lovers, filling the role of a traditional Greek chorus. Although these woodcutters want the Bride and Leonardo to escape unharmed, a personified version of the moon soon appears and reveals its desire to shed light upon the forest so that the lovers won't go undetected. What's more, an old beggar woman who represents death (according to Lorca's stage note) appears and asserts that Leonardo and the Bride will not make it past the nearby stream. Soon, the Bridegroom and a young man ride up and talk about the chase. When his helper suggests that they turn back, the Bridegroom says he can't because of his family's history with the Felix family. At this point, he stumbles into the beggar woman, who joins the search for Leonardo and the Bride. Just as they leave, though, the lovers emerge and talk about the dangers of what they've done. The Bride regrets running away, but only because doing so has endangered Leonardo. Nevertheless, they both decide that nothing but death will "separate" them. Moments after they leave, two piercing screams fill the dark woods.

After the wedding, three little girls play with a bundle of red yarn and discuss what happened, wondering why none of the guests have returned from the ceremony. Finally, the old beggar woman appears and tells them that the Bridegroom and Leonardo have both died. When she and the little girls leave, the Bridegroom's mother and her neighbor enter and discuss the tragedy. "All of them are dead now," the mother says. "At midnight I'll sleep, I'll sleep and not be afraid of a gun or a knife." As she mourns, she refuses to cry, not wanting her other neighbors—who are beginning to enter the room—to see her fall apart. However, when the Bride arrives, she finds it difficult to withhold her anger. "You would have gone too," the young woman insists. "I was a woman burning, full of pain inside and out, and your son was a tiny drop of water that I hoped would give me children, land, health." Continuing, she says that Leonardo was like a "dark river" that swept her away. Unable to stop herself, the Bridegroom's mother slaps the Bride, who readily accepts this punishment, telling the old woman that she merely wants to weep with her. As such, the Bridegroom's mother says she can cry by the door, admitting that nothing "matter[s]" to her anymore. At this point, the two women begin to speak in verse, trading lines and bemoaning the loss of their loved ones as people file in and sob.

CHARACTERS

The Bridegroom – The Bride's fiancé. The Bridegroom is a young man whose family has long had a feud with the members of the Felix family, who murdered his father and brother. Now that the Bridegroom is the only male left in his clan, his mother

is constantly worried about his safety, unwilling to forget what the Felixes did to her loved ones. This tends to annoy the Bridegroom, who clearly wants to focus on the future instead of the past. To that end, he has made plans to marry a young woman who lives four hours from his and his mother's home. What he doesn't know, though, is that the Bride used to be in a relationship with Leonardo, the only Felix man who hasn't been imprisoned (this is because Leonardo was only eight when his family members killed the Bridegroom's father and brother). Unfortunately for the Bridegroom, the Bride is still in love with Leonardo, despite the fact that she originally ended their relationship because he wasn't rich enough to provide for her. The Bridegroom, on the other hand, is quite affluent on account of his family's prosperous vineyard, which he now tends. Proud of his ability to care for the Bride, he is completely oblivious to her unhappiness, failing to recognize how sad she is to marry him. Because of his ignorance, he's caught by surprise when the Bride elopes with Leonardo during the wedding reception. Suddenly enraged, he follows them into the woods and refuses to turn around, citing his family's history with the Felixes as the reason he must find Leonardo and take his revenge. Unsurprisingly, this dogged chase only leads him to death, as he and Leonardo fulfill his mother's worst fear by killing each other.

The Bride – A young woman who lives with her father on an isolated stretch of dry, largely infertile land. Even though she is about to marry the Bridegroom, the Bride is sullen and sad. Unlike everybody around her, she's unimpressed by all that the Bridegroom will be able to give her, feeling unexcited by the prospect of gaining his prosperous vineyard. In keeping with this, she's also unmoved by the ornate gifts that his mother gives her. This is because she is in love with Leonardo, the last free member of the Felix family. She and Leonardo used to be in a romantic relationship, but she refused to marry him because she knew he wouldn't be able to financially provide for her. Choosing what seemed like the responsible, rational option, she broke off their romance, and so he ended up marrying her cousin. However, Leonardo recognizes his ex-lover's discontent on her wedding day, when he comes to her home before the other guests and makes it clear that he still loves her. This has a profound effect on the Bride, who tries to remain committed to the Bridegroom but finds herself deeply affected by the mere sound of Leonardo's voice. As such, she goes to the Bridegroom and insists that they hurry the wedding along, thinking that solidifying their marriage will keep her from succumbing to her true desires. This, of course, is a grave miscalculation, as she ends up eloping with Leonardo during the wedding reception. When the Bridegroom and Leonardo later kill each other as a result of this situation, the Bride goes to the Bridegroom's mother's house and tries to explain herself, though she ends up simply asking to mourn alongside the old woman.

Mother – The Bridegroom's mother. Because members of the Felix family murdered her husband and her other son, the Bridegroom's mother is perpetually anxious about the possibility of her only remaining son—the Bridegroom—succumbing to the same fate. As a result, she frequently curses **knives** and the person who invented them, in addition to all other weapons. These thoughts are never far from the old woman's mind, since she vehemently defends her right to talk about such matters until the day she dies, telling anyone who will listen that she'll never forget the past. At the same time, she appears willing to look toward the future, as she agrees to go along with her son's marriage even though she finds out that the Bride was once romantically involved with Leonardo, the last free member of the Felix family. Admirably, she decides not to tell her son this, ultimately wanting to preserve his happiness, though this unfortunately makes it even easier for him to overlook the fact that the Bride is still in love with Leonardo. When the Bridegroom's mother meets the Bride's father, both parents are delighted by the transactional nature of the wedding, seeing it first and foremost as a union that will bring children and riches. This, perhaps, is why none of them recognize the Bride's discontent. And although the mother is supposedly so averse to violence, she's quick to encourage violent revenge when Leonardo elopes with the Bride. Later, when the Bridegroom dies, the old woman feels oddly liberated, mourning the loss of her son while simultaneously realizing that she no longer has to worry about anyone attacking her loved ones.

Leonardo Felix – The Bride's true love, and the only member of the Felix family who hasn't been imprisoned because of the ongoing feud with the Bridegroom's clan. The Bridegroom's mother allows her son to marry the Bride despite her past relations with a Felix for the simple reason that Leonardo was only eight when his family members murdered the Bridegroom's father and brother. Little does she know, though, that Leonardo is still in love with the Bride. This is because their relationship ended not because their romance died away, but because the Bride decided Leonardo wasn't wealthy enough to wed her. As such, he married the Bride's cousin and had a baby with her. However, it's quite obvious that he has no feelings for his wife, as he shamelessly lies to her and his mother-in-law about the fact that he has been riding his horse to the Bride's house at night to stand outside her window. When the Bride's wedding day finally comes around, Leonardo makes sure to ride ahead of the other guests so that he's the first to arrive, thereby catching the Bride by surprise and telling her in front of the servant that he still has feelings for her. As he talks to her, the mere sound of his voice erodes The Bride's willpower, but the servant sends him away before anything can happen between the two former lovers. After the wedding ceremony, though, the Bride breaks down and elopes with Leonardo, riding off with him into the dark woods. While they're running away from the Bridegroom and other wedding guests, Leonardo and the Bride decide that only death will "separate"

them, and this is exactly what happens, as Leonardo and the Bridegroom soon kill each other.

Father – The Bride's father. A widower whose wife never loved him, he now lives on an isolated stretch of dry land with his daughter—a plot of earth he is immensely proud of, having "punish[ed]" in order to grow healthy crops of esparto. When the Bridegroom's mother meets him for the first time, he speaks lovingly about his farm and praises her prosperous vineyard, which he wishes he could put right next to his own land so that both properties could be one. In alignment with this, he also hopes that the Bride and Bridegroom have many boys so that he can benefit from the children's unpaid labor in the fields. Focused solely on the financial and material benefits of his daughter's marriage, he fails to recognize her unhappiness. As a result, he is blindsided by her elopement with Leonardo and—thus—slow to react, apparently not doing anything until the Bridegroom's mother entreats him to rally his side of the family to chase after the escaped lovers.

The Servant – A servant in the Bride's house. A seemingly kind and attentive woman, the servant is the only person who picks up on the Bride's hesitancy to get married, though—like everybody else—she is also quite taken by the fancy gifts the Bridegroom's mother gives the young woman. However, these material possessions don't completely blind her to the Bride's unhappiness, which is why she eventually asks, "Do you love your young man?" What's more, she tells the Bride that it's not too late to back out of the marriage, though the young woman unfortunately waits until after she's already married the Bridegroom to change her mind. What's more, despite her attentiveness to the Bride, the servant also actively tries to shelter her from Leonardo, as she realizes that he has an overwhelming effect on her.

The Neighbor – A woman who lives next to the Bridegroom's mother. In a conversation about the Bride, the neighbor tells the Bridegroom's mother that the young woman used to be romantically involved with Leonardo. When the Bridegroom's mother expresses her dismay that her son is about to marry a woman who has associated with one of the family's enemies, the neighbor urges her not to do anything to prevent the wedding, since Leonardo was only eight when his family members murdered the Bridegroom's father and brother. Going on, the neighbor encourages her friend to help preserve the Bridegroom's happiness by not telling him about his future wife's involvement with Leonardo. After the Bridegroom and Leonardo kill each other, the neighbor mourns with the mother, crying openly and insisting that the old woman should come spend the night at her house, though the Bridegroom's mother declines this offer because she's no longer afraid of anything.

Leonardo's Wife – Leonardo's wife, and the Bride's cousin. When the Bride and Leonardo were first together, she told him she wouldn't marry him because he wouldn't be able to provide for her financially. As such, he married her cousin, with whom he now has a baby. Unfortunately, Leonardo doesn't love her, nor does he treat her very well, as he makes little effort to conceal his love for the Bride. As a result, his wife easily sees that she is being "thrown aside" for her cousin, though Leonardo doesn't do anything to make her feel better about this when she confronts him.

Mother-in-Law – The mother of Leonardo's wife. The mother-in-law lives with Leonardo and her daughter and helps take care of their baby. When Leonardo lies in order to conceal the fact that he's been visiting the Bride at night, his mother-in-law sees through his excuses, though she backs off when he gets angry about her questions.

The Moon – A personification of the moon. This character appears on stage when Leonardo and the Bride run into the woods in order to escape the Bridegroom and his angry mob, which wants to capture them and punish Leonardo for breaking up the wedding. A highly symbolic character, the moon expresses its wish to shine light throughout the woods so that Leonardo and the Bride can't escape death, which is hotly pursuing them. As such, this lunar being comes to represent nature's embrace of death and, thus, the fact that even the most ghastly deaths—like murders—are part of the ordinary cycles of mortality that occur in the natural world.

Beggar Woman (Death) – An old woman dressed in rags who appears in the forest when Leonardo and the Bride elope. In his stage note, Lorca writes that the "beggar woman" is death itself. Unsurprisingly, then, she eagerly awaits Leonardo and the Bridegroom's deaths, predicting that blood will be spilled in a nearby stream, which she says Leonardo and the Bride will not be able to cross. After her prediction comes true and Leonardo and the Bridegroom kill each other, the beggar woman visits the Bridegroom's house and tells the three little girls waiting there what has happened.

The Woodcutters – A group of three woodsmen who act as a traditional Greek Chorus, or a set of characters who appear in Ancient Greek plays and comment on the plot as it unfolds. When Leonardo and the Bride escape into the woods, the woodcutters talk about their elopement, saying that they hope the two lovers evade the hands of death.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

LOVE, PASSION, AND CONTROL

In *Blood Wedding*, Federico Garcia Lorca scrutinizes the nature of love and the ways in which passionate romance can affect a person's control over his or her life. In his treatment of the Bride and the Bridegroom's relationship, Lorca presents the audience with a seemingly blissful and logical pairing, one that should—for all intents and purposes—bring happiness to both partners. Although the Bride is clearly less invested in the relationship than her fiancé, she appears to actively want to marry him for practical reasons. However, she finds herself unable to go through with the marriage because her true love lies with Leonardo, who is one of the Bridegroom's enemies. When Leonardo first appears at her wedding, she tries to resist her feelings by telling him to keep his distance throughout the day. Later, she rushes to the Bridegroom and insists that they hurry the ceremony along, clearly hoping that making their union official will keep her from succumbing to her true desire for Leonardo. In this way, Lorca intimates that the Bride is afraid of what she might do under the strong influence of love. Indeed, protecting herself from her own desires, the Bride attempts to ignore her feelings by making a pragmatic commitment to the Bridegroom, one that will provide her with domestic and financial stability. When she later elopes with Leonardo even after having married the Bridegroom, though, the audience sees that she is powerless against her romantic passions. In turn, Lorca suggests that love is irrational and perfectly capable of squashing a person's willpower, regardless of what he or she does to stave off the yearnings of the heart.

The Bride's initial decision to marry the Bridegroom is pragmatic and rational. Rather than paying attention to her romantic feelings, she focuses on the practical reasons to get married to a man like the Bridegroom, who can provide her with everything except the passion she feels for Leonardo. Given that everybody in her life (except Leonardo) fixates on the pragmatic benefits of marriage, it's unsurprising that she settles for a steady—but unimpassioned—domestic life. "You know what getting married is, child?" the Bridegroom's mother asks, and the Bride "solemnly" says she does. "A man, children, and as for the rest a wall that's two feet thick," her future mother-in-law intones, suggesting that the only reasons to get married are to attach oneself to a man, to have children, and to live in a sturdy house. "Who needs anything else?" the Bridegroom happily adds, demonstrating just how oblivious he is to the fact that his future wife happens to want love in addition to these relatively mundane perks. Rather than backing out, though, the Bride commits herself to this dreary, loveless life, saying, "I know my duty" in response to her future mother-in-law's talk about childrearing. As such, the Bride frames the institution of marriage as an obligation to which she has stoically resigned herself. In other words, she has chosen to live a cheerless life in order to attain the kind of domestic stability her society values most.

However, the Bride's resolve to enter into a loveless marriage falters when Leonardo appears on her wedding day, stirring up feelings of passion that threaten the Bride's commitment to pragmatism. When he laments that she decided not to marry him (for financial reasons) when they were first together, she replies, "I've got my pride. Which is why I'm getting married. And I'll shut myself away with my husband, and I'll love him above everything." Despite these strong words, though, Leonardo simply says, "Pride will get you nowhere," adding that "to keep quiet and burn is the greatest punishment we can heap upon ourselves." When he says this, the Bride begins to "tremble" and admits that just hearing "the sound of his voice" is enough to make her feel "drunk." But before she completely breaks down, the servant steps in and sends Leonardo away. Still, though, the damage has been done, and the Bride now knows how difficult it will be to turn her back on love.

After realizing how susceptible she is to her love for Leonardo, the Bride tries to seal her own fate by hurrying along the wedding process. "Let's get to the church quickly," she tells the Bridegroom, saying, "I want to be your wife and be alone with you and not hear any other voice but yours." Although this might seem like an expression of love, it is actually the Bride's flimsy attempt to *run* from love, since the only reason she wants to "be alone" with the Bridegroom is so she can't listen to Leonardo's pleadings, which she knows will crush her willpower and convince her to sacrifice the even-keeled domestic life she's trying to secure for herself. Going on, she tells the Bridegroom she wants him to "hold [her] so tight that" she couldn't break free from his grasp even if she wanted to. By saying this, she reveals that she wants her future husband to make it *impossible* for her to act on her true desires. As such, the audience sees that if she were to listen to her heart, she would certainly not choose to be with the Bridegroom, which is why she needs him to force her to stay.

Even after the Bride marries the Bridegroom, she isn't safe from her own desires. This becomes evident when she elopes with Leonardo during the wedding's afterparty, having finally given into her yearnings. This lapse of willpower illustrates how difficult it is to resist passion. "You have to follow your instinct," says the Greek chorus of woodcutters, who comment on the Bride and Leonardo's elopement, saying that "they were right to run away." In keeping with this, Leonardo justifies what he and the Bride have done by upholding that "the fault belongs to the earth," implying that it would be unnatural to deny certain romantic bonds, which are stronger than humans themselves. In this way, Lorca suggests that although following one's heart might end in tragedy (since both Leonardo and the Bridegroom eventually die as a result of the elopement), it's pointless to resist the undeniable strength of love and passion.

HISTORY AND FATE

Blood Wedding is a play about the ways in which history repeats itself. As early as the first scene, the Bridegroom's mother expresses her unwillingness to forget the past, saying that she will never stop talking about how the Felix family murdered her husband and firstborn son. These travesties happened many years ago, but she refuses to move on, evidently worried that the bad blood between her family and their enemies will resurface. Throughout the play, then, she is presented as an anxious old women who can't overcome her personal history, which ultimately affects her ability to enjoy life in the present. However, her fear of the past—and its tendency to repeat itself—is eventually justified when her son dies at the hands of Leonardo Felix, thus succumbing to the same miserable fate as his father and brother. Strangely enough, this fulfillment of destiny actually releases the old woman from her fears, as she realizes she can finally live her life without having to worry about what will happen to her loved ones. In this sense, fear and anticipation themselves trouble the mother more than the actual reality of losing her son. In fact, with nothing else to lose, she stops obsessing about the cyclical nature of history. In turn, Lorca implies that although tragedy may indeed repeat itself, people ought to live in the moment, since worrying about fate won't change what happens but *will* ruin a person's ability to enjoy the present.

In the play's opening scene, the Bridegroom finds himself forced to listen to his mother's longwinded rant about the past, which consequently reveals her deep-rooted anxiety about the future. Even though he's only told her that he's going out to the vineyard to cut grapes off the branches for lunch, she subjects him to a wistful speech about his father and brother's respective deaths, refusing to let him go about his day without stopping to remember that they were killed by the Felix family. "Is that it?" he asks, tired of her unending obsession with the past. "If I lived to be a hundred, I wouldn't speak of anything else," she says. Of course, it's understandable that she's upset about having lost two of her family members, but her inability to move on has clearly become a burden on her son, who can't even leave the house without her worrying that he too will be killed. "I don't like you carrying a **knife**," she says. "It's just that…I wish you wouldn't go out to the fields." When she says this, the audience sees that her fixation on the past actually brings itself to bear on the present, as she fears what will happen to her only remaining family member. Unfortunately, this means the Bridegroom can't even "go out to the fields" without setting her on edge, which illustrates just how much the old woman's fraught relationship with the past impedes upon both her and her son's ability to lead normal lives in the present.

Rather ironically, the same obsession with the past that fuels the old woman's fear is what later emboldens the Bridegroom to put himself in a fatally dangerous situation, showing how dwelling on the past can be harmful in the present. After learning that the Bride has run off with Leonardo Felix, the Bridegroom charges into the woods, surely aware that he's speeding toward a conflict with one of his family's enemies and, as such, is brazenly tempting fate. Rather than fearing that history will repeat itself, though, he appears oddly encouraged by the complicated legacy he has inherited from his father and brother. While trying to find the Bride and Leonardo in the dark woods, he turns to a young man helping him and says, "You see this arm? Well it's not my arm. It's my brother's arm and my father's arm and my whole dead family's arm." By saying this, the Bridegroom suggests that his father and brother's deaths are literally part of him—they are, after all, part of his history, and since his mother refuses to let the past slip away, he has absorbed this history and incorporated it into his identity. In turn, he is especially motivated to track down Leonardo, choosing to let the embattled past between their two families steer him toward danger rather than away from it. As a result, the audience sees that his mother has good reason to fear the repetition of history, though it is, of course, tragically comedic that her obsession with their violent family legacy has contributed to the Bridegroom's own investment in the feud—an investment that costs him his life and fulfills the destiny his mother has feared all along.

What's most interesting about the old woman's relationship with history and fate is that she seems to experience a sense of relief after her worst fear comes true. Having spent the majority of her adult life fretting that history will repeat itself, she is suddenly released from such worries when the Bridegroom dies. While she's mourning, she tells her neighbor that she will now have no problem being "at peace" in her own home. "All of them are dead now," she says. "At midnight I'll sleep, I'll sleep and not be afraid of a gun or a knife." Of course, she could be referring to the Felix family when she says, "All of them are dead now," since Leonardo has also died. But her lack of fear most likely stems from the fact that she no longer has any sons to be killed. "Other mothers will go to their windows, lashed by the rain, to see the face of their sons. Not me," she says, sounding strangely liberated by her loss. Needless to say, this doesn't mean she isn't devastated that her son has been killed, but she's quite aware that now her life can proceed peacefully. As such, Lorca subtly intimates that the mere *possibility* of history repeating itself was more torturous to the old woman than the actual reality of her son's death. Furthermore, considering that her obsession with the past ultimately contributed to her son's embrace of his own destruction, Lorca conveys that it's both futile *and* potentially harmful to fixate on what can't be changed. Instead of focusing on the merciless regenerations of history, he upholds, people should focus their efforts on conducting happier lives in the present.

VIOLENCE AND REVENGE

In *Blood Wedding*, Lorca studies the allure of violence, investigating the odd way that humans are drawn to acts of revenge and retribution. By telling a tale about two families that have long been at war with one another, the playwright invites audience members to question the motivations that lie behind the various acts of violence fueling the feud. The Bridegroom's mother, for her part, seems to understand the utter vapidity of the conflict between her family and the Felix family, framing violence as a petty thing while waxing poetic in the first scene about how absurd it is that "a thing as small as a pistol or a **knife** can put an end to a man." However, even she ends up buying into the rivalry, as she yearns to see her enemies suffer for having killed her husband and son. By complaining that imprisonment isn't a harsh enough punishment, she adopts the same brutal mentality that keeps the feud alive. What's more, when the Bridegroom chases down Leonardo with the intention of killing him for eloping with the Bride, the audience once again witnesses an unnecessary impulse toward violence. Indeed, these characters are so caught up in exacting revenge on their enemies that they don't stop to consider that this kind of behavior does nothing but perpetuate itself. In keeping with this, the Bridegroom dies in his quest for retribution—a quest that champions revenge for its own sake. By spotlighting this mindless cycle of violence, Lorca suggests that revenge is unproductive and harmful, since it does nothing but create misfortune for everyone involved.

In the play's opening few lines, the Bridegroom's mother expresses her disdain for violence. In fact, she displays a hypersensitivity to the mere idea that a person might use a weapon to hurt someone else. When her son says he's going to cut grapes in the vineyard, the thought of him using a knife rattles her. "The knife, the knife…Damn all of them and the scoundrel who invented them," she says. "And shotguns…and pistols…even the tiniest knife…and mattocks and pitchforks." By listing these instruments, the mother calls attention to the fact that seemingly anything can be used as a weapon, categorizing "shotguns" with everyday agricultural implements like "mattocks and pitchforks." By grouping these items together, she emphasizes how perverse it is that humans gravitate toward violence by using otherwise harmless objects to inflict pain upon one another—a fact that illustrates how quickly and easily people resort to violence. "Is it fair?" she asks. "Is it possible that a thing as small as a pistol or a knife can put an end to a man who's a bull?" As she says this, the audience sees that the old woman's grief regarding the death of her husband and son has enabled her to recognize the tragedy of physical aggression, which is capable of taking away something precious—life—with such ease and thoughtlessness.

Despite her contempt for violence, the Bridegroom's mother unfortunately buys into the exact same obsession with revenge that leads to such conflicts in the first place. Lorca reveals this when the old woman complains that her enemies aren't suffering enough for their crimes. "Can someone bring your father back to me? And your brother?" she asks the Bridegroom. "And then there's the gaol. What is the gaol? They eat there, they smoke there, they play instruments there. My dead ones full of weeds, silent, turned to dust; two men who were two geraniums…The murderers, in gaol, as large as life, looking at the mountains…" By suggesting that imprisonment isn't a sufficient form of punishment, the old woman adopts a vindictive mindset, one that fills her with rage when she considers that her family members' murderers are looming "as large as life" in "gaol" (jail). Upset that her loved ones have been "turned to dust," she believes the members of the Felix family don't deserve to live. This is precisely the kind of thinking that leads to violence in the first place, and the old woman's preoccupation with retribution blinds her to the fact that it doesn't really matter whether or not the murderers are still alive, as her loved ones will still be dead regardless. Plus, the murderers are in jail, so it ultimately wouldn't make any difference to her everyday life if they were executed. Nevertheless, she tacitly condones violence by playing into the narrative of revenge.

Although the Bridegroom's mother is supposedly so afraid of violence, she has no problem encouraging it when her son's bride runs away with Leonardo Felix. Urging the Bride's father to rally his family to help her own clan track down Leonardo, she says, "The hour of blood has come again. Two sides. You on yours, me on mine. After them! Get after them!" As such, the audience sees that she has suddenly become an impassioned supporter of violent retribution. When she asserts that "the hour of blood has come again," she perpetuates the aggressive mentality that has driven the feud between her family and the Felix family all along, the same mentality that has left her with a dead husband and son. As such, the audience comes to understand that the Bridegroom's mother has gotten swept up in the strange appeal of revenge. Similarly, her son also gets wrapped up in the idea of making his enemy pay for stealing his bride, calling his pursuit of Leonardo "the greatest hunt of all," a phrase that denotes his belief that revenge is a respectable and meaningful endeavor. Of course, what he fails to see is that killing Leonardo will do nothing to help his situation, since even if he *does* defeat him, it won't change the fact that the Bride doesn't love him. Because of this, his desire to exact revenge only puts him in harm's way. When both he and Leonardo end up dying as a result of his bloodthirstiness, the audience sees how self-defeating it is to invest oneself in violence and retribution. By outlining this avoidable tragedy, Lorca communicates the futility of revenge, which only leads to unnecessary sorrow.

OWNERSHIP AND UNHAPPINESS

The majority of the characters in *Blood Wedding* invest themselves in the importance of ownership. This is evident in the way the Bridegroom, his mother, and the Bride's father speak about land, a topic that consumes them and overshadows more important matters. Indeed, their preoccupation with the ownership of land and material items even informs the way they approach the institution of marriage, seeing it as more of a transaction than a celebration of happiness and love. Because of this, the people in the Bride's life fail to recognize her discontent, instead fervently planning the merging of her and the Bridegroom's family land and, when that's settled, making arrangements for the various gifts the Bride will receive. Unimpressed by these material benefits, the Bride makes little effort to conceal her gloominess, but hardly anybody notices her somber attitude. Assuming that she has nothing to be upset about, the people closest to her remain oblivious to her true feelings, unable to fathom that she might want more than land and riches. In turn, Lorca highlights the ways in which greedy fixations on ownership and possession can consume people and keep them from identifying unhappiness, even when it arises in the people closest to them.

For people like the Bride's father, owning well-maintained land is a badge of honor. Although his own property is covered in dry, stubborn soil, he has managed to eke what he can out of it and is clearly quite proud of this achievement. "In my day this land didn't even produce esparto," he tells the Bridegroom's mother. "I've had to punish it, even make it suffer, so it gives us something useful." He then goes on to say that he wishes he could transport the land owned by the Bridegroom's mother so that it would be right next to his land, and when the old woman asks why he would want this, he says, "To see it all together. Together, that would be a thing of beauty!" It's worth noting that this old man is fantasizing not about his daughter's future happiness, but about the idea of increasing his plot of land. Rather than discussing the actual wedding, he and the Bridegroom's mother consider the "beauty" of their land. In alignment with this, the Bride's father later celebrates the prospect of having grandchildren, but his excitement primarily stems from his realization that the children will be able to work on his property. "I want them to have many [children]," he tells the Bridegroom's mother. "This land needs arms that are not paid for." When he says this, the audience understands that he's more interested in maintaining his land for free than he is in paying attention to the specifics of his daughter's marriage, which, he would realize if he took a moment to think about it, is clearly bound to fail.

The Bride's marriage is doomed because she cares about more than the worldly possessions she stands to gain by marrying the Bridegroom. When the Bridegroom's mother first comes to her house to make arrangements with her father, she brings a number of gifts, but the Bride is uninterested in them. After the old woman departs, the Bride's servant fawns over the presents, begging for the Bride to show her what she has been gifted. However, the Bride says she doesn't even want to look at the fine stockings her future mother-in-law has given her. "For God's sake!" the servant says after the Bride snaps at her for so eagerly wanting to handle the gifts. "It's as if you have no wish to get married." Although the servant herself is—like the Bride's father—excited by the idea of ownership, she at least is able to intuit that the Bride has absolutely "no wish to get married." It is perhaps because she senses the Bride's apathy regarding possession and ownership that she later tries to emphasize the more emotionally significant elements of marriage, saying, "Such a lucky girl…to be able to put your arms around a man, to kiss him, to feel his weight!" By saying this, she tries to appeal to the Bride's desire to find actual happiness—not the superficial kind that arises from stockings and landownership and "bunches of flowers," all of which the Bridegroom and his mother bestow upon her.

The fact that the servant is the only person to notice the Bride's discontent is yet another indication that everybody else in her life is too focused on what she's going to gain from the marriage to pay attention to how she actually feels. Even the Bridegroom himself is oblivious to her disinterest in material possessions, as he speaks proudly about the wreath of **orange blossoms** he gave her to wear. "It's all made of wax. It'll last for ever [sic]. I'd like you to have worn them all over your dress." The pleasure he takes in the fact that the flowers will never die says something about his priorities, as he brags that his wife will be able to own the orange blossoms forever. If he took a moment to consider the matter, though, he might realize that she doesn't *care* about orange blossoms. Unlike the Bridegroom, the Bride's true lover, Leonardo, understands this, as made clear by what he says regarding the flowers: "It shouldn't be so big. Something smaller would suit her better." Whereas the Bridegroom only stops to think about whether or not his gift appears valuable, Leonardo considers what the Bride herself likes and wants. This, it seems, is the kind of sensitivity and consideration the Bride is looking for in a partner, which is why she elopes with Leonardo. In this manner, Lorca manages to accentuate how meaningless the concept of ownership is to a person who simply wants happiness. Furthermore, the playwright demonstrates that superficial and materialistic preoccupations only interfere with a person's ability to sense discontent in their loved ones, as the vast majority of people who care about the Bride fail to note her misery.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

THE ORANGE BLOSSOMS

The wreath of orange blossoms that the Bridegroom gives to the Bride on their wedding day signifies their community's lavish and materialistic beliefs about marriage. Proud of the impressive wreath he has presented to his future wife, the Bridegroom boasts to her about the fact that it will last forever because it's made of wax, a sentiment that illustrates his investment in material items, as he takes pride in the idea that she can truly *possess* these flowers. This impulse toward ownership and external beauty is exactly what keeps him and everybody else from recognizing that the Bride wants more out of a relationship than beautiful objects and worldly possessions. Of course, the only person who *does* understand this is Leonardo, who comments that a smaller wreath would "suit" the Bride better. By saying this, he demonstrates his ability to pinpoint what the Bride actually likes and wants. Because the orange-blossom wreath becomes the focal point of this discrepancy, then, it comes to stand for the vast disconnect between the Bride's desire for true love and her community's fixation on marriage as a transaction of tantalizing but altogether emotionally insignificant benefits.

KNIVES

Because the Bridegroom's mother speaks extensively about the danger of knives and anything "that can cut a man," the audience naturally comes to associate them with unnecessary violence. This is especially true because of the way the old woman talks about knives, urging her son—and, really, anybody who will listen—to recognize how ridiculous and sad it is that a person can kill somebody with such a small instrument. "Is it fair?" she asks. "Is it possible that a thing as small as a pistol or a knife can put an end to a man who's a bull?" By asking this question, the Bridegroom's mother urges the audience to consider the tragic fact that humans are so violent that they find ways to end each other's lives with even the smallest tools. Interestingly enough, though, a knife never actually appears in any of the play's most significant scenes, thereby becoming nothing more than an ominous presence that hovers throughout the narrative. In turn, García Lorca uses the mere *idea* of knives to symbolize not only humanity's inherently violent nature, but also the ever-present sense of fear that accompanies this kind of aggression.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Methuen Drama edition of *Blood Wedding* published in 2009.

Act One, Scene One Quotes

MOTHER (*muttering and looking for [the knife]*). The knife, the knife…Damn all of them and the scoundrel who invented them.

BRIDEGROOM. Let's change the subject.

MOTHER. And shotguns…and pistols…even the tiniest knife…and mattocks and pitchforks…

BRIDEGROOM. Alright.

MOTHER. Everything that can cut a man's body. A beautiful man, tasting the fullness of life, who goes out to the vineyards or tends to his olives, because they are his, inherited…

Related Characters: The Bridegroom, Mother (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 3

Explanation and Analysis

This conversation between the Bridegroom and his mother takes place in the play's first scene, before García Lorca has revealed the family's violent and traumatic past. When the Bridegroom tells his mother that he's going to go to the vineyard and cut grapes off the branches with a knife, she immediately curses the invention of knives. In doing so, she alerts the audience to her hypersensitivity to violence, ultimately conflating simple implements like "mattocks and pitchforks" with serious weapons like "shotguns" and "pistols." As such, she demonstrates her intolerance for anything "that can cut a man's body," alluding to the fact that she has lost loved ones to violence. By spotlighting this intense reaction in the play's opening conversation, then, García Lorca gives the audience an early glimpse at just how extensively the old woman's traumatic memories have affected the way she moves through her life in the present.

If I lived to be a hundred, I wouldn't speak of anything else. First your father. He had the scent of carnation for me, and I enjoyed him for three short years. Then your brother. Is it fair? Is it possible that a thing as small as a pistol or a knife can put an end to a man who's a bull? I'll never be quiet.

Related Characters: Mother (speaker), The Bridegroom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 4

Explanation and Analysis

The Bridegroom's mother says this to her son when he asks if she'll ever stop talking about the fact that the Felix family mercilessly murdered both her husband and (other) son. When she says she will continue to "speak of" this even if she lives "to be a hundred," the audience sees how adamant she is about holding her grudge against the family's enemies. Indeed, she can't let go of how unfair it is that two of her loved ones were murdered. What's interesting, though, is that she refuses to let go of her grudge against the Felix family while simultaneously chastising violence altogether. "Is it possible that a thing as small as a pistol or a knife can put an end to a man who's a bull?" she asks, calling attention to the inherent absurdity of needless violence. At the same time, though, her anger creates the exact kind of mentality that leads to violence in the first place. As such, she condemns violence while inadvertently condoning the values that usually end up leading to physical aggression in the first place.

MOTHER. I won't stop. Can someone bring your father back to me? And your brother? And then there's the gaol. What is the gaol? They eat there, they smoke there, they play instruments there. My dead ones full of weeds, silent, turned to dust; two men who were two geraniums…The murderers, in gaol, as large as life, looking at the mountains…

BRIDEGROOM. Do you want me to kill them?

MOTHER. No…If I speak it's because…How am I not going to speak seeing you go out that door? I don't like you carrying a knife. It's just that…I wish you wouldn't go out to the fields.

Related Characters: The Bridegroom, Mother (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 4

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the Bridegroom's mother complains that it isn't fair that the men who murdered her loved ones are still alive. Of course, these men are in jail ("gaol"), but this punishment doesn't satisfy the old woman, who clearly believes they deserve to be "full of weeds" like her own family members (in other words, dead and buried in the ground). Indeed, the mere thought of these men carrying out everyday activities during their imprisonment causes her to boil over with rage. What she doesn't stop to consider, though, is that her yearning for proper revenge is actually a kind of bloodthirstiness, meaning that her obsession with retribution perpetuates the same aggressive mindset that led the Felix men to murder her loved ones in the first place. The Bridegroom, for his part, seems cognizant of this, as he sarcastically asks his mother if she wants him to kill their enemies. Perhaps because this comment helps her momentarily see how combative her attitude is, the mother then tries to justify her anger, saying, "How am I not going to speak seeing you go out that door?" By saying this, she frames her worry and rage as byproducts of her fear, since she's constantly afraid that the Bridegroom will succumb to the same fate as his father and brother. This is why she admits to wishing he would never "go out to the fields," a statement that emphasizes just how much their tragic family history influences her ability to function normally in everyday life.

No. I can't leave your father and your brother here. I have to go to them every morning, and if I leave, one of the Felixes could die, one of the family of murderers, and they'd bury him next to mine. I won't stand for that. Never that! Because I'll dig them up with my nails and all on my own I'll smash them to bits against the wall.

Related Characters: Mother (speaker), The Bride, The Bridegroom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 5

Explanation and Analysis

The Bridegroom's mother says this to him after he suggests that she move in with them after the wedding. Taken aback by the idea of leaving her property, she tells him that she can't leave her late husband and son, who are buried nearby. Although it might seem relatively reasonable for her to want to stay close to her loved ones' graves for sentimental reasons, she soon reveals that her desire to remain is simply part of her inability to let go of the feud between her family and the Felix family. Explaining that one of the Felixes could die and then get buried next to her husband or son, the old woman suggests that she could never tolerate such a fate. "Never that!" she says, going on to say that she would "dig them up with [her] nails" if this ever happened. As such, the

audience sees that the Bridegroom's mother not only perpetuates the same kind of hostile attitude that fuels the feud between these two families, but is also willing to *act* on her hatred.

NEIGHBOUR. […] I often think your son and mine are better off where they are, sleeping, resting, no chance of being crippled.

MOTHER. Be quiet. It's all talk that, but there's no comfort in it.

Related Characters: Mother, The Neighbor (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 7

Explanation and Analysis

In this exchange, the woman who lives next to the Bridegroom and his mother tries to soothe the old woman's pain by suggesting that her dead loved ones are "better off." This idea implies that the fear of death is worse than death itself—a sentiment that must ring true for the Bridegroom's mother, who spends the majority of her time thinking about the possibility of losing her last family member to violence. However, she claims that this is nothing but "talk," clearly finding no relief in such a morbid idea. Indeed, she says that "there's no comfort" in thinking that her loved ones are "better off." This, of course, is because she still has the Bridegroom to worry about. After all, if she were to start fully believing that her husband and son are "better off" because they're dead, she would also have to hope that the Bridegroom dies, since she is his mother and thus wants what's best for him. As a result, this line of thinking obviously does nothing to help her, though it is the exact same mindset that later helps her cope with the Bridegroom's death.

NEIGHBOUR. Calm down. What good does it do you?

MOTHER. None. But you understand.

NEIGHBOUR. Don't stand in the way of your son's happiness. Don't tell him anything. You're an old woman. Me too. You and me, we have to keep quiet.

MOTHER. I won't say anything.

NEIGHBOUR (*kissing her*). Nothing.

MOTHER (*calmly*). Things!...

NEIGHBOUR. I'm going.

Related Characters: Mother, The Neighbor (speaker), Leonardo Felix, The Bride, The Bridegroom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 9

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the neighbor tries to make the Bridegroom's mother feel better after having told her that the Bride used to be in a relationship with Leonardo Felix. Because Leonardo is the only one of her enemies who hasn't been put in jail, she naturally becomes quite upset when she discovers that her son's future wife has been associated with this man. However, the neighbor levelheadedly points out that worrying about this is unhelpful and unproductive. This is sage advice, considering how thoroughly the old woman's obsession with the past—and with revenge—keeps her from enjoying her life in the present. To her credit, the neighbor seems to understand this, which is why she counsels her friend to avoid getting "in the way" of the Bridegroom's happiness. And though the mother agrees to do this, she soon sees that it is easier said than done, as made clear by her sudden outburst right after her neighbor kisses her and says, "Nothing." García Lorca doesn't make it clear what—exactly—the Bridegroom's mother wants to say when she shouts, "Things!...", but what's important is that this exclamation illustrates just how hard it's going to be for her to "keep quiet." In this way, the audience witnesses the old woman's struggle to put the past behind her—something she's not used to doing.

Act One, Scene Two Quotes

Down they went to the river bank,
Down to the stream they rode.
There his blood ran strong and fast,
Faster than the water could.
[…] Go to sleep carnation,
For the horse will not drink deep.

Related Characters: Leonardo's Wife, Mother-in-Law (speaker), The Bride, Leonardo Felix

Related Themes:

Page Number: 10

Explanation and Analysis

This is an excerpt of the rather morbid lullaby that Leonardo's wife and mother-in-law sing to his baby. In the

song, a horse refuses to drink from a stream, where "his blood [runs] strong and fast." This imagery is important to note while considering *Blood Wedding*, as it comes to represent the ways in which violence and revenge are self-defeating measures. For instance, when the Bridegroom rushes after Leonardo for eloping with the Bride, he does so because he feels an obligation to avenge not only himself, but his father and brother, both of whom were murdered by members of Leonardo's family. Unfortunately for him, though, this bloodthirstiness ends in his death, ultimately suggesting that only tragedy comes from trying to strike out in violent retribution. To put the matter another way, using violence to take revenge on someone is like drinking from a stream flowing with one's own blood, for a person puts himself at risk by engaging in such unnecessary aggressive behavior.

Act One, Scene Three Quotes

❝ BRIDEGROOM. These are the dry lands.

MOTHER. Your father would have covered them with trees.

BRIDEGROOM. Without water?

MOTHER. He'd have looked for it. The three years he was married to me, he planted ten cherry trees. (*Recalling.*)

Related Characters: Mother, The Bridegroom (speaker), Father, The Bride

Related Themes:

Page Number: 16

Explanation and Analysis

This conversation takes place between the Bridegroom and his mother as they sit in the Bride's house and wait to meet her father. As they pass the time, they discuss the fact that the Bride's father owns very dry, infertile land. Despite this, the old woman boasts that her husband would have been able to plant many trees throughout the area. The Bridegroom, for his part, finds this unlikely, since there isn't water to properly grow trees, but his mother is too proud of her dead husband to admit that even he wouldn't be able to make this land flourish. This is because she sees successful land ownership as a badge of honor, something that makes a man worthy of respect. Since she herself has always respected him, then, she doesn't question whether or not he'd be able to spread trees throughout infertile land. This, in turn, demonstrates the importance people in *Blood Wedding* place on a person's ability to own, create, and maintain prosperous land—a preoccupation that eventually overshadows the fact that the Bride isn't in love with the Bridegroom, as seemingly everyone except Leonardo is too focused on the idea of conjoining the Bride and Bridegroom's properties to notice that the young woman is deeply unhappy.

❝ FATHER. In my day this land didn't even produce esparto. I've had to punish it, even make it suffer, so it gives us something useful.

MOTHER. And now it does. Don't worry. I'm not going to ask you for anything.

FATHER (*smiling*). You are better off than me. Your vineyards are worth a fortune. Each vine-shoot a silver coin. What I'm sorry about is that the estates are…you know…separate. I like everything together. There's just one thorn in my heart, and that's that little orchard stuck between my fields, and they won't sell it to me for all the gold in the world.

[…]

If we could use twenty teams of oxen to bring your vineyards here and put them on the hillside. What a joy it would be!

MOTHER. But why?

FATHER. Mine is hers and yours his. That's why. To see it all together. Together, that would be a thing of beauty!

Related Characters: Mother, Father (speaker), The Bride, The Bridegroom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 17

Explanation and Analysis

The Bride's father and the Bridegroom's mother have this conversation upon meeting for the first time. Interestingly enough, one of the first things the Bride's father says to the Bridegroom's mother is that he has "had to punish" his land in order to grow "useful" crops. The fact that he tells her this right away indicates how proud he is of his ability to bend the land to his will, framing himself as an able farmer who has power over his own property. As he goes on, he fantasizes aloud about joining the old woman's land with his own, saying that this would bring him "joy." This, of course, is a telling moment, as he expresses his belief that land ownership contributes to a person's happiness. Indeed, the father invests himself in the idea that ownership is a "thing of beauty." Instead of paying attention to *actual* "thing[s] of

beauty"—like, say, young love—he concerns himself with superficial matters, approaching his daughter's wedding as nothing more than a business transaction. Given this unsentimental attitude, it's no wonder he doesn't notice that the Bride has no true interest in marrying the Bridegroom.

MOTHER. My son's handsome. He's never known a woman. His name's cleaner than a sheet spread in the sun.

FATHER. What can I tell you about my girl? She's breaking up bread at three when the morning star's shining. She never talks too much; she's as soft as wool; she does all kinds of embroidery, and she can cut a piece of string with her teeth.

Related Characters: Father, Mother (speaker), The Bride, The Bridegroom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 18

Explanation and Analysis

This exchange takes place when the Bridegroom's mother and the Bride's father meet for the first time to discuss the details of their children's marriage. After waxing poetic about their respective pieces of property, the two parents turn their attention to the other things their children have to offer, each one bragging about his or her offspring. As they speak about their children's traits, though, they both fail to mention anything about either the Bridegroom's or the Bride's actual personality, instead focusing on rather superficial aspects of who they are. In particular, the Bride's father lists off what he thinks are her best attributes, but he only talks about her usefulness around the house and her ability to be subservient. "She's breaking up bread at three when the morning star's shining," he says, suggesting that her best traits have to do with her domestic handiness. This, it's easy to see, is the kind of transactional, pragmatic mindset that causes both parents—and, for that matter, the Bridegroom himself—to overlook the obvious fact that the Bride isn't in love with her future husband.

MOTHER. Come! Are you happy?

BRIDE. Yes, señora.

FATHER. You mustn't be so serious. After all, she's going to be your mother.

BRIDE. I'm happy. When I say 'yes' it's because I want to.

[...]

MOTHER. [...] You know what getting married is, child?

BRIDE (*solemnly*). I do.

MOTHER. A man, children, and as for the rest a wall that's two feet thick.

BRIDEGROOM. Who needs anything else?

MOTHER. Only that they should live. That's all...that they should live!

BRIDE. I know my duty.

Related Characters: The Bridegroom, Father, The Bride, Mother (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 19

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the Bridegroom's mother meets the Bride for the very first time. As she inspects her son's future wife, she asks her if she's happy—a shrewd question, considering that the Bride is quite obviously unhappy to be marrying the Bridegroom. Despite her misery, though, the Bride lies and says that she *is* happy, clearly trying to convince herself that it's a good idea to go through this wedding, through which she will gain financial stability. However, when she says, "When I say 'yes' it's because I want to," the audience gets the sense that this is exactly the opposite of what's true. After all, it seems that only a person who has thought about how much she *doesn't* want to say "yes" would use this kind of logic. Unfortunately, though, the Bridegroom's mother hardly picks up on this, instead plowing on to list what she sees as the most noteworthy benefits of getting married: "A man, children, and as for the rest a wall that's two feet thick." By emphasizing the importance of gaining a husband, children, and a house, the Bridegroom's mother frames marriage as nothing more than an exchange of goods, something that brings a pragmatic sense of stability to a person's life. Unfortunately, nobody except the Bride seems to care about love, and it is perhaps because she picks up on this that she approaches the union as if it is merely a "duty."

Act Two, Scene One Quotes

SERVANT (*combing*). Such a lucky girl…to be able to put your arms around a man, to kiss him, to feel his weight!

BRIDE. Be quiet!

SERVANT. But it's best of all when you wake up and you feel him alongside you, and he strokes your shoulders with his breath, like a nightingale's feather.

BRIDE (*forcefully*). Will you be quiet!

SERVANT. But child! What is marriage? That's what marriage is. Nothing more! Is it the sweetmeats? Is it the bunches of flowers? Of course it's not! It's a shining bed and a man and a woman.

Related Characters: The Bride, The Servant (speaker), Father, Mother, The Bridegroom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 23

Explanation and Analysis

On the morning of her wedding day, the Bride dresses with help from her servant, who combs her hair and talks to her about how "lucky" she is to be getting married. The mere fact that she goes out of her way to emphasize the romantic aspects of marriage—the tender caresses and kisses—is noteworthy, as it suggests that the servant has picked up on the Bride's hesitancy. Unlike everybody else, the servant appears somewhat cognizant of the young woman's misery regarding her own marriage, seemingly intuiting that the materialistic and transactional benefits of getting married have done little to excite the Bride. As such, the servant tries to entice her by talking about what it will feel like to have a man "alongside" her, trying to speak in more emotional terms. Unfortunately, though, what the servant still doesn't understand is that while the Bride *does* want love, she doesn't want the Bridegroom's romantic attention (since her true love lies with Leonardo). Still, though, the servant deserves credit for being one of the only characters in *Blood Wedding* to understand that marriage is "more" than "sweetmeats," "flowers," and land ownership and to recognize the Bride's unhappiness.

SERVANT. It's no time to be feeling sad. (*Spiritedly.*) Give me the orange-blossom. (*The* BRIDE *throws the wreath away.*) Child! Don't tempt fate by throwing the flowers on the floor! Look at me now. Don't you want to get married? Tell me. You can still change your mind. (*She gets up.*)

BRIDE. Dark clouds. A cold wind here inside me. Doesn't everyone feel it?

Related Characters: The Bride, The Servant (speaker), The Bridegroom

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 23

Explanation and Analysis

As the servant helps the Bride get ready for her wedding, she urges the young woman to adopt a positive attitude, telling her that "it's no time to be feeling sad." However, the Bride is completely uninterested in anything that has to do with the wedding, even going as far as to throw the wreath of orange blossoms on the ground, thereby desecrating what everybody sees as a symbol of the opulence, happiness, and domestic bliss the couple is supposedly about to share. Recognizing how thoroughly unimpressed the Bride is by these things, the servant asks her if she even wants to get married, giving her an out by saying that it's not too late for her to back out. However, the Bride simply says, "Dark clouds. A cold wind here inside me. Doesn't everyone feel it?" By saying this, she indicates that she feels a deep sadness regarding her prospects. Indeed, her only choices are to marry a man she doesn't love or to leave behind everything in order to elope with Leonardo, which could be dangerous. Given that the latter would mean abandoning her entire life, she has clearly chosen to go through with her marriage to the Bridegroom, but this fills her with a "cold wind," one she thinks "everyone" must sense, considering the fact that all the people surrounding her seemingly pay no attention to love, instead focusing only on the material gains of marriage.

LEONARDO (*getting up*). I suppose the bride will be wearing a big wreath of flowers? It shouldn't be so big. Something smaller would suit her better. Did the bridegroom bring the orange-blossom so she can wear it on her heart?

BRIDE (*she appears still in petticoats and with the wreath of flowers in place*). He brought it.

SERVANT (*strongly*). Don't come out like that.

BRIDE. What's the matter? (*Seriously.*) Why do you want to know if they brought the orange-blossom? What are you hinting at?

LEONARDO. What would I be hinting at? (*Moving closer.*) You, you know me, you know I'm not hinting. Tell me. What was I to you? Open up your memory, refresh it. But two oxen and a broken-down shack are almost nothing. That's the thorn.

Related Characters: The Servant, The Bride, Leonardo Felix (speaker), The Bridegroom

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 25

Explanation and Analysis

In this moment, Leonardo appears at the Bride's house before any of the other wedding guests. Before laying eyes on her, he asks the servant if the Bridegroom has given the Bride a "big wreath of flowers," adding that "something smaller would suit her better." By saying this, he differentiates himself from the Bridegroom, demonstrating the fact that he doesn't care about lavish material items. Instead of fixating on superficial ideas of ownership, he actually pays attention to the Bride as a person, which is how he knows what kind of flower arrangement would "suit" her. When the Bride emerges after hearing this—scantily clad in her undergarments—she picks up on his desire to speak his heart, asking what he's "hinting at" by talking about the orange blossoms. In response, he cuts straight to the point, asking her to remember their relationship. As he does so, the audience learns that the only reason the Bride never married Leonardo is because he's poor. Whereas the Bridegroom can offer her large orange blossoms and an entire vineyard, Leonardo only has "two oxen and a broken-down shack." However, it's rather obvious by this point that the Bride regrets her decision, having finally realized that riches pale in comparison to love.

BRIDE. […] I'll shut myself away with my husband, and I'll love him above everything.

LEONARDO. Pride will get you nowhere! (*He approaches her.*)

BRIDE. Don't come near me!

LEONARDO. To keep quiet and burn is the greatest punishment we can heap upon ourselves. What use was pride to me and not seeing you and leaving you awake night after night? No use! It only brought the fire down on top of me! You think that time heals and walls conceal, and it's not true, not true! When the roots of things go deep, no one can pull them up!

Related Characters: Leonardo Felix, The Bride (speaker), Leonardo's Wife, The Bridegroom, The Servant

Related Themes:

Page Number: 26

Explanation and Analysis

During her conversation with Leonardo on the morning of her wedding, the Bride tries to remain true to her commitment to marry the Bridegroom. Although it's rather apparent that she still loves Leonardo, she tries to convince herself that she'll be able to "love [the Bridegroom] above everything," proudly devoting herself to the man even though she doesn't have feelings for him. Leonardo, for his part, debunks the notion that staying true to her commitment will help her cope with the fact that she's turning away from true love, saying that "pride" will get her "nowhere." Going on, he says that "to keep quiet and burn is the greatest punishment we can heap upon ourselves," essentially encouraging the Bride to give in to her desires, which he knows are strong and capable of consuming her for the rest of her life. This, of course, is what he himself has had to deal with ever since he married his wife, which has "only brought the fire" of yearning upon him, as he still pines for the Bride. In keeping with the idea that it's impossible to forget about this kind of passion, Leonardo adds, "When the roots of things go deep, no one can pull them up," thereby suggesting that the Bride will *never* be able to love the Bridegroom "above everything," since her bond with Leonardo will always remain, torturing her throughout her entire life.

I can't hear you. I can't hear your voice. It's as if I'd drunk a bottle of anise and fallen asleep on a bedspread of roses. And it drags me along, and I know that I'm drowning, but I still go on.

[...]

And I know I'm mad, and I know that my heart's putrified from holding out, and here I am, soothed by the sound of his voice, by the sight of his arms moving.

Related Characters: The Bride (speaker), The Bridegroom, Leonardo Felix

Related Themes:

Page Number: 27

Explanation and Analysis

The Bride speaks these words as the servant tries to send Leonardo away before the wedding guests arrive. Having resisted him for as long as she possibly could, the young woman now finds herself succumbing to her own feelings, which are so intense that she feels intoxicated just by the sound of Leonardo's voice. Of course, she knows that choosing poor Leonardo over the wealthy Bridegroom would go against all reason, which is why she says, "I know I'm mad." At the same time, though, she admits that her heart is "putrified from holding out," suggesting that she is literally suffering from her attempt to refuse the man she loves. In this way, García Lorca intimates that it's nearly impossible to resist passionate love, and that, if a person *does* keep such feelings at bay, she will be plunged into a state of agony.

BRIDE. I want to be your wife and be alone with you and not hear any other voice but yours.

BRIDEGROOM. That's what I want!

BRIDE. And to see only your eyes. And to have you hold me so tight that, even if my mother were to call me, my dead mother, I couldn't free myself from you.

Related Characters: The Bridegroom, The Bride (speaker), Leonardo Felix

Related Themes:

Page Number: 31

Explanation and Analysis

This conversation takes place between the Bride and the Bridegroom shortly after the Bride has spoken to Leonardo. Having felt her willpower weaken as a result of hearing her true lover's voice, the Bride tries to protect herself from her own desires. To do this, she goes to the Bridegroom and tells him that she wants to hurry to the church so they can get married as soon as possible. When he asks why she wants to rush the process along, she says, "I want to be your wife and be alone with you and not hear any other voice but yours." It's worth noting here that the Bride admitted only moments before that the sound of Leonardo's voice was intoxicating and made it hard for her to remain true to the Bridegroom. This is why she says she doesn't want to hear "any other voice" but the Bridegroom's, essentially acknowledging to herself—and, in turn, the audience—that she won't be able to resist Leonardo if she continues to listen to him. In keeping with this urgent need to keep her own desires at bay, she tells the Bridegroom that she wants him to "hold" her so that she wouldn't be able to "free" herself even if she wanted to—yet another indication that she's afraid of what she might do with Leonardo if given the chance.

Act Two, Scene Two Quotes

It hurts to the ends of my veins. On the face of every one of them I can only see the hand that killed what was mine. Do you see me? Do I seem mad to you? Well I am mad from not being able to shout what my heart demands. There's a scream here in my heart that's always rising up, and I have to force it down again and hide it in these shawls. They've taken my dead ones from me and I have to be silent. And because of that people criticize.

Related Characters: Mother (speaker), The Servant, Father, Leonardo Felix

Related Themes:

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

The Bridegroom's mother says this to the Bride's father after returning from the wedding ceremony and talking about the fact that Leonardo Felix was invited to the event. Finding herself incapable of containing her rage, she feels like it's impossible to simply ignore the trauma she experiences every time she simply looks at somebody who belongs to her enemies' clan. "On the face of every one of them I can only see the hand that killed what was mine," she says, once again illustrating how unwilling she is to put the

past behind her. Of course, Felix was only eight years old when the violence between the two families took place, but this doesn't matter to the old woman because she feels as if there's "a scream" in her heart that is "always rising up." And although her persistent and rather aggressive attitude regarding this particular subject is certainly unappealing, the audience may come to sympathize with her in this moment, as she points out that people "criticize" her simply for being unable to get over the death of her loved ones. "They've taken my dead ones from me and I have to be silent," she laments, inviting listeners to empathize with the fact that people expect her to simply move on from such a devastating blow to her family.

I want them to have many [children]. This land needs arms that are not paid for. You have to wage a constant battle with the weeds, with the thistles, with the stones that come up from who knows where. And these arms must belong to the owners, so that they can punish and master, so that they can make the seed flourish. Many sons are needed.

Related Characters: Father (speaker), The Bridegroom, The Bride, Mother

Related Themes:

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

The Bride's father says this to the Bridegroom's mother shortly after the wedding ceremony. As people dance in celebration of the event, the two parents discuss how excited they are to have grandchildren. However, instead of talking about the emotional joys of becoming a grandparent, the Bride's father characteristically focuses on the financial benefits of having "arms that are not paid for." Indeed, what he looks forward to most about his daughter having children is not the happiness that will come from expanding the family, but the ways in which he'll be able to make use of new helpers on his farm. In the same way that he fixates on the supposed importance of land ownership while first going over the details of the Bride and Bridegroom's marriage, he now obsesses over superficial perks once again, making it all the more obvious that his inability to pay attention to human emotion renders him incapable of registering his daughter's discontent.

FATHER. It can't be her. Perhaps she's thrown herself into the water-tank.

MOTHER. Only decent and clean girls throw themselves into the water. Not that one! But now she's my son's wife. Two sides. Now there are two sides here. [...] My family and yours. All of you must go. Shake the dust from your shoes. Let's go and help my son. (*The people split into two groups.*) He's got plenty of family: his cousins from the coast and all those from inland. Go out from here! Search all the roads. The hour of blood has come again. Two sides. You on yours, me on mine. After them! Get after them!

Related Characters: Mother, Father (speaker), Leonardo Felix, The Bridegroom, The Bride

Related Themes:

Page Number: 43

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the wedding guests have just discovered that the Bride has eloped with Leonardo, escaping into the woods on horseback after sneaking away from the wedding reception. Her father, for his part, is completely blindsided by this development. In fact, he's so surprised that his daughter would run away with Leonardo that he insists that "it can't be her" who actually rode into the woods. "Perhaps she's thrown herself into the water-tank," he says, suggesting that his daughter would sooner commit suicide than abandon the Bridegroom. This is an odd thing to say, since it implies that the father believes it's more honorable to kill oneself than to go against what society expects of new brides. This, in turn, provides insight into why the Bride has waited this long to follow her heart. After all, it's quite clear that the people around her view such an act as unspeakably disgraceful.

Unlike the Bride's father, the Bridegroom's mother is quick to jump to action. Although she claims to detest violence so much, she doesn't hesitate before immediately rallying people to chase after Leonardo. In fact, she doesn't even appear to want to find Leonardo and the Bride in order to bring the Bride back to her son. Rather, she wants to exact revenge on the young man who stole her son's wife, making this all too clear by saying, "The hour of blood has come again." Of course, this bloodthirstiness is the exact same mentality that led members of the Felix family to kill her husband and son, but her obsession with revenge keeps her from seeing this. As such, she plays into a cycle of violent retribution by advocating for aggression and brutality.

Act Three, Scene One Quotes

❝ Be quiet. I'm certain I'll find them here. You see this arm? Well it's not my arm. It's my brother's arm and my father's and my whole dead family's. And it's got such strength, it could tear this tree from its roots if it wanted to. Let's go quickly. I can feel the teeth of all my loved ones piercing me here so I can't breathe.

Related Characters: The Bridegroom (speaker), Leonardo Felix, The Bride

Related Themes:

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

The Bridegroom says this to a young man helping him track down Leonardo and the Bride. As they move through the woods, the young man expresses his reservations about the manhunt, but the Bridegroom simply tells him to "be quiet," clearly absorbed by his determination to exact revenge on Leonardo. To justify his violent intentions, he refers to a part of his own body as a symbol of the injustice his family members have suffered because of the Felix clan. "You see this arm?" he asks. "Well it's not my arm. It's my brother's arm and my father's and my whole dead family's. And it's got such strength, it could tear this tree from its roots if it wanted to." By saying this, he taps into the history of violence and animosity that has long fueled the feud between his family and the Felix family. Indeed, his pursuit of Leonardo is seemingly no longer about the Bride, but about avenging the deaths of the Bridegroom's father and brother. After all, this is the only way he can make sense of what he's doing, since it's quite obvious that nothing he can do will change the fact that the Bride doesn't love him. Unfortunately, though, this revenge-oriented mentality only exposes the Bridegroom himself to danger, making it all the more likely that he will meet to the same bloody fate as his family members did.

❝ Oh, I'm not the one at fault.
The fault belongs to the earth
And that scent that comes
From your breasts and your hair.

Related Characters: Leonardo Felix (speaker), The Bride

Related Themes:

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

Leonardo says this to the Bride as they sneak through the woods after having run away together during the Bride's wedding reception. Shortly after they leave, the Bride expresses her regrets, though this is only because she fears her decision to elope with Leonardo will get him killed. The couple then waxes poetic (literally) about their love, speaking in verse, and Leonardo says that he's "not the one at fault" for what they've done. When he says this, he isn't implying that the Bride is the one to blame, but that "the fault belongs to the earth." By framing the matter like this, he portrays their romance as something that is bigger than both of them, something neither of them can control. Similarly, he avoids taking responsibility for his actions by saying that the mere "scent" of the Bride is enough to overpower him. In this way, García Lorca once again presents passion as something capable of squashing a person's willpower and forcing him or her to give up any sense of reason.

Act Three, Scene Two Quotes

❝ Won't you be quiet? I don't want weeping in this house. Your tears are tears that come from your eyes, that's all. But mine will come, when I'm all alone, from the soles of my feet, from my roots, and they'll burn hotter than blood.

Related Characters: Mother (speaker), Leonardo Felix, The Bridegroom, The Neighbor

Related Themes:

Page Number: 58

Explanation and Analysis

The Bridegroom's mother says this to her neighbor after they return to her house after the wedding. As her friend "weep[s]" by her side, the Bridegroom's mother refuses to shed a tear, even ridiculing this naked display of emotion. This is because she knows that crying won't do anything to change what has happened. Indeed, the mourning she will eventually do will be much more intense, since her tears will come "from the soles of [her] feet, from [her] roots." By referring to the source of her despair as her "roots," the Bridegroom's mother taps into the history of her family's suffering, framing it as something that reaches deeper into her past than her son's recent death. At the same time, though, her refusal to cry also says something about her lack of emotion. After all, throughout the play she has only

truly felt two kinds of emotion: anger and fear. These, it seems, are the only feelings she's used to experiencing, which is why she's able to keep herself from crying. In alignment with this, it's worth noting that—although she is undoubtedly angry about her son's death—she no longer has anything to be afraid of. In this small way, then, a burden has been lifted from her shoulders.

Here. Here's where I want to be. At peace. All of them are dead now. At midnight I'll sleep, I'll sleep and not be afraid of a gun or a knife. Other mothers will go to their windows, lashed by the rain, to see the face of their sons. Not me.

Related Characters: Mother (speaker), Leonardo Felix, The Bridegroom, The Neighbor

Related Themes:

Page Number: 59

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the Bridegroom's mother tells her neighbor that she wants to remain in her own house. Even though her neighbor has invited her over so that she doesn't have to be alone, the old woman refuses to leave. This, however, is not because she can't fathom the idea of spending a night in a stranger's house, but because she doesn't feel the need to seek comfort. In fact, she feels "at peace" for the first time in many years, since all of her sons "are dead now," meaning she no longer has to worry about the safety and well-being of her loved ones. Whereas before she was constantly afraid that the Bridegroom would fall to the same violent death as her husband and son, now she no longer needs to fret. Of course, this isn't something she's necessarily *happy* about—as made clear by her pained assertion that she no longer has anybody's "face" to look for when she peers out the window at night—but her surprising serenity in this moment suggests that she's at least released from the torturous fears that have kept her from living life in the present. In this manner, García Lorca subtly suggests that people ought to live without constantly fretting about the terrible things that might happen, since no amount of worrying can actually prevent such things.

You would have gone too. I was a woman burning, full of pain inside and out, and your son was a tiny drop of water that I hoped would give me children, land, health; but the other one was a dark river, full of branches, that brought to me the sound of its reeds and its soft song. And I was going with your son, who was like a child of cold water, and the other one sent hundreds of birds that blocked my path and left frost on the wounds of this poor, withered woman, this girl caressed by fire. I didn't want to, listen to me! I didn't want to! Your son was my ambition and I haven't deceived him, but the other one's arm dragged me like a wave from the sea, like the butt of a mule, and would always have dragged me, always, always, even if I'd been an old woman and all the sons of your son had tried to hold me down by my hair!

Related Characters: The Bride (speaker), Leonardo Felix, The Bridegroom, Mother

Related Themes:

Page Number: 60

Explanation and Analysis

The Bride speaks these words to the Bridegroom's mother upon seeing her for the first time after the Bridegroom's death in the forest. Trying to apologize for eloping with Leonardo—an act that led to the Bridegroom's death—she insists that the old woman would have done the same, since she was "full of pain inside and out." Once again, then, the Bride frames romantic desire as irresistible, something that can make somebody feel as if she's "burning" alive. When she says that the Bridegroom was like "a tiny drop of water" that might give her "children, land, [and] health," she acknowledges that she tried to convince herself that these things would be enough to make her happy. However, she found herself unable to invest herself in these superficial benefits, which have nothing to do with love. As a result, she was powerless to Leonardo's influence, which worked on her like a rushing "river." This, she upholds, is why she was swept away from the Bridegroom even though he was her "ambition"—a statement that once again implies that certain romantic bonds overpower rationality and make it impossible to do anything but surrender to desire.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

The Bridegroom enters his home and tells his mother he's going out to the vineyard, declining her offer of food because he plans to eat grapes off the vine. When he asks her to hand him a **knife**, though, she becomes darkly worried, saying, "The knife, the knife…Damn all of them and the scoundrel who invented them." Hearing this, the Bridegroom urges her to talk about something else, but she pushes on, listing off weapons like "shotguns" and "pistols." She even mentions "mattocks and pitchforks," complaining about anything capable of hurting people. Rambling on in this worried manner, she makes veiled allusions to a man who visits his "inherited" vineyards and never comes back, except as a dead body waiting for her to anoint it with a "palm-leaf."

When the Bridegroom's mother worries aloud about the danger of knives—or anything that can cause pain—García Lorca draws the audience's attention to the ways in which violence can influence how a person moves through life. Although the playwright hasn't yet revealed what happened in this old woman's past, it becomes clear that she is deeply troubled by the fact that something as insignificant as a knife or "pitchfork" can be used to take away a person's life. What's more, when she offhandedly mentions "inherited" vineyards, García Lorca suggests that the Bridegroom's mother values the importance of ownership, ultimately setting the foundation for the play's exploration of materialism, greed, and family legacy.

Tired of his mother's morbid attitude, the Bridegroom asks if she's finished talking about such bleak matters, but she only says, "If I lived to be a hundred, I wouldn't speak of anything else. First your father. He had the scent of carnation for me, and I enjoyed him for three short years. Then your brother." Going on, she asks him if it's "fair" that such small objects—like guns and **knives**—"can put an end to a man." When the Bridegroom tries to convince her to change the subject, she ignores him by complaining that the men who killed his father and brother are still alive. "What is the gaol?" she asks, referring to the prison. "They eat there, they smoke there, they play instruments there." Meanwhile, she upholds, her loved ones are rotting in the ground.

Again, the Bridegroom's mother expresses her disdain for violence, framing it as futile and needlessly brutal. At the same time, though, she inadvertently advocates for the same kind of revenge-oriented mindset that leads to violence in the first place, since she implies that the men who killed her loved ones ought to suffer the same fate. When she complains that the murderers are still alive in jail, it becomes clear that she'd rather see them dead than locked up. In this way, her thirst for retribution gives birth to the same mentality that perpetuates the kind of violence she supposedly abhors.

Fed up, the Bridegroom asks his mother if she wants him to murder their enemies, who are living out their remaining days in jail. "No," his mother says, adding that the only reason she can't stop talking about the matter is because she worries every time the Bridegroom leaves the house. How, she asks him, is she supposed to stay calm when he ventures out into the world with a **knife**, the very same thing that killed his family members? "I wish you wouldn't go out to the fields," she admits.

When the Bridegroom asks his mother if she wants him to kill their enemies, he picks up on the fact that her desire to exact revenge gives rise to the same kind of bloodthirstiness that took his family members away in the first place. Because he emphasizes this point, she ends up backing down, admitting that she doesn't want him to do anything of the sort, though one gets the sense this isn't because she wants to spare her enemies, but because she doesn't want her son to put himself in danger. In keeping with this, she tells him that she doesn't like it when he leaves the house, thereby demonstrating how thoroughly a person's traumatic history can alter the way he or she moves through life in the present. Indeed, the Bridegroom's mother finds it difficult to relax after having lost her husband and son many years ago.

Changing the subject, the Bridegroom reminds his mother that he is soon to be married. Although the old woman knows his future wife—whom she hasn't met—is a "hard-working" woman, she appears skeptical, thinking that it's all so "sudden." "I'll be left alone," she says. "Only you are left to me now and I'm sorry to see you going." In response, the Bridegroom says she'll be coming with him and his new wife, but she refuses, saying she has to stay on the family land because that's where her husband and son are buried. "If I leave, one of the Felixes could die, one of the family of murderers, and they'd bury him next to mine," she says. This idea deeply troubles the Bridegroom's mother, as she says she would "dig" up her enemies with her own fingernails if this ever happened.

Once more, the Bridegroom's mother clings to her hatred of her enemies, a bitterness that greatly affects the way she leads her life. Although the men who murdered her loved ones are in jail, she refuses to leave her land because she fears somebody in the Felix family might be buried next to her husband or son. As such, something that happened many years ago impedes her ability to live a carefree life in the present.

Moving on, the Bridegroom's mother asks her son about his future wife, saying, "She had another young man, didn't she?" Answering this question, the Bridegroom says he doesn't know, though he adds that he doesn't think this is the case. Still, though, the old woman would like to know more about the Bride, expressing her desire to hear about the girl's mother, though the Bridegroom brushes this off. Deciding to lighten up, then, the Bridegroom's mother turns her attention to what gifts they should bestow upon the Bride, deciding to bring the young woman earrings and "patterned stockings."

Despite her obvious hesitancy regarding her son's marriage, the Bridegroom's mother finally stops focusing on morbid or pessimistic notions of violence and revenge. However, it's worth noting that what she turns her attention to isn't the fact that her son is in love—rather, she concerns herself with what she should buy the Bride. In this way, García Lorca shows the audience the old woman's investment in ownership, a concept she uses as a way of investing herself in the Bridegroom's marriage without actually having to overcome her misgivings.

When the Bridegroom goes out to the vineyard, his mother's neighbor enters and falls into conversation with the old woman. "I often think your son and mine are better off where they are, sleeping, resting, no chance of being crippled," she says at one point, before the two friends begin to talk about the Bridegroom's wedding. When the mother asks her neighbor if she knows anything about the Bride, the neighbor tells her that the young woman lives in relative isolation on a far-off plot of land with her father. When the Bridegroom's mother asks about the Bride's mother, the neighbor tells her that she's dead and that she never truly loved her husband. What's more, she reveals that the Bride was in love with Leonardo Felix when she was fifteen, but that Leonardo ended up marrying the girl's cousin instead.

The fact that the Bride used to be in a relationship with Leonardo Felix will certainly pose a dilemma for the Bridegroom's mother, since she is so hung up on distancing herself and her son from the Felix family. As such, the audience will soon see how much this feud will interfere with the old woman's ability to go along with an otherwise positive scenario—after all, her son is clearly happy, so she will have to make a choice about whether or not to stand between him and his new wife.

The Bridegroom's mother is distraught to learn that her son is about to marry a woman who was in a relationship with Leonardo, a member of the Felix family. However, the neighbor reminds her that Leonardo was only eight years old when the trouble emerged between the two families. As such, she urges the old woman not to tell the Bridegroom about the Bride's past relationship, saying, "Don't stand in the way of your son's happiness." "I won't say anything," the mother agrees, but then shouts out, "Things!..." Before she can finish her sentence, though, the neighbor stands up and says farewell.

Unsurprisingly, the Bridegroom's mother clearly finds it difficult to simply accept that her future daughter-in-law used to be in love with a member of the Felix family. However, the neighbor wisely advises her to leave the matter alone, since the Bridegroom is quite happy. As such, the old woman agrees not to say anything to her son, though the fact that she immediately shouts, "Things!..." right after vowing not to say anything indicates that it's all she can do to keep quiet. And although it's unclear what the Bridegroom's mother exactly means to say when she shouts, García Lorca shows through the mother's outburst how hard it is for her to ignore her family's embattled history.

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

Leonardo's mother-in-law cradles his baby and sings a lullaby at his home. Joining in, Leonardo's wife helps her mother tell the tale of a horse who won't drink from a river because its hooves are bleeding into the water. "Go to sleep, carnation, / For the horse will not drink deep," she sings, trading verses with her mother until the child falls asleep, at which point they put him down. Leonardo enters, claiming he's just come from the blacksmith's, who put "new shoes" on the horse because they never stay on the animal's hooves. "I reckon he rips them off on the stones," Leonardo says, but his wife suggests that perhaps the horseshoes fall off because Leonardo rides him so much. "I hardly ever ride him," Leonardo says, but his wife reveals that their neighbors claim to have seen him on "the other side of the plains."

The lullaby that Leonardo's wife and mother-in-law sing in this scene serves as a metaphor for the destructive properties of violence and revenge. In the same way that the horse bleeds into the same water it's supposed to drink, the Bridegroom's family and the Felix family essentially poison themselves by feuding with one another, as evidenced by the fact that the Bridegroom's mother can't even allow herself to live a normal life in the present because she won't let go of her bitterness toward her enemies. As the play progresses, it will be helpful to keep this metaphor in mind, as García Lorca uses this imagery throughout the play to comment on the nature of violence and death.

Leonardo upholds that he wasn't riding his horse on "the other side of the plains," which is quite far away. In fact, he vehemently rejects this notion, though his mother-in-law—who briefly left and now reenters the house—says, "Who's racing the horse like that? He's down there stretched out with his eyes bulging as if he's come from the end of the world." This comment visibly sets Leonardo on edge, but Leonardo's wife quickly changes the subject, telling him that her cousin is soon to marry the Bridegroom. The mother-in-law, for her part, adds that she doesn't think the Bridegroom's mother is happy about the union, and Leonardo suggests the old woman is perhaps right to feel this way, saying that the Bride "needs watching." After all, he would know, since he was in a relationship with her for three years.

It seems obvious in this moment that Leonardo is lying about how far he has ridden his horse, since his mother-in-law unknowingly corroborates his wife's assertion that he was spotted on "the other side of the plains." However, García Lorca doesn't reveal yet why he might be lying about this, though his unwillingness to tell the truth to his wife suggests that their relationship is strained.

A young girl enters Leonardo's house and tells his mother-in-law that the Bridegroom came to her family's store and "bought all the best things" for the Bride, going on at length about the beautiful stockings he and his mother purchased. When Leonardo hears this, he vehemently says, "We couldn't care less," and when Leonardo's wife and mother-in-law scold him for being so rude, he simply tells them to leave him alone, storming out of the house and waking the baby with his angry words as he goes. When he's gone, his wife and mother-in-law try to soothe the child by singing the same lullaby about the horse who "will not drink deep."

Leonardo's sudden anger upon hearing about the Bride and the Bridegroom's wedding suggests that he hasn't gotten over the Bride. In turn, this clarifies why he has a strained relationship with his own wife, to whom he has no problem lying. As he leaves the house, it seems obvious that he's still attached to his former lover, as the mere mention of her wedding enrages him and causes him to rudely rush away from his family, not even caring that he has woken the baby.

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

A servant welcomes the Bridegroom and his mother into the domesticated cave in which the Bride lives with her father. As they sit down and wait for their hosts, the Bridegroom and his mother discuss how far this property is from their vineyard, and the mother expresses her eagerness to return before dark. "But this land's good," the Bridegroom points out. "Yes, but too isolated," his mother replies. "These are the dry lands," the Bridegroom explains, and his mother talks about how her husband "would have covered [the land] with trees" despite the lack of water.

When the Bridegroom's mother talks about her husband's ability to turn infertile land into verdant pastures, the audience senses the pride she associates with land ownership and competent farming. Indeed, she clearly believes that a person gains respect by owning fertile land—yet another indication that she's more interested in superficial notions of ownership than she is in matters of love, since she's talking about property instead of romance even as she sits and waits to meet the Bride for the first time.


Finally, the Bride's father enters and introduces himself. Within moments, he starts talking about his land, speaking proudly about his crops. "In my day this land didn't even produce esparto [grass]," he says. "I've had to punish it, even make it suffer, so it gives us something useful." Hearing how much he cares for his property, the Bridegroom's mother assures him that they will not be asking for a dowry, which the Bride's father appreciates, since he knows their family is quite well-off on account of their prosperous vineyards. "What I'm sorry about is that the estates are…you know…separate," he says, wishing that he could transport the vineyards so that they could be right next to his own land.

Like the Bridegroom's mother, the Bride's father is interested in the importance of ownership, as evidenced by his immediate desire to discuss his land. As such, neither parent focuses on the emotional details of their children's relationship, instead fixating on the superficial and pragmatic elements that come along with marriage.


When the Bridegroom's mother asks why the Bride's father would want their land to be conjoined, he says, "Mine is hers and yours his. That's why. To see it all together. Together, that would be a thing of beauty!" Turning their attention to the union of their children, they then discuss the marriage, listing off the positive traits of their respective children. The mother, for her part, says that her son "has plenty" and "knows how to manage it," adding that he's good-looking and pure, since he's "never known a woman." The father, in turn, talks about his daughter's positive traits, explaining that she wakes up early to work, doesn't "talk too much," and is good at embroidery.

Even when the mother and father turn their attention to their children and their upcoming marriage, they fail to focus on the Bride and Bridegroom's actual relationship. Instead, the Bridegroom's mother talks about her son as if he is a prized possession, and the Bride's father brags about his daughter in the same manner. When he boasts that the Bride doesn't "talk too much," the audience sees how little he is concerned with the Bride's interior or emotional life, instead fixating on whether or not she'll make a stereotypically good wife—a notion that draws on a sense of patriarchal ownership, as the father implies that the Bridegroom will benefit from the Bride's subservience and practical skills.


Having listed these traits, the parents approve of the marriage and set the date for the following Thursday, which is also the Bride's twenty-second birthday. "That's what my son would have been if he were still alive," the Bridegroom's mother says, but the Bride's father tells her not to "dwell" on such matters, though she admits that she thinks about it "every minute." At this point, the Bride enters with a bowed head. When the Bridegroom's mother asks if she's happy, she sullenly says yes, and the old woman tells her not to be so "serious." The Bride then says that she wouldn't have agreed to marry the Bridegroom if she didn't want to.

When the Bridegroom's mother says she'll never stop thinking about her son's death, she once again suggests that her personal history will always be with her and will continue to influence the way she lives in the present and future. On another note, the Bride's solemnity suggests that she is less enthused about the idea of marrying the Bridegroom than one might expect. Indeed, the fact that she goes out of her way to point out that she wouldn't agree to marry the Bridegroom if she didn't want to ultimately suggests that the opposite *might be true, as it carries undertones of defensiveness.*

Taking the Bride's chin in hand, the Bridegroom's mother says, "You know what getting married is, child?" When the girl says, "I do," the mother says, "A man, children, and as for the rest a wall that's two feet thick." The Bridegroom then happily chimes in, asking, "Who needs anything else?" Agreeing that this is what marriage means, the Bride says, "I know my duty."

In this moment, it becomes clear that the Bridegroom and his mother approach marriage as a transaction, one in which the Bride will gain a reliable husband, children, and a home. When the Bridegroom cheerfully agrees with this notion, the audience comes to understand that seemingly everyone surrounding the Bride has forgotten that marriage is also about love. Because of this, the Bride sees her and the Bridegroom's wedding as nothing more than a "duty" she must fulfill, implying that she sees it as a somber, tedious, or even unsavory task that she must grit her teeth and go through with.

The mother gives the Bride the wedding gifts before departing with the Bridegroom, leaving the Bride with her servant, who's eager to inspect the presents. "Stop it!" the Bride says, but the servant persists, wanting badly to see the stockings because she's heard they're quite "fancy." Still, though, the Bride refuses to take any interest in the wedding gifts. "For God's sake!" the servant exclaims, exasperated. "Alright. It's as if you have no wish to get married." In response, the Bride sharply tells her to "shut up" and asks that they change the subject, so the servant asks if she heard a horse the night before. At first, the Bride pretends she doesn't know what the servant is talking about, but the servant tells her that she saw Leonardo ride up to her window, and the Bride admits this is true and tells her not to talk about it.

The servant is apparently the only person to pick up on the Bride's unhappiness. Although she is—like everyone else—quite taken by material items, she manages to recognize the Bride's discontent, which is why she points out that the young woman is acting like she doesn't want to get married. By this point in the play, it's clear that this is an accurate assessment, and this is further solidified by the revelation that Leonardo has been visiting the Bride late at night. This, it seems, is where he has been riding his horse, visiting his former lover even though he's married to her cousin.

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

On the wedding day, the servant combs the Bride's hair, saying, "Such a lucky girl…to be able to put your arms around a man, to kiss him, to feel his weight!" Instead of delighting in this kind of talk, though, the Bride tells her to stop talking about such matters, pouting sullenly as she prepares to get married. "But child!" the servant says. "What is marriage? That's what marriage is. Nothing more! Is it the sweetmeats? Is it the bunches of flowers? Of course it's not! It's a shining bed and a man and a woman." Despite this enthusiasm, though, the Bride tells her servant to be quiet. When the servant tries to put a wreath of **orange blossoms** in her hair, the Bride takes it from her, tells the servant to leave her alone, and throws the flower crown on the floor.

The fact that the servant tries to emphasize the romantic implications of marriage suggests that she understands that the Bride is uninterested in the materialistic and pragmatic benefits that will come along with her marriage. Unlike her father and the Bridegroom's mother, the Bride is obviously unimpressed by the thought of possessing the Bridegroom's vineyard. However, the servant fails to cheer the young woman up. This, it's not hard to see, is because her affections clearly lie with Leonardo, judging by the secret meetings she has apparently been having with him at night.

"Don't you want to get married?" the servant asks, adding that the Bride can still back out of the arrangement. However, the Bride responds vaguely, saying, "Dark clouds. A cold wind here inside me. Doesn't everyone feel it?" This remark prompts the servant to ask the young woman if she even loves the Bridegroom, and the Bride says that she does, but points out that it's "a very big step" to get married. "It has to be taken," the servant says, and the Bride replies, "I've already agreed to take it."

When the servant says that marriage is a "step" that "has to be taken," she addresses society's expectation that a young woman like the Bride marry an affluent man like the Bridegroom. Of course, the Bride herself is already quite aware of this expectation—earlier, she referred to the marriage as her "duty"—which is why she reminds the servant that she has "already agreed to take" this step, acting as if her fate is sealed and that she has no choice but to go through with the marriage.

While the servant helps the Bride get ready, the first wedding guest arrives. To the servant's surprise, she opens the door to find that the guest is Leonardo, who says he rode ahead of his wife. In the distance, a song about the Bride's wedding day rises as the rest of the guests draw near, though they're still only on the horizon. "I suppose the bride will be wearing a big wreath of flowers?" Leonardo says. "It shouldn't be so big. Something smaller would suit her better." Hearing Leonardo's voice, the Bride steps into view. Still clad in her undergarments, she ignores the servant's instructions not to show herself, and she asks Leonardo what he's "hinting at" by asking about the **orange blossoms**. "You, you know me, you know I'm not hinting," Leonardo answers.

By this point in the play, there is no doubt that Leonardo and the Bride are still in love. When Leonardo says the Bridegroom should have given the Bride a "smaller" orange-blossom wreath, he differentiates himself from the people who are invested first and foremost in the superficial, materialistic aspects of marriage. Whereas the Bridegroom is clearly proud of his ability to provide the Bride with expensive things, Leonardo is only interested in love, which doesn't require oversized wreaths or fertile vineyards. This, it seems, is why he has ridden ahead of the wedding guests, clearly wanting to express his true feelings to the Bride before she commits to the Bridegroom.

Standing before the Bride, Leonardo asks what he meant to her, urging her to think back to their relationship. "But two oxen and a broken-down shack are almost nothing. That's the thorn," he laments. When the Bride asks why he's come, he says he simply wanted to see her wedding—after all, she watched him get married, which he reminds her was her own fault, since she was the one who refused to marry him. Still, though, he says he won't "speak out" because he doesn't want people to hear his "complaints." "Mine would be louder," the Bride admits, at which point the servant tries to end the conversation, telling them they shouldn't "talk about what's gone." Nonetheless, Leonardo says that even after his own wedding he has never been able to forget the Bride.

It's no wonder that Leonardo and the Bride are still in love, since their relationship only ended because of superficial, pragmatic reasons—namely, that Leonardo couldn't support the Bride financially. Indeed, the Bride clearly felt obligated to find a wealthy husband, a decision her society champions. However, this has left her heartbroken and sad, which is why she's so unexcited by the idea of marrying the Bridegroom. Now that she's doing what society expects of her by wedding a rich man, she understands how joyless it is to embark upon a loveless life. As a result, she admits to Leonardo that she's unhappy about her wedding. Unfortunately, though, the servant tries to come between the two lovers by urging them to stop talking about the past.

The Bride tells Leonardo that she will stick by her decision to marry the Bridegroom. "I'll shut myself away with my husband, and I'll love him above everything," she says, but Leonardo points out that "to keep quiet and burn is the greatest punishment we can heap upon ourselves." What's more, he says that "when the roots of things go deep, no one can pull them up." These statements cause the Bride to start shaking, as she admits that the mere sound of Leonardo's voice makes her feel intoxicated. "And I know I'm mad," she says, "and I know that my heart's putrified from holding out, and here I am, soothed by the sound of his voice, by the sight of his arms moving." Hearing this, the servant firmly puts an end to the conversation, and the voices of the wedding guests sound out in song as they approach.

In this moment, the Bride tries to control her passionate love for Leonardo. Thinking she can resist her feelings, she reminds herself of the commitment she's about to make to the Bridegroom, upholding that she's going to "shut" herself "away." Of course, isn't a very romantic way to talk about her marriage, but this is exactly the point: she's trying to ignore *the idea of romance in order to bolster her willpower. However, this proves harder than she thought, since Leonardo is there to tell her that "keep[ing] quiet" about love is torturous. After all, he would know, since he married a woman he doesn't truly love and continues to pine for the Bride.*

The wedding guests enter, still singing about the Bride and her magnificent wedding day. After they settle in, the Bride—who ran out of the room just before they arrived—reappears, finally dressed in her wedding gown and the crown of **orange blossoms**. As the excitement sets in, the Bridegroom's mother asks the Bride's father why members of the Felix family are in attendance, and he tells her that "today's a day for forgiveness"—after all, "they are family." Still, the mother says she will "put up with" their presence but will not "forgive" them.

Yet again, the Bridegroom's mother refuses to forget about her family's violent past. This is worth paying attention to, since the servant has recently urged the Bride to stop talking "about what's gone." In the same way that the Bridegroom's mother finds it impossible to stop thinking about her dead family members, then, the Bride struggles to push her and Leonardo's love out of her mind.

Meanwhile, the Bride rushes over to the Bridegroom and says she wants to hurry to the church, not wanting to delay any longer. When he asks why, she says, "I want to be your wife and be alone with you and not hear any other voices but yours." Going on, she adds, "And to have you hold me so tight that, even if my mother were to call me, my dead mother, I couldn't free myself from you." With this, they set off for the church, the many guests following them as they go.

The Bride's desire to hurry along the process of her wedding has to do with her weakening willpower. Afraid of what she might do if she remains too long in Leonardo's presence, she tries to invest herself in her relationship with the Bridegroom, hoping that making their union official will keep her from succumbing to her desires for Leonardo. And although the Bridegroom seems to think this is an expression of love, the Bride's yearning for him to "hold" her says more about how much she distrusts herself (that is, if he doesn't have a secure grasp on her, she'll flee to Leonardo the first chance she gets) than it says about her feelings for her future husband.

Just as Leonardo is about to leave for the church, his wife urges him to come with her in the cart instead of taking his horse, which he rode without her on the way to the Bride's house. When he says he's "not the kind of man to go by cart," she responds that she isn't "the kind of woman to go to a wedding" alone. "I can't put up with it any more!" she cries. "Neither can I," he says in turn, glaring at her. "I don't know what's happening," she says. "But I think and I don't want to think. One thing I do know. I've already been thrown aside."

The relationship Leonardo has with his wife provides insight into what it's like to be in a loveless marriage. This, it seems, is what the Bride has to look forward to if she decides to go through with her plan to spend the rest of her life with the Bridegroom.

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

The Bridegroom's mother and the Bride's father return after the wedding ceremony and ask the servant if they're the first to arrive, but she informs them that Leonardo and his wife made it back before them, driving dangerously fast the whole way. Commenting on this, the father notes that Leonardo doesn't have "good blood," and the mother says, "What blood could he have? The blood of his entire family." Going on, she once again talks about how the Felixes murdered her husband and son, but the Bride's father tells her to stop obsessing about the matter, though she reminds him again that she will never forget what happened. The two then discuss the prospect of having grandchildren, and the father says, "I want them to have many. This land needs arms that are not paid for."

Once more, the Bridegroom's mother appears unwilling to let go of the past. In turn, García Lorca shows the audience how difficult it is to forget about one's personal history, which doesn't bode well for the Bride, who is trying desperately to put her romantic history with Leonardo out of her mind. On another note, the Bride's father once again demonstrates his all-consuming obsession with land ownership, finding a way to fixate on such superficial notions even when thinking about having grandchildren. He doesn't want grandchildren so he can love nurture them; he wants grandchildren so they can love and nurture his land.

Finally, the rest of the wedding party returns, and the Bridegroom's mother talks to the Bride, noting that her "blessings weigh heavily" even though she should be "light as a dove." The Bridegroom then comes to the Bride and asks if she likes the **orange blossoms**, proudly pointing out that the wreath will "last for ever" because it's wax. "I'd like you to have worn them all over your dress," he says, though she tells him such a thing would be unnecessary.

It's apparent in this moment that the Bridegroom is quite proud of the impressive wreath he gave the Bride. Of course, it's worth bearing in mind that Leonardo—who knows the Bride on a more personal level—has already made it clear that she doesn't care about such lavish material items. As such, the Bridegroom's boast that the wax orange blossoms will "last for ever" only underscores how little he knows about his new wife.

As the party begins, the guests dance merrily while Leonardo's wife wonders where he has gone. During this time, the Bridegroom flirts cheekily with the servant and prepares to spend his first night with the Bride, who is currently talking to a group of young women who are giddy and jealous of her, though they sense her somberness. "It's a difficult step to take," she tells them, insisting that she has "lots of things on [her] mind" because she has just gotten married. As this conversation ends, the Bridegroom hugs her from behind, and she immediately says, "Don't." Confused, he asks why she's afraid of him, and she's surprised to see that it's him, pretending to have thought he was her father. She then tells him to stop touching her, acting as if she doesn't want the guests to see them.

When the Bridegroom hugs the Bride from behind, she reacts strongly because she assumes that he is Leonardo. This is why she says, "Don't," and also why she quickly has to think of a reason she would be so startled by her own husband's touch. Indeed, even if this isn't the case—and she knows all along that the Bridegroom is behind her—her reaction reveals how uncomfortable she is about the mere idea of the Bridegroom touching her romantically.

Interrupting the Bride and Bridegroom's conversation, Leonardo's wife asks if they've seen Leonardo, saying she has looked all over for him. In a carefree manner, the Bridegroom suggests that he must have taken his horse for a ride, and the wife continues to search. Seeing the Bride's unhappiness, the servant asks her what's wrong. "It's as if someone's struck me on the head!" the Bride answers, declaring that she's going to the bedroom to rest for a little while. When the Bridegroom offers to accompany her, she forces him to stay. "Whatever you want," he says. "But don't be like this tonight!" On her way out, she says, "I'll be better tonight."

It's worth noting that the Bride suddenly comes down with a headache as soon as people start talking about Leonardo, a fact that indicates how profoundly affected she is by the mere mention of his name. Furthermore, when the Bridegroom tells her not to decline his advances later that night—when they're inevitably expected to have sex for the first time—the audience understands that he sees himself as someone who can tell her what to do, now that she's his wife. In turn, it becomes clear that he views sex in the same way that he views land ownership and materialistic possession, clearly thinking he's entitled to whatever he wants because he has gone through the transactional process of marriage.

The Bridegroom's mother walks over to him and asks him where the Bride has gone. "A bad day for brides," he jokes after answering her question. "A bad day?" she asks. "The only good one. For me it was like an inheritance." At this point, the Bride's father enters and asks where his daughter is, and the partygoers soon discover that she's nowhere to be found. As everybody begins to panic, Leonardo's wife comes in and screams, "They've run way! Her and Leonardo. On horseback! Arms around one another!" With this, the celebrants jump to action as the Bridegroom prepares to mount a horse and follow the lovers into the woods.

When the Bridegroom's mother says that her wedding day was like an "inheritance," García Lorca once again spotlights the fact that the majority of the characters in Blood Wedding *see marriage as a transaction, not necessarily as a celebration of love. Indeed, it is perhaps because of their obsession with the superficial and material benefits of marriage that everyone surrounding the Bride has failed to recognize the discontent that led her to elope with Leonardo.*

As the Bride's father dumbfoundedly expresses his disbelief that his daughter would elope with another man, the Bridegroom's mother entreats him to rally his side of the family to chase down the runaway lovers. "Now there are two sides here. My family and yours. All of you must go," she says. "The hour of blood has come again. Two sides. You on yours, me on mine. After them! Get after them!"

Although the Bridegroom's mother is supposedly so averse to violence (recall her earlier tirade against knives), she suddenly advocates for bloodshed when her son's new wife escapes with Leonardo. By saying that "the hour of blood has come again," she expresses her desire to take revenge on Leonardo, a member of the Felix family, ultimately playing into the same violent narrative that led to her husband and son's deaths. In this way, she perpetuates the embattled history that she claims to detest.

ACT THREE, SCENE ONE

In the woods, three woodcutters talk about Leonardo and the Bride's escape, saying that everyone is looking for them and will "find them soon." "They should leave them alone," one of the woodcutters says, and another adds, "You have to follow your instinct. They were right to run away." Unfortunately, though, the woodcutters recognize that the lovers' actions will have consequences. As they speak, they realize that they're getting "close" to Leonardo and the Bride, and because the moon is emerging, they decide to "hurry" away.

García Lorca presents the three woodcutters as if they are members of a traditional Greek Chorus, a group of characters that comment on the events taking place in an Ancient Greek play. The fact that these woodcutters are sympathetic to Leonardo and the Bride is refreshing, considering that seemingly everybody else is eager to hold their love against them. However, that they end up slinking away in retreat suggests that their goodwill will not be enough to save the young lovers.

The moon appears as "a young woodcutter with a white face." Speaking in verse, he calls himself the "false dawn amongst the leaves," adding that the Bride and Leonardo won't get away. "Let me come in!" he says, eventually declaring how "cold" he is, thinking about how his white light glimmers off the river before him, building up "cold and hard in pools." However, he asserts that "tonight there'll be red blood to fill [his] cheeks." Turning to the surrounding tree branches, he says he doesn't want any "shadows" to fall on the ground, since his "rays must enter everywhere." "Who is hiding? Come out, I say! / No! They shan't get away!" he rhymes.

Unlike the woodcutters, the moon hopes that Leonardo and the Bride won't successfully escape. Indeed, he seems to crave death, as he believes bloodshed will warm his cold "cheeks." In turn, García Lorca communicates just how difficult it will be for Leonardo and the Bride to escape, making it even harder for their love to triumph, as even the natural elements surrounding them seemingly disapprove of their elopement.

When the moon slinks back into the trees, an elderly beggar woman appears. ("She is Death," García Lorca confirms in his stage note.) Also speaking in verse, she celebrates the fact "from here they shan't move," indicating that death will take place in this very spot by the river. Conspiring with the moon, she says, "We mustn't let them get beyond the stream." At this point, the Bridegroom emerges with a young man helping him track down Leonardo and the Bride. "You won't find them," the young man says, but the Bridegroom ignores this, insisting that he heard the sound of a horse. "You see this arm?" he cries. "Well it's not my arm. It's my brother's arm and my father's and my whole dead family's. And it's got such strength, it could tear this tree from its roots if it wanted to."

When the beggar woman—who explicitly represents death itself—asserts that Leonardo and the Bride won't make it beyond the stream running through the forest, the audience sees that the two lovers are hurdling toward a grim fate, as shadowy figures make bleak prophecies about what will happen to them. In keeping with this, the Bridegroom references his own fate as a way of justifying his pursuit of Leonardo. When he says that his arm belongs to his "whole dead family," he uses his family history as something motivating him to take revenge on Leonardo. Of course, by pursuing his enemy, he is only increasing the likelihood that he will succumb to the same fate as his father and brother, but he's unable to consider this at the moment, since he's blinded by his thirst for revenge.

The beggar woman lets out a cry, which the Bridegroom and his helper hear. "This is a hunt," says the young man, to which the Bridegroom declares, "A hunt. The greatest hunt of all." The young man then runs off, and the Bridegroom bumps into the beggar. When he asks her whether she has seen Leonardo, she is too fixated on his beauty to answer, saying, "Such a good-looking boy if you were asleep!" After marveling at the sight of him, she finally directs him, telling him to follow her. When they set off, the woodcutters return and say, "Oh rising death!" They decide to leave a "green branch" for Leonardo and the Bride's love.

By saying that his pursuit of Leonardo is "the greatest hunt of all," the Bridegroom glorifies the idea of revenge, framing it as something that brings honor and pride. In reality, though, he's doing nothing but speeding toward a violent encounter that will endanger his own life—a fact made all the more clear by the beggar woman's ominous interest in how beautiful he would be if he were "asleep," or unconscious. Given that the beggar woman represents death, it becomes rather obvious that the Bridegroom is hurdling to his own demise, though he's too hell-bent on exacting revenge to consider this.

The woodcutters retreat, and Leonardo and the Bride emerge. Sneaking through the woods, the Bride expresses regret about eloping, but Leonardo says, "Oh, I'm not the one at fault. / The fault belongs to the earth / And that scent that comes / From your breasts and your hair." In turn, the Bride tells him that she's worried their love will get him killed, which is why she wants him to leave her behind, though he refuses. "If they separate us, it will be / Because I am dead," Leonardo says, to which the Bride adds, "I will be dead too." As they hurry off, the moon reemerges, shining a "strong blue light" all over the forest. Then, "two long, piercing screams" sound out, and the beggar woman comes out and "stands with her back to the audience," opening her ragged cloak "like a great bird with huge wings."

The only reason the Bride regrets eloping with Leonardo is that she fears he'll be killed as a result of their love. This is rather levelheaded, since it's clear that the preexisting feud between Leonardo's family and the Bridegroom's family is only going to fuel the animosity between the two men. However, her misgivings are useless, since she can't change the fact that they've already run away. Leonardo, for his part, articulates what the Bride has been struggling with throughout the entire play—namely, that certain kinds of passionate love are too difficult to resist, which is why he claims that the "earth" is "at fault" for their elopement, an idea that frames their relationship as a force of nature that is too great and powerful to resist.

ACT THREE, SCENE TWO

Back at the Bridegroom's house, two little girls wind "a skein of red wool" while a third talks about the fact that nobody has returned from the wedding yet. "Oh wool, oh wool, / What will you say?" says one of the girls playing with the wool, and the other says, "The lover's dumb, / The young man red. / On the silent shore / I saw them spread."

The three little girls and their "skein of red wool" resemble the Fates, or the three goddesses in Greek mythology who work with the threads of fate, spinning out destinies and determining when a person will die. As such, the fact that García Lorca opens the final scene with these three girls hints that someone has died—a notion that is supported when one of the girls talks about an unspeaking lover and a "young man" washed up on a "shore."

Leonardo's wife and mother-in-law enter and worry aloud about what might have happened in the woods. When they leave several moments later, the old beggar woman appears at the door and asks for bread, and one of the little girls asks if she has been near the river. The beggar reveals that she did indeed walk along the stream, saying, "I saw them; they'll be here soon: two rushing streams / Still at last amongst the great stones, / Two men at the horse's feet, / Dead in the beauty of the night." Going on, she says (without using their names) that both Leonardo and the Bridegroom have died but that the Bride is soon to return, her clothing stained by her lovers' blood. Having said this, she departs.

In this moment, the beggar woman confirms that both Leonardo and the Bridegroom are dead. As such, the audience sees that the Bridegroom truly was rushing toward his own death as he pursued his enemy, ultimately succumbing to the same destiny as his brother and father. This, of course, is quite absurd, considering that he was seemingly only chasing Leonardo down to fulfill this destiny—after all, it's not as if he would have been able to convince the Bride to fall in love with him. As such, violence is the only thing the Bridegroom could have hoped to achieve, and achieve it he did, though at the cost of his own life.

The Bridegroom's mother arrives with her neighbor, who is crying. "Be quiet," the mother says. She then thinks about the fact that her son should have been there to greet her, saying that his voice is "fading" "beyond the mountains." Wanting to help her friend, the neighbor says, "Come to my house. Don't stay here." However, the mother declines, saying that she wants to be at home and "at peace." "All of them are dead now," she says. "At midnight I'll sleep, I'll sleep and not be afraid of a gun or a **knife**." She then notes that "other mothers" will look out their windows to find their sons, but that she won't be able to do this anymore. Having said this, she sits down and resolves to remain strong, since mourners will soon come to visit.

When the Bridegroom's mother says that she'll be able to fall asleep at night without being "afraid of a gun or a knife," there is a hint of relief in her voice. For years, she has worried about losing her son to the same kind of violence that claimed her husband and other son. Of course, this fear came true, but this means she can finally live her life in the present, getting the first peaceful night's sleep in a long time.

The Bride enters wearing all black and weeping. Upon seeing her, the Bridegroom's mother calls her a "serpent" and slaps her to the ground, at which point the neighbor tries to push her away. However, the Bride speaks up, telling the neighbor to leave the old woman alone. "I came so that she could kill me, so that they bear me away with them," she says. She also says she wants the Bridegroom's mother to know that she's still a virgin, but the old woman tells her to be quiet, saying, "What does that matter to me?" "Because I went off with the other one!" the Bride replies, insisting that the Bridegroom's mother would have done the same thing. Saying that she was a "burning" woman, the Bride likens the Bridegroom to a "drop of water" that might bring her "children, land, [and] health."

As she tries to atone for eloping with Leonardo, the Bride accepts the old woman's scorn. At the same time, though, she tries to defend herself by saying that she was a "burning" woman, an idea that suggests that her desires were out of her own control. When she says that the Bridegroom was like a "drop of water," she implies that he wasn't quite enough to satisfy her true yearnings or put out her passion for Leonardo. In turn, this confirms that the promise of "children" and "land" weren't enough to convince the Bride to give up true love.

The Bride says that while the Bridegroom was like a "drop of water," Leonardo was like "a dark river." Trying to explain herself to the Bridegroom's mother, she says that the Bridegroom was her "ambition" but that Leonardo "dragged" her down "like a wave from the sea." Unsurprisingly, the Bridegroom's mother doesn't care about any of this, refusing to forgive the Bride for being a "weak" woman. In utter anguish, the Bride pleads for the mother to take revenge on her, begging her to cut her throat. However, the mother refuses to do anything, simply saying, "What does your honour matter to me? What does your death matter to me? What does anything matter to me?"

Unfortunately for the Bride, the Bridegroom's mother is unsympathetic, as she remains unmoved by the Bride's inability to resist love. For her, all that counts is that the Bride's elopement led to her son's death. And now that this has happened, nothing "matter[s]" to her anymore, a fact that aligns with her previous assertion that she's no longer "afraid" of anything.

Once it becomes clear that the Bridegroom's mother will not do anything to harm the Bride, the Bride asks if she can "weep" with her, and the old woman allows her to cry "by the door." In this fashion, the two women mourn their losses, speaking in verse about how even the smallest **knife**—one "that barely fits the hand"—can part flesh and drive into the body, where there "trembles" "the dark root of a scream."

Blood Wedding *ends with two women—who are at odds with one another—lamenting the same thing: the tragic fact that human beings find ways to kill each other with even the smallest of weapons. In this way, García Lorca illustrates that violence-related grief is universal, ultimately transcending interpersonal divisions and uniting people with an internal "scream," which all humans possess because everybody on earth feels the pain of losing a loved one.*

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