

***“Becket”* Study Guide Act I & II**

1. What is the significance of the forks? Why are they mentioned?
2. What (historically inaccurate) nationality does Anouilh give to Becket? Why does the playwright choose this?
3. What government position does Henry give to Becket in Act I, and what important item goes with that title?
4. What has Becket done in his life that would make it unlikely for him to become a Bishop? (2 things)
5. In Act One, Henry says “All wars are holy wars, Bishop. I defy you to find a serious belligerent who doesn’t have Heaven on his side, in theory.” What does this mean?
6. What is the major problem between Henry and the Archbishop, in Act I?
7. What is Becket’s metaphor about the monarchy in this Act?
8. What is the only way the church can retaliate against the nobility?
9. According to the song, who were Becket’s parents?
10. What are the circumstances of Gwendolen’s death?

ACT II

1. Why do the barons distrust Becket?
2. What does Becket compare governing to?
3. What treasonous act is suspected of the young monk?
4. How does Becket save him?
5. What is the “good” news from William of Corbeil?
6. How does this news work for Henry’s advantage?
7. As a result of this news, what does Henry decide to do?
8. What is Becket’s initial response to Henry’s suggestion, and how does this change?
9. What is Becket doing, at the end of Act II?
10. How do the ideas of ambition and honor come into conflict, in Becket’s character?

***“Becket”* Study Guide Act III & IV**

1. Why does Queen Eleanor (young Queen) resent Becket?
2. Henry refers to an ancestress named Mathilda – who was she and what is the tapestry he claims she wove?
3. What is in the package from the monk, and why has Becket sent it?
4. What is Henry’s metaphor for friendship?
5. Who is the young monk Becket takes as his assistant?
6. Why has Becket excommunicated William of Aynsford, Gilbert of Clare and Robert De Vere?
7. What crime is Becket accused of committing against the church?
8. Why does Henry still admire and love Becket, even after Becket has acted against his will?
9. According to the Pope, what does Becket claim about the election of Clarendon?
10. What is the tone, in the scene between the Pope and the Cardinal? Where do they send Becket?

ACT IV

1. What does King Louis say is “a very cumbersome thing”?
2. In their last scene together, what tragic flaw does Henry reveal about himself? (hint: hawks, horses, family)
3. According to Henry, what does a Crusade cover up?
4. Becket says he is no longer like himself. What does he say has changed him?
5. Henry has a list of twelve proposals and a personal request. Which 4 of these does Becket refuse to concede to?
6. Where does Henry send the Queen Mother and his wife, in his rage?
7. According to the Barons, how did the people respond when Becket landed at Sandwich?
8. What does the young monk mean when he says he is “just a grain of sand in the machine”?
9. What does Henry do, to punish himself for Becket’s murder?
10. Whose army is rebelling against the King’s army, as the play ends? Why?