

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director Heather Kitchen, Executive Director

PRESENTS

WORDS ^{on} PLAYS

INSIGHT INTO THE PLAY, THE PLAYWRIGHT, AND THE PRODUCTION

'Tis Pity She's a Whore

BY JOHN FORD

DIRECTED BY CAREY PERLOFF

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why do you think John Ford chose to call the play *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*? What do you think the title means? Do you think it fits the play? Why or why not? What would you title the play? To which of the characters do you think the title applies?
2. Giovanni and Annabella's incestuous relationship is described as both "natural" and "unnatural." How can it be both at once? Do you think it is more one than the other? Why?
3. How do you define justice? How is it different from revenge? Are any of the revenge plots in the play justified? Is there any justice in the play? If so, where does that justice come from?
4. Do you find yourself sympathizing with any of the characters? Does your sympathy shift at different points from one character to another? Who is the protagonist? Who is the antagonist? How can you tell?
5. Consider the four women in the play: Annabella, Putana, Hippolita, and Philotis. How are they similar and different? How much freedom do they each have in their lives? What are the consequences when they exercise that freedom and make their own choices?
6. Consider the theme of corruption in the play. What might Ford be saying about Jacobean and Caroline England? How do the characters in the play represent and illustrate social corruption? Do any of the characters in the play transcend their corrupt society? How? How do the play's themes apply to our contemporary society?
7. Compare the Friar and the Cardinal as representatives of religion and authority in the world of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. How do they differ? Do you agree with either of them? Why or why not? What do they say about the world of the play?
8. How is *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* like and unlike other dramas of the period in which it was written? Does it remind you of Shakespeare? Why or why not? How is it different from Shakespeare?
9. What is the role of the music in the play? How does it further the story? What other stories does it tell?
10. What do you think of the design for this production? How do the design elements (sets, costumes, lighting, sound) affect your perception of the story? If you were designing a production of this play, how would your design be different? Why?