

# Angels In America

## Harper

- Beginning – She fears about the changes that are happening around her.
- She describes to us her fear in the form of a metaphor.
- Harper later on within the play loses everything she holds dear. However this gives her a new perspective upon life.
- At the end of the play we see her on a plane, going to San Francisco to start a new life.
- However at the end she suggests to the reader that, “Nothing is lost forever



## Louis

- His views can be found as somewhat Darwinism
- He thinks that the world will change for the better. However he cannot accept Prior's sickness. He runs away from it.
- From running away he immerses himself to avoid deterioration.
- Whilst running away he finds Joe, and his newfound friends Roy and Martin
- Joe tells Harper that things are beginning to change
- However at the end of the play Louis and Joe are longing for things to return to how they were.



## Prior and the Angels

- Prior plays the biggest struggle over change
- Change after change is forced upon him
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Disease
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Lewis abandons him
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Angels call upon him
- However Prior thwarts their plan
- Hannah accepts that Prior is a homosexual, even though she is a Mormon



## Belize

- He's the nurse to Prior
- He's an ex-drag queen, and is having his own identity problem.
- Prior confesses to Belize that he has been hearing voices
- Belize is sceptical about the voices. However once he leaves we hear this voice speak to Prior.





## **Roy Cohn**

- His blustering character is etched close to a historical figure.
- He is an infamous red-baiter and corrupt lawyer
- He is struggling to manifest the calamity of his AIDS, even as he distances himself from other homosexuals
- His refusal to identify with other victims, the drama makes compelling statements about image versus reality, power, and death.

## **Identity**

- The theme of identity is closely tied to the play's notion of community
- In the play all characters are marked by ethnicity:
  - WASP
  - Jewish
  - Mormon
  - Black
  - Homosexuality
- Even AIDS infection serves as an identity type

## **Identity Within The Opening Monologue**

- Within the opening monologue of the play, each of the characters become involved, whether they intend it or not.
- Sarah Ironson, Rabbi Chemelwitz describes the deceased as special bread, who have carried pieces of the 'old world' to the new homeland (America)
- To the Rabbi, Sarah Ironson is part of the American identity

## **Joe's Struggle For Identity**

- Joe within the play seeks a different kind of identity.
- In his Mormon life he has tried to deny the nature of his sexuality. (He is attracted to men.)
- He tries to change this, he goes to lengths such as marrying Harper.
- Through a short relationship with Louis, he is nearly liberated.
- He admits to longings to himself, and to Louis, however does not come out to the world.
- At the end of the play he is still torn between his life as a heterosexual married, republican law clerk, and the happiness he found in Louis.

## **Louis's Struggle For Identity**

- He thinks that he solutions for everything about the world. However his philosophies are constantly being test
- Like Joe he lives a life of contradictions, he criticizes Joes for hiding his sexuality.
- However Louis adapts a heterosexual façade around his family.
- Louis is a tortured agnostic who was raised Jewish, but can't find a religion that accepts him for what he is.
- His quest for identity does not end with the play. During the epilogue, he is still arguing religion and politics with Belize.