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UNDERSTANDING LILLIAN HELLMAN

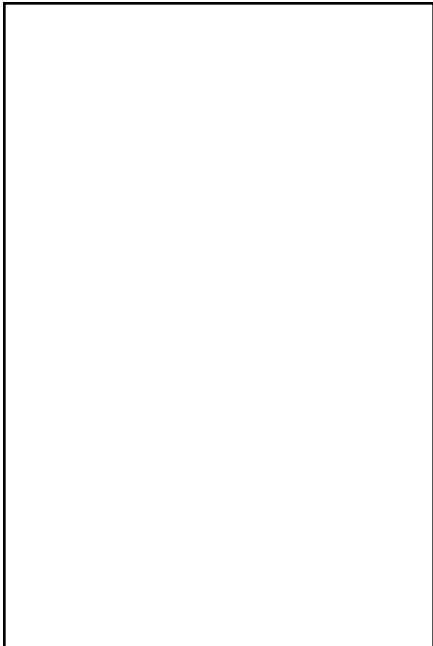
Alice Griffin and Geraldine Thorsten

"Lucid, up-to-date resource on the career and writings of Lillian Hellman. . . . Clearly up to the standards already established in the Understanding Contemporary American Literature series, which offers balanced and in-depth examinations of important U.S. writers."—*Choice*

In this perceptive study of the literary career of Lillian Hellman (1905–1984), Alice Griffin and Geraldine Thorsten provide a balanced, in-depth examination of Hellman's major works. In the thirties, when Hellman's theater career began, George Jean Nathan, the dean of theater critics, suggested that although Hellman was the country's foremost playwright, she would never equal a man. Correcting the badly skewed evaluations that such bias fostered, Griffin and Thorsten give Hellman's plays fresh critical assessments as they analyze her rarely acknowledged dramatic gifts for humor, irony, satire, and strong narrative line and dialogue, as well as her concern for moral issues. They also credit Hellman's memoirs with introducing innovations in free association, elliptical time, and symbolism to the genre. Griffin and Thorsten demonstrate that Hellman's distinctive voice influenced other major playwrights—including Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams—and inspired a younger generation of women writers.

Understanding Contemporary American Literature • Matthew J. Bruccoli, series editor

February 2010, 184 pages



Alice Griffin is a professor emerita and former director of graduate studies in English at Lehman College of the City University of New York. She is the author of *Rebels and Lovers: Shakespeare's Young Heroes and Heroines*, *Shakespeare's Women in Love*, and *Understanding Arthur Miller*.

Geraldine Thorsten taught English and women's studies at Lehman College of the City University of New York. Her previous books are *God Herself* and *The Goddess in Your Stars*.

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