



The French King at Court from *The Story of Two Lovers*

*The French King at Court from *The Story of Two Lovers**

Unknown Artist

French, about 1460–1470

Tempera colors and gold paint on parchment

6 15/16 in. x 4 1/2 in.

Ms. 68, fol. 1

The story in this image is told in a continuous narrative—characters are shown more than once in different parts of the image and in different actions. This allows the artist to tell a full story in one scene. A fashionably dressed young man approaches the king of France, who sits on a throne draped in a blue fabric patterned with the French **fleur-de-lis**. The courtier, perhaps a messenger, wears long riding boots and spurs. This suggests that he may be the same figure as the black-clad rider of the white horse visible in the **miniature's** background. Both the ceremony and the intrigue of court are represented in the subtle gestures of the figures and the discrete groups of attendants around the king. The king peers out of the miniature with a seemingly knowing expression, as if to indicate his wariness of competing groups. The miniature sets the tone for the text, which concerns the perils of life at court.



Other Background Information for Lesson *Medieval Natural Resources*

Materials used in making a manuscript page come from many different sources. This page is made of parchment—goat, cow, or sheepskin. Lead, graphite, or silver was used to make the **lines** on which the text is written. Charcoal and pine pitch were used for the ink of the text. Ground pigments of lapis lazuli (deep blue), madder (red), parsley (green), saffron (yellow), and vermilion (bright red) were mixed with egg to create the tempera paint. Ground gold was also mixed with the egg base to create the gold paint used in throughout the image.

Questions for Teaching

What is happening in the image?

Who do you think are the main characters in this story?

Notice that one character is repeated in the foreground and background. Which character is it? What does this tell us about the story/narrative in this image?

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Where do you see other objects repeated? What kinds of patterns do they create?

What colors do you see?

Notice the border decorations. What images do you see in it?

