

KING LEAR (New Folger Edition)

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS

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SYNOPSIS

Act I, Scene i At King Lear's palace, the Earl of Kent meets the Earl of Gloucester's illegitimate son Edmund and hopes to know him better. Lear, the aging ruler of Britain, resolves to abdicate and relieve himself of responsibility by dividing the realm among his daughters, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia. He intends to offer the largest portion to the daughter who most loves him. That done, he expects to retain the honor and prestige due the position.

Goneril, the oldest, wife of the Duke of Albany, and Regan, the middle daughter, wife of the Duke of Cornwall, flatter Lear effusively. His favorite, Cordelia, the youngest, says only that she loves her father as befits her filial duty. Enraged by her uninflated expression, he disinherits her. The Earl of Kent, Lear's faithful friend, lashes out at the rash change in the king's will. In retaliation, Lear gives him ten days to leave England in permanent exile.

Cordelia's suitors, the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France, learn that Lear has rescinded her dowry. Burgundy repudiates her, but the French king, acknowledging her honesty and character, treasures and weds her. Shortly after receiving their portions, Goneril and Regan plot to curb their father's power to overrule them.

Act I, Scene ii At the Earl of Gloucester's castle, Edmund, his bastard son, schemes to displace his half-brother Edgar, the legitimate heir. Edmund produces a forged letter in which Edgar supposedly requests his brother's help in overthrowing their father. Edmund sets up a contrived conversation with Edgar for Gloucester to overhear. Remarking on how easy it is to gull his father, Edmund warns his brother that the earl is furious and instructs Edgar to arm himself.

Act I, Scene iii Days later, to humble Lear, Goneril orders her steward Oswald to insult the former king and his retainers when he arrives at the Duke of Albany's palace.

Act I, Scene iv According to the terms of agreement, Lear plans to divide his time between the residences of Goneril and Regan. At the elder daughter's home, Oswald insults Lear; Goneril forces him to decrease his train of 100 knights by half. Accompanied by his fool and the loyal Kent in disguise, Lear abandons Goneril to seek respect from Regan. Lear admits to a knight that the fool, Lear's court jester, has pined for Cordelia for two days. Goneril dispatches Oswald with a letter warning her sister of family developments.

Act I, Scene v Lear sends his own letter to Regan. The fool derides Lear for letting his daughters plague him.

Act II, Scene i At a courtyard in Gloucester's castle, Edmund manipulates Edgar into fleeing their angry father. As Gloucester arrives, Edmund convinces his brother to enter a ruse in which Edmund pretends to hold Edgar at swordpoint while actually encouraging his escape. Edmund then informs

their father that Edgar attacked him. Gloucester determines to execute Edgar and advance Edmund to his place. When the Cornwall party enters Gloucester's castle, Edmund further smears his brother's reputation. Regan and her husband take Edmund into their confidence.

Act II, Scene ii Outside Gloucester's castle in the morning, Kent, preceding Lear as a messenger, sees Oswald and chastises him for abusing Lear. To further humiliate her father, Regan places Kent in stocks. Left to himself, Kent considers a letter from Cordelia, who is shocked at family mistreatment of her father.

Act II, Scene iii Edgar, fleeing pursuers in a wood, learns that he is an outlaw. He disguises himself as the mad beggar Tom o'Bedlam.

Act II, Scene iv After Lear and Goneril arrive at Gloucester's castle by night, the fool berates Kent for his loyalty to a powerless master. Regan and Cornwall refuse to see Lear. The two sisters join forces to strip their father of his retinue. Enraged, Lear and the fool depart for the heath in a storm.

Act III, Scene i Kent learns from a gentleman that Lear has fled with only the fool for company. Kent dispatches the gentleman to report to Cordelia, who heads the French army at its landing in Dover.

Act III, Scene ii On a different part of the heath, the three shelter in a hovel occupied by Edgar, disguised. The fool predicts that England will suffer for this turn of events.

Act III, Scene iii At his castle, Gloucester informs Edmund that Cornwall, his feudal superior, forbids him to shelter Lear. A letter affirms to Gloucester that a French invasion will avenge Lear. Edmund resolves to reveal the plot so his father will be executed, leaving the entire inheritance to Edmund.

Act III, Scene iv On the heath at night, Lear welcomes the storm as nature's echo of his raging emotions. He considers the state of the poor and homeless, whom he never before pitied. The fool exits the hovel to avoid Tom o'Bedlam. Edgar puts in a performance of insanity. Lear commiserates. Edgar declares his mental state a punishment for seducing his mistress. Gloucester, who had pursued Lear, finds the foursome and persuades Lear to accompany him to a nearby farmhouse. Gloucester discloses to Kent that the royal daughters intend to kill their father.

Act III, Scene v At Gloucester's castle, Edmund hands over Gloucester's letters to the French. Cornwall names Edmund the new Earl of Gloucester.

Act III, Scene vi At a farmhouse adjoining Gloucester's castle, Lear tries Goneril and Regan as traitors in a mock court and appoints as judges Tom and the fool. Gloucester warns them to flee. Kent and the fool bolt, bearing Lear, who is still asleep. Edgar muses that Lear faces a worse fate than his own.

Act III, Scene vii At his castle, Gloucester, presented

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before Cornwall and Regan, warns them that they will be punished. Cornwall blinds the earl. Servants escort Gloucester to the care of Edgar, the errant madman.

Act IV, Scene i On the heath, an old man who has been Gloucester's tenant for 80 years leads him to Edgar. Edgar, still in disguise, meets his blind father and accompanies him to the cliffs of Dover so Gloucester can commit suicide.

Act IV, Scene ii Before Albany's palace, Oswald reports to Goneril and Edmund that Albany knows of Cordelia's invasion and that Edmund has betrayed his father. Goneril dispatches Edmund to Cornwall commanding him to raise an army and implies that they will kill Albany. He charges Goneril with treachery. She brands him a coward. A messenger reports the blinding of Gloucester. Goneril fears that Regan may marry Edmund. Albany determines to avenge Gloucester.

Act IV, Scene iii At the French encampment at Dover, a gentleman reports to Kent that the King of France has suddenly returned home, leaving Monsieur La Far in charge of the army. The gentleman declares that Cordelia was heartbroken to learn of her father's state. Kent knows that Lear is in Dover and that he is too shamed to receive his youngest.

Act IV, Scene iv From her tent, Cordelia instructs searchers to retrieve Lear. A doctor believes that the old man will recover with rest and simples. Meanwhile, the forces of Albany and Cornwall approach.

Act IV, Scene v At Gloucester's castle, Oswald reports that Goneril's husband will counter the French invaders. Oswald presents Goneril's letter addressed to Edmund, which inflames Regan's jealousy. She hands Oswald a token to bear to Edmund and instructs her man to kill Gloucester.

Act IV, Scene vi Deceiving his father with a muffled voice, Edgar, in the fields near Dover, tricks him into believing that he fell from the cliffs and miraculously survived. Gloucester decides to live with his blindness. A gentleman takes Lear to Cordelia. When Oswald tries to assassinate Gloucester, Edgar kills the servant. Edgar reads the proposition from Goneril that Edmund kill her husband and marry her.

Act IV, Scene vii At a tent near Dover, Cordelia reunites with Lear and, with the doctor's aid, nurses her father tenderly.

Act V, Scene i At the British camp, near Dover, Regan questions Edmund about Goneril's designs. Edmund determines that they will need Albany in the coming battle, but that Albany is then expendable. Edmund declares that he will show no mercy to Lear and Cordelia.

Act V, Scene ii In a field between the two camps, the sisters' troops defeat Cordelia's men and take Lear and Cordelia prisoner. Gloucester resolves not to flee, then opts to escape with Edgar.

Act V, Scene iii On the way to prison at the British camp, Lear rejoices at reunion with Cordelia. Edmund orders them executed. Albany arrests Edmund and Goneril. Edgar mortally wounds Edmund in a duel; Edmund confesses his order to have Lear and Cordelia killed and sends his sword as a token of his command. Goneril, jealous of Regan's attentions to Edmund, poisons her. When the company realize Goneril's duplicity, she stabs herself.

Edgar reveals his identity to his father. Gloucester dies. Rescuers attempt to save Lear and his daughter. Despite the effort, the captain of the guard hangs Cordelia in her cell.

Albany intends to restore Lear's kingdom to him. Lear, lapsed into madness, falls dead. Albany arranges the funeral and joins Kent and Edgar in restoring order to the realm.

TIME LINE

- 1558 Elizabeth I becomes queen of England.
- 1564 **April 23** Shakespeare is born, the son of John and Mary Shakespeare.
- 1567 Mary, Queen of Scots, is deposed; she flees to England.
- 1570 Shakespeare attends a Latin grammar school.
- 1576 London's first theatre is built.
- 1577 John Shakespeare suffers failing finances. Holinshed's *Chronicles* is published.
- 1577-80 Francis Drake sails around the world.
- 1582 **Nov. 28** Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway of Shroton.
- 1583 **May** Susanna Shakespeare is born.
- 1584 Sir Walter Raleigh claims Virginia for England.
- 1586 **February** The twins, Judith and Hamnet, are born.
- 1587 Shakespeare moves to London.
- Mary, Queen of Scots, is executed.
- 1588 The Spanish Armada is defeated.
- 1592 Shakespeare receives critical acclaim.
- 1596 Hamnet dies.
- 1597 Shakespeare builds New Place, a country estate.
- 1599 The Globe Theatre is built.
- 1600 Population of England and Ireland is estimated at 5.5 million.
- 1603 James VI of Scotland becomes King James I of England.
- 1605 Shakespeare buys real estate.
- 1606 A law forbids foul language on the English stage.
- 1607 Virginia Company founds colony at Jamestown.
- 1608 Shakespeare holds stock in Blackfriars Theatre. Mary Shakespeare dies.
- 1611 Shakespeare retires to Stratford.
- 1612 Shakespeare writes *Henry VIII*, his last play. Virginia colonists begin to raise tobacco.
- 1613 The Globe Theatre burns.
- 1616 **late March** Shakespeare revises his will. **April 23** Shakespeare dies.
- 1623 The First Folio is published.

AUTHOR'S LIFE

William Shakespeare (ca. April 23, 1564-April 23, 1616) attended a Latin grammar school in his hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. At eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway of Shroton, eight years his senior, and fathered a daughter, Susanna, and twins, Judith and Hamnet. He moved to London at the age of 23 or 24, joined the Lord Chamberlain's company, later known as the King's Men, and remained active in theater until 1611. Much about his early adulthood is a mystery, but it is clear that he obtained a thorough knowledge of his chosen field—acting—and was well-known by 1592.

Shakespeare gained the approval of Elizabeth I and her Scottish successor, James I, both regular theater-goers. His success as an actor-playwright enabled him to invest in real estate, to build the popular Globe Theatre, and to purchase a coat of arms for his father, John Shakespeare, a glover and bailiff in Stratford. Having written and produced thirty-seven plays, a sonnet sequence, and two long poems, Shake-

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spere retired to a large house in Stratford. As a country gentleman, he lived out his life in harmony with his family and lies buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church.

CRITIC'S CORNER

King Lear, Shakespeare's most dramatically challenging tragedy, was composed in the winter of 1605-1606. In a proof dating from that time, a reference in Act I, Scene ii, line 112 to eclipses of the sun and moon probably alludes to a pair of eclipses in September and October 1605. The tragedy influenced Edward Sharpham's *The Fleir* (1606), which is memorable only because it establishes the popularity of the tragedy at that date. The play examines the life of nobles in pre-Christian Britain. The theme of the co-existence of both good and evil leaves the reader to muse on Cordelia's innocence and death. The juxtaposition of stormy human affairs and a gale in nature establishes that humankind is both animal and virtuous being.

The sources of the play are numerous. Shakespeare apparently knew of a local example, Sir Brian Annesley, a courtier of Queen Elizabeth I, who disinherited two of his daughters in 1600. Three years later, when the two tried to have him declared incompetent, his third daughter, Cordell, petitioned Robert Cecil, the queen's minister, to intercede. Cordell honored Annesley and his wife with a monument inscribed with a comment about ingratitude.

Literary sources are numerous: Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* [*History of the Kings of England*] (ca. 1140), Gerard Legh's *Accedens of Armory* (1562), Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587), John Higgins's *A Mirror for Magistrates* (1587), Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1589), Sir William Sidney's "The Tale of the Blind King of Paphlagonia" in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1590), William Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), John Florio's translation of Michel de Montaigne's essay "Apology for Raymond Sebonde" (1603), Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* (1605), and William Camden's *Remaines* (1605). Most important is an anonymous work, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and His Three Daughters*, written in 1590 and possibly acted by Shakespeare, which provides a happy ending in which Cordelia survives to see her father restored to his throne. This restoration of order contrasts Shakespeare's grim tragedy. He deliberately robs the play of reclamation by insisting on despair and severe punishment for Lear's egotism and Gloucester's failure to find good in Edgar. By making Cordelia a symbol of Christian virtue and self-sacrifice, the playwright stresses acceptance of earthly disappointment as God's will. An historical interpretation of the story characterizes it as a model of disorder because of a lapse in leadership and because of Lear's failure to pity his poor and homeless subjects.

The play may have debuted at the Globe in 1605. The first recorded staging, starring Richard Burbage, entertained King James I and his court at Whitehall on December 26, 1606. The text entered print in 1608 in the First Quarto as *William Shakespeare: His True Chronicle Historie of the Life and Death of King Lear and His Three Daughters*, but, as suggested by limited comment from the era, appears not to have flourished on the popular stage. A subsequent Candlemas production in 1609 was the work of Sir Richard Cholmeley's company at Gouthwaite Hall in Yorkshire. During the

Restoration, William Davenant restaged *King Lear* in 1660 and 1675; John Downes lists it as a vehicle for the Duke's Company in the 1662-1665 period. Nahum Tate adapted the plot in 1681 at Dorset Garden as *The History of King Lear*, a wildly popular version starring Thomas Betterton and George Colman and concluding with the king's return to the throne. David Garrick revived the original tragedy in 1742 and again in 1756 and 1788 at Drury Lane, but it saw few productions during the Hanoverian era, particularly during the reign of the mentally ill King George III. Subsequent restagings by John Philip Kemble, Edmund Kean, Robert W. Elliston, and William Hazlett preceded the purist staging at Covent Garden by Charles William Macready in 1838 and at Sadler's Wells by Samuel Phelps in 1845. The play was also a vehicle for the talents of Charles Kean, Edwin Forrest, and Edwin Booth, and for Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, who starred in an 1892 production.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the demanding part of Lear has been the choice of the strongest male leads of the era—Robert Bruce Mantell, Anthony Quayle, John Gielgud, Donald Wolfit, and Paul Rogers, followed by Michael Redgrave, Morris Carnovsky, Orson Welles, Charles Laughton, Paul Scofield, Ian Holm, and James Earl Jones. A Japanese adaptation, *Ran* (1985), was the work of director Akira Kurosawa. In addition, the play was the subject of eight films, five television productions, and six operas.

SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

All's Well That Ends Well (ca. 1604)
Antony and Cleopatra (ca. 1605)
As You Like It (ca. 1599)
The Comedy of Errors (ca. 1580s-1594)
Coriolanus (ca. 1605-1609)
Cymbeline (ca. 1608-1610)
Hamlet (ca. 1599-1600)
Henry IV, Part I (ca. 1596)
Henry IV, Part II (ca. 1597-1598)
Henry V (1599)
Henry VI, Part 1 (ca. 1589)
Henry VI, Part 2 (ca. 1590-1591)
Henry VI, Part 3 (ca. 1590-1591)
Henry VIII (ca. 1612-1613)
Julius Caesar (ca. early 1599)
King John (1590)
Love's Labours Lost (ca. 1593-1595)
Macbeth (ca. 1603-1606)
Measure for Measure (1604)
The Merchant of Venice (1596-1598)
Merry Wives of Windsor (ca. 1597)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (ca. 1593-1595)
Much Ado About Nothing (ca. 1598)
Othello (ca. 1603-1604)
Pericles (ca. 1606-1608)
Rape of Lucrece (1594)
Richard II (ca. 1595-1596)
Richard III (ca. 1589)
Romeo and Juliet (ca. 1593-1595)
Sonnets (ca. 1592-1598)
The Taming of the Shrew (ca. 1589)
The Tempest (ca. 1610-1611)
Timon of Athens (ca. 1606-1608)
Titus Andronicus (ca. 1588-1594)

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Troilus and Cressida (ca. 1602)
Twelfth Night (ca. 1599 to 1601)
The Two Gentlemen of Verona (ca. 1613)
The Two Noble Kinsmen (possibly written by Shakespeare and John Fletcher in 1613)
Venus and Adonis (1593)
The Winter's Tale (ca. 1610-1611)

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To experience and read aloud from a Shakespearean tragedy
2. To identify and explain soliloquy and other dramatic conventions
3. To envision the staging of contrasting scenes and moods

4. To evaluate constraints on power
5. To analyze variances in filial devotion
6. To contrast settings that soothe or dismay
7. To note the value of reunion
8. To depict misconceptions, fears, and self-doubts
9. To anticipate the consequences of choices
10. To analyze types of family dysfunction

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To enumerate varied images of kingship and fatherhood
2. To isolate and explain examples of class difference
3. To set the play in its social and geographical context near Dover
4. To comprehend the inheritance of Lear's kingdom as a motivator
5. To discuss the Elizabethan delight in tricks and deception
6. To determine how Lear earns a reputation for rashness
7. To analyze Goneril's plotting and punishment
8. To explain why Gloucester sickens and dies
9. To examine Edmund's motivation and method in tricking his father and brother
10. To discuss the necessity for written communication
11. To chart events that lead to suicidal thoughts
12. To discuss Cordelia's strengths
13. To describe the conflict between England and France
14. To account for Kent's loyalty
15. To discuss the effects of poverty on Lear

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of William Shakespeare's style, present the following terms and applications to the play:

foil a character whose presence in a literary work offsets or enhances the contrasting traits of another character, for example, Cordelia and Goneril. The foil serves as an opposite or as a standard by which another character is measured, a situation found in the reaction of two royal sisters to their father's abdication. Cordelia discloses a gentle, unassuming nature, which offsets the grasping, cruel, and unscrupulous mindset of Goneril. To extend the threat of Goneril's plotting, Shakespeare creates Albany, an honest man who is no match for his wife's guile.

round character a realistic being who possesses a complex or multifaceted array of traits. The description fits Lear, who comes full circle in the course of the tragedy. In Act I, he is presumptuous and egotistical in expecting his daughters to honor an impromptu plan for abdication and the division of inheritance among the royal offspring. When the older daughters join forces and turn against him, he allows anger to overwhelm reason and flees to the heath to rage against the storm. The recognition of suffering and need in his subjects restructures his view of people. Humbled and grateful for a reunion with his beloved Cordelia, he undergoes a change of heart in the falling action and dies a fuller, more compassionate person.

time compression the molding of real or fictional events into a suitable series of actions for a stage play. The complex wanderings, letter exchanges, and combat at Dover appear to happen in rapid order with little separation in time. Shake-

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speare's chronology suits the stage, but deviates from the likely order of events in Lear's day, when constraints of transportation and communication would have required lengthy gaps in the action. Thus, the viewer experiences a rapid decline in Lear's affairs that would have taken months to unfold in real life.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

King Lear is a study in contrasts. The hard decisions concerning how Lear will divide his kingdom and to whom it will pass occur in a castle, a suitably noble setting. Similarly, the Earl of Gloucester's difficulties with his legitimate and bastard sons take place in his castle. When Lear tests his reception at his daughter's home, he finds himself unwelcome at Albany's palace. For the first time, Lear is on the outside looking in. The anguish of his faulty choices forces him outdoors and out of polite society to the heath, a barren, inhospitable stretch of wasteland fit only for animals and recluses.

While wandering the heath, Lear encounters a scene in nature that mirrors the surging emotion within him. As a gale sweeps the heath, he prefers outdoors to Edgar's hovel. Outside the range of his hundred knights and numerous servants, Lear rids himself of poisoned feelings and a fear of abandonment. The Earl of Gloucester's kindness in removing Lear to a farmhouse places the self-deposed king in a safer, warmer, less challenging atmosphere. Gloucester's personal problems then push him to despair after he is blinded and seeks the cliffs of Dover as a suitable dropping-off point to end his misery. Still separated from the trappings of royalty and power, Lear has an opportunity to ponder the lives of his humblest subjects, about whom he had formerly had no concern.

Scenes at Dover continue to stress the theme of disorder as Cordelia and the French troops set up camp on the English shore of the Channel to plot a war against England. Cordelia remains autonomous in this temporary shelter, but proceeds to her doom when she and Lear fall into Goneril and Edmund's hands. The action moves back to English control after the French lose the battle. Lear and Cordelia enter custody at the British camp. Out of sight of the audience, the captain of the guard carries out the cruel execution of Cordelia, whose corpse unhinges Lear and causes his cry of woe at the loss of an innocent, unjustly spurned daughter. Matters are in a state of confusion and regrouping in the final lines as Kent, Albany, and Edgar, still in a military camp, sort out the future of England.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

Novels

Pearl S. Buck, *The Good Earth*
Honore de Balzac, *Pere Goriot*
Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*
Margaret Laurence, *The Stone Angel*
Jane Smiley, *A Thousand Acres*
John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*
Booth Tarkington, *The Magnificent Ambersons*
Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*
Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*

Plays

Maxwell Anderson, *Anne of the Thousand Days*
James Goldman, *The Lion in Winter*
Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

Poetry

Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias"

Nonfiction

Christina Counsell and Kate Thompson, *Life in Tudor Times*
Dana Fradon, *King's Fool: A Book About Medieval and Renaissance Fools*

Chris Husbands, *Changing Britain: Crown, Parliament, and People*

Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema, *Bard of Avon*

Internet

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<mentalhelp.net/psyhelp/chap6/>

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"The Globe Theatre,"

<www.twingroves.district96.k12.il.us/renaissance/Globe/GlobeTheatre.html>

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<www.engl.uvic.ca/Faculty/MBhomepage/ISShakespeare/Resources/WorldView/LearMadness.html>, 1999.

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"King Lear Paintings,"

<www.bbc.co.uk/education/archive/lear/>

"King Lear's Palace," <www.cabrillo-aquarium.org/kl/>

"Shakespeare Web", <www.shakespeare.com>

Videos/DVDs

The Lion in Winter (1968)

King Lear (1997)

The Madness of King George (1994)

Ran (1985)

Shakespeare in Love (1998)

A Thousand Acres (1997)

THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in William Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear* should include these aspects:

Themes

- royalty
- egotism
- competition
- disrespect
- duplicity
- insanity
- conflict
- jealousy
- loss
- disorder

Motifs

- coping with disaster
- experiencing change of heart
- grieving over an undeserved execution
- restructuring a kingdom

MEANING STUDY

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the play. Explain each in context. Act, scene, line, and page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

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1. *Now, our joy,
Although our last and least, to whose young love
[The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interested,] What can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.*
(I, i, 91-95)
(Lear notes that his third and youngest child, Cordelia, is unmarried, but has prospects of a stable and remunerative alliance in France. Her name derives from the Latin for "heart," a suggestion that she is her father's favorite.)
2. *To plainness honor's bound
When majesty falls to folly.* (I, i, 165-166)
(Kent defends Cordelia and casts blame for her failure to flatter on King Lear's foolishness in putting his daughters in a position to fawn on him in exchange for a parcel of his kingdom.)
3. *Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.*
(I, i, 300-301)
(The King of France indicates to the Duke of Burgundy that he has lost all chance of winning Cordelia, who is precious, even though she is unprized by her father. He stresses the paradox of "precious" and "unprized," both derivatives of the Latin word for "price.")
4. *If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were
his; but in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.*
(I, ii, p. 67-68)
(Edmund cleverly pretends to shield his brother Edgar by refusing to identify the handwriting of a note that implicates Edgar in conspiracy. Edmund's duplicity helps to convince Gloucester that the illegitimate son is the better choice of heir for his earldom.)
5. *Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again and must be used
With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abused.*
(I, iii, 19-21)
(Goneril describes her father as though he were in his dotage and incapable of ruling. By sending Oswald as her emissary of ill will, she insults the man who was once reigning king.)
6. *Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell.
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.* (IV, vi, 66-69)
(Edgar pretends that Gloucester fell the distance of over ten masts laid end to end. By declaring it a miracle that Gloucester survived, Edgar implies that there is something supernatural about his survival, as though God ordained that Gloucester should not succeed in suicide.)
7. *O, you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abusèd nature!
Th' untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up,
Of this child-changèd father!* (IV, vii, 16-19)
(Cordelia prays for Lear's sanity to return. As though he were a clock, she asks that he be rewound. She blames his ailment on a state she calls "child-changèd," which could blame his children for unhinging him or could blame a natural dotage, which turns him again into a child.)
8. *(To watch, poor perdu,
With this thin helm?) Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night*

Against my fire. (IV, vii, 41-43)

(Cordelia's concern for her father takes the form of a French term that implies both "lost" and a doomed soldier standing guard duty that endangers his life. She contrasts Lear to the dog of an enemy. Even if the dog had bitten Cordelia, she would have welcomed him to her fireside on so stormy a night.)

9. *So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news, and we'll talk with them too—
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out—
And take upon 's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies.* (V, iii, 12-18)
(Lear, completely humbled by his circumstances, looks forward to a life with Cordelia, the daughter he once spurned. He gives his version of the life of the fallen and intends to enjoy court gossip and a chance to snicker at "gilded butterflies.")
10. *I was contracted to them both. All three
Now marry in an instant.* (V, iii, 270-271)
(Edmund, who is severely wounded, confesses that he conspired with both Goneril and Regan and that the three will marry as corpses.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important. Be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the play.

Plot

1. Explain the purpose of Lear's request that his daughters flatter him.
(Lear, an early king of England, chooses an unusual scenario to accompany his abdication. He forces his three heirs—Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia—into a verbal trial by duel. By forcing them to profess their love for him before the court, he appears to set up a contest. Actually, he flatters himself by demanding public adulation.
The unfairness of the set-up does not escape Kent, who points out the inequities of this method of determining which daughter deserves the best portion of the kingdom. Intervening in Lear's banishment of Cordelia, Kent declares that he must be discourteous to the king "when Lear is mad." Kent accuses the king of being an "old man" and warns him to retrieve his rash words. As the argument rises to fever pitch, Kent declares that the king kills his physician and rewards a "foul disease.")

Character

2. How does Cordelia react to disinheritance?
(With daughterly courtesy, Cordelia approaches the king and confesses that she lacks "that glib and oily art to speak and purpose not." With an honest attempt to smooth over an ugly scene before the court and her two sisters, she declares that he has no reason to disinherit her, for she is guilty of "no vicious blot, murder, or foulness, no unchaste action or dishonored step that hath deprived me of your grace and favor." Upon leaving her father's presence, she looks at Goneril and Regan and declares, "I know you what you are," yet restrains herself from calling them names. As though departing on a long journey, she leaves Lear in the care of the favored sis-

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ters, but worries that he is in danger. His only remark is to cast her out "without our grace, our love, our benison.")

Conflict

3. How do Cordelia's suitors display their character?

(The disinheriting of Cordelia after Lear's foolish contest immediately alters her status from princess at the English court to banished subject. With both the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France in contention for her hand, she can observe the reactions of the two men to an official act that strips her of monetary worth and title. Immediately, Burgundy declares that she has lost both father and would-be husband in one official decree.

In contrast to Burgundy, who seeks a noble, well dowered bride, the King of France finds her richer in poverty and more choice in the king's public forsaking. The despised former princess is the king of France's most loved object of affection. For her virtues, he intends to seize her, spare her neglect, and shower her with love and respect. No longer a "dowerless daughter," ironically, Cordelia, the former spurned princess, is now "queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.")

Action

4. Describe the scene in which numerous characters die.

(In Act V, Scene iii, Shakespeare brings to the stage the principal players. After Edmund imprisons Lear and Cordelia and orders their executions, Albany enables Edgar to face down the wicked Edmund in a manly duel. By revealing Gloucester's death, Edgar can end the downward spiral of plotting and viciousness. The scene shifts to announcements of the deaths of Regan and Goneril, who expire offstage. Regan, poisoned by her sister, leaves Goneril wracked with guilt and eager for death by her own hand with a knife to the heart.

The final deaths overwhelm the tragedy with loss. Seriously wounded, Edmund is able to answer Albany's demands about the fates of the king and Cordelia. Panting from sword wounds, Edmund admits that he has sent a message to the castle ordering the double execution. Albany dispatches a messenger on the run, but the return of Lear to the stage with Cordelia's body in his arms proves that the rescue only half succeeded. With news of Edmund's death, Lear reaches the end. Sorrowing for the "poor fool," he dies consumed with grief for Cordelia.)

Character Development

5. Describe changes in Lear.

(A victim of pride and unbridled anger, Lear, like Oedipus, must pay a grim price for rejecting his beloved youngest daughter. Blinded to the goodness in Cordelia and the deception in his two older daughters, he causes his own public embarrassment by forcing the three girls to fawn over him in public in exchange for parcels of his realm. Lear's egocentrism, arrogance, and vanity forces him into severe mental and emotional distress. As the cause of his own suffering, he, like Oedipus, must bear the torment of self-incrimination.

From wandering in the wild and wrestling with his imperfections, Lear redeems himself somewhat and is able to reconcile with his beloved youngest daughter. In a storm that parallels the uproar in his kingdom, Lear

acknowledges the sufferings of the mentally ill and homeless. He is able to extend sympathy and kindness to the Earl of Gloucester, whose blindness leaves him vulnerable to the elements. Forcing himself to be patient, Lear embraces human infirmities and returns to Cordelia as a humbled and "very foolish fond old man.")

Structure

6. Explain why Shakespeare parallels Edgar's problems with those of King Lear.

(By paralleling the wanderings of the banished Edgar with the exiled king, Shakespeare expresses the extremes of misery that waylay and haunt human life. Both vagabonds witness the dark side of their relatives—the evil nature of Lear's two recently endowed daughters and the cruelty and jealousy of Edmund, the illegitimate son of Gloucester and Edgar's half-brother. At the same time, Edgar's love and loyalty toward his father, whom he saves from suicide, suggests the fact that Lear is still loved by one relative, his spurned daughter Cordelia. Redeemed by his good qualities, Edgar becomes a guide and protector for Lear at his lowest point. The two demonstrate the torments of family dysfunction and characterize a spark of goodness toward people outside the family circle.)

Motivation

7. Account for Gloucester's suffering.

(The towering figure in the family of Edgar and Edmund, the Earl of Gloucester is unaware how easily he falls for deception by believing lies about Edgar. Handed over to Albany, Gloucester, also like Oedipus, loses his eyes because he has not used them properly to "see" Edgar's good qualities and Edmund's trickery. Gloucester's frailties deprive him of the will to live and to atone for the hardships he has conferred on his deserving son. Even though Edgar rescues his father and makes him believe that he has survived a terrible fall from the cliffs of Dover, Gloucester is unable to survive and face the wrong he has perpetrated on his heir. Shakespeare describes him as laden with a "flaw'd heart," the inner anguish that kills him.)

Interpretation

8. Explain why Shakespeare heaps such heavy sorrows on Lear.

(Shakespeare's tragedy lies beyond Christian philosophy in a period of kingship preceding England's move from paganism to faith. The naked passions that spread anguish and pain among the characters represent a period of pre-civilization when evil was its own reason for existence. Edmund eagerly lures Edgar into self-incrimination, thus ending his warm relationship with their father. Lear, also tinged with raw malice, allows vanity to entice him into a public display of filial love.

In Shakespeare's view, malicious people spread ill will and suffering to the innocent. The two, Edmund and Lear, upset the natural loving relationship that should exist in families, setting in motion concentric waves of evil that Edmund is unable to stop. Before his death, he attempts to call back his order to execute Lear and Cordelia, but succeeds in saving only Lear. Himself caught in the web of human willfulness, Lear expires over the inert form of Cordelia, the repository of true love

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and fealty, whose life knows no reward for goodness.)

Philosophy

9. Summarize Edmund's diseased outlook.

(The perennial malcontent, Edmund, like Don John in Much Ado About Nothing, stewes in the outskirts of family happiness because he perceives himself as the maligned party. The faulty self-image that Edmund perpetuates is the root of his villainy, which bubbles up with wicked vengeance that causes multiple anguish. The stereotypical plotter of mayhem, he sets in motion a plot based on lies and deception that successfully lures Gloucester away from his true son. Lacking the character and scruples of the gentlemanly Edgar, Edmund moves beyond decency and filial devotion to a pagan internal realm governed solely by self-interest. Shakespeare hints that Gloucester deserves ruin for siring a child out of wedlock, but the evil that Edmund creates spreads far beyond home to upset the tenuous reunion between Cordelia and Lear.)

Comparative Literature

10. How does Lear parallel the willfulness of Oedipus?

(The consummate tragic hero of classic drama, Oedipus Rex searches for an unidentified moral wrong in his kingdom that gives rise to an epidemic. When he learns that his own arrogance toward a traveler brought about the death of Laius, Oedipus is engulfed in wave upon wave of comeuppance. Not only does he realize that he has killed his father and married his mother, he recognizes that he has robbed his homeland of its rightful king. Ironically self-tormented by ripping his eyes with the brooch of his mother/wife, Oedipus in exile can see his fitful way only through the guidance of his daughters/sisters.

Similarly, Lear must find love and acceptance through outcasts. Tended by Mad Tom O'Bedlam, Edgar's assumed identity, as he wanders the wastelands near Dover, Lear makes his way back to Cordelia, the child he falsely accused of disloyalty. Made sightless by a period of madness, Lear returns to sanity too late to restore order in his kingdom. Like Oedipus, Lear must accept what remains of his dignity and enter prison with hopes of reacquainting himself with Cordelia. In atonement, however, Lear suffers more misery than he can survive. Deprived of Cordelia, who dies before the villain's order can be countermanded, Lear sinks into despondency and death.)

HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

One of the dramatic triumphs of the Elizabethan era, Shakespeare's tragedy contains a full range of rhetorical devices:

1. **repetition**—Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow!
2. **metaphor**—Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks.
3. **simile**—How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child.
4. **apostrophe**—Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend.
5. **alliteration**—I am a man more sinned against than sinning.
6. **hyperbole**—'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind.
7. **parallel construction**—I know when one is dead and

when one lives.

8. **prose**—I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways not as it hath power but as it is suffered.
9. **caesura**—And worse I may be yet. The worst is not So long as we can say "This is the worst."
10. **rhymed couplet**—And thou shalt have more than two tens to a score.
11. **epithet**—Nuncle Lear, Nuncle Lear, tarry.
12. **sibilance**—As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods; They kill us for their sport.
13. **paradox**—this unprized precious maid
14. **allusion**—I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.
15. **cacophony**—An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star!
16. **quatrain**—
Sleepest or wakest, thou jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn.
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,
Thy sheep shall take no harm.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art and Costume Design

1. Create a handbill that will catch the eye of prospective audiences. Choose an illustration that intrigues the illiterate reader to see the play and learn how it ends, such as the approach of the French fleet to England or attempts to revive Cordelia. Emphasize action and contrast in your drawing, for example by depicting Lear mourning Cordelia, the defeat of the French at Dover, Regan killing a servant with a sword, a poisoned princess, or Goneril and Regan adding Edmund to their conspiracy.
2. Create posters illustrating Shakespeare's skill at detail, e. g., Edgar in disguise, Cordelia nursing her father during his madness, the Duke of Burgundy's spurning of Cordelia, Goneril's jealousy, the bloody knife, and Lear holding a feather to Cordelia's face.

Cinema

1. Describe movie and television versions of Shakespeare's plays that capture the sense of time, place, fashion, and historical events along with Elizabethan poetry and character studies. What does each movie say about the pleasure, moral instruction, and education the playwright provided audiences?
2. Discuss films that glimpse the compromise or fall of a great monarch, for example *The Lion in Winter*. List human qualities that keep each monarch from becoming godlike or all-powerful.

Drama and Speech

1. Explain to a small group the nature of dramatic scenes from the play that would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and stunts.
2. Compose an extended definition of drama in which you explain the following aspects: character, setting, plot, theme, tone, mood, aside, induction, epilogue, soliloquy, monologue, climax, chorus or prologue, dilemma, conflict, literary foils, motivation, tragedy, rising action, and denouement.

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Education

Compose a lesson on English oratory based on important soliloquys in the play. Choose a speech that brings out human qualities in the character, such as Edgar's intent to "Lurk, lurk."

History and Social Studies

1. State changes to the English monarchy after James VI of Scotland succeeded Elizabeth I of England. Comment on the popularity of stage drama in both their reigns. Which plays did Shakespeare direct at royalty?
2. In a brief speech, justify Lear's abdication in favor of his daughters. State precedents in other royal successions, particularly that of Edward VIII. How did monarchs use a shared throne or abdication as a means of preparing their offspring for rule?
3. View murals, portraits, tapestry, illuminations, bas reliefs, coins, and other art forms typifying the lives of early English monarchs. Comment on the interplay of people of different social, educational, and professional backgrounds.
4. Explain class differences between the aristocracy, monarchy, knight, tenant, and servant classes as well as wanderers, warriors, a doctor, and madmen. With which groups does Lear identify? Why does the fool chastise Lear for his wrong-headedness?
5. Summarize scenes that describe humble life. Focus on Lear's retirement to the hovel and the move to the farmhouse. Explain why these brief sojourns on the heath cause him to pity the underclass.
6. Create a web site contrasting settings described or mentioned in the text. Include England, the cliffs of Dover, Bedlam, Camelot, Sarum Plain, France, and Albion. Propose a shape and style for Gloucester's castle, Albany's palace, or Cordelia's tent.
7. With a group, design a brochure, web site, frieze, or poster series detailing the route from France across the English Channel to Dover. Estimate the time required to sail the distance. Suggest a likely location to set up tents and prepare for battle.
8. Create a map of Shakespeare's plays and long poems and their settings. Note whether the places in *King Lear* are real or imaginary, for example, the castle of Gloucester and the palace of Albany. Locate real settings on a map along with the names of the plays. Place a star on Shakespeare's birthplace.
9. Explain in a theme a genealogy of the interrelated families. Include Lear, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, the King of France, the Duke of Cornwall, and the Duke of Albany. Make a parallel family tree for the Earl of Gloucester.
10. Make an oral report on the various crimes committed in the play. Suggest appropriate punishments for each in Lear's time, in Elizabethan England, and currently.

Language Arts

1. With a group, list and explain important words and phrases from the books such as halter, parricide, ignobly, Ursa Major, fathom, and superflux. List items alphabetically under such headings as insults, literary terms, historical figures, descriptives, and objects.
2. List forceful, managerial qualities in *King Lear*, particular-

ly his willingness to make binding decisions. Define kingship as it applies to him and his successors. Why would Goneril and Regan have made poor replacements for their father?

3. Choose a series of lines from the play to illustrate the playwright's skill with poetry and aphorism as with "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods./They kill us for their sport." Post the phrases on the bulletin board and lead a discussion of their significance. If you have questions about such Elizabethan words as priethee, avaunt, cozened, fain, alack, fat, and sith, which have changed or fallen out of common use since the English Renaissance, refer to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.
4. List and explain mythological, literary, astronomical, and historical allusions in the play. Refer to comments about Phoebus, Hoppedance, the Thunder-bearer, Hecate, Ursa Major, Dragon's Tail, Ajax, Jupiter, and Nero.
5. Post a website listing dialect from the play and its pronunciations. Include Edgar's statement, "Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk pass. An chud ha' bin zwagger'd out of my life, 'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight."
6. Differentiate between comedy and comic relief. Explain other elements of stage humor, e. g. low comedy, black comedy, high comedy, pun, burlesque, wit, parody, invective, caricature, satire, black-out, mock epic, repartee, farce, and pantomime. Include a brief explanation of the function of puns, jingles, wit, and satire in a serious stage tragedy like *King Lear*.
7. Debate who offers the more substantial basis on which to build a lasting dynasty. What qualities do Goneril, Regan, Edgar, Kent, and Albany offer England? Explain what qualities Cordelia and the King of France have to uplift the French monarchy.
8. Read aloud passages that capture a single feeling, especially fatherly love, delight, pleasure, jealousy, regret, or despair. Add details that explain how these incidents influence the action, for example, Lear's shame, Goneril's jealousy, Cordelia's commitment to the French army, Regan's passion, the fool's disapproval, Burgundy's greed, Lear's regret, and Kent's friendship.
9. Choose actors to play the parts in a reading of "The Smallpox Hut," Chapter 29 of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Emphasize the lesson the king learns when he enters a commoner's hovel and visits dying subjects.
10. Read James Goldman's *The Lion in Winter*. Outline a short speech comparing Henry II to Lear. How do these two kings demonstrate the patriarchal control of women and the errors women make when they break out of control to think and decide for themselves?
11. Write a report on Shakespeare's method of enhancing drama. Include the use of different stage levels and trapdoors, dancers, disguises, musical instruments, and special effects, such as cannon fire, ghostly apparitions, and thunder. Comment on his casting of young men to play the roles of such female characters as Cordelia, Regan, and Goneril. Explain the purpose of the flag on top of the theater. Discuss how the producer would compensate

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- for lack of curtains, sound systems, printed programs, and sophisticated lighting devices.
12. Write a diary entry describing a presentation of *King Lear* as seen from the point of view of an orange-seller, groundling, actor, rival playwright, courtier, monarch, or visitor from France. Stress the parts of the play that would impress a poorly educated but thoroughly experienced playgoer, especially arguments, disguises, deceit, arrests, a royal procession, preparations for war, blinding, prisoners in stocks, forgery, invasion, and plotting.
 13. Write an updated epilogue to the play. Choose an identifiable character such as Kent, Albany, Edgar, or Shakespeare himself to express the future of England after the violent demise of King Lear and his three daughters.
 14. Compose a short congratulatory telegram to Shakespeare from Ben Jonson, Anne Hathaway, John Fletcher, James I, Richard Burbage, Thomas Middleton, Queen Elizabeth I, or a rival company upon the success of this play.
 15. Write a note to King James I in which you invite him and his courtiers to the opening night of *King Lear* at Whitehall. Narrate the highlights of the plot. Emphasize the grandeur of the language and seriousness of the themes. Why would he enjoy seeing a grim theatrical study of a fallen English king?

Math

Use historical data to determine the height, width, and depth of the Globe Theater. Include figures on how many people could stand or sit to view a play. Contrast these figures to copies of the Globe, particularly the Elizabethan stage in the Folger Library, Washington, D. C.

Music

Compose posters illustrating the shape and sound of Elizabethan musical instruments, including the hautboy, lute, rebeck, flute, recorder, and tabor. How could Shakespeare incorporate them in a production of *King Lear*?

Psychology

1. Characterize in a theme signs of tension, depression, despair, and confusion in Lear and Gloucester. Suggest why numerous disloyalties, shifts of power, and hard decisions threaten the stability of their families and all of England.
2. Read aloud from other conflicts in Shakespeare's plays, especially his most famous tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Account for his placement of characters in predicaments where there appears to be no way out of disaster.
3. Organize a discussion of insanity. Answer these basic questions: What makes people belittle the mentally ill? How do editorials, speeches, books, plays, monuments, music, murals, and other forms of creativity help quell prejudice against mental illness?
4. Compose a lecture on emotional maladjustment. List home diagnosis, complications, and treatment for severe personality disorders. Account for the importance to the story of Lear's arrogance and madness, Edgar's pose as a wandering beggar, and Gloucester's intent to leap from the cliffs of Dover to his death.

Religion

Write a theme explaining the significance of Lear's famous cry, "Never, never, never, never, never." Contrast this negative utterance with the beliefs of the Catholic church concerning salvation and an afterlife.

Science and Health

List, define, and illustrate with flash cards references to nature. Explain why home cures were called "simples."

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List and account for moments in Lear's life when he suffers.
2. Make a list of scenes that stress guilt and vengeance.
3. Compose advertisements for the play to appear in newspapers, on radio and television, via web sites, and on posters and handbills. Emphasize treachery, plotting, rage, torture, vengeance, a duel, and international combat.
4. Explain how these events illuminate the plot: Oswald's mission with a letter from Goneril, the landing at Dover, Regan's widowhood, Gloucester's gullibility, Albany's patriotism to the English, dispatch of a message and token, Burgundy's hasty departure, Edmund's scheming, Lear's intent to give up responsibility, a forged letter, and restoration of order by Kent, Albany, and Edgar.

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VOCABULARY TEST

Match the underlined word in each phrase at left with the original term from the list at right. Place the letter of your response in the blank.

- ___ 1. cowardly man, that bear'st a cheek for blows
- ___ 2. they chanced to neglect you
- ___ 3. your needful advice
- ___ 4. by chance, when I shall wed
- ___ 5. embossèd carbuncle
- ___ 6. bestow you with a friend
- ___ 7. forever goodnight
- ___ 8. thy broken nerves
- ___ 9. child of malice
- ___ 10. hear from you soon
- ___ 11. menaces and curses
- ___ 12. execution of this dread exploit
- ___ 13. a gentleman of nobility
- ___ 14. will you offer less
- ___ 15. in anger parted
- ___ 16. according to my obligation
- ___ 17. drowned the weathervanes
- ___ 18. prevent your liking
- ___ 19. as senility gives it
- ___ 20. being his servant

- A. aye
- B. slack
- C. cholera
- D. maledictions
- E. avert
- F. counsel
- G. sinews
- H. fleshment
- I. bond
- J. tumor
- K. tender
- L. spleen
- M. haply
- N. cocks
- O. dotage
- P. villain
- Q. blood
- R. lodge
- S. anon
- T. milk-livered

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Complete each of the following lines with a correct answer. Write the letter of your response in the blank.

- _____ 1. Oswald carries
 - a. a warning to Regan.
 - b. a token to Edgar.
 - c. a report that the English have defeated the French.
 - d. orders from La Far.

- _____ 2. Lear wanders the heath with
 - a. Kent and the fool.
 - b. Kent, the fool, and Gloucester.
 - c. Tom, the fool, and Kent.
 - d. Tom, Gloucester, and Kent.

- _____ 3. The doctor recommends that Lear be dosed with
 - a. simples.
 - b. rest alone.
 - c. ratsbane.
 - d. carbuncle.

- _____ 4. Because he is a loyal Briton,
 - a. Edgar recognizes the King of France as a worthy suitor.
 - b. Cornwall orders the captain of the guard to free Cordelia.
 - c. Albany fights the French.
 - d. Kent hurries to Dover to warn Cordelia and La Far.

- _____ 5. To judge the mock trial, Lear, at the peak of madness, appoints
 - a. Tom and the fool.
 - b. the fool.
 - c. Kent and the fool.
 - d. Gloucester and Kent.

- _____ 6. After the division of property and banishment, disguise is the only hope for
 - a. the fool and Gloucester.
 - b. Edgar, the fool, and Kent.
 - c. Kent and Gloucester.
 - d. Edgar and Kent.

- _____ 7. Goneril mocks her husband because
 - a. she has no dowry.
 - b. she prefers Edmund.
 - c. he sides with Lear.
 - d. the English lose at Dover.

- _____ 8. Edmund dies after
 - a. accepting Edgar's apology.
 - b. confessing that he executed Cordelia.
 - c. admitting that he forged a letter to Lear.
 - d. sending his sword as a token of command.

- _____ 9. Goneril dies after
 - a. drinking poison intended for Regan.
 - b. stabbing herself with a knife.
 - c. rejecting her father one last time.
 - d. repudiating Albany.

- _____ 10. In flight from the farmhouse,
 - a. Gloucester follows Tom to the cliffs.
 - b. Lear hurries to save Cordelia from execution.
 - c. Lear, Kent, the fool, and Tom encounter Gloucester, who needs a guide.
 - d. Kent and the fool carry Lear.

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Part II: Character Identification (20 points)

Name the characters described below.

- _____ 1. disinherits a deserving child
- _____ 2. becomes Mad Tom
- _____ 3. sends a messenger to save Cordelia and Lear
- _____ 4. sits in stocks
- _____ 5. is Lear's voice of sanity
- _____ 6. blinds a traitor
- _____ 7. suggests plucking out eyes
- _____ 8. is illegitimate
- _____ 9. is a widow in pursuit of a mate
- _____ 10. rejects a dowerless bride

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Gloucester tells Kent that he loves his sons equally.
- _____ 2. After dividing his kingdom, Lear plans to spend a month at Cornwall's castle.
- _____ 3. While attempting to execute Gloucester, Oswald dies at the hands of Edgar.
- _____ 4. Despite Goneril's contradiction, Albany shelters Lear at a farmhouse.
- _____ 5. Kent urges Lear to flee combat at Dover.
- _____ 6. Regan stabs the servant who tries to attack Cornwall.
- _____ 7. Both Goneril and Regan intend to pursue Edmund as future mate.
- _____ 8. Lear takes no interest in Gloucester or his anguish.
- _____ 9. Gloucester miraculously survives a plunge from the cliffs of Dover.
- _____ 10. Before his death, Lear recovers from madness.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two of the following quotations and explain their significance.

- 1. Only she comes too short, that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys
Which the most precious square of sense (possesses),
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear Highness' love.
- 2. The revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father are not fit for your beholding.
- 3. Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity, and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this forever.
- 4. I am rough and lecherous. (Fut) I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Identifying Places (20 points)

Provide terms to fit each description that follows.

- _____ 1. shelter where Gloucester takes Lear
- _____ 2. place to which Cordelia's husband departs in haste
- _____ 3. place where Oswald insults his mistress's father
- _____ 4. building inhabited by Poor Tom
- _____ 5. place where La Far takes charge
- _____ 6. place where sisters vie for the largest part of an inheritance
- _____ 7. site of the duel
- _____ 8. place where Cornwall orders Gloucester's arrest
- _____ 9. setting of Lear's rage in the storm
- _____ 10. room where Cordelia is hanged

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to each of the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. What is the action against Cordelia for failing to speak words of love?
- _____ 2. What remuneration does Burgundy expect from Lear?
- _____ 3. What is Kent's punishment for enraging the king?
- _____ 4. Who kills a servant who assails Cornwall?
- _____ 5. What friend wants Lear to die and suffer no more?
- _____ 6. Who wants to kill Edgar for conspiracy?
- _____ 7. What is Edgar's name on the heath?
- _____ 8. Who tells the king the truth and scolds him for foolishness?
- _____ 9. What pretense does Lear initiate at the farmhouse?
- _____ 10. Who kills the wife of the King of France?

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Part III: Selecting Details (20 points)

Place an X beside any statement that is true of Cordelia:

- 1. stabs a servant who attacks with a sword
- 2. loses her dowry
- 3. refuses to flatter her father
- 4. escapes poisoning
- 5. dies before she can be rescued
- 6. reunites with her father
- 7. takes pity on Gloucester
- 8. knows that she was born a bastard
- 9. marries the better of two suitors
- 10. must live with her sisters after she is disowned

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Account for Lear's longing to end his rule.
2. Discuss where and how Lear expresses his anguish.
3. Describe the cause of combat between France and England.
4. Justify the duel.
5. Contrast Lear's affections in the first and last acts.

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ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. R | 11. D | 16. I |
| 2. B | 7. A | 12. H | 17. N |
| 3. F | 8. G | 13. Q | 18. E |
| 4. M | 9. L | 14. K | 19. O |
| 5. J | 10. S | 15. C | 20. P |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. d |
| 2. b | 7. c |
| 3. a | 8. d |
| 4. c | 9. b |
| 5. a | 10. d |

Part II: Character Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Gloucester | 6. Cornwall |
| 2. Edgar | 7. Goneril |
| 3. Albany | 8. Edmund |
| 4. Kent | 9. Regan |
| 5. fool | 10. Burgundy |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. T | 6. T |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. F |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Identifying Places (20 points)

1. farmhouse
2. France
3. Albany's palace
4. hovel
5. French camp
6. Lear's castle
7. British camp
8. Gloucester's castle
9. heath
10. her cell at the British camp

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. disinheritance | 6. Gloucester |
| 2. dowry | 7. Tom o'Bedlam |
| 3. banishment | 8. fool |
| 4. Regan | 9. mock trial |
| 5. Kent | 10. captain of the guard |

Part III: Selecting Details (20 points)

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. | 6. X |
| 2. X | 7. |
| 3. X | 8. |
| 4. | 9. X |
| 5. X | 10. |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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