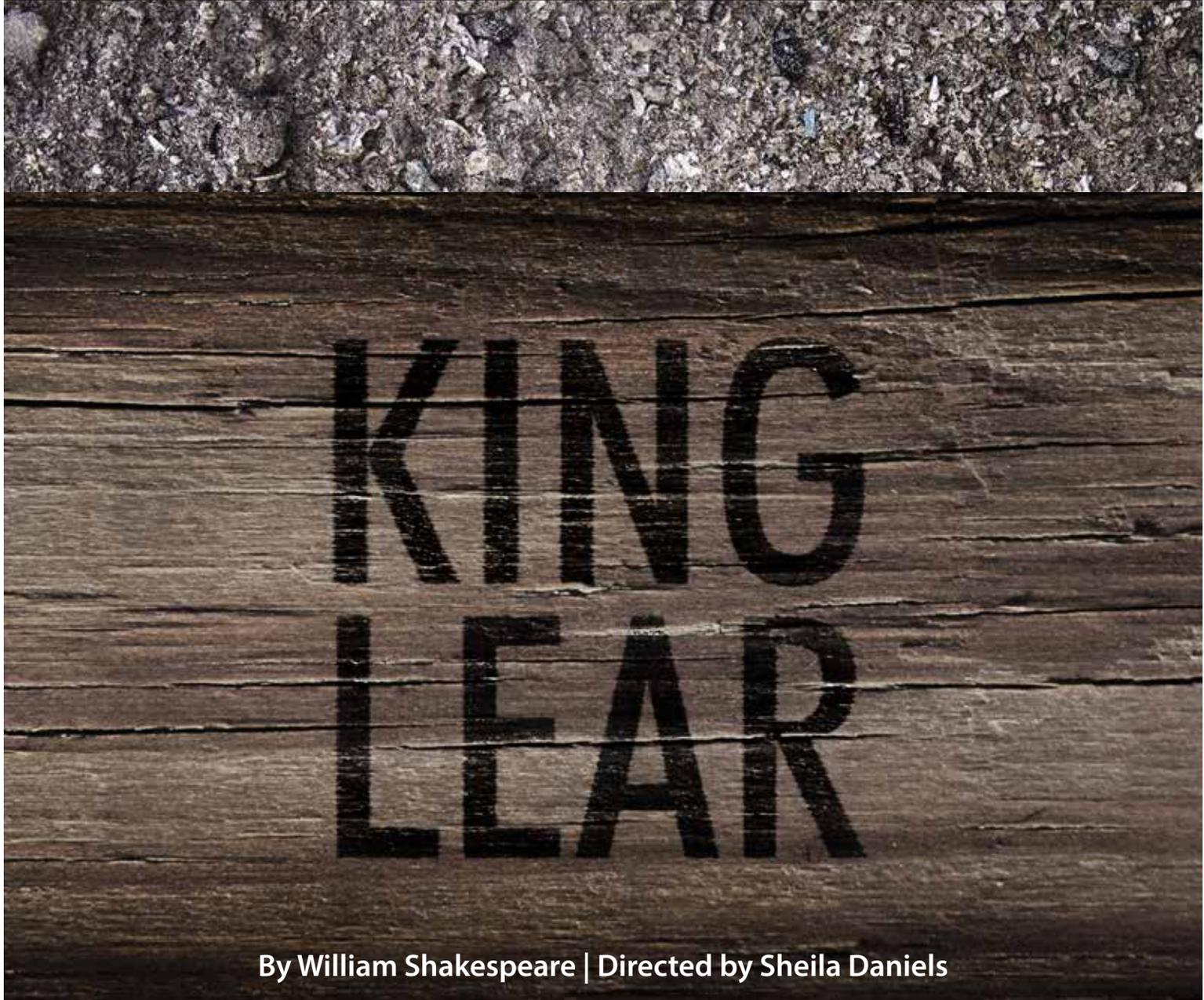


# EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE



**KING  
LEAR**

By William Shakespeare | Directed by Sheila Daniels

## SEATTLE SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

Dear Educators,

Welcome to the final show in our 2013–2014 indoor season, *King Lear*. This production could not be more different than our last show, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. They each address this season's theme, "Know Thyself," in two very different ways. Ernest Worthing discovers through the course of the play that his fiction of himself is in fact true, whereas King Lear discovers through the course of the play that what he thought was his reality is in fact a fiction of power and love from his daughters. Though both title characters find they were wrong about themselves all along, Lear's discovery has tragic and terrible consequences.

We have announced our season for next year, and hope you will bring your students to join us again. We will be kicking off our season in September with a special presentation of *Waiting for Godot*. Then we will be diving into our 2014–2015 mainstage season, with the theme of "Lead us into Temptation." Our first show will be *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare's classic story about falling in love with all the wrong people. Then we will produce *Measure for Measure*, a problem play that brings up questions of morality and lust — and is recommended only for mature high school audiences and up. In the spring we will produce Moliere's *Tartuffe*, a tale of false morality. We will finish the season with *Othello*, directed by John Langs.

We hope you and your students are touched by this tragic story of *King Lear*, and we hope to see you again next year.

Best,  
Michelle Burce  
*Education Director*

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**the Stranger**



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## SYNOPSIS



*Cordelia in the Court of King Lear* by Sir John Gilbert (1873)

In ancient Britain, King Lear has decided to retire the throne and split his kingdom between his three daughters, Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. As he divides his kingdom, he asks each daughter which of them loves him best, indicating he will award them accordingly. Goneril and Regan flatter him and he responds by giving them each an equal portion of his kingdom. Cordelia, the youngest and Lear's favorite, bluntly says she loves him out of the duty expected of a daughter, no more and no less. Lear, incensed, disowns Cordelia before the court and her suitors, the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy. The Duke of Kent defends Cordelia and argues with the king. He is exiled. Cordelia leaves the court with the King of France, who marries her anyway, regardless of her disinheritance.

Since he has given away his kingdom and all of his lands, Lear decides to spend time alternately living with Goneril and her husband, the Duke Albany, and Regan and her husband, the Duke of Cornwall. He also retains a train of a hundred knights as well as his fool to accompany him. The exiled Kent, disguised as a commoner called Caius, follows Lear and becomes part of his train. Goneril and Regan privately reveal their declarations of love for Lear to be false, and they begin to plot against their father.

Edmund, the bastard son of the Duke of Gloucester, begins his own plots against his father and his brother, Edgar. Using the escalating tensions between Albany and Cornwall, he lies to his father saying that Edgar plots to murder him. Edmund also lies to his brother, telling him that his father wishes him dead. Edgar disguises himself as a beggar named Poor Tom and flees. Edmund becomes his father's heir.

Lear travels to Albany and Goneril's castle. Goneril says her father may stay with her, but without his knights; he, after all, is no longer king. Lear is furious with his daughter's lack of respect and travels to Regan's castle, where he is met with similar treatment. Shocked by his daughter's betrayal, Lear runs out into an approaching storm, accompanied only by his fool and the disguised Kent. They meet Edgar, still in his Poor Tom disguise, and Lear, nearing his breaking point, denounces his daughters and seems to go mad. Kent leads them to a cave and they leave Edgar.

Gloucester attempts to help Lear by contacting Cordelia, who raises an army in France to help her father. But Gloucester is betrayed by Edmund to Cornwall and Regan, and they seize the Duke and gouge out his eyes, in a struggle which eventually kills Cornwall. Regan reveals Edmund's falsehood and turns Gloucester out of her castle. The blind Duke eventually meets Edgar. Edgar does not reveal to his father who he is, and agrees to lead Gloucester to the cliffs of Dover where the Duke may jump to his death.

They meet a mad Lear, who is taken by French soldiers sent by Cordelia. Lear is cared for and reconciles with his daughter, who leads the fight to defeat her sisters. Edgar then tricks Gloucester into believing that he has jumped off a cliff and has survived the fall. Gloucester and Edgar are met by Oswald, who tries to kill Gloucester but is killed by Edgar. On the body, Edgar discovers a letter by Goneril to Edmund, indicating a plot to kill Albany.



*King Lear and the Fool in the Storm* by William Dyce (1806-864)

In the meantime, Edmund has indeed begun affairs with both Goneril and Regan. Albany is disgusted with his wife, but still resolves to join the fight against France. In this, he tries to protect both Lear and Cordelia. The battle continues and the Britons are victorious against France, and both Cordelia and Lear are captured.

Regan and Goneril begin quarreling as to who should marry Edmund. Regan is suddenly taken ill and dies, poisoned by her sister. Albany accuses Edmund of treason and a disguised Edgar challenges his brother to a duel. Edmund is mortally wounded and Goneril, in despair, commits suicide. Edgar reveals his true identity and reveals that Gloucester has died. A dying Edmund confesses that he had already sentenced Lear and Cordelia to death. Urgent messages are sent to overturn the order, but they are too late. Lear enters with Cordelia's body in his arms, and he dies of grief. Kent declares that he will follow Lear into the afterlife. Edgar, aided by Albany, is left to rule the country.

## CHARACTERS

### Lear

King of Britain

### Goneril

Elders daughter of Lear

### Regan

Second daughter of Lear

### Cordelia

Youngest daughter of Lear

### Duke of Albany

Husband of Goneril

### Duke of Cornwall

Husband of Regan

### Duke of Gloucester

### Duchess of Kent

### Edgar

Son of Gloucester

### Edmund

Younger bastard son of Gloucester

### Oswald

Steward to Goneril

### Fool

Lear's fool

### King of France

Suitor and later husband to Cordelia

### Duke of Burgundy

Suitor to Cordelia

### Curan

A courtier

### Old man

Tenant of Gloucester

A Doctor, Courtiers, Servants, Knights, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants

## SOURCES

*King Lear* is unique among Shakespeare's tragedies due to the combination of stories and elements from various sources and theatrical genres. In many ways, Shakespeare was continuing the trend he had done previously with such plays as *Hamlet* and *Othello*, in which he focused on the physical and emotional journey of a primary character. The multiple storylines Shakespeare employs further enrich the play making *King Lear* an incredibly rich and epic piece.

The story of Lear and his three daughters was taken from the legend of King Leir, whose authorship was unknown. It is speculated that Shakespeare also drew from Holinshed and various other historical texts. The chief difference between the stories of *Leir* and Shakespeare's play is the ending. Leir and Cordelia both live in the original story, and the ending is much less bleak than the one that Shakespeare wrote. The Gloucester story-line is taken from *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* by Phillip Sidney, which deals with a blind king and his two sons.

In the Gloucester subplot, it appears that Shakespeare was revisiting some themes from his earlier plays. Gloucester's on-stage blinding recalls the horrific violence of *Titus Andronicus*. The character of Edmund recalls such previous creations as Aaron, Richard III, and Iago, who are all evil with little discernible motive.

There is also the role of the Fool. Shakespeare took a stock character that was familiar in his comedies, and put him in a tragedy. The character of the Fool was often present for comic relief, but in this play Lear's fool also provides a commoner's view of the events of the play, and serves as a voice of wisdom in the madness of the play. His sudden absence midway through the play is a sort of harbinger that things will not end well for these characters.

The question remains as to why Shakespeare transformed the story of *King Leir* into the tragedy of *King Lear*. Because his take on the story explores familial connections between fathers and sons, and between fathers and daughters, some critics speculate that it was a strained home life that inspired Shakespeare to write this play and its weighty ending. The grief and loss of Gloucester and Lear could mirror grief and loss in Shakespeare's own life — potentially caused by the loss of his son, Hamnet, at an early age. However, given how little we know about Shakespeare's home life, all anyone can do is speculate. We still have the great and tragic story of *King Lear*, however we may have gotten it.

## INTO THE WILD

Humans live in our own sphere of civilization and culture, distinct from the larger network of the natural world. Even most of the world's origin myths do not imagine a beginning at which humans and nature were not separate — and the wilderness has fascinated us ever since.

Prophets and mystics from cultures around the world venture into the wilderness in search of transformative experience. This practice is seen in religious leaders, like Buddha and Muhammad, or traditional rites of passage, like those of the Lakota of North America.

Shakespeare keenly understood the universal human instinct to seek wonder in the wilderness. He casts characters into the forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* in order for them to experience transformation. In *Cymbeline* and *Timon of Athens*, characters flee into the woods when all seems lost only to chance upon allies or assets.

Lear not only immerses himself in the wild but, slipping into apparent madness, speaks to the storm that rages outside the castle. "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow!" Beyond simply removing himself into the setting of nature, Lear directly engages with nature.

Here, as in Shakespeare's other wild settings, transformation is able to begin. Lear has been separated from those who have been false to him and is gradually reunited with his true allies.

**Dancing at the Storm** Chimpanzees, both in the wild and captivity, react distinctly to thunderstorms. The group's alpha male, a king of his own band, stands and confronts the natural phenomena. Swaying in a dance-like motion and making dominance displays —the alpha male addresses the storm as if it were another sentient animal. These "rain dances," as primatologists call them, are observed in our species's two closest relatives, chimpanzees and bonobos.



From upper left: Nature scenes from *As You Like It*, *King Lear*, *Cymbeline*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



## HUMAN NATURE

Nature and naturalness are recurring themes in *King Lear* and were part of a larger academic dialogue during Shakespeare's lifetime.

Shakespeare lived during the Renaissance — a radically transformative period of European history during which the understanding of human nature and the natural world were reexamined. After centuries of relying on the Catholic dogma to explain reality, scholars turned from the mystical to the physical world in order to seek answers about our species's innate character. By setting *King Lear* in a pre-Christian Britain, Shakespeare was able to explore ideas about human nature without reference to biblical morals as medieval literature had been constrained by.

The popularity of newly discovered Roman texts strongly influenced the direction of philosophic thought during the

Renaissance. The ancient Greeks and Romans had looked to systems of nature to justify human society and their ideas were echoed in the works of Renaissance philosophers. The companion theme to nature in *King Lear*, "reason," indicates that William Shakespeare was not unfamiliar with these new philosophies. The character of Edmund embodies many of the characteristics outlined in Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*, considered the earliest work of modern philosophy and published 70 years before *King Lear* was written.

In fact, *King Lear* preceded ideas about human nature which would be explored in the following years by famous philosophers like Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes. In 1845, a theory even emerged proposing that Francis Bacon was responsible for writing a portion of Shakespeare's plays — one of many history figures suggested in various conspiracies.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Before watching the show, have students reflect on the following questions, either in a large group, small group, or individually in a journal.

**In *King Lear*, Lear goes through a large amount of suffering that changes his character. In what ways can suffering change a person?**

***King Lear* is considered a tragedy. What makes a story tragic? What makes a character a tragic hero?**

***King Lear* has a big focus on family issues and family dynamics. It features father-daughter, father-son, sister, and brother relationships. Reflect on your own family relationships — both when they are positive, and when you face challenges and conflicts.**

**What does it mean for something to be “natural” or “unnatural”? Can objects, relationships, or people be natural / unnatural? Is it better to be considered natural? Why or why not?**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are some discussion questions to answer as a group after seeing the production. Some possible answers are included, but students may come up with more based on their interpretation of the play.

**Several characters in the play either pretend to be mad, actually go mad, or are considered fools. What role does madness play in *King Lear*? What is the relationship between madness and wisdom?**

- Madness in this play is associated both with disorder and with hidden wisdom.
- King Lear’s madness mirrors the disorder in his kingdom, but also reveals his sight.
- The Fool’s madness is used to tell Lear the truth.
- Edgar pretends to be mad so that he is not recognized, and can take care of his father.

**Throughout history, some producers have changed the ending to *King Lear*. They felt that the ending is too dark, so they changed it to be a happy ending. Would you change the ending to the play? How would you end the play?**

- I would end the play with Cordelia and Lear both being saved at the last moment.
- I would end the play with Kent staying alive to take care of a heartbroken Lear, even after Cordelia’s death.
- I would end the play with Cordelia and Edgar marrying to rule the kingdom.
- I would not change the ending to the play. It is tragic, but it is important that the play end with sweeping away the old guard to make way for Edgar to rebuild the kingdom.

**One of the themes of the play is justice. Do you think justice is served for the people in the play? Who got what they deserved? Who did not get what they deserved?**

- Regan and Goneril and Edmund got what they deserved. Regan and Goneril died because of their own treachery and jealousy, and Edmund was killed by the brother he wronged.
- Edgar got what he deserved. Since he was a faithful son and subject, he inherited the crown.
- Cordelia did not deserve to die, and did not receive justice. She had already been disowned by her father for speaking the truth, and was avenging him as the rightful king when she invaded with France.
- Gloucester and Lear may or may not have been served justly. They both made big errors in judgement early in the play that caused suffering to their faithful children, but then they repented at the end of the play.

**Sight and blindness are recurring themes in the play. What are the ways that various characters are blind, and when do they gain sight?**

- King Lear is blind when he divides his kingdom between the daughters who don’t love him, and disinherits Cordelia, who does love him as a daughter should.
- Gloucester is blind when he believes Edmund’s lies about Edgar.
- King Lear gains sight when he goes mad and sees the world more as it is.
- Gloucester gains sight when he has his eyes gouged out and is taken care of by his faithful son.
- Regan and Goneril are blind when they both fall for Edmund.



Dan Kremer



ACT 1-1



ACT 1

Cordelia and King of France



King Lear



+ shirt



Set Model

## PLACING THE PRODUCTION

Director Sheila Daniels describes *King Lear* as the first piece of theater that changed her. She saw it for the first time at age 15, and knew she wanted to spend her life making people feel the way that she felt when watching that play at that time in her life. She describes this as her "First Lear," implying that this is a play that directors come back to over and over in their careers, and they never really are done with.

*King Lear* is distinct from most of Shakespeare's other tragedies because of the sheer number of characters who go through changes during the course of the play. By the director's count,

there are twelve characters who have real journeys through the play. While Lear himself may have the most lines in the play, Gloucester and Kent have more scenes.

In this production, Daniels is interested in exploring nature. Whose nature changes through the story? Whose nature stays the same? Whose nature is revealed? What about this story, its settings, or its relationships are "unnatural"?

This interest in nature will be revealed in the scenic design. One feature of the set will be buckets of natural material — dirt, mud,



Duke of Cornwall and Regan



Edgar



Edmund



Duke of Albany and Goneril

water, etc. — placed around the stage. The backdrop will be translucent and shifting, as our perspectives on the story and the characters shift and change.

The sound design will also be somewhat “natural,” in that there will be very little in the way of amplified sound cues. Instead, actors will make sounds using the stage, drums, shakers, and other objects to create the sounds of the storm.

Costumes will also reflect this theme of manmade versus natural, with different characters wearing more natural colors and

clothing at different points in the show. The colors worn will also indicate the alliances that characters have with each other, to help the audience keep track of the story. The clothing is not set in any particular time period, but stylistically reflects both the medieval era and modern times.

## ACTIVITY: RE-SETTING THE LEGEND OF LEAR

Directors choose to update the setting of Shakespearean plays for many reasons. Sometimes they feel that the original setting, particularly if it is long ago or far away, is not accessible to the audience, so they choose a more modern or local setting. Sometimes they feel that the themes in the play are analogous to themes at some point in the historical past, and so they change the setting to that time period. Other times, they choose a more fantastical setting where the characters can be large and memorable to modern audiences.

The story of *King Lear* is based on a legendary tale of a pre-Roman king of Brittain. This king Leir would have lived around the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Most productions update the setting of *King Lear*

to be Elizabethan, modern, or another setting in another place and time. Even Shakespeare himself plays fast and loose with the setting of *King Lear* naming Roman deities in a pre-Roman Britain and using the title of Duke, which was established after the Norman invasion in 1066 CE — or the very existence of France, which did not exist before the Middle Ages.

In this activity, students will be taking the basic story of *King Lear* and updating it to another time and/or location besides 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE in Brittain. Below are the instructions for this activity. On the opposite page is a sample of how students might go about this activity.

### Instructions:

1. Break students into small groups of 4 or 5. Review the synopsis of *King Lear*, and have students make a list of the 5–10 most important plot points in the play. For younger students or those less familiar with the play, you can provide them with the list.
2. Either in a large group or as small groups, have students suggest major motifs and themes that are present in *King Lear*.
3. Have each group choose a theme or motif (or several) that they want to base their play around. Then they should think of another setting, place and time, where that theme or motif could be important. Helping individual groups brainstorm is valuable during this step.
4. Once groups have chosen their setting, students should choose 3–6 of their major plot points, and write down what that scene would look like in their version of the play.
5. (optional) Students should then design a poster for their production of *King Lear*. It should indicate to the viewer where the production is set.
6. Once all students have completed this activity, have groups give a 5-minute presentation about their production. Remember — it's ok to have the same basic setting as another group!

### Example of this activity:

#### 1. Make a list of the important plot points:

1. Lear divides his kingdom between his daughters, excluding Cordelia.
2. Edmund tricks Gloucester into thinking Edgar is planning to usurp him.
3. Both Goneril and Regan kick Lear out of their houses.
4. Edgar (disguised as Old Tom), Lear, the Fool, and Kent all get stuck in the storm.
5. Gloucester is betrayed by Edmund, and Cornwall gouges out his eyes.
6. Gloucester asks Old Tom to lead him off a cliff, but Edgar reveals himself as his son.
7. France invades Brittain, and Brittain is victorious.
8. Regan is killed by Goneril out of jealousy, and Goneril commits suicide.
9. Albany and Edmund are too late to save Cordelia, and Lear carries her body onstage.
10. Lear dies of grief, and Edgar assumes the throne.

#### 2. Make a list of motifs and themes in the play:

- Blindness and sight
- Jealousy
- Deceit
- The storm
- Natural and unnatural
- Family relationships
- Madness and wisdom

3. Choose a motif or theme, and a setting that corresponds to that motif or theme:

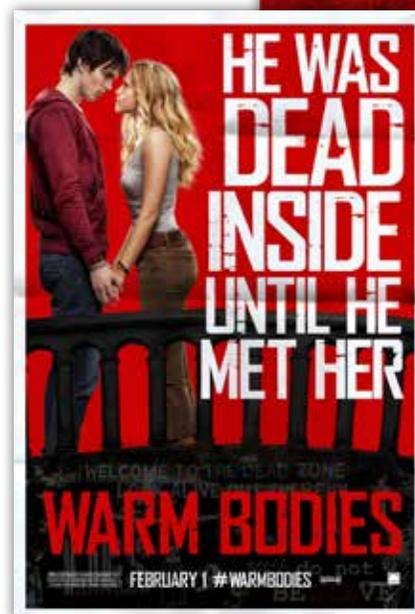
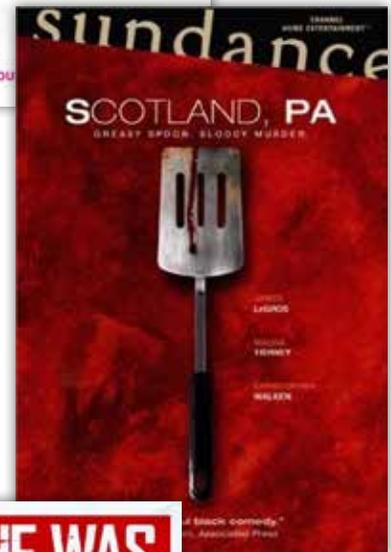
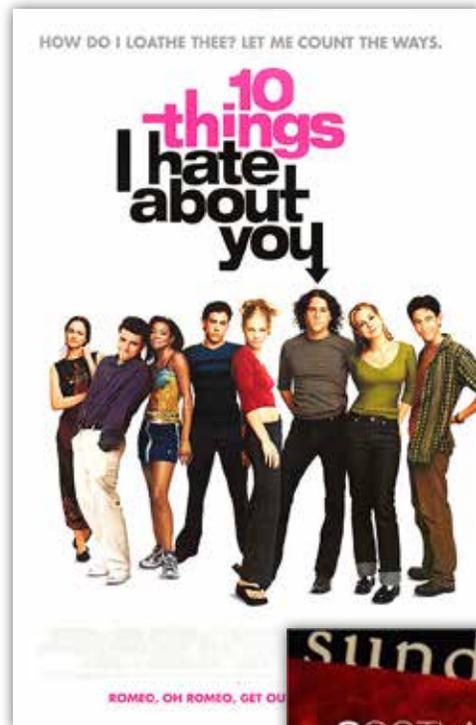
- Jealousy and Family Relationships: The setting will be in Los Angeles in modern times, with a wealthy TV-station owner who divides his broadcasting empire between his daughters.

4. Choose 3–6 plot points and describe how they look in this production:

1. Lear divides his kingdom between his daughters, excluding Cordelia.
  - a) This scene is set in a grand TV studio, on a set that looks like it is from old dating games. Lear asks “Daughter Number One” how much she loves him, and then tells her what she’s won. He does this for all three daughters, but does not like Cordelia’s answer and so she doesn’t win anything. The other two daughters each win half of his fortune and a spin-off TV station of their own.
2. Both Goneril and Regan kick Lear out of their houses.
  - a) In this scene, Lear is trying to have a say in what content the girls play on their TV stations. He doesn’t like the “trashy” shows they are producing, so they both kick him out of the buildings and take away his access.
3. Edgar (disguised as Old Tom), Lear, the Fool, and Kent all get stuck in the storm.
  - a) In this scene, all four characters end up outside on Venice Beach in a storm, with Edgar disguised as a druggie and the Fool is a vagrant living on the beach. Lear finds them both to be very wise.
4. Regan is killed by Goneril out of jealousy, and Goneril commits suicide.
  - a) Both daughters run smear campaigns against each others’ TV stations. Ratings drop steeply for both stations, and they are forced to shut them down.

5. Design a poster for this production.

- The poster for this would look like the logo of a TV station called “King Lear,” with a channel number. It might look a little like the “King 5” station logo.



## ACTIVITY: DECISION ALLEY

Adapted from Cambridge University's European Theatre Group

There are many important decisions that characters must make in this play. Sometimes they make what we, the audience, can see is a good decision, and sometimes they make one that leads to their ruin. But there are reasons in favor and against just about every decision. In this activity, students will be coming up with many arguments on both sides of several big decisions in the play.

### Instructions:

1. Have students line up shoulder-to-shoulder in two equal lines facing each other. The gap in between the lines will be known as "Decision Alley," and should be wide enough for someone to walk comfortably down the alley.
2. In turn, have students choose a character from the play facing a big decision. Have them ask their question out loud, and then begin to slowly walk down the alley.
3. Assign each side of the alley as "Yes" or "No." As the decision-maker walks down the alley, those nearest have the opportunity to shout out a reason in favor of or against the decision. Remember – those at the end must wait until the decision-maker is approaching them to speak, so that not everyone is talking at once (but there will be lots of overlap).
4. Once the decision-maker gets to the end of the alley, they should make a decision, and join the side that they agreed with. Then a new decision-maker should start over from the beginning with a new question. Note: The decisions these characters make do not need to be the same as the ones made in the play.
5. (optional) Have the decision-maker identify which one or two arguments were most persuasive when they made their decision.

### Here are some examples of decisions that characters must make in the play:

- **Lear:** Should I include Cordelia when I divide my kingdom up?
- **France:** Should I marry Cordelia even though she has no dowry?
- **Kent:** Should I stay with Lear even though he has lost everything?
- **Edgar:** Should I run away and disguise myself?
- **Goneril:** Should I poison my sister to get Edmund for myself?
- **Edmund:** Should I tell them I ordered Lear and Cordelia to be killed?
- **Lear:** Should I take back the throne?

There are many more — have students come up with their own!

## ACTIVITY: THE CLIFF SCENE

The cliff scene in *King Lear* is a famous and memorable scene. In it, the blinded Gloucester asks "Old Tom," actually his son Edgar, to lead him to the cliffs of Dover so that he can jump to his death. Edgar instead leads him to flat ground, and when Gloucester "jumps," Edgar reveals himself and claims his father has miraculously survived a great fall. This scene has challenged directors and actors for centuries, as they try to find exciting and believable ways to stage this scene.

### Instructions:

Break into pairs and read over the cliff scene, and then try to brainstorm ways you could stage the scene. Why does Gloucester think he is walking uphill? How does Edgar convince him that he actually falls and lives? Is Gloucester at all suspicious, or does he believe this unknown stranger?

*Scene text on opposite page.*

**TEXT: THE CLIFF SCENE****GLOUCESTER**

When shall we come to the top of that same hill?

**EDGAR**

You do climb up it now: look, how we labour.

**GLOUCESTER**

Methinks the ground is even.

**EDGAR**

Horrible steep.

Hark, do you hear the sea?

**GLOUCESTER**

No, truly.

**EDGAR**

Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect  
By your eyes' anguish.

**GLOUCESTER**

So may it be, indeed:  
Methinks thy voice is alter'd; and thou speak'st  
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

**EDGAR**

You're much deceived: in nothing am I changed  
But in my garments.

**GLOUCESTER**

Methinks you're better spoken.

**EDGAR**

Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still. How fearful  
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!  
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!  
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:  
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,  
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,  
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy  
Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,  
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,  
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;  
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight  
Topple down headlong.

**GLOUCESTER**

Set me where you stand.

**EDGAR**

Give me your hand: you are now within a foot  
Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon  
Would I not leap upright.

**GLOUCESTER**

Let go my hand.

Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel  
Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods  
Prosper it with thee! Go thou farther off;  
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

**EDGAR**

Now fare you well, good sir.

**GLOUCESTER**

With all my heart.

**EDGAR**

Why I do trifle thus with his despair  
Is done to cure it.

**GLOUCESTER**

*[Kneeling]* O you mighty gods!  
This world I do renounce, and, in your sights,  
Shake patiently my great affliction off:  
If I could bear it longer, and not fall  
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,  
My snuff and loathed part of nature should  
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!  
Now, fellow, fare thee well.

*He falls forward*



## SEATTLE SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

### Mission Statement:

With the plays of William Shakespeare at our core, Seattle Shakespeare Company engages our audiences, our artists and our community in the universal human experience inherent in classic drama through the vitality, immediacy and intimacy of live performance and dynamic outreach programs.

### About Us

Seattle Shakespeare Company is the Puget Sound region's year-round, professional, classical theatre. The company's growing success stems from a deep belief in the power and vibrancy of the time-tested words and ideas of Shakespeare and other classical playwrights along with a commitment to artistic excellence on stage. The results have been provocative performances that both challenge and delight audiences while fostering an appreciation for great stage works.

Our combined programs — which include indoor performances, free outdoor productions, regional tours, educator and youth programs — reach across barriers of income, geography, and education to bring classical theatre to Washington State.

### EDUCATION STAFF CONTACTS

#### In-School Residencies and Camps

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#### Touring Productions

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#### General

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### EDUCATION PROGRAMS

#### In-School Residencies, Matinees, and Workshops:

- In-School Residencies bring active, customized curriculum into schools across Washington State. Professional teaching artists plan with teachers to tailor each residency to fit the needs and objectives of the classroom. Seattle Shakespeare Company residencies inject vibrant, active exercises into lessons that unlock the text, themes, and actions of a Shakespeare play.
- Student Matinees bring over 3,000 students annually to our mainstage productions in the Seattle Center. Teachers are provided free study guides, and student groups are invited to stay after the show for a free Q&A session with the cast.
- Pre-show and post-show workshops can be booked to accompany mainstage matinees. These workshops include an introduction to the play itself, student activities, and insights into direction and design choices of our specific production.

#### Touring Productions:

- Fresh and accessible 90-minute productions tour across Washington State each Spring, reaching more than 14,000 students and adults. These nimble productions perform as easily in school gymnasiums as professional theatre facilities. Teachers are provided free study guides and students enjoy free post-show Q&A sessions with the cast.
- Schools have the opportunity to book accompanying in-school residencies with touring productions, led by members of the touring cast and additional teaching artists.

#### Camps and Classes:

- Our summer "Camp Bill" series in Seattle and Edmonds offers young actors a variety of camps to choose from or combine. Camps range from a One-Week Introduction to a Three-Week Production Intensive, with many options in between.
- In our Fall and Spring after-school "Short Shakes" programs, young actors develop their skills and gain hands-on performance and production experience.
- Seattle Shakespeare Company occasionally offers adult classes and workshops to our community featuring guest artists who work on our stage.