SOUTHERN **SHAKESPEARE** COMPANY

King Lear Read-Along Activities

These activities were developed by SSC as part of a social media "Community Read-Along" series designed to engage the community in a fashion similar to that of an online book club. Each week 3-4 scenes were "assigned" and SSC's Facebook Page facilitated a dialogue around the text – providing thought points, discussion questions, and activities for theatre students.

King Lear
Act 1, Scenes 4-5

In these last two scenes of Act 1 we see the beginnings of conflict between King Lear and his remaining two daughters, Goneril and Regan. In Scene 4 we witness Lear lose his patience with Goneril after being mistreated by her household staff and being asked to reduce the number of knights in his company. We also meet Lear's fool for the first time in Scene 4 who can often seem cruel but is merely brutally honest in his advocacy for Lear.

Goneril and Regan express concern for their father's diminishing state of mind, from King Lear, exclusively recorded by the ABC at Melbourne's Arts Centre performed by The Bell Shakespeare Company.

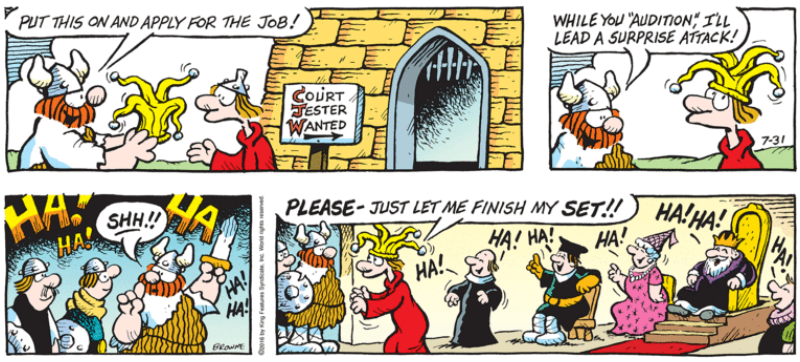
Discussion Questions:

- One of the most interesting dynamics in King Lear is the relationship between Lear and the Fool. As you read these two scenes pay close attention to the interactions between these two characters.
- Why do you think the Earl of Kent returns to Lear's service after being banished?
- What do you think the role of the Fool is in the play so far?
- What does Lear mean in Scene 5 when he says, "I did her wrong"?

#sscREADALONG

Student Activities

The tradition of fools and jesters in royal courts is as old as royalty itself. When we think of the jester, we often think of a person dressed in many bright colors, with a pointed hat with bells, and indeed, this traditional European court fool was very much in favor during Shakespeare's time and may have influences his portrayal of the Fool in King Lear.

However, a fool was not just a teller-of-jokes in the court, most had some performance skill such as singing, playing instruments, dance, or athletics.

If you were at an "audition" for the job of Fool for a King, what special skills do you have that might impress the Royal Court? Leave us a video of your audition!