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❁ ACT 2 ❁

PRE-GRAMMAR | Preparation

Prepare to think about the novel and its Central One Idea by drawing upon your prior knowledge, experience, or interests.

1. Imagine being on the run, entirely destitute, without any possessions, and only the clothes of a beggar. Where would you go? How would you survive? What would you discover about yourself in your suffering?

GRAMMAR | Presentation

Discover essential facts, elements, and features of the play through the Reading Notes, Words to Be Defined, and Comprehension Questions.

READING NOTES

Scene 1

1. **Pray you** (2.1.10) – please; I implore you
2. **roused** (2.1.56) – provoked

Scene 2

1. **pander** (2.2.21) – a lewd man who solicits in brothels
2. **varlet** (2.2.28) – a subordinate in a lowly, menial position; alternatively, a deceitful scoundrel
3. **shanks** (2.2.39) – the part of the legs from the knees to the ankles
4. **ruffian** (2.2.63) – a violent brute; a thug
5. **beguiled** (2.2.113) – deceptively charmed; deceptively captivated
6. **stocks** (2.2.127) – devices used to punish criminals; constructed of a wooden frame that locks, binding the feet, hands, and neck

Scene 3

1. **sheepcotes** (2.3.18) – enclosures for sheep; pens
2. **Bedlam beggars** (2.3.14) – In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Tom o' Bedlam was a name given for a wandering beggar who had been released from the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlem, a London insane asylum.

Scene 4

1. **durst** (2.4.21) – *archaic*; past tense for *dare*
2. **trespass** (2.4.43) – crime; wrongdoing
3. **raiment** (2.4.155) – clothing
4. **dotage** (2.4.196) – old age
5. **chide** (2.4.224) – scold; reprimand
6. **kleos (glory) and timê (honor)** – In thinking about King Lear and his dwindling retinue of knights, it can be helpful to recognize a similarity to the Homeric warrior, who fought solely for *kleos* (glory) and *timê* (honor). *Kleos* (glory) was what other men say about the warrior, both while he was alive and after he was dead. *Timê* (honor) meant the *tangible, physical expression of honor* in the form of booty, gifts, or prizes (*geras*) acquired from those conquered. If the Homeric warrior's honor (possessions of booty, slaves, prizes, etc.) was stripped away from him, then his glory would also be stripped away, because his glory came as a consequent of his honor (which was marked by physical possessions). Thus, if a warrior's honor and glory were stripped away, then his entire personhood, his entire value and worth, were stripped away with it. Both he (and his surrounding people) would see him as nothing.

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Definitions Bank

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| advises | patiently refrain from; abstain from |
| bitterness; hostility | from |
| harmony; friendly relations | perhaps; possibly |
| hatred; aversion | persuaded against; diverted |
| malevolence; spite; ill will | petition; appeal for |
| model; example | plaster |
| multiple; many | possessions; money |
| obtain; acquire | unhealthy; sick |

1. Spoke with how **manifold** and strong a bond, *adj.* (2.1.49)
2. When I **dissuaded** him from his intent, *v.* (2.1.66)
3. To have th' expense and waste of his **revenues**. *n.* (2.1.102)
4. I will tread this/unbolted villain into mortar and **daub** the wall of a jakes with him. *v.* (2.2.66-67)
5. No contraries hold more **antipathy**/Than I and such a knave. *n.* (2.2.89-90)
6. You shall do small respect, show too bold **malice**, *n.* (2.2.132)
7. Will not be rubbed nor stopped. I'll **entreat** for thee. *v.* (2.2.157)
8. The country gives me proof and **precedent**, *n.* (2.3.13)
9. To suffer with the body. I'll **forbear**; *v.* (2.4.107)
10. To take the **indisposed** and sickly fit, *adj.* (2.4.109)
11. If, sir, **perchance**/She have restrained the riots of your followers, *adv.* (2.4.141-142)
12. To wage against the **enmity** o' th' air,/To be a comrade with the wolf and owl, *n.* (2.4.208-209)
13. Hold **amity**? 'Tis hard, almost impossible. *n.* (2.4.241)
14. The injuries that they themselves **procure**, *v.* (2.4.302)
15. My Regan **counsels** well. Come out o' th' storm. *v.* (2.4.308)



Read Act 2, marking the text in key places according to the method taught in "How to Mark a Book."

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the **setting** at the opening of Act 2. What is taking place? Who is set to arrive there later that night?
2. How does Edmund feel about these events? What does he urge Edgar to do? What **dramatic crisis** takes place?
3. What does Gloucester conclude after this dramatic scene? Include a quotation.
4. Why have Regan and Cornwall come there?
5. Read 2.1.113-119, starting at "Cornwall. ... For you, Edmund,/Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant" What stands out to you? Is there any foreshadowing present?
6. At the beginning of scene 2, why is Kent so upset with Oswald? What does Kent say and do to him? Include a quotation.
7. When Regan, Cornwall, Gloucester, and the servants arrive, what happens?
8. What important object does Kent use to help bring himself solace in the stocks?
9. In scene 3, what does Edgar decide he must do?
10. In scene 4, when Lear, the Fool, and a Gentleman arrive, what transpires? Include a quotation.
11. When Regan, Cornwall, and Gloucester return, Lear speaks to Regan about Goneril, expressing his disapproval of her unkindness. How does Regan respond?
12. How does Lear feel about Regan's suggestion that he return to Goneril to apologize? How does he use **irony** in his reply? Is the Elizabethan World Order present here? Include a quotation.
13. When Goneril arrives, how does Lear feel?
14. When Regan suggests that Lear return to Goneril's residence with a smaller retinue, what is his response? Include a quotation.

15. When Lear concludes that he should go with his 100 knights to live with Regan, what is Goneril and Regan's reply?
16. Read 2.4.277-282, starting at "Lear. ... No, you unnatural hags!/I will have such revenges on you both"
How does the act conclude? What **imagery** stands out to you? Briefly summarize the closing action.

LOGIC | Dialectic

*Reason with the facts, elements, and features of the play;
sort, arrange, compare, and connect ideas – and begin
to uncover and determine the Central One Idea.*

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

May be verbally discussed or answered in written form in your Literature Notebook.

1. How are the main plot and the Gloucester subplot beginning to be joined in Act 2, scene 1? How does the arrival of Regan and Cornwall amplify Gloucester's **moral dilemma**?
2. Why is placing Kent in the stocks such an offensive act, one that bothers Gloucester so much? What does this action **symbolize**? By referring, on more than one occasion, to Kent's age, does Kent represent anything? Include a quotation.
3. Read 2.3.1-21, starting at "Edgar. *I heard myself proclaimed; And by the happy hollow of a tree*"
What is significant or **symbolic** about Edgar's transformation into a Bedlam beggar? Does it **foreshadow** anything?
4. It may be difficult in our day to understand why Lear needs a full retinue of servant knights, and why he is so offended when they are being stripped away, but it was very common and reasonable for those in his position in ancient times. Compare Lear's situation with the rage of Achilles, caused by Agamemnon's affront to Achilles' glory (*kleos*) and honor (*timê*). How does this comparison shed light on why Lear's retinue is so important to him? Include a quotation.
5. How does Lear's inner world reflect or relate to what is taking place in the outer world?