

ACT I. SCENE 1

SCENE I. King Lear's palace. East Garden.

Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER, [EDGAR] and EDMUND

KENT

[Fair Gloucester.]

GLOUCESTER

[Good Earl of Kent.]

KENT

Is not this your son, my lord?

GLOUCESTER

His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.

KENT

I cannot conceive you.

GLOUCESTER

Sir, this young fellow's mother could: whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

KENT

I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

GLOUCESTER

But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

EDMUND

No, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

EDMUND

My services to your lordship.

GLOUCESTER

The king is coming.

Sennet. Enter KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants

KING LEAR

Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

GLOUCESTER

I shall, my liege.

Exeunt GLOUCESTER and EDMUND

KING LEAR

Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.

Give me the map there. Know that we have divided

In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent

To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters,--
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

GONERIL

Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;
Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

CORDELIA

[Aside] What shall Cordelia do?
Love, and be silent.

LEAR

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual.

REGAN

Sir, I am made

Of the self-same metal that my sister is,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love;
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.

CORDELIA

[Aside] Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's
More richer than my tongue.

KING LEAR

To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom;
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy,
Speak.

CORDELIA

Nothing, my lord.

KING LEAR

Nothing!

CORDELIA

Nothing.

KING LEAR

Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

CORDELIA

I love your majesty

According to my bond; nor more nor less.

KING LEAR

How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

CORDELIA

Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

KING LEAR

So young, and so untender?

CORDELIA

So young, my lord, and true.

KING LEAR

Let it be so; thy truth, then, be thy dower:
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee, from this, for ever.

KENT

Good my liege,--

KING LEAR

Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!
Cornwall and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Ourselves, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name, and all the additions to a king;
This coronet part betwixt you.
Giving the crown

KENT

Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Loved as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers,--

KING LEAR

The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.

KENT

Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,
When Lear is mad. What wilt thou do, old man?
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;

KING LEAR

Kent, on thy life, no more.

KENT

My life I never held but as a pawn

To wage against thy enemies; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

KING LEAR

Out of my sight!

KENT

See better, Lear.

KING LEAR

Now, by Apollo,--

KENT

Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

KING LEAR

O, vassal! miscreant!
Laying his hand on his sword

ALBANY/CORNWALL

Dear sir, forbear.

KENT

Do:
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon thy foul disease. Revoke thy doom;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

KING LEAR

Hear me, recreant!
On thine allegiance, hear me!
[T]urn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom: if

Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away!

KENT

Fare thee well, king: sith thus thou wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.
To CORDELIA

The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid.

To REGAN and GONERIL

And your large speeches may your deeds approve,
That good effects may spring from words of love.
Exit

*Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER, with KING OF FRANCE,
BURGUNDY, and Attendants*

GLOUCESTER

Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

KING LEAR

My lord of Burgundy.
She's there, and she is yours.

BURGUNDY

I know no answer.

KING LEAR

Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

BURGUNDY

Pardon me, royal sir;

Election makes not up on such conditions.

KING LEAR

Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made me,
I tell you all her wealth.

To KING OF FRANCE

For you, great king,

[I] beseech you

To avert your liking a more worthier way

Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed

Almost to acknowledge hers.

KING OF FRANCE

This is most strange,

That she, that even but now was your best object,

The argument of your praise, balm of your age,

Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time

Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle

So many folds of favour.

CORDELIA

I yet beseech your majesty,--

That you make known

It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,

No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,

That hath deprived me of your grace and favour;

But even for want of that for which I am richer,

A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue

As I am glad I have not, though not to have it

Hath lost me in your liking.

KING LEAR

Better thou

Hadst not been born than not to have pleased me better.

KING OF FRANCE

Is it but this,--a tardiness in nature
Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My lord of Burgundy,
Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

BURGUNDY

Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself proposed,

KING LEAR

Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

BURGUNDY

I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father
That you must lose a husband.

CORDELIA

Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

KING OF FRANCE

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:

KING LEAR

Thou hast her, France: let her be thine; for we

Have no such daughter[.]

*Flourish. Exeunt all but KING OF FRANCE, GONERIL, REGAN,
and CORDELIA*

KING OF FRANCE

Bid farewell to your sisters.

CORDELIA

The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are;
And like a sister am most loath to call
Your faults as they are named. Use well our father:

REGAN

Prescribe not us our duties.

GONERIL

Let your study
Be to content your lord [.]
You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

CORDELIA

Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides:
Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper!

KING OF FRANCE

Come, my fair Cordelia.

Exeunt KING OF FRANCE and CORDELIA

GONERIL

Sister, it is not a little I have to say of what
most nearly appertains to us both. I think our

father will hence to-night.

REGAN

That's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

GONERIL

You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little: he always loved our sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

REGAN

'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.
We shall further think on't.

GONERIL

We must do something, and i' the heat.
Exeunt

Act I. SCENE 2. The Earl of Gloucester's castle.

Enter EDMUND, with a letter

EDMUND

Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER

Edmund, how now! what news?

EDMUND

So please your lordship, none.

Putting up the letter

GLOUCESTER

Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

EDMUND

I know no news, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

What paper were you reading?

EDMUND

Nothing, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

No?

Let's see: come,

EDMUND

[I]t is a letter

from my brother[.]

I find it not

fit for your o'er-looking.

GLOUCESTER

Give me the letter, sir.

EDMUND

I shall offend, either to detain or give it.

GLOUCESTER

Let's see, let's see.

[Reads] 'This policy and reverence of age makes
the world bitter to the best of our times[.]

If our father

would sleep till I waked him, you should half his
revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your
brother, EDGAR.'

Hum—conspiracy!

EDMUND

It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is
not in the contents.

GLOUCESTER

Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

EDMUND

Never, my lord: but I have heard him oft maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

GLOUCESTER

O villain, villain!
Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested,
brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah,
seek him; I'll apprehend him: abominable villain!
Where is he?

EDMUND

I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course[.]

GLOUCESTER

Think you so?

GLOUCESTER

He cannot be such a monster--

EDMUND

Nor is not, sure.

GLOUCESTER

To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth!

EDMUND

I will seek him, sir, presently: convey the

business as I shall find means and acquaint you withal.

GLOUCESTER

These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend
no good to us:

[T]here's son against father: the king
falls from bias of nature; there's father against
child. We have seen the best of our time:
machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all
ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our
graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall
lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the
noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his
offence, honesty! 'Tis strange.

Exit

EDMUND

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that,
when we are sick in fortune,--often the surfeit
of our own behavior,--we make guilty of our
disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as
if we were villains by necessity; fools by
heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and
treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards,
liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of
planetary influence[-]

Edgar--

Enter EDGAR

EDGAR

How now, brother Edmund! what serious
contemplation are you in?

EDMUND

Come, come; when saw you my father last?

EDGAR

Why, the night gone by.

EDMUND

Spake you with him?

EDGAR

Ay, two hours together.

EDMUND

Found you no displeasure in him by word or countenance?

EDGAR

None at all.

EDMOND

[A]t my entreaty forbear his presence
till some little time hath qualified the heat of
his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth
in him[.]

EDGAR

Some villain hath done me wrong.

EDMUND

That's my fear. I pray you, go; there's my key:
if you do stir abroad, go armed.

EDGAR

Armed, brother!

EDMUND

[P]ray you, away.

EDGAR

Shall I hear from you anon?

EDMUND

I do serve you in this business.

Exit EDGAR

A credulous father! and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none: on whose foolish honesty
My practises ride easy! I see the business.
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.

Exit

Act I. SCENE 3. The Duke of Albany's palace.

Enter GONERIL, and OSWALD, her steward

GONERIL

Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

OSWALD

Yes, madam.

GONERIL

By day and night he wrongs me; every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle.

OSWALD

He's coming, madam; I hear him.

Horns within

GONERIL

Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows;
If he dislike it, let him to our sister,
Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away!

OSWALD

Well, madam.

GONERIL

And let his knights have colder looks among you;
I'll write straight to my sister,
To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.

Exeunt

ACT I. SCENE 4. A hall in the same.

Enter KENT, disguised

KENT

Now, banish'd Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lovest,
Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter KING LEAR, Knights, and Attendants

KING LEAR

How now! what art thou?

KENT

A man, sir.

KING LEAR

What dost thou profess? what wouldst thou with us?

KENT

I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve
him truly that will put me in trust[.]

KING LEAR

What art thou?

KENT

A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

KING LEAR

What wouldst thou?

KENT

Service.

KING LEAR

Who wouldst thou serve?

KENT

You.

KING LEAR

Dost thou know me, fellow?

KENT

No, sir; but you have that in your countenance
which I would fain call master.

KING LEAR

What's that?

KENT

Authority.

KING LEAR

What services canst thou do?

KENT

I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious
tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message
bluntly[.]

KING LEAR

How old art thou?

KENT

Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor

so old to dote on her for any thing[.]

KING LEAR

Follow me; thou shalt serve me[.]

Dinner, ho, dinner! Where's my knave? my fool?

Enter OSWALD

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

OSWALD

So please you,--

Exit

KING LEAR

What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back.

Where's my fool, ho? I think the world's asleep.

How now! where's that mongrel?

KENT

My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont[.]

KING LEAR

Ha! sayest thou so?

KENT

[M]y duty cannot be silent when I think your highness wronged.

KING LEAR

Thou but rememberest me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late[.]

Go you, and

tell my daughter I would speak with her.

Exit an KENT

Go you, call hither my fool.

Exit an Attendant [Audience member]

Re-enter OSWALD

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir: who am I,
sir?

OSWALD

My lady's father.

KING LEAR

'My lady's father!' my lord's knave: your
whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

OSWALD

I am none of these, my lord[.]

KING LEAR

Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?
Striking him

OSWALD

I'll not be struck, my lord.

KENT [(Entering)]

Nor tripped neither, you base football player.
Tripping up his heels

KING LEAR

I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll
love thee.

KENT

Come, sir, arise, away!
Pushes OSWALD out

KING LEAR

Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee[.]
Giving KENT money

Enter Fool

Fool

Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb.
Offering KENT his cap

KING LEAR

How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

Fool

Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

KENT

Why, fool?

Fool

Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour:

KING LEAR

Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool

Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipped
out[.]

KING LEAR

A pestilent gall to me!

Fool

Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

KING LEAR

Do.

Fool

Mark it, nuncle:

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

KENT

This is nothing, fool.

Fool

Can you make no use of
nothing, nuncle?

KING LEAR

Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool

[To KENT] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of
his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.

KING LEAR

A bitter fool!

Fool

Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

KING LEAR

Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool

All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

KENT

This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Singing

Fools had ne'er less wit in a year;
For wise men are grown foppish,
They know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

KING LEAR

When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool

I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mothers: for when thou gavest them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

Singing

Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.
Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach

thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

KING LEAR

An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

Fool

I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are:
they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt
have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am
whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any
kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be
thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides,
and left nothing i' the middle: here comes one o'
the parings.

Enter GONERIL

KING LEAR

How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on?
Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown.

GONERIL

Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done.
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance[.]

KING LEAR

Are you our daughter?

GONERIL

Come, sir,
I would you would make use of that good wisdom,
Whereof I know you are fraught[.]

Fool

May not an ass know when the cart
draws the horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

KING LEAR

Doth any here know me? This is not Lear:
Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?
Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Fool

Lear's shadow.

KING LEAR

I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

Fool

Which they will make an obedient father.

KING LEAR

Your name, fair gentlewoman?

GONERIL

As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a graced palace.

KING LEAR

Darkness and devils!
Saddle my horses; call my train together:
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee.
Yet have I left a daughter.

GONERIL

You strike my people; and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY

KING LEAR

To ALBANY

O, sir, are you come?
Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude[.]

ALBANY

Pray, sir, be patient.

KING LEAR

[To GONERIL] Detested kite! thou liest.
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in,
Striking his head

Go, go, my people.

ALBANY

My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath moved you.

KING LEAR

It may be so, my lord.
Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her!
Away, away!

Exit

ALBANY

Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

GONERIL

Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
But let his disposition have that scope
That dotage gives it.

Re-enter KING LEAR

KING LEAR

What, fifty of my followers at a clap!
Within a fortnight!

ALBANY

What's the matter, sir?

KING LEAR

I'll tell thee:
To GONERIL

Life and death! I am ashamed
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,

Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!
The untented woundings of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee! **Old fond eyes,**
Yea, it is come to this?
Let is be so: yet have I left a daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolvisish visage.
I warrant thee.

Exeunt KING LEAR, KENT, and Attendants

GONERIL

Do you mark that, my lord?

ALBANY

I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you,--

GONERIL

Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!
To the Fool

You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

Fool

Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry and take the fool
with thee.
Exit

GONERIL

[A] hundred knights!
'Tis politic and safe to let him keep
At point a hundred knights[?]
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say!

ALBANY

Well, you may fear too far.

GONERIL

Safer than trust too far:

What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister

If she sustain him and his hundred knights

When I have show'd the unfitness,--

Re-enter OSWALD

How now, Oswald!

What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

OSWALD

Yes, madam.

GONERIL

Take you some company, and away to horse:

Inform her full of my particular fear;

Get you gone;

And hasten your return.

Exit OSWALD

ALBANY

How far your eyes may pierce I can not tell:

Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

GONERIL

Nay, then--

ALBANY

Well, well; the event.

Exeunt

ACT I. SCENE 5. Court before the same.

Enter KING LEAR, KENT, and Fool

KING LEAR

Go you before to Gloucester with these letters.

KENT

I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered
your letter.

Exit

Fool

Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

KING LEAR

No.

Fool

Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

KING LEAR

Why?

Fool

Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his
daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

KING LEAR

I will forget my nature. So kind a father! Be my
horses ready?

Fool

Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the
seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason.

KING LEAR

Because they are not eight?

Fool

Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

KING LEAR

Monster ingratitude!

Fool

If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten
for being old before thy time.

KING LEAR

How's that?

Fool

Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst
been wise.

KING LEAR

O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven
Keep me in temper: I would not be mad!

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 1. GLOUCESTER's castle.

Enter EDMUND, and CURAN meets him

EDMUND

Save thee, Curan.

CURAN

And you, sir. [T]he Duke of Cornwall and Regan
his duchess will be here with him this night.

Exit

EDMUND

The duke be here to-night? The better! best!
Brother, a word; descend: brother, I say!

Enter EDGAR

My father watches: O sir, fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night:
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?
He's coming hither: now, i' the night, i' the haste,
And Regan with him: have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany?
Advise yourself.

EDGAR

I am sure on't, not a word.

EDMUND

I hear my father coming: pardon me:
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you
Draw; seem to defend yourself; now quit you well.
Yield: come before my father. Light, ho, here!
Fly, brother. Torches, torches! So, farewell.

Exit EDGAR

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion.

Wounds his arm

Stop, stop! No help?

Enter GLOUCESTER, and Servants with torches

GLOUCESTER

Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

EDMUND

Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out[.]

GLOUCESTER

But where is he?

EDMUND

Look, sir, I bleed.

GLOUCESTER

Where is the villain, Edmund?

EDMUND

Fled this way, sir. When by no means he could--

GLOUCESTER

Pursue him, ho! Go after.

Exeunt some Servants

By no means what?

EDMUND

Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;

But that I told him, the revenging gods

'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;
Spoke, with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to the father[.]

GLOUCESTER

Let him fly far:
Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;
And found--dispatch.
He that conceals him, death.

EDMUND

When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech
I threaten'd to discover him: he replied,
'Thou unpossessing bastard!

GLOUCESTER

Strong and fasten'd villain
Would he deny his letter? I never got him.
Tucket within

All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not 'scape;
[A]nd of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.
Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and Attendants

CORNWALL

How now, my noble friend! since I came hither,
Which I can call but now, I have heard strange news.

REGAN

If it be true, all vengeance comes too short
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord?

GLOUCESTER

O, madam, my old heart is crack'd, it's crack'd!

REGAN

Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father?

GLOUCESTER

I know not, madam: 'tis too bad, too bad.

EDMUND

Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

REGAN

No marvel, then, though he were ill affected:
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the expense and waste of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them; and with such cautions,
That if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

CORNWALL

Nor I, assure thee, Regan.
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.

EDMUND

'Twas my duty, sir.

GLOUCESTER

He did bewray his practise; and received
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

CORNWALL

Is he pursued?

GLOUCESTER

Ay, my good lord.

CORNWALL

If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm[.]

EDMUND

I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

GLOUCESTER

For him I thank your grace.

CORNWALL

You know not why we came to visit you,--

REGAN

Wherein we must have use of your advice:
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,

GLOUCESTER

I serve you, madam:
Your graces are right welcome.

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE 2. Before Gloucester's castle.

Enter KENT and OSWALD, severally

OSWALD

Good dawning to thee, friend: art of this house?

KENT

Ay.

OSWALD

Where may we set our horses?

KENT

I' the mire.

OSWALD

Prithee, if thou lovest me, tell me.

KENT

I love thee not.

OSWALD

Why, then, I care not for thee.

KENT

I would make thee care for me.

OSWALD

Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

KENT

Fellow, I know thee.

OSWALD

What dost thou know me for?

KENT

[A] lily-livered, action-taking knave, a whoreson, a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.

OSWALD

Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

KENT

What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days ago since I tripped up thy heels, and beat thee before the king? Draw, you rogue: draw, you whoreson[.]
Drawing his sword

OSWALD

Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

KENT

Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the King[.]

OSWALD

Help, ho! murder! help!

KENT

Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand; you neat slave, strike.
Beating him

OSWALD

Help, ho! murder! murder!

Enter EDMUND, with his rapier drawn, CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, and Servants

EDMUND

How now! What's the matter?

KENT

I'll flesh ye; come on, young master.

GLOUCESTER

Weapons! arms! What 's the matter here?

CORNWALL

Keep peace, upon your lives:

REGAN

The messengers from our sister and the king.

CORNWALL

What is your difference? speak.

OSWALD

I am scarce in breath, my lord.

KENT

You cowardly rascal[.]

CORNWALL

Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

OSWALD

This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spared[-]

KENT

Thou whoreson zed!

CORNWALL

Peace, sirrah!

You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

KENT

Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

CORNWALL

Why art thou angry?

KENT

That such a slave as this should wear a sword,

Who wears no honesty.

A plague upon your epileptic visage!

CORNWALL

Why, art thou mad, old fellow?

GLOUCESTER

How fell you out? say that.

KENT

No contraries hold more antipathy

Than I and such a knave.

CORNWALL

Why dost thou call him a knave? What's his offence?

KENT

His countenance likes me not.

CORNWALL

No more, perchance, does mine, nor his, nor hers.

KENT

Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

CORNWALL

This is some fellow,
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he,
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth!

KENT

I know, sir, I am no flatterer: though I should win your displeasure
to entreat me to 't.

CORNWALL

What was the offence you gave him?

OSWALD

I never gave him any:
It pleased the king his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;

KENT

None of these rogues and cowards

CORNWALL

Fetch forth the stocks!
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you--

KENT

Sir, I am too old to learn:
Call not your stocks for me: I serve the king;
On whose employment I was sent to you:

CORNWALL

Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life and honour,
There shall he sit till noon.

REGAN

Till noon! till night, my lord; and all night too.

KENT

Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

REGAN

Sir, being his knave, I will.

CORNWALL

This is a fellow of the self-same colour
Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the stocks!
Stocks brought out

GLOUCESTER

Let me beseech your grace not to do so:
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will cheque him for 't[.]
[T]he king must take it ill,
That he's so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

CORNWALL

I'll answer that.

REGAN

My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,
For following her affairs. Put in his legs.
KENT is put in the stocks

Come, my good lord, away.
Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER and KENT

GLOUCESTER

I am sorry for thee, friend[.]

KENT

Pray, do not, sir: I have watched and travell'd hard;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:
Give you good morrow!

GLOUCESTER

The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken.
Exit

KENT

Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night: smile once more: turn thy wheel!
Sleeps

ACT II. SCENE 3. A wood.

Enter EDGAR

EDGAR

Whiles I may 'scape,
I will preserve myself: and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth;
Blanket my loins: elf all my hair in knots;
And with presented nakedness out-face
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!
That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

Exit

**ACT II. SCENE 4. Before GLOUCESTER's castle.
KENT in the stocks.**

Enter KING LEAR, Fool, and Gentleman

KENT

Hail to thee, noble master!

KING LEAR

Ha!

Makest thou this shame thy pastime?

KENT

No, my lord.

Fool

Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters.

KING LEAR

What's he that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?

KENT

Your son and daughter.

KING LEAR

No.

KENT

Yes.

KING LEAR

No, I say.

KENT

I say, yea.

KING LEAR

No, no, they would not.

KENT

Yes, they have.

KING LEAR

By Jupiter, I swear, no.

KENT

By Juno, I swear, ay.

KING LEAR

They durst not do 't;
They could not, would not do 't; 'tis worse than murder,
To do upon respect such violent outrage:

KENT

My lord, when at their home
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
[C]ame there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations;
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome, I perceived, had poison'd mine,--
Having more man than wit about me, drew:
He raised the house with loud and coward cries.

Fool

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;
But fathers that bear bags

Shall see their children kind.
Fortune, that arrant whore,
Ne'er turns the key to the poor.

KING LEAR

Where is this daughter?

KENT

With the earl, sir, here within.

KING LEAR

Follow me not;
Stay here.

Exit

Fool

Let go thy hold when a great wheel
runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with
following it: but the great one that goes up the
hill, let him draw thee after.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm,

KENT

Where learned you this, fool?

Fool

Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter KING LEAR with GLOUCESTER

KING LEAR

Deny to speak with me?
Fetch me a better answer.

GLOUCESTER

My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke[.]

KING LEAR

Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

GLOUCESTER

Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

KING LEAR

Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

GLOUCESTER

Ay, my good lord.

KING LEAR

The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear father
Would with his daughter speak, commands her service[.]
Looking on KENT

Should he sit here?
Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the duke and 's wife I'd speak with them,
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

GLOUCESTER

I would have all well betwixt you.
Exit

KING LEAR

O me, my heart, my rising heart! but, down!

Fool

Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels
when she put 'em i' the paste alive[.]

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, and Servants

KING LEAR

Good morrow to you both.

CORNWALL

Hail to your grace!

KENT is set at liberty

REGAN

I am glad to see your highness.

KING LEAR

Regan, I think you are; I know what reason
I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
Sepulchring an adultress.

To KENT

O, are you free?

Some other time for that. Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here:

Points to his heart

REGAN

I pray you, sir, take patience: I have hope.
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.

KING LEAR

Say, how is that?

REGAN

I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation[.]

KING LEAR

My curses on her!

REGAN

O, sir, you are old.
Of her confine: you should be ruled and led
By some discretion[.]
Therefore, I pray you,
That to our sister you do make return;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

KING LEAR

Ask her forgiveness?
'Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Kneeling

Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.'

REGAN

Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:
Return you to my sister.

KING LEAR

[Rising] Never, Regan:
She hath
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
All the stored vengeance of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top!

CORNWALL

Fie, sir, fie!

KING LEAR

You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes!

REGAN

O the blest gods! so will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.

KING LEAR

No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse:
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness[.]

REGAN

Good sir, to the purpose.

KING LEAR

Who put my man i' the stocks?
Tucket within

CORNWALL

What trumpet's that?

REGAN

I know't, my sister's: this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.
Enter OSWALD

Is your lady come?

KING LEAR

Out, varlet, from my sight!

CORNWALL

What means your grace?

KING LEAR

Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good hope
Thou didst not know on't. Who comes here? O heavens,
Enter GONERIL

To GONERIL

Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

GONERIL

Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?
All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

KING LEAR

How came my man i' the stocks?

CORNWALL

I set him there, sir[.]

KING LEAR

You! did you?

REGAN

I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,

KING LEAR

Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose

To wage against the enmity o' the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,--
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom.
Pointing at OSWALD

GONERIL

At your choice, sir.

KING LEAR

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood.
I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

REGAN

Not altogether so:
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;

KING LEAR

Is this well spoken?

REGAN

I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?
Is it not well? What should you need of more?

GONERIL

Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
From those that she calls servants or from mine?

REGAN

I entreat you
To bring but five and twenty: to no more
Will I give place or notice.

KING LEAR

I gave you all--

REGAN

And in good time you gave it.

KING LEAR

Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number.

REGAN

And speak't again, my lord; no more with me.

KING LEAR

To GONERIL

I'll go with thee:

Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

GONERIL

Hear me, my lord;
What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,

REGAN

What need one?

KING LEAR

O, reason not the need[.]

But, for true need,--

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!

You think I'll weep

No, I'll not weep:

I have full cause of weeping; but this heart

Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,

Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

Exeunt KING LEAR, GLOUCESTER, KENT, and Fool

Storm and tempest

CORNWALL

Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm.

REGAN

This house is little: the old man and his people

Cannot be well bestow'd.

GONERIL

'Tis his own blame; hath put himself from rest,

And must needs taste his folly.

REGAN

For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,

But not one follower.

GONERIL

So am I purposed.

Where is my lord of Gloucester?

CORNWALL

Follow'd the old man forth: he is return'd.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER

The king is in high rage.

CORNWALL

Whither is he going?

GLOUCESTER

He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.

CORNWALL

'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

GONERIL

My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

GLOUCESTER

Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle; for many miles a bout
There's scarce a bush.

REGAN

O, sir, to wilful men,
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors[.]

CORNWALL

Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night:
My Regan counsels well; come out o' the storm.
Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 1. A heath.

Storm still. Enter KENT and a Gentleman, meeting

KENT

Who's there, besides foul weather?

Gentleman

One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

KENT

I know you. Where's the king?

Gentleman

Contending with the fretful element:
Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.

KENT

Sir, I do know you;
[F]rom France there comes a power
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet
In some of our best ports, and are at point
To show their open banner. Now to you:
If on my credit you dare build so far
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
Some that will thank you, making just report
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
The king hath cause to plain.
[O]pen this purse, and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,--
As fear not but you shall,--show her this ring;
And she will tell you who your fellow is

That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
I will go seek the king.

Gentleman

Give me your hand[.]

Exeunt severally

ACT II. SCENE 2. Another part of the heath. Storm still.

Enter KING LEAR and Fool

KING LEAR

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, an germens spill at once,
That make ingrateful man!

Fool

Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters' blessing:
here's a night pities neither wise man nor fool.

KING LEAR

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription: then let fall
Your horrible pleasure: here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man:
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

Fool

He that has a house to put's head in has a good
head-piece.

Enter KENT

KENT

Who's there?

Fool

Marry, here's grace and a cod-piece; that's a wise
man and a fool.

KENT

Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night
Love not such nights as these[.]

KING LEAR

Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now.
I am a man
More sinn'd against than sinning.

KENT

Alack, bare-headed!
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest:

KING LEAR

My wits begin to turn.
Come on, my boy: how dost, my boy? art cold?
I am cold myself.

Fool

[Singing]

He that has and a little tiny wit--
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,--
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
For the rain it raineth every day.

KING LEAR

True, my good boy. Come, bring us to this hovel.
Exeunt KING LEAR and KENT

Fool

This is a brave night to cool a courtezan.
Exit

ACT III. SCENE 3. Gloucester's castle.

Enter GLOUCESTER and EDMUND

GLOUCESTER

Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing.

EDMUND

Most savage and unnatural!

GLOUCESTER

Go to; say you nothing. There's a division betwixt the dukes; and a worse matter than that: I have received a letter this night; 'tis dangerous to be spoken; I have locked the letter in my closet: these injuries the king now bears will be revenged home; there's part of a power already footed: we must incline to the king. I will seek him[.]

Though I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful.

Exit

EDMUND

This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke Instantly know; and of that letter too: This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me That which my father loses; no less than all: The younger rises when the old doth fall.

Exit

ACT III. SCENE 4. The heath. Before a hovel.

Enter KING LEAR, KENT, and Fool

KENT

Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter:

The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure.

Storm still

KING LEAR

Let me alone.

KENT

Good my lord, enter here.

KING LEAR

Wilt break my heart?

KENT

I had rather break mine own. Good my lord, enter.

KING LEAR

Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee;

But where the greater malady is fix'd,

The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'ldst shun a bear;

But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,

Thou'ldst meet the bear i' the mouth. When the
mind's free,

The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind

Doth from my senses take all feeling else

Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude!

O Regan, Goneril!

Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,--

O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;

No more of that.

KENT

Good my lord, enter here.

KING LEAR

To the Fool

In, boy; go first.

Fool goes in

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,

EDGAR

[Within] Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor Tom!

The Fool runs out from the hovel

Fool

Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit

Help me, help me!

KENT

Give me thy hand. Who's there?

Fool

A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's poor Tom.

Enter EDGAR disguised as a mad man

EDGAR

Away! the foul fiend follows me!

KING LEAR

Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?

And art thou come to this?

EDGAR

Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the foul
fiend hath led through fire and through flame[.]
Tom's a-cold,--O, do de, do de, do de. Do poor Tom some
charity, whom the foul fiend vexes[.]

Storm still

KING LEAR

What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?
Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give them all?

Fool

Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed.

KENT

He hath no daughters, sir.

KING LEAR

Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued nature
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
Is it the fashion[.]

EDGAR

Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

Fool

This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

EDGAR

Take heed o' the foul fiend: obey thy parents[.] Tom's a-cold.

KING LEAR

What hast thou been?

EDGAR

A serving-man, proud in heart and mind[.] [O]ne that
slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it:
wine loved I deeply, dice dearly: and in woman
out-paramoured the Turk: false of heart, light of
ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth,
wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey.
Storm still

KING LEAR

Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer
with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies.
Is man no more than this? Thou art the thing itself:
unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor bare,
forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings!
come unbutton here.
Tearing off his clothes

Fool

Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 'tis a naughty night
to swim in.
Enter GLOUCESTER, with a torch

EDGAR

This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins
at curfew, and walks till the first cock;
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

KENT

How fares your grace?

KING LEAR

What's he?

KENT

Who's there? What is't you seek?

GLOUCESTER

What are you there? Your names?

EDGAR

Poor Tom[.]

But mice and rats, and such small deer,

Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin; peace, thou fiend!

GLOUCESTER

What, hath your grace no better company?

EDGAR

Poor Tom's a-cold.

GLOUCESTER

Go in with me: my duty cannot suffer

To obey in all your daughters' hard commands[.]

KING LEAR

First let me talk with this philosopher.

What is the cause of thunder?

KENT

Good my lord, take his offer; go into the house.

KING LEAR

What is your study?

EDGAR

How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

KING LEAR

Let me ask you one word in private.

KENT

His wits begin to unsettle.

GLOUCESTER

Canst thou blame him?

Storm still

His daughters seek his death: ah, that good Kent!
He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!
Thou say'st the king grows mad; I'll tell thee, friend,
I am almost mad myself: I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,
But lately, very late: I loved him, friend;
No father his son dearer: truth to tell thee,
The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night's this!
I do beseech your grace,--

KING LEAR

O, cry your mercy, sir.
Noble philosopher, your company.

EDGAR

Tom's a-cold.

GLOUCESTER

In, fellow, there, into the hovel: keep thee warm.

KING LEAR

Come let's in all.

KENT

This way, my lord.

KING LEAR

With him;
I will keep still with my philosopher.

KENT

Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.

GLOUCESTER

Take him you on.

KENT

Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

KING LEAR

Come, good Athenian.

GLOUCESTER

No words, no words: hush.

EDGAR

Child Rowland to the dark tower came,
His word was still,--Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man.

Exeunt

GLOUCESTER [From later scene.]

Here is better than the open air; take it
thankfully. [Exit.]

ACT III. SCENE 5. Gloucester's castle.

Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND

CORNWALL

I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

EDMUND

How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France: O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!

CORNWALL

o with me to the duchess.

EDMUND

If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

CORNWALL

True or false, it hath made thee earl of Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is[.]

EDMUND

[Aside] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully.--I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

CORNWALL

I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love.

Exeunt

ACT III. SCENE 6. A chamber in a farmhouse adjoining the castle.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER

Come hither, friend: where is the king my master?

KENT

Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

GLOUCESTER

Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms;
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him:
There is a litter ready; lay him in 't,
And drive towards Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet
Both welcome and protection.
take up, take up;
And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

KENT

To the Fool

Come, help to bear thy master;
Thou must not stay behind.

GLOUCESTER

Come, come, away.
Exeunt all but EDGAR

EDGAR

How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend makes the king bow,
He childed as I father'd! Tom, away!

Mark the high noises; and thyself bewray,
When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,
In thy just proof, repeals and reconciles thee.
What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the king!
Lurk, lurk.
Exit

ACT III. SCENE 7. Gloucester's castle.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, and Servants

CORNWALL

Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter: the army of France is landed. Seek out the villain Gloucester.

Exeunt some of the Servants

REGAN

Hang him instantly.

GONERIL

Pluck out his eyes.

CORNWALL

Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund, keep you our sister company: the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father are not fit for your beholding.

GONERIL

Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

Exeunt GONERIL, EDMUND, and OSWALD

Who's there? the traitor?

Enter GLOUCESTER, brought in by two or three

REGAN

Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

CORNWALL

Bind fast his corky arms.

GLOUCESTER

What mean your graces? Good my friends, consider
You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

CORNWALL

Bind him, I say.
Servants bind him

REGAN

Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!

GLOUCESTER

Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

CORNWALL

To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt find--
REGAN plucks his beard

GLOUCESTER

By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

REGAN

So white, and such a traitor!

GLOUCESTER

Naughty lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,
Will quicken, and accuse thee[.]

CORNWALL

Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?

REGAN

Be simple answerer, for we know the truth.

CORNWALL

And what confederacy have you with the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?

REGAN

To whose hands have you sent the lunatic king? Speak.

GLOUCESTER

I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one opposed.

CORNWALL

Cunning.

REGAN

And false.

CORNWALL

Where hast thou sent the king?

GLOUCESTER

To Dover.

REGAN

Wherefore to Dover, sir?

GLOUCESTER

Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
All cruels else subscribed: but I shall see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

CORNWALL

See't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

GLOUCESTER

He that will think to live till he be old,
Give me some help! O cruel! O you gods!

REGAN

One side will mock another; the other too.

CORNWALL

If you see vengeance,--

First Servant

Hold your hand, my lord:
I have served you ever since I was a child;
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

REGAN

How now, you dog!

First Servant

If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean?

CORNWALL

My villain!
They draw and fight

First Servant

Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

REGAN

Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus!
Takes a sword, and runs at him behind

First Servant

O, I am slain! My lord, you have one eye left
To see some mischief on him. O!
Dies

CORNWALL

Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!
Where is thy lustre now?

GLOUCESTER

All dark and comfortless. Where's my son Edmund?
Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,
To quit this horrid act.

REGAN

Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee: it was he
That made the overture of thy treasons to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.

GLOUCESTER

O my follies! then Edgar was abused.
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

REGAN

Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover.
Exit one with GLOUCESTER

How is't, my lord? how look you?

CORNWALL

I have received a hurt: follow me, lady.

Exit CORNWALL, led by REGAN

ACT IV. SCENE 1. The heath.

Enter EDGAR

EDGAR

The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts. But who comes here?

Enter GLOUCESTER, led by an Old Man

My father, poorly led? World, world, O world!

GLOUCESTER

Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;
Thee they may hurt.

EDGAR

Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

GLOUCESTER

I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw[.]
O dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say I had eyes again! How now! Who's there?

EDGAR

'Tis poor mad Tom.
[Aside] And worse I may be yet: the worst is not
So long as we can say 'This is the worst.'

GLOUCESTER

Is it a beggar-man?

EDGAR

Madman and beggar too.

GLOUCESTER

He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;
Which made me think a man a worm: my son
Came then into my mind; and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him: I have heard
more since.

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods.
They kill us for their sport.

EDGAR

Bless thee, master!

GLOUCESTER

Is that the naked fellow?

EDGAR

Ay, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind.
Sirrah, naked fellow,--

EDGAR

Poor Tom's a-cold.

Aside

I cannot daub it further.

GLOUCESTER

Come hither, fellow.

EDGAR

[Aside] And yet I must.--Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

GLOUCESTER

Know'st thou the way to Dover?

EDGAR

Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-path.

GLOUCESTER

Here, take this purse, thou whom the heavens' plagues
Have humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier: heavens, deal so still!
Dost thou know Dover?

EDGAR

Ay, master.

GLOUCESTER

There is a cliff[.]
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me: from that place
I shall no leading need.

EDGAR

Give me thy arm:
Poor Tom shall lead thee.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 2. Before ALBANY's palace.

Enter GONERIL and EDMUND

GONERIL

Welcome, my lord: I marvel our mild husband
Not met us on the way.
Then shall you go no further.
Back, Edmund, to my brother;
Hasten his musters and conduct his powers:
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands.
A mistress's command. Wear this; spare speech;
Giving a favour

Decline your head: this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air:
Conceive, and fare thee well.

EDMUND

Yours in the ranks of death.

GONERIL

My most dear Gloucester!
Exit EDMUND

O, the difference of man and man!
To thee a woman's services are due:
My fool usurps my body.

Enter ALBANY

GONERIL

I have been worth the whistle.

ALBANY

O Goneril!

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition:

GONERIL

No more; the text is foolish.

ALBANY

Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile:
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate!

GONERIL

Milk-liver'd man!
Where's thy drum?
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;
With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats;
Whiles thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and criest
'Alack, why does he so?'

ALBANY

See thyself, devil!
Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
So horrid as in woman.

GONERIL

O vain fool!

ALBANY

Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
Be-monster not thy feature. Were't my fitness

To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones: howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

GONERIL

Marry, your manhood now--
Enter a Messenger

ALBANY

What news?

Messenger

O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's dead:
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloucester.

ALBANY

Gloucester's eye!

Messenger

A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Opposed against the act, bending his sword
To his great master; who, thereat enraged,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead;
But not without that harmful stroke, which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

ALBANY

This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge!

Messenger

This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;

'Tis from your sister.

GONERIL exits

ALBANY

Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

Messenger

Come with my lady hither.

ALBANY

He is not here.

Messenger

No, my good lord; I met him back again.

ALBANY

Knows he the wickedness?

Messenger

Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd against him;

ALBANY

Gloucester, I live

To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,

And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend:

Tell me what more thou know'st.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 3. The French camp near Dover.
[CUT]

ACT IV. SCENE 4. The same. A tent.

Enter, with drum and colours, CORDELIA, Doctor, and Soldiers

CORDELIA

Alack, 'tis he: why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye.

Exit an Officer

He that helps him take all my outward worth.

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

News, madam;
The British powers are marching hitherward.

CORDELIA

'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning and important tears hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right:
Soon may I hear and see him!

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 5. Gloucester's castle.

Enter REGAN and OSWALD

REGAN

But are my brother's powers set forth?

OSWALD

Ay, madam.

REGAN

Himself in person there?

OSWALD

Madam, with much ado:

Your sister is the better soldier.

REGAN

Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?

OSWALD

No, madam.

REGAN

What might import my sister's letter to him?

OSWALD

I know not, lady.

I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

REGAN

Our troops set forth to-morrow: stay with us;

The ways are dangerous.

OSWALD

I may not, madam:
My lady charged my duty in this business.

REGAN

Why should she write to Edmund?

OSWALD

Madam, I had rather--

REGAN

I know your lady does not love her husband;
I am sure of that: and at her late being here
She gave strange oeillades and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

OSWALD

I, madam?

REGAN

I speak in understanding; you are; I know't:
Therefore I do advise you, take this note:
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd;
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's[.]
So, fare you well.
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

OSWALD

Would I could meet him, madam! I should show
What party I do follow.

REGAN

Fare thee well.

Exeunt

ACT IV. SCENE 6. Fields near Dover.

Enter GLOUCESTER, and EDGAR dressed like a peasant

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:
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[.]

GLOUCESTER

Let go my hand.
Here, friend, 's another purse[.]
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 Edgar live, O, bless him!
Now, fellow, fare thee well.
He falls forward

EDGAR

What are you, sir?

GLOUCESTER

Away, and let me die.

EDGAR

Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.

GLOUCESTER

But have I fall'n, or no?

EDGAR

From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.
[D]o but look up.

GLOUCESTER

Alack, I have no eyes.
Is wretchedness deprived that benefit,
To end itself by death?

EDGAR

Give me your arm:
Up: so. How is 't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

GLOUCESTER

Too well, too well.

EDGAR

This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?

GLOUCESTER

A poor unfortunate beggar.

GLOUCESTER

[H]enceforth I'll bear
Affliction till it do cry out itself
'Enough, enough,' and die.

EDGAR

Bear free and patient thoughts. But who comes here?
Enter KING LEAR, fantastically dressed with wild flowers

KING LEAR

I am the king himself.

EDGAR

O thou side-piercing sight!

KING LEAR

Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted
cheese will do 't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove
it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills. O, well
flown, bird! i' the clout, i' the clout: hewgh!
Give the word.

GLOUCESTER

I know that voice.

KING LEAR

Ha! Goneril, with a white beard! They flattered

me like a dog[.] When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.

GLOUCESTER

The trick of that voice I do well remember:
Is 't not the king?

KING LEAR

Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause? Adultery?
Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
Though women all above:
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiends';
There's hell, there's darkness, there's the
sulphurous pit,
Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie,
fie, fie! pah, pah!

GLOUCESTER

O, let me kiss that hand!

KING LEAR

Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

GLOUCESTER

O ruin'd piece of nature!

Dost thou know me?

KING LEAR

I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid! I'll not love.

EDGAR

I would not take this from report; it is,
And my heart breaks at it.

KING LEAR

[Y]et you see how this world goes.

GLOUCESTER

I see it feelingly.

KING LEAR

What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

GLOUCESTER

Ay, sir.

KING LEAR

And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!

Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;

Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind

For which thou whipp'st her.

Get thee glass eyes;
And like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not.

GLOUCESTER

Alack, alack the day!

KING LEAR

When we are born, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of fools: this a good block;
It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
A troop of horse with felt: I'll put 't in proof;
And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants

Gentleman

O, here he is: lay hand upon him. Sir,
Your most dear daughter--

KING LEAR

No rescue? What, a prisoner?

Gentleman

You shall have any thing. Good sir,--

KING LEAR

I will die bravely, like a bridegroom. What!
I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that.

Gentleman

You are a royal one, and we obey you.

KING LEAR

Then there's life in't. Nay, if you get it, you shall get it with running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

Exit running; Attendants follow

Gentleman

A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

EDGAR

Hail, gentle sir.

Gentleman

Sir, speed you: what's your will?

EDGAR

Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward?

Gentleman

Most sure and vulgar: every one hears that,
Which can distinguish sound.

EDGAR

But, by your favour,
How near's the other army?

Gentleman

Near and on speedy foot; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.

EDGAR

I thank you, sir: that's all.

Gentleman

[T]he queen on special cause is here,
Her army is moved on.

EDGAR

I thank you, sir.
Exit Gentleman

GLOUCESTER

You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me:
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again
To die before you please!

EDGAR

Well pray you, father.

GLOUCESTER

Now, good sir, what are you?

EDGAR

A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows;
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some biding.

GLOUCESTER

Hearty thanks:
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!
Enter OSWALD

OSWALD

A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember: the sword is out

That must destroy thee.

EDGAR interposes

OSWALD

Let go, slave, or thou diest!

EDGAR

Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk
pass.

OSWALD

Out, dunghill!

EDGAR

Ch'll pick your teeth, zir: come; no matter vor
your foins.

They fight, and EDGAR knocks him down

OSWALD

Slave, thou hast slain me: villain, take my purse:
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;
And give the letters which thou find'st about me
To Edmund earl of Gloucester; seek him out
Upon the British party: O, untimely death!

Dies

EDGAR

I know thee well: a serviceable villain;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

GLOUCESTER

What, is he dead?

EDGAR

Sit you down, father; rest you
Let's see these pockets: the letters that he speaks of
May be my friends.

Reads

GONERIL

'Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have
many opportunities to cut him off: if your will
want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered.
There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror:
then am I the prisoner, and his bed my goal; from
the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply
the place for your labour.

'Your--wife, so I would say--

'Affectionate servant,

'GONERIL.'

EDGAR

A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
And the exchange my brother!

GLOUCESTER

The king is mad[.]

EDGAR

Give me your hand:

Drum afar off

Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum:
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend.

Exeunt

**ACT IV. SCENE 7. A tent in the French camp.
LEAR on a bed asleep,**

soft music playing; Gentleman, and others attending.
Enter CORDELIA, KENT, and Doctor

CORDELIA

O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.

KENT

To be acknowledged, madam, is o'erpaid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

CORDELIA

How does the king?

KENT

Madam, sleeps still.

CORDELIA

O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
O my dear father! Restoration hang
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

KENT

Kind and dear princess!

CORDELIA

Alack, alack!

'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all. He wakes; speak to him.

KENT

Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

CORDELIA

How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?

KING LEAR

You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like moulten lead.

CORDELIA

Sir, do you know me?

KING LEAR

You are a spirit, I know: when did you die?

CORDELIA

Still, still, far wide!

KENT

He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.

KING LEAR

I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity,
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
Of my condition!

CORDELIA

O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:
No, sir, you must not kneel.

KING LEAR

Pray, do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

CORDELIA

And so I am, I am.

KING LEAR

Be your tears wet? yes, 'faith. I pray, weep not:
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
You have some cause, they have not.

CORDELIA

No cause, no cause.

KING LEAR

Am I in France?

KENT

In your own kingdom, sir.

KING LEAR

Do not abuse me.

CORDELIA

Will't please your highness walk?

KING LEAR

You must bear with me:

Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.

Exeunt all but KENT.

KENT

My point and period will be throughly wrought,

Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought.

Exit

ACT V. SCENE 1. The British camp, near Dover.

Enter, with drum and colours, EDMUND, REGAN, Gentlemen, and Soldiers.

EDMUND

Know of the duke if his last purpose hold,
To a Gentleman, who goes out

REGAN

Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

EDMUND

'Tis to be doubted, madam.

REGAN

Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you:
Tell me--but truly--but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister?

EDMUND

In honour'd love.

REGAN

But have you never found my brother's way
To the forfended place?

EDMUND

That thought abuses you.

REGAN

I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

EDMUND

No, by mine honour, madam.

REGAN

I never shall endure her: dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

EDMUND

Fear me not:

She and the duke her husband!

Enter, with drum and colours, ALBANY, GONERIL, and Soldiers

GONERIL

[Aside] I had rather lose the battle than that sister
Should loosen him and me.

ALBANY

Our very loving sister, well be-met.
Sir, this I hear; the king is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigor of our state
Forced to cry out.

GONERIL

Combine together 'gainst the enemy;
For these domestic and particular broils
Are not the question here.

ALBANY

Let's then determine
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

EDMUND

I shall attend you presently at your tent.

REGAN

Sister, you'll go with us?

GONERIL

No.

REGAN

'Tis most convenient; pray you, go with us.

GONERIL

[Aside] O, ho, I know the riddle.--I will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR disguised

EDGAR

If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.

ALBANY

I'll overtake you. Speak.

Exeunt all but ALBANY and EDGAR

EDGAR

Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it[.]
Fortune love you.

ALBANY

Stay till I have read the letter.

EDGAR

I was forbid it.

When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I'll appear again.

ALBANY

Why, fare thee well: I will o'erlook thy paper.

Exit EDGAR

Re-enter EDMUND

EDMUND

The enemy's in view; draw up your powers.

ALBANY

We will greet the time.

Exit

EDMUND

To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive: to take the widow
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive. Now then we'll use
His countenance for the battle; which being done,
Let her who would be rid of him devise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,
The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon[.]

Exit

ACT V. SCENE 2. A field between the two camps.

Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours, KING LEAR, CORDELIA, and Soldiers, over the stage; and exeunt

Enter EDGAR and GLOUCESTER

EDGAR

Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive:
If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.

GLOUCESTER

Grace go with you, sir!
Exit EDGAR

Alarum and retreat within. Re-enter EDGAR

EDGAR

Away, old man; give me thy hand; away!
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en:
Give me thy hand; come on.

GLOUCESTER

No farther, sir; a man may rot even here.

EDGAR

Ripeness is all: Come on.

GLOUCESTER

And that's true too.
Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE 3. The British camp near Dover.

Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours, EDMUND, KING LEAR and CORDELIA, prisoners; Captain, Soldiers, & c

EDMUND

Some officers take them away[.]

CORDELIA

We are not the first
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?

KING LEAR

No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: 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[.]

EDMUND

Take them away.

KING LEAR

Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee?
Wipe thine eyes;
The good-years shall devour them, flesh and fell,
Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see 'em starve

first. Come.

Exeunt KING LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded

EDMUND

Giving a paper

go follow them to prison:
[K]now thou this, that men
Are as the time is: to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword:
[E]ither say thou'lt do 't,
Or thrive by other means.

Captain

I'll do 't, my lord.

EDMUND

Mark, I say, instantly; and carry it so

Captain

If it be man's work, I'll do 't.

Exit

*Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, another Captain,
and Soldiers*

ALBANY

Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well: you have the captives
That were the opposites of this day's strife:
We do require them of you[.]

EDMUND

Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention and appointed guard;
With him I sent the queen;
My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend[.]
The question of Cordelia and her father
Requires a fitter place.

ALBANY

Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

REGAN

That's as we list to grace him.
Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded,
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers[.]

GONERIL

Not so hot:
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
More than in your addition.

REGAN

In my rights,
By me invested, he compeers the best.

GONERIL

That were the most, if he should husband you.

REGAN

Jesters do oft prove prophets.

GONERIL

Holla, holla!

That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.

REGAN

Lady, I am not well; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach. General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine:
Witness the world, that I create thee here
My lord and master.

GONERIL

Mean you to enjoy him?

ALBANY

The let-alone lies not in your good will.

EDMUND

Nor in thine, lord.

ALBANY

Half-blooded fellow, yes.

REGAN

[To EDMUND] Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

ALBANY

Stay yet; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason; and, in thine attaint,
This gilded serpent
Pointing to Goneril

For your claim, fair sister,
I bar it in the interest of my wife:
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your bans.
If you will marry, make your loves to me,
My lady is bespoke.

GONERIL

An interlude!

ALBANY

Thou art arm'd, Gloucester: let the trumpet sound:
If none appear to prove upon thy head
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge;
Throwing down a glove

I'll prove it on thy heart,
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

REGAN

Sick, O, sick!

GONERIL

[Aside] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.

EDMUND

There's my exchange:
Throwing down a glove

what in the world he is
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:

REGAN

My sickness grows upon me.

ALBANY

She is not well; convey her to my tent.

Exit Regan, led

Enter EDGAR, at the third sound, armed, with a trumpet before him

ALBANY

Ask him his purposes[.]

Herald

What are you?

Your name, your quality?

EDGAR

Know, my name is lost;

By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit:

Yet am I noble as the adversary

I come to cope.

ALBANY

Which is that adversary?

EDGAR

What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of Gloucester?

EDMUND

Himself: what say'st thou to him?

EDGAR

Draw thy sword,

That, if my speech offend a noble heart,

Thy arm may do thee justice: here is mine.

Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,

Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor;

False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;

Conspirant 'gainst this high-illustrious prince[.]

Say thou 'No,'

This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent

To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,

Thou liest.

EDMUND

In wisdom I should ask thy name;
But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak!
Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls

GONERIL

This is practise, Gloucester:
By the law of arms thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguiled.

ALBANY

Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it: Hold, sir:
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:
No tearing, lady: I perceive you know it.
Gives the letter to EDMUND

GONERIL

Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine:
Who can arraign me for't.

ALBANY

Most monstrous! oh!
Know'st thou this paper?

GONERIL

Ask me not what I know.
Exit

ALBANY

Go after her: she's desperate; govern her.

EDMUND

What you have charged me with, that have I done;

And more, much more; the time will bring it out:
'Tis past, and so am I. But what art thou

EDGAR

Let's exchange charity.

I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;

If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.

My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices

Make instruments to plague us:

EDMUND

Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;

The wheel is come full circle: I am here.

ALBANY

Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I

Did hate thee or thy father!

EDGAR

Worthy prince, I know't.

Enter a Gentleman, with a bloody knife

Gentleman

Help, help, O, help!

Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister

By her is poisoned; she hath confess'd it.

EDMUND

I was contracted to them both: all three

Now marry in an instant.

EDGAR

Here comes Kent.

ALBANY

This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,

Touches us not with pity.

Exit Gentleman

Enter KENT

O, is this he?
The time will not allow the compliment
Which very manners urges.

KENT

I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night:
Is he not here?

ALBANY

Great thing of us forgot!
Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's Cordelia?
See'st thou this object, Kent?
The bodies of GONERIL and REGAN are brought in

KENT

Alack, why thus?

EDMUND

Yet Edmund was beloved:
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.

ALBANY

Even so. Cover their faces.

EDMUND

I pant for life: some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,
Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia:
Nay, send in time.

ALBANY

Run, run, O, run!

EDGAR

To who, my lord? Who hath the office? send
Thy token of reprieve.

EDMUND

Well thought on: take my sword,
Give it the captain.

ALBANY

Haste thee, for thy life.

Exit EDGAR

EDMUND

He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself.

ALBANY

The gods defend her!

EDMUND is borne off

*Re-enter KING LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms;
EDGAR, Captain, and others following*

KING LEAR

Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones:
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever!
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

KENT

Is this the promised end

EDGAR

Or image of that horror?

ALBANY

Fall, and cease!

KING LEAR

This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

KENT

[Kneeling] O my good master!

KING LEAR

Prithee, away.

EDGAR

'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

KING LEAR

A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have saved her; now she's gone for ever!
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!
What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

Captain

'Tis true, my lords, he did.

KING LEAR

Who are you?

Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you straight.

KENT

If fortune brag of two she loved and hated,
One of them we behold.

KING LEAR

This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

KENT

The same,

Your servant Kent[.]

That, from your first of difference and decay,
Have follow'd your sad steps.

KING LEAR

You are welcome hither.

KENT

Nor no man else: all's cheerless, dark, and deadly.
Your eldest daughters have fordone them selves,
And desperately are dead.

KING LEAR

Ay, so I think.

ALBANY

He knows not what he says: and vain it is
That we present us to him.

EDGAR

Very bootless.
Enter a Captain

Captain

Edmund is dead, my lord.

ALBANY

That's but a trifle here.
You lords and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay may come
Shall be applied: for us we will resign,
During the life of this old majesty,
To him our absolute power:
To EDGAR and KENT

you, to your rights:

With boot, and such addition as your honours
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings. O, see, see!

KING LEAR

And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.
Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
Look there, look there!

Dies

EDGAR

He faints! My lord, my lord!

KENT

Break, heart; I prithee, break!

EDGAR

Look up, my lord.

KENT

Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him much
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

EDGAR

He is gone, indeed.

KENT

The wonder is, he hath endured so long[.]

ALBANY

Our present business

Is general woe.

To KENT and EDGAR

Friends of my soul, you twain

Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

KENT

I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;

My master calls me, I must not say no.

ALBANY

The weight of this sad time we must obey;

Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

The oldest hath borne most: we that are young

Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

Exeunt, with a dead march