
THE TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR (1606)



by William Shakespeare

Styled by LimpidSoft

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John Redmond
Sydney, Australia

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Lear, King of Britain. King of France. Duke of Burgundy. Duke of Cornwall. Duke of Albany. Earl of Kent. Earl of Gloucester. Edgar, son of Gloucester. Edmund, bastard son to Gloucester. Curan, a courtier. Old Man, tenant to Gloucester. Doctor. Lear's Fool. Oswald, steward to Goneril. A Captain under Edmund's command. Gentlemen. A Herald. Servants to Cornwall.

Goneril, daughter to Lear. Regan, daughter to Lear. Cordelia, daughter to Lear.

Knights attending on Lear, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers, Attendants.

SCENE: – BRITAIN

ACT I

SCENE I

KING LEAR'S PALACE

Enter Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund. (Kent and Gloucester converse, Edmund stands back)

KENT I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall

GLOU It did always seem so to us; but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the Dukes he values most, for equalities are so weigh'd that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety

KENT Is not this your son, my lord?

GLOU His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge

KENT I cannot conceive you

GLOU Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-womb'd, and had indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed

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

GLOU But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account

EDM *Comes forward*) No, my lord

GLOU My Lord of Kent

EDM My services to your lordship

KENT I must love you, and sue to know you better

EDM Sir, I shall study deserving

GLOU He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again

Sound a sennet.

The King is coming

Enter one bearing a coronet; then Lear; then the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall; next, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, with Followers

LEAR Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester

GLOU I shall, my liege

Exeunt Gloucester and Edmund

LEAR Meantime we shall express our darker purpose

Give me the map there. Know 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

(Since now we will divest us both of rule, Interest of territory, cares of state),

Which of you shall we say doth love us most?

That we our largest bounty may extend

Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril, Our eldest-born, speak first.

GON Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;

Dearer than eyesight, 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 lov'd, or father found;

A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable.

Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

COR *Aside* What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent

LEAR Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,

With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,

With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,

We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issue

Be this perpetual.- What says our second daughter,

Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

REG Sir, I am made

Of the selfsame 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.

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

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,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interest; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

COR Nothing, my lord

LEAR Nothing?

COR Nothing

LEAR Nothing can come of nothing

COR Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty
According to my bond; no more nor less.

LEAR How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a
little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

COR Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd 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.

LEAR But goes thy heart with this?

COR Ay, good my lord

LEAR So young, and so untender?

COR So young, my lord, and true

LEAR Let it be so! thy truth then be thy dower!
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate and the night;
By all the operation of the orbs
From whom we do exist and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous
Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,
As thou my sometime daughter.

KENT Good my liege—

LEAR Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery— Hence and avoid my sight!—
So be my grave my peace as here I give
Her father's heart from her! Call France! Who
stirs?
Call Burgundy! Cornwall and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third;
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly in my power,
Preeminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. Ourself, 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 th' additions to a king. The
sway,
Revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours; which to confirm,
This coronet part betwixt you.

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

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 wouldst thou do, old
man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak
When power to flattery bows? To plainness
honour's bound
When majesty falls to folly. Reverse thy doom;
And in thy best consideration check
This hideous rashness. Answer my life my
judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least,
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.

LEAR Kent, on thy life, no more!

KENT My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

LEAR Out of my sight!

KENT See better, Lear, and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.

LEAR Now by Apollo—

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

LEAR O vassal! miscreant!

Lays his hand on his sword

ALB , Corn

KENT Do!

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

LEAR Hear me, recreant!

On thine allegiance, hear me!
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow-
Which we durst never yet- and with strain'd pride
To come between our sentence and our power,-
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,-
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world,
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom. If, on the tenth day
following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter,
This shall not be revok'd.

KENT Fare thee well, King

Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.
To Cordelia The gods to their dear shelter take
thee, maid,
That justly think'st and hast most rightly said!
To Regan and Goneril And your large speeches
may your deeds
approve,
That good effects may spring from words of love.
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;
He'll shape his old course in a country new.
Exit

FLOURISH Enter Gloucester, with France and
Burgundy; Attendants

GLOU Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord

LEAR My Lord of Burgundy,

We first address toward you, who with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter. What in the least
Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

BUR Most royal Majesty,

I crave no more than hath your Highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

LEAR Right noble Burgundy,

When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands.
If aught within that little seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,
And nothing more, may fitly like your Grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

BUR I know no answer

LEAR Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new adopted to our hate,

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

BUR Pardon me, royal sir

Election makes not up on such conditions.

LEAR Then leave her, sir; for, by the pow'r that
made me,

I tell you all her wealth. *To France* For you, great
King,

I would not from your love make such a stray
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
T' avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is asham'd
Almost t' acknowledge hers.

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. Sure her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fall'n into taint; which to believe of her
Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Should never plant in me.

COR I yet beseech your Majesty,

If for I want that glib and oily art
To speak and purpose not, since what I well
intend,
I'll do't before I speak- that you make known
It is no vicious blot, murther, or foulness,
No unchaste action or dishonoured step,
That hath depriv'd 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.

LEAR Better thou

Hadst not been born than not t' have pleas'd me
better.

FRANCE Is it but this- a tardiness in nature

Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love's not love
When it is mingled with regards that stands
Aloof from th' entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

BUR Royal Lear,

Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

LEAR Nothing! I have sworn; I am firm

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

COR Peace be with Burgundy!

Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

FRANCE Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon.
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect
My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.
Thy dow'rless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.
Not all the dukes in wat'rish Burgundy
Can buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind.
Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

LEAR Thou hast her, France; let her be thine; for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again. Therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.
Come, noble Burgundy.

*Flourish. Exeunt Lear, Burgundy, Cornwall,
Albany,
Gloucester, and Attendants*

FRANCE Bid farewell to your sisters

COR 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 nam'd. Use well our
father.
To your professed bosoms I commit him;
But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place!
So farewell to you both.

GON Prescribe not us our duties

REG Let your study
Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have
wanted.

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

FRANCE Come, my fair Cordelia
Exeunt France and Cordelia

GON Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most
nearly appertains to us both

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

GON You see how full of changes his age is
sister most, and with what poor judgment he hath
now cast her off appears too grossly.

REG 'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever
but slenderly known himself

GON The best and soundest of his time hath been
but rash; then must we look to receive from his

age, not alone the imperfections of long-ingrafted
condition, but therewithal the unruly
waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring
with them

REG Such unconstant starts are we like to have
from him as this of Kent's banishment

GON There is further compliment of leave-taking
between France and him

REG We shall further think on't

GON We must do something, and i' th' heat
Exeunt

SCENE II

The Earl of Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Edmund the Bastard solus, with a letter

EDM Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen
moonshines
Lag of a brother? 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?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to th' creating a whole tribe of fops
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to th' legitimate. Fine word- 'legitimate'!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top th' legitimate. I grow; I prosper.
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter Gloucester

GLOU Kent banish'd thus? and France in choler
parted?
And the King gone to-night? subscrib'd his
pow'r?
Confin'd to exhibition? All this done
Upon the gad? Edmund, how now? What news?

EDM So please your lordship, none
Puts up the letter

GLOU Why so earnestly seek you to put up that
letter?

EDM I know no news, my lord

GLOU What paper were you reading?

EDM Nothing, my lord

GLOU No? What needed then that terrible dispatch
of it into your pocket? The quality of nothing

hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see.
Come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

EDM I beseech you, sir, pardon me
perus'd, I find it not fit for your o'erlooking.

GLOU Give me the letter, sir

EDM I shall offend, either to detain or give it

GLOU Let's see, let's see!

EDM I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote
this but as an essay or taste of my virtue

GLOU (*Reads*)

'This policy and reverence of age makes
the world bitter to the best of our times;
keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness
cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle
and fond bondage in the oppression of aged
tyranny, who sways, not as it hath power,
but as it is suffer'd. Come to me, that of
this I may speak more. If our father would
sleep till I wak'd him, you should enjoy
half his revenue for ever, and live the
beloved of your brother,
'EDGAR.'

Hum! Conspiracy? 'Sleep till I wak'd him, you
should enjoy half his revenue.' My son Edgar!
Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to
breed it in? When came this to you? Who
brought it?

EDM It was not brought me, my lord: there's the
cunning of it

GLOU You know the character to be your brother's?

EDM If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear
it were his; but in respect of that, I would fain
think it were not

GLOU It is his

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

GLOU Hath he never before sounded you in this
business?

EDM Never, my lord

GLOU O villain, villain! His very opinion in the
letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested,
brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah,
seek him

EDM I do not well know, my lord

GLOU Think you so?

EDM If your honour judge it meet, I will place you
where you shall hear us confer of this and by an
auricular assurance have your satisfaction, and
that without any further delay than this very
evening

GLOU He cannot be such a monster

EDM Nor is not, sure

GLOU To his father, that so tenderly and entirely
loves him

Heaven and earth! Edmund, seek him out; wind
me into him, I pray you; frame the business after
your own wisdom. I would unstate myself to be
in a due resolution.

EDM I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the
business as I shall find means, and acquaint you
withal

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

EDM This is the excellent foppery of the world,
that, when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeit
of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our
disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we
were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly
compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by
spherical pre-dominance; drunkards, liars, and
adulterers by an enforc'd obedience of planetary
influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine
thrusting on Edgar—

Enter Edgar

and pat! he comes, like the catastrophe of the old
comedy. My cue is villainous melancholy, with a
sigh like Tom o' Bedlam.

O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! Fa,
sol, la, mi.

EDG How now, brother Edmund? What serious
contemplation are you in?

EDM I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read
this other day, what should follow these eclipses

EDG Do you busy yourself with that?

EDM I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed
unhappily: as of unnaturalness between the child
and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of
ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and
maledictions against king and nobles; needless
diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of
cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what

EDG How long have you been a sectary
astronomical?

EDM Come, come! When saw you my father last?

EDG The night gone by

EDM Spake you with him?

EDG Ay, two hours together

EDM Parted you in good terms? Found you no
displeasure in him by word or countenance

EDG None at all

EDM Bethink yourself wherein you may have
offended him; and at my entreaty forbear his
presence until some little time hath qualified the
heat of his displeasure, which at this instant so
rageth in him that with the mischief of your

person it would scarcely allay

EDG Some villain hath done me wrong

EDM That's my fear

EDG Arm'd, brother?

EDM Brother, I advise you to the best

EDG Shall I hear from you anon?

EDM 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 practices 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

SCENE III

The Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter Goneril and her Steward Oswald

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

OSW Ay, madam

GON 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. When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him. Say I am sick.
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

Horns within

OSW He's coming, madam; I hear him

GON Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows. I'd have it come to
question.
If he distaste it, let him to our sister,
Whose mind and mine I know in that are one,
Not to be overrul'd. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away! Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again, and must be us'd
With checks as flatteries, when they are seen
abus'd.
Remember what I have said.

OSW Very well, madam

GON And let his knights have colder looks among
you
What grows of it, no matter. Advise your fellows
so.
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
That I may speak. I'll write straight to my sister
To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.

Exeunt

SCENE IV

The Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter Kent, (disguised)

KENT If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I raz'd my likeness. Now, banish'd
Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand
condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lov'st,
Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter Lear, Knights, and Attendants

LEAR Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it
ready

Exit an Attendant How now? What art thou?

KENT A man, sir

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, to love
him that is honest, to converse with him that is
wise and says little, to fear judgment, to fight
when I cannot choose, and to eat no fish

LEAR What art thou?

KENT A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as
the King

LEAR If thou be'st as poor for a subject as he's for a
king, thou art poor enough

KENT Service

LEAR Who wouldst thou serve?

KENT You

LEAR Dost thou know me, fellow?

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

LEAR What's that?

KENT Authority

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

LEAR How old art thou?

KENT Not so young, sir, to love a woman for
singing, nor so old to dote on her for anything

LEAR Follow me; thou shalt serve me

Where's my knave? my fool? Go you and call
my fool hither.

Exit an attendant
Enter Oswald the Steward

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

OSW So please you— *Exit*

LEAR What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back

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

Enter Knight

How now? Where's that mongrel?

KNIGHT He says, my lord, your daughter is not well

LEAR Why came not the slave back to me when I call'd him?

KNIGHT Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not

LEAR He would not?

KNIGHT My lord, I know not what the matter is; but to my judgment your Highness is not entertain'd with that ceremonious affection as you were wont

LEAR Ha! say'st thou so?

KNIGHT I beseech you pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your Highness wrong'd

LEAR Thou but rememb'rest me of mine own conception

KNIGHT Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away

LEAR No more of that; I have noted it well

Exit an Attendant.

Enter Oswald the Steward

O, you, sir, you! Come you hither, sir. Who am I, sir?

OSW My lady's father

LEAR 'My lady's father'? My lord's knave! You whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

OSW I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon

LEAR Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

Strikes him

OSW I'll not be strucken, my lord

KENT Nor tripp'd neither, you base football player?

Trips up his heels

LEAR I thank thee, fellow

KENT Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences

Pushes him out.

LEAR Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee

Enter Fool

FOOL Let me hire him too

Offers Kent his cap.

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

LEAR Why, my boy?

FOOL If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself
There's mine! beg another of thy daughters.

LEAR Take heed, sirrah— the whip

FOOL Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipp'd out, when Lady the brach may stand by th' fire and stink

LEAR A pestilent gall to me!

FOOL Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech

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,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest;
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 Then 'tis like the breath of an unfeed lawyer— you gave me nothing for't

LEAR Why, no, boy

FOOL *To Kent* Prithee tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to

LEAR A bitter fool!

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

LEAR No, lad; teach me

FOOL That lord that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me—
Do thou for him stand
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there

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

FOOL No, faith; lords and great men will not let me

LEAR What two crowns shall they be?

FOOL Why, after I have cut the egg i' th' middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg

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

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

FOOL I have us'd it, nuncle, ever since thou mad'st
thy daughters thy mother; for when thou gav'st
them the rod, and put'st down thine own
breeches,

Sings 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.

LEAR An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipp'd

FOOL I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are
Enter Goneril

LEAR How now, daughter? What makes that
frontlet on? Methinks you are too much o' late i'
th' frown

FOOL Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no
need to care for her frowning
(*To Goneril*) Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue.
So your face bids me, though you say nothing.
Mum, mum!

*He that keeps nor crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some.-
(Points at Lear)* That's a sheal'd peascod.

GON Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd 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; which if you should, the fault
Would not scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Must call discreet proceeding.

FOOL For you know, nuncle,

The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long
That it had it head bit off by it young

So out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

LEAR Are you our daughter?

GON Come, sir,
I would you would make use of that good wisdom

Whereof I know you are fraught, and put away
These dispositions that of late transform you
From what you rightly are.

FOOL May not an ass know when the cart draws the
horse?

Whoop, Jug, I love thee!

LEAR Doth any here know me? This is not Lear
Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his
eyes?

Either his notion weakens, his discernings
Are lethargied- Ha! waking? 'Tis not so!
Who is it that can tell me who I am?

FOOL Lear's shadow

LEAR I would learn that; for, by the marks of
sovereignty,
Knowledge, and reason, I should be false
persuaded
I had daughters.

FOOL Which they will make an obedient father

LEAR Your name, fair gentlewoman?

GON This admiration, sir, is much o' th' savour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright.
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 grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy. Be then desir'd
By her that else will take the thing she begs
A little to disquantity your train,
And the remainder that shall still depend
To be such men as may besort your age,
Which know themselves, and you.

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

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

Enter Albany

LEAR Woe that too late repents!- O, sir, are you
come?
Is it your will? Speak, sir!- Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster!

ALB Pray, sir, be patient

LEAR *To Goneril* Detested kite, thou liest!
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know

And in the most exact regard support
 The worships of their name.- O most small fault,
 How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
 Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of
 nature
 From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love
 And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
 Beat at this gate that let thy folly in *Strikes his
 head*
 And thy dear judgment out! Go, go, my people.

ALB My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
 Of what hath mov'd you.

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! If she must teem,
 Create her child of spleen, that it may live
 And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her.
 Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,
 With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
 Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
 To laughter and contempt, that she may feel
 How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
 To have a thankless child! Away, away! *Exit.*

ALB Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

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

LEAR What, fifty of my followers at a clap?
 Within a fortnight?

ALB What's the matter, sir?

LEAR I'll tell thee
 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!
 Th' untented woundings of a father's curse
 Pierce every sense about thee!- Old fond eyes,
 Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,
 And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
 To temper clay. Yea, is it come to this?
 Let it 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. Thou shalt find
 That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
 I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.
Exeunt Lear, Kent, and Attendants

GON Do you mark that, my lord?

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

GON Pray you, content
To the Fool You, sir, more knave than fool, after
 your master!

FOOL Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry! Take the
 fool with thee

A fox when one has caught her,
 And such a daughter,
 Should sure to the slaughter,
 If my cap would buy a halter
 So the fool follows after.

Exit

GON This man hath had good counsel! A hundred
 knights?
 'Tis politic and safe to let him keep
 At point a hundred knights; yes, that on every
 dream,
 Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
 He may enguard his dotage with their pow'rs
 And hold our lives in mercy.- Oswald, I say!

ALB Well, you may fear too far

GON Safer than trust too far
 Let me still take away the harms I fear,
 Not fear still to be taken. I know his heart.
 What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister.
 If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
 When I have show'd th' unfitness-

Enter Oswald the Steward

How now, Oswald?
 What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

OSW Yes, madam

GON Take you some company, and away to horse!
 Inform her full of my particular fear,
 And thereto add such reasons of your own
 As may compact it more. Get you gone,
 And hasten your return. *Exit Oswald* No, no, my
 lord!
 This milky gentleness and course of yours,
 Though I condemn it not, yet, under pardon,
 You are much more at task for want of wisdom
 Than prais'd for harmful mildness.

ALB How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell
 Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

GON Nay then-

ALB Well, well; th' event

SCENE V

*Court before the Duke of Albany's Palace.
Enter Lear, Kent, and Fool*

LEAR Go you before to Gloucester with these letters

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

Exit

FOOL If a man's brains were in's heels, were't not
in danger of kibes?

LEAR Ay, boy

FOOL Then I prithee be merry

LEAR Ha, ha, ha!

FOOL Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee
kindly; for though she's as like this as a crab's
like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell

LEAR What canst tell, boy?

FOOL She'll taste as like this as a crab does to a crab

LEAR No

FOOL Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose,
that what a man cannot smell out, 'a may spy into

LEAR I did her wrong

FOOL Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

LEAR No

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

LEAR Why?

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

LEAR I will forget my nature

FOOL Thy asses are gone about 'em

LEAR Because they are not eight?

FOOL Yes indeed

LEAR To tak't again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

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

LEAR How's that?

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

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

Enter a Gentleman

How now? Are the horses ready?

GENT Ready, my lord

LEAR Come, boy

FOOL She that's a maid now, and laughs at my
departure,
Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut
shorter

Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I

A court within the Castle of the Earl of Gloucester.

Enter Edmund the Bastard and Curan, meeting

EDM Save thee, Curan

CUR And you, sir notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his Duchess will be here with him this night.

EDM How comes that?

CUR Nay, I know not whisper'd ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?

EDM Not I

CUR Have you heard of no likely wars toward 'twixt the two Dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

EDM Not a word

CUR You may do, then, in time

EDM The Duke be here to-night? The better! best! This weaves itself perforce into my business. My father hath set guard to take my brother; And I have one thing, of a queasy question, Which I must act. Briefness and fortune, work! 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' th' night, i' th' haste, And Regan with him. Have you nothing said Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany? Advise yourself.

EDG I am sure on't, not a word

EDM I hear my father coming

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 Of my more fierce endeavour. *Stabs his arm* I have seen

drunkards

Do more than this in sport.- Father, father!- Stop, stop! No help?

Enter Gloucester, and Servants with torches

GLOU Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

EDM Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out, Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon To stand 's auspicious mistress.

GLOU But where is he?

EDM Look, sir, I bleed

GLOU Where is the villain, Edmund?

EDM Fled this way, sir

GLOU Pursue him, ho! Go after
By no means what?

EDM 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 th' father- sir, in fine, Seeing how loathly opposite I stood To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion With his prepared sword he charges home My unprovided body, lanch'd mine arm; But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits, Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to th' encounter, Or whether gasted by the noise I made, Full suddenly he fled.

GLOU Let him fly far

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught; And found- dispatch. The noble Duke my master, My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night. By his authority I will proclaim it That he which find, him shall deserve our thanks, Bringing the murderous caitiff to the stake; He that conceals him, death.

EDM 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, dost thou think, If I would stand against thee, would the reposal Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee Make thy words faith'd? No. What I should deny (As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce My very character), I'd turn it all To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice;

And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it.'

GLOU Strong and fast'ned villain!
Would he deny his letter? I never got him.

Tucket within

Hark, the Duke's trumpets! I know not why he comes.
All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not scape;
The Duke must grant me that. Besides, his picture
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
May have due note of him, and of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, and Attendants

CORN How now, my noble friend? Since I came hither
(Which I can call but now) I have heard strange news.

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

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

REG What, did my father's godson seek your life?
He whom my father nam'd? Your Edgar?

GLOU O lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

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

GLOU I know not, madam

EDM Yes, madam, he was of that consort

REG No marvel then though he were ill affected
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have th' 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.

CORN Nor I, assure thee, Regan
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A childlike office.

EDM 'Twas my duty, sir

GLOU He did bewray his practice, and receiv'd
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

CORN Is he pursued?

GLOU Ay, my good lord

CORN If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm. Make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please. For you,
Edmund,

Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours.
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

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

GLOU For him I thank your Grace

CORN You know not why we came to visit you-

REG Thus out of season, threading dark-ey'd night
Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise,
Wherein we must have use of your advice.
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home. The several messengers
From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,
Lay comforts to your bosom, and bestow
Your needful counsel to our business,
Which craves the instant use.

GLOU I serve you, madam
Your Graces are right welcome.
Exeunt. Flourish

SCENE II

Before Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Kent and Oswald the Steward, severally

OSW Good dawning to thee, friend

KENT Ay

OSW Where may we set our horses?

KENT I' th' mire

OSW Prithee, if thou lov'st me, tell me

KENT I love thee not

OSW Why then, I care not for thee

KENT If I had thee in Lipsbury Pinfold, I would
make thee care for me.

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

KENT Fellow, I know thee

OSW What dost thou know me for?

KENT A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking, whoreson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pander, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch; one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deny the least syllable of thy addition.

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

KENT What a brazen-fac'd varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me!

Is it two days ago since I beat thee and tripp'd up thy heels before the King? *Draws his sword*
Draw, you rogue! for, though it be night, yet the moon shines. I'll make a sop o' th' moonshine o' you. Draw, you whoreson cullionly barbermonger! draw!

OSW Away! I have nothing to do with thee

KENT Draw, you rascal! You come with letters against the King, and take Vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father

OSW Help, ho! murder! help!

KENT Strike, you slave! Stand, rogue! Stand, you neat slave!
Strike! *Beats him*

OSW Help, ho! murder! murder!
Enter Edmund, with his rapier drawn, Gloucester, Cornwall, Regan, Servants

EDM How now? What's the matter? *Parts them*

KENT With you, Goodman boy, an you please!
Come, I'll flesh ye!
Come on, young master!

GLOU Weapons? arms? What's the matter here?

CORN Keep peace, upon your lives!
He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

REG The messengers from our sister and the King

CORN What is your difference? Speak

OSW I am scarce in breath, my lord

KENT No marvel, you have so bestirr'd your valour rascal, nature disclaims in thee; a tailor made thee.

CORN Thou art a strange fellow

KENT Ay, a tailor, sir
made him so ill, though he had been but two hours at the trade.

CORN Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

OSW This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spar'd
At suit of his grey beard—

KENT Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary letter!
My lord, if you'll give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain into mortar and daub the walls of a jakes with him. 'Spare my grey beard,' you wagtail?

CORN Peace, sirrah!
You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

KENT Yes, sir, but anger hath a privilege

CORN Why art thou angry?

KENT That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords atwain
Which are too intrinsic t' unloose; smooth every passion

That in the natures of their lords rebel,
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
Knowing naught (like dogs) but following.
A plague upon your epileptic visage!
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?
Goose, an I had you upon Sarum Plain,
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

CORN What, art thou mad, old fellow?

GLOU How fell you out? Say that

KENT No contraries hold more antipathy
Than I and such a knave.

CORN Why dost thou call him knave? What is his fault?

KENT His countenance likes me not

CORN No more perchance does mine, or his, or 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.

CORN This is some fellow
Who, having been prais'd 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!
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know which in this plainness
Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly-ducking observants
That stretch their duties nicely.

KENT Sir, in good faith, in sincere verity,
Under th' allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phoebus' front—

CORN What mean'st by this?

KENT To go out of my dialect, which you
discommend so much know, sir, I am no flatterer.
He that beguil'd you in a plain accent was a plain
knave, which, for my part, I will not be, though I
should win your displeasure to entreat me to't.

CORN What was th' offence you gave him?

OSW I never gave him any
It pleas'd the King his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd
And put upon him such a deal of man
That worthied him, got praises of the King
For him attempting who was self-subdu'd;
And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,

Drew on me here again.

KENT None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajax is their fool.

CORN Fetch forth the stocks!
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverent
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.
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

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

REG 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.

REG Sir, being his knave, I will

CORN This is a fellow of the selfsame colour
Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the
stocks!

Stocks brought out

GLOU Let me beseech your Grace not to do so
His fault is much, and the good King his master
Will check him for't. Your purpos'd low
correction
Is such as basest and contemn'dest wretches
For pilf'rings and most common trespasses
Are punish'd with. The King must take it ill
That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

CORN I'll answer that

REG My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abus'd, 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

GLOU I am sorry for thee, friend
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd. I'll entreat for
thee.

KENT Pray do not, sir
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!

GLOU The Duke 's to blame in this; 'twill be ill
taken
Exit

KENT Good King, that must approve the common
saw,
Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st
To the warm sun!
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter. Nothing almost sees miracles
But misery. I know 'tis from Cordelia,
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course- and *Reads* 'shall find
time
From this enormous state, seeking to give
Losses their remedies' - All weary and
o'erwatch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night; smile once more, turn thy
wheel.

Sleeps

SCENE III

The open country
Enter Edgar

EDG I heard myself proclaim'd,
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escap'd the hunt. No port is free, no place
That guard and most unusual vigilance
Does not attend my taking. 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 outface
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, sheepcotes, 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*

SCENE IV

Before Gloucester's Castle; Kent in the stocks.
Enter Lear, Fool, and Gentleman

LEAR 'Tis strange that they should so depart from home,
And not send back my messenger.

GENT As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.

KENT Hail to thee, noble master!

LEAR Ha!
Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

KENT No, my lord

FOOL Ha, ha! look! he wears cruel garters

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

KENT It is both he and she-
Your son and daughter.

LEAR No

KENT Yes

LEAR No, I say

KENT I say yea

LEAR No, no, they would not!

KENT Yes, they have

LEAR By Jupiter, I swear no!

KENT By Juno, I swear ay!

LEAR They durst not do't;
They would not, could not do't. 'Tis worse than
murther
To do upon respect such violent outrage.
Resolve me with all modest haste which way
Thou mightst deserve or they impose this usage,
Coming from us.

KENT My lord, when at their home
I did commend your Highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,
Which presently they read; on whose contents,
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took
horse,
Commanded me to follow and attend
The leisure of their answer, gave me cold looks,
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome I perceiv'd had poison'd mine-
Being the very fellow which of late
Display'd so saucily against your Highness-
Having more man than wit about me, drew.
He rais'd the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

FOOL Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly
that way

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;
But fathers that bear bag
Shall see their children kind.
Fortune, that arrant whore,
Ne'er turns the key to th' poor

But for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours
for thy
daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

LEAR O, how this mother swells up toward my
heart!
Hysterica passio! Down, thou climbing sorrow!
Thy element's below! Where is this daughter?

KENT With the Earl, sir, here within

LEAR Follow me not;
Stay here. *Exit*

GENT Made you no more offence but what you
speak of?

KENT None
How chance the King comes with so small a
number?

FOOL An thou hadst been set i' th' stocks for that
question,
thou'dst well deserv'd it.

KENT Why, fool?

FOOL We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach
thee there's no labouring i' th' winter
When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give
me mine again. I would have none but knaves
follow it, since a fool gives it.

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.
But I will tarry; the fool will stay,
And let the wise man fly.
The knave turns fool that runs away;
The fool no knave, perdy

KENT Where learn'd you this, fool?

FOOL Not i' th' stocks, fool
Enter Lear and Gloucester

LEAR Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they
are weary?
They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches-
The images of revolt and flying off!
Fetch me a better answer.

GLOU My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the Duke,
How unremovable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

LEAR Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
Fiery? What quality? Why, Gloucester,
Gloucester,

I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

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

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

GLOU Ay, my good lord

LEAR The King would speak with Cornwall; the dear father
Would with his daughter speak, commands her service.

Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!
Fiery? the fiery Duke? Tell the hot Duke that-
No, but not yet! May be he is not well.

Infirmity doth still neglect all office
Whereto our health is bound. We are not ourselves

When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind

To suffer with the body. I'll forbear;
And am fallen out with my more headier will,

To take the indispos'd and sickly fit
For the sound man.- Death on my state!
Wherefore

Should be sit here? This act persuades me
That this remotion of the Duke and her
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.

Go tell the Duke and 's wife I'd speak with them-
Now, presently. Bid them come forth and hear me,

Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

GLOU I would have all well betwixt you

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' th' paste alive

Enter Cornwall, Regan, Gloucester, Servants

LEAR Good morrow to you both

CORN Hail to your Grace!

Kent here set at liberty

REG I am glad to see your Highness

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!

Lays his hand on his heart

I can scarce speak to thee. Thou'lt not believe
With how depriv'd a quality- O Regan!

REG I pray you, sir, take patience

You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.

LEAR Say, how is that?

REG I cannot think my sister in the least

Would fail her obligation. If, sir, perchance
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As clears her from all blame.

LEAR My curses on her!

REG O, sir, you are old!

Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine. You should be rul'd, and led
By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you
That to our sister you do make return;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

LEAR Ask her forgiveness?

Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
'Dear daughter, I confess that I am old. *Kneels*
Age is unnecessary. On my knees I beg
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.'

REG Good sir, no more! These are unsightly tricks
Return you to my sister.

LEAR *Rises* Never, Regan!

She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her
tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart.
All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness!

CORN Fie, sir, fie!

LEAR You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames

Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the pow'rful sun,
To fall and blast her pride!

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

LEAR No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness. Her eyes are fierce; but thine

Do comfort, and not burn. 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in. Thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude.
Thy half o' th' kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

REG Good sir, to th' purpose
Tucket within

LEAR Who put my man i' th' stocks?

CORN What trumpet's that?

REG I know't- my sister's
That she would soon be here.

Enter Oswald the Steward

Is your lady come?

LEAR This is a slave, whose easy-borrowed pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.
Out, varlet, from my sight!

CORN What means your Grace?

Enter Goneril

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

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience- if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause! Send down, and take my
part!

To Goneril Art not asham'd to look upon this
beard?-

O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

GON Why not by th' hand, sir? How have I
offended?

All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

LEAR O sides, you are too tough!

Will you yet hold? How came my man i' th'
stocks?

CORN I set him there, sir; but his own disorders
Deserv'd much less advancement.

LEAR You? Did you?

REG I pray you, father, being weak, seem so
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me.
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

LEAR Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' th' air,
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl-
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom. *Points at Oswald*

GON At your choice, sir

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. But I'll not chide thee.
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it.

I do not bid the Thunder-bearer shoot
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.
Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure;
I can be patient, I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

REG Not altogether so

I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old, and so-
But she knows what she does.

LEAR Is this well spoken?

REG I dare avouch it, sir
Is it not well? What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How in one
house
Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

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

REG Why not, my lord? If then they chanc'd to
slack ye,
We could control them. If you will come to me
(For now I spy a danger), I entreat you
To bring but five-and-twenty. To no more
Will I give place or notice.

LEAR I gave you all-

REG And in good time you gave it!

LEAR Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
But kept a reservation to be followed
With such a number. What, must I come to you
With five-and-twenty, Regan? Said you so?

REG And speak't again my lord

LEAR Those wicked creatures yet do look
well-favour'd
When others are more wicked; not being the
worst
Stands in some rank of praise. *To Goneril* I'll go
with thee.
Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

GON Hear, me, my lord

What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

REG What need one?

LEAR O, reason not the need! Our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady:
If only to go warm were gorgeous,

Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous
 wear'st
 Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true
 need-
 You heavens, give me that patience, patience I
 need!
 You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
 As full of grief as age; wretched in both.
 If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts
 Against their father, fool me not so much
 To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
 And let not women's weapons, water drops,
 Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags!
 I will have such revenges on you both
 That all the world shall- I will do such things-
 What they are yet, I know not; but they shall be
 The terrors of the earth! 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 Lear, Gloucester, Kent, and Fool. Storm
 and tempest*

CORN Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm

REG This house is little; the old man and 's people
 Cannot be well bestow'd.

GON 'Tis his own blame; hath put himself from rest
 And must needs taste his folly.

REG For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
 But not one follower.

GON So am I purpos'd
 Where is my Lord of Gloucester?

CORN Followed the old man forth
Enter Gloucester
 He is return'd.

GLOU The King is in high rage

CORN Whither is he going?

GLOU He calls to horse, but will I know not whither

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

GON My lord, entreat him by no means to stay

GLOU Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak
 winds
 Do sorely ruffle. For many miles about
 There's scarce a bush.

REG O, sir, to wilful men
 The injuries that they themselves procure
 Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors.
 He is attended with a desperate train,
 And what they may incense him to, being apt
 To have his ear abus'd, wisdom bids fear.

CORN Shut up your doors, my lord: 'tis a wild night
 My Regan counsels well. Come out o' th' storm.
Exeunt

ACT III

SCENE I

A heath. Storm still.

Enter Kent and a Gentleman at several doors

KENT Who's there, besides foul weather?

GENT One minded like the weather, most unquietly

KENT I know you

GENT Contending with the fretful elements;

Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,
That things might change or cease; tears his
white hair,

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury and make nothing of;
Strives in his little world of man to outscorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.

This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would
couch,

The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.

KENT But who is with him?

GENT None but the fool, who labours to outjest
His heart-struck injuries.

KENT Sir, I do know you,

And dare upon the warrant of my note
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division
(Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
With mutual cunning) 'twixt Albany and
Cornwall;
Who have (as who have not, that their great stars
Thron'd and set high?) servants, who seem no
less,
Which are to France the spies and speculations
Intelligent of our state. What hath been seen,
Either in snuffs and packings of the Dukes,
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
Against the old kind King, or something deeper,
Whereof, perchance, these are but furnishings-
But, true it is, from France there comes a power
Into this scattered 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.

I am a gentleman of blood and breeding,
And from some knowledge and assurance offer
This office to you.

GENT I will talk further with you

KENT No, do not

For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open 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.

GENT Give me your hand

KENT Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet:
That, when we have found the King (in which
your pain
That way, I'll this), he that first lights on him
Holla the other.

Exeunt severally

SCENE II

Another part of the heath.

Storm still. Enter Lear and Fool

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 sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking
thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world,
Crack Nature's moulds, all germins spill at once,
That makes ingrateful man!

FOOL O nuncle, court holy water in a dry house is
better than this rain water out o' door. Good
nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters blessing! Here's
a night pities nether wise men nor fools.

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 despis'd old man.
 But yet I call you servile ministers,
 That will with two pernicious daughters join
 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

The codpiece that will house
 Before the head has any,
 The head and he shall louse:
 So beggars marry many.
 The man that makes his toe
 What he his heart should make
 Shall of a corn cry woe,
 And turn his sleep to wake.
 For there was never yet fair woman but she
 made mouths in a glass

Enter Kent

LEAR No, I will be the pattern of all patience;
 I will say nothing.

KENT Who's there?

FOOL Marry, here's grace and a codpiece; that's a
 wise man and a fool.

KENT Alas, sir, are you here? Things that love night
 Love not such nights as these. The wrathful skies
 Gallow the very wanderers of the dark
 And make them keep their caves. Since I was
 man,
 Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
 Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
 Remember to have heard. Man's nature cannot
 carry
 Th' affliction nor the fear.

LEAR Let the great gods,
 That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,
 Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou
 wretch,
 That hast within thee undivulged crimes
 Unwhipp'd of justice. Hide thee, thou bloody
 hand;
 Thou perjur'd, and thou simular man of virtue
 That art incestuous. Caitiff, in pieces shake
 That under covert and convenient seeming
 Hast practis'd on man's life. Close pent-up guilts,
 Rive your concealing continents, and cry
 These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
 More sinn'd against than sinning.

KENT Alack, bareheaded?
 Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
 Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the
 tempest.
 Repose you there, whilst I to this hard house
 (More harder than the stones whereof 'tis rais'd,
 Which even but now, demanding after you,

Denied me to come in) return, and force
 Their scanted courtesy.

LEAR My wits begin to turn
 Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy? Art cold?
 I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?
 The art of our necessities is strange,
 That can make vile things precious. Come, your
 hovel.
 Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
 That's sorry yet for thee.

FOOL *Sings*

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

LEAR True, my good boy
Exeunt Lear and Kent

FOOL This is a brave night to cool a courtesan
 prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than
 matter;
 When brewers mar their malt with water;
 When nobles are their tailors' tutors,
 No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;
 When every case in law is right,
 No squire in debt nor no poor knight;
 When slanders do not live in tongues,
 Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
 When usurers tell their gold i' th' field,
 And bawds and whores do churches build:
 Then shall the realm of Albion
 Come to great confusion.
 Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
 That going shall be us'd with feet.
 This prophecy Merlin shall make, for
 I live before his time

Exit

SCENE III

Gloucester's Castle.
Enter Gloucester and Edmund

GLOU Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this
 unnatural dealing! When I desir'd their leave that
 I might pity him, they took from me the use of
 mine own house, charg'd me on pain of perpetual
 displeasure neither to speak of him, entreat for
 him, nor any way sustain him

EDM Most savage and unnatural!

GLOU Go to; say you nothing
 Pray you be careful. *Exit*

EDM 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*

SCENE IV

*The heath. Before a hovel.
Storm still. Enter Lear, Kent, and Fool*

KENT Here is the place, my lord
The tyranny of the open night 's too rough
For nature to endure.

LEAR Let me alone

KENT Good my lord, enter here

LEAR Wilt break my heart?

KENT I had rather break mine own

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'dst shun a bear;
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,
Thou'dst meet the bear i' th' 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!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to't? But I will punish home!
No, I will weep no more. In such a night
'To shut me out! Pour on; I will endure.
In such a night as this! 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

LEAR Prithee go in thyself; seek thine own ease
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.
To the Fool In, boy; go first.— You houseless
poverty—
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.
Exit Fool

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'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,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
And show the heavens more just.

EDG *Within* Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor
Tom!
Enter Fool from the hovel

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

KENT Give me thy hand

FOOL A spirit, a spirit! He says his name's poor
Tom

KENT What art thou that dost grumble there i' th'
straw?
Come forth.
Enter Edgar disguised as a madman

EDG Away! the foul fiend follows me! Through the
sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind

LEAR Hast thou given all to thy two daughters, and
art thou come to this?

EDG Who gives anything to poor Tom? whom the
foul fiend hath led through fire and through
flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and
quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow
and halters in his pew, set ratsbane by his
porridge, made him proud of heart, to ride on a
bay trotting horse over four-inch'd bridges, to
course his own shadow for a traitor
Storm still

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

FOOL Nay, he reserv'd a blanket, else we had been
all sham'd

LEAR Now all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy
daughters!

KENT He hath no daughters, sir

LEAR Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd
nature
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
Is it the fashion that discarded fathers
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
Judicious punishment! 'Twas this flesh begot
Those pelican daughters.

EDG Pillicock sat on Pillicock's Hill

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

EDG Take heed o' th' foul fiend; obey thy parents:
keep thy word
justly; swear not; commit not with man's sworn
spouse; set not
thy sweet heart on proud array. Tom 's acold.

LEAR What hast thou been?

EDG A servingman, proud in heart and mind; that
curl'd my hair, wore gloves in my cap; serv'd the
lust of my mistress' heart and did the act of
darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I
spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of
heaven; one that slept in the contriving of lust,
and wak'd to do it

Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman. Keep thy foot out of brothel, thy hand out of placket, thy pen from lender's book, and defy the foul fiend. Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind; says suum, mun, hey, no, nonny. Dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa! let him trot by.

Storm still

LEAR Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncover'd body this extremity of the skies

Tears at his clothes.

FOOL Prithee, nuncle, be contented! 'Tis a naughty night to swim in

Enter Gloucester with a torch

EDG This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet
Saint Withold footed thrice the 'old;
He met the nightmare, and her nine fold;
Bid her alight
And her troth plight,
And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

KENT How fares your Grace?

LEAR What's he?

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

GLOU What are you there? Your names?

EDG Poor Tom, that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the todpole, the wall-newt and the water; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets, swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog, drinks the green mantle of the standing pool; who is whipp'd from tithing to tithing, and stock-punish'd and imprison'd; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride, and weapons to wear;

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!

GLOU What, hath your Grace no better company?

EDG The prince of darkness is a gentleman!
Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.

GLOU Our flesh and blood is grown so vile, my lord,
That it doth hate what gets it.

EDG Poor Tom 's acold

GLOU Go in with me
T' obey in all your daughters' hard commands.
Though their injunction be to bar my doors
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventur'd to come seek you out
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

LEAR First let me talk with this philosopher
What is the cause of thunder?

KENT Good my lord, take his offer; go into th' house

LEAR I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban

What is your study?

EDG How to prevent the fiend and to kill vermin

LEAR Let me ask you one word in private

KENT Importune him once more to go, my lord
His wits begin t' unsettle.

GLOU 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 lov'd him, friend-
No father his son dearer. True to tell thee,
The grief hath craz'd my wits. What a night 's this!
I do beseech your Grace-

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

EDG Tom's acold

GLOU In, fellow, there, into th' hovel; keep thee warm

LEAR Come, let's in all

KENT This way, my lord

LEAR With him!
I will keep still with my philosopher.

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

GLOU Take him you on

KENT Sirrah, come on; go along with us

LEAR Come, good Athenian

GLOU No words, no words! hush

EDG Child Rowland to the dark tower came;
His word was still

Fie, foh, and fum!
I smell the blood of a British man

Exeunt

SCENE V

Gloucester's Castle.
Enter Cornwall and Edmund

CORN I will have my revenge ere I depart his house

EDM How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

CORN I now perceive it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his

death; but a provoking merit, set awork by a
reproveable badness in himself.

EDM 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!

CORN Go with me to the Duchess

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

CORN True or false, it hath made thee Earl of
Gloucester
Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready
for our apprehension.

EDM *Aside* If I find him comforting the King, it will
stuff his suspicion more fully.- I will persever in
my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore
between that and my blood.

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

Exeunt

SCENE VI

*A farmhouse near Gloucester's Castle.
Enter Gloucester, Lear, Kent, Fool, and Edgar*

GLOU Here is better than the open air; take it
thankfully

KENT All the power of his wits have given way to
his impatience
The gods reward your kindness!
Exit Gloucester

EDG Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an
angler in the lake of darkness

FOOL Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be
a gentleman or a yeoman

LEAR A king, a king!

FOOL No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his
son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a
gentleman before him

LEAR To have a thousand with red burning spits
Come hizzing in upon 'em-

EDG The foul fiend bites my back

FOOL He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a
wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's
oath

LEAR It shall be done; I will arraign them straight
(To Edgar) Come, sit thou here, most learned
justicer.
(To the Fool) Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you
she-foxes!

EDG Look, where he stands and glares! Want'st
thou eyes at trial, madam?

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me

FOOL Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak
Why she dares not come over to thee

EDG The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of
a nightingale

Hoppedance cries in Tom's belly for two white
herring. Croak not, black angel; I have no food
for thee.

KENT How do you, sir? Stand you not so amaz'd
Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

LEAR I'll see their trial first
To Edgar Thou, robed man of justice, take thy
place.
To the Fool And thou, his yokefellow of equity,
Bench by his side. *To Kent* You are o' th'
commission,
Sit you too.

EDG Let us deal justly

Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth
Thy sheep shall take no harm
Purr! the cat is gray

LEAR Arraign her first

FOOL Come hither, mistress

LEAR She cannot deny it

FOOL Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool

LEAR And here's another, whose warp'd looks
proclaim
What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!
Arms, arms! sword! fire! Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her scape?

EDG Bless thy five wits!

KENT O pity! Sir, where is the patience now
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

EDG *Aside* My tears begin to take his part so much
They'll mar my counterfeiting.

LEAR The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at
me.

EDG Tom will throw his head at them

Be thy mouth or black or white,
Tooth that poisons if it bite;
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,
Bobtail tyke or trundle-tall-
Tom will make them weep and wail;
For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled
Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to
wakes and fairs and market towns. Poor
Tom, thy horn is dry

LEAR Then let them anatomize Regan

KENT Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile

LEAR Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains

So, so, so. We'll go to supper i' th' morning. So, so, so.

FOOL And I'll go to bed at noon

Enter Gloucester

GLOU Come hither, friend

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

GLOU 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 thy master.

If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,

With thine, and all that offer to defend him,

Stand in assured loss. Take up, take up!

And follow me, that will to some provision

Give thee quick conduct.

KENT Oppressed nature sleeps

This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken senses,

Which, if convenience will not allow,

Stand in hard cure. *To the Fool* Come, help to bear thy master.

Thou must not stay behind.

GLOU Come, come, away!

Exeunt all but Edgar

EDG When we our betters see bearing our woes,

We scarcely think our miseries our foes.

Who alone suffers suffers most i' th' mind,

Leaving free things and happy shows behind;

But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip

When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.

How light and portable my pain seems now,

When that which makes me bend makes the King bow,

He childed as I fathered! 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*

SCENE VII

Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, Goneril, Edmund the Bastard, and Servants

CORN *To Goneril* Post speedily to my lord your husband, show him this letter

Exeunt some of the Servants

REG Hang him instantly

GON Pluck out his eyes

CORN Leave him to my displeasure

Farewell, dear sister; farewell, my Lord of Gloucester.

Enter Oswald the Steward

How now? Where's the King?

OSW My Lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence

Some five or six and thirty of his knights,

Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;

Who, with some other of the lord's dependants,

Are gone with him towards Dover, where they boast

To have well-armed friends.

CORN Get horses for your mistress

GON Farewell, sweet lord, and sister

CORN Edmund, farewell

Exeunt Goneril, Edmund, and Oswald

Go seek the traitor Gloucester,

Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

Exeunt other Servants

Though well we may not pass upon his life

Without the form of justice, yet our power

Shall do a court'sy to our wrath, which men

May blame, but not control.

Enter Gloucester, brought in by two or three

Who's there? the traitor?

REG Ingrateful fox! 'tis he

CORN Bind fast his corky arms

GLOU What mean, your Graces? Good my friends, consider

You are my guests. Do me no foul play, friends.

CORN Bind him, I say

Servants bind him

REG Hard, hard

GLOU Unmerciful lady as you are, I am none

CORN To this chair bind him

Regan plucks his beard

GLOU By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done

To pluck me by the beard.

REG So white, and such a traitor!

GLOU Naughty lady,

These hairs which thou dost ravish from my chin

Will quicken, and accuse thee. I am your host.

With robber's hands my hospitable favours

You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

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

REG Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth

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

REG To whose hands have you sent the lunatic King?
Speak.

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

CORN Cunning

REG And false

CORN Where hast thou sent the King?

GLOU To Dover

REG Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charg'd at peril-

CORN Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that

GLOU I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course

REG Wherefore to Dover, sir?

GLOU 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.
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endur'd, would have buoy'd up
And quench'd the steeled fires.
Yet, poor old heart, he help the heavens to rain.
If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
Thou shouldst have said, 'Good porter, turn the key.'
All cruels else subscrib'd. But I shall see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

CORN See't shalt thou never
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

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

REG One side will mock another

CORN If you see vengeance-

1 SERV Hold your hand, my lord!
I have serv'd you ever since I was a child;
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

REG How now, you dog?

1 SERV If you did wear a beard upon your chin,

I'd shake it on this quarrel.

REG What do you mean?

CORN My villain! Draw and fight

1 SERV Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger

REG Give me thy sword
She takes a sword and runs at him behind

1 SERV O, I am slain! My lord, you have one eye left
To see some mischief on him. O! *He dies*

CORN Lest it see more, prevent it
Where is thy lustre now?

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

REG 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.

GLOU O my follies! Then Edgar was abus'd
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

REG 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?

CORN I have receiv'd a hurt
Turn out that eyeless villain. Throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace.
Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm.
Exit Cornwall, led by Regan

2 SERV I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man come to good.

3 SERV If she live long,
And in the end meet the old course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.

2 SERV Let's follow the old Earl, and get the bedlam
To lead him where he would. His roguish
madness
Allows itself to anything.

3 SERV Go thou
To apply to his bleeding face. Now heaven help him!

Exeunt

ACT IV

SCENE I

The heath. Enter Edgar

EDG Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.

The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts.

Enter Gloucester, led by an Old Man

But who comes here?
My father, poorly led? World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.

OLD MAN O my good lord,
I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant,
These fourscore years.

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

OLD MAN You cannot see your way

GLOU I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities. Ah 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!

OLD MAN How now? Who's there?

EDG *Aside* O gods! Who is't can say 'I am at the
worst'?
I am worse than e'er I was.

OLD MAN 'Tis poor mad Tom

EDG *Aside* And worse I may be yet
So long as we can say 'This is the worst.'

OLD MAN Fellow, where goest?

GLOU Is it a beggarman?

OLD MAN Madman and beggar too

GLOU He has some reason, else he could not beg
I' th' 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 th' gods.
They kill us for their sport.

EDG *Aside* How should this be?
Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,
Ang'ring itself and others.- Bless thee, master!

GLOU Is that the naked fellow?

OLD MAN Ay, my lord

GLOU Then prithee get thee gone
Thou wilt o'ertake us hence a mile or twain
I' th' way toward Dover, do it for ancient love;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Who I'll entreat to lead me.

OLD MAN Alack, sir, he is mad!

GLOU 'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the
blind
Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure.
Above the rest, be gone.

OLD MAN I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,
Come on't what will. *Exit*

GLOU Sirrah naked fellow-

EDG Poor Tom's acold

GLOU Come hither, fellow

EDG *Aside* And yet I must

GLOU Know'st thou the way to Dover?

EDG Both stile and gate, horseway and footpath

GLOU 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!
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
Because he does not feel, feel your pow'r quickly;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough. Dost thou know
Dover?

EDG Ay, master

GLOU There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep.
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.

EDG Give me thy arm
Poor Tom shall lead thee.

Exeunt

SCENE II

*Before the Duke of Albany's Palace.
Enter Goneril and Edmund the Bastard*

GON Welcome, my lord
Not met us on the way.
Enter Oswald the Steward
Now, where's your master?

OSW Madam, within, but never man so chang'd
I told him of the army that was landed:
He smil'd at it. I told him you were coming:
His answer was, 'The worse.' Of Gloucester's
treachery
And of the loyal service of his son
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out.
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to
him;
What like, offensive.

GON *To Edmund* Then shall you go no further
It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake. He'll not feel wrongs
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the
way
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother.
Hasten his musters and conduct his pow'rs.
I must change arms at home and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us. Ere long you are like to
hear
(If you dare venture in your own behalf)
A mistress's command. Wear this. *Gives a favour*
Spare speech.
Decline your head. This kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air.
Conceive, and fare thee well.

EDM Yours in the ranks of death! *Exit*

GON My most dear Gloucester!
O, the difference of man and man!
To thee a woman's services are due;
My fool usurps my body.

OSW Madam, here comes my lord
Enter Albany

GON I have been worth the whistle

ALB O Goneril,
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face! I fear your disposition.
That nature which contemns its origin

Cannot be bordered certain in itself.
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither
And come to deadly use.

GON No more! The text is foolish

ALB Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile;
Filth's 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, have you
madded.
Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
A man, a prince, by him so benefited!
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
It will come,
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.

GON Milk-liver'd man!
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st
Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy
drum?
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land,
With plumed helm thy state begins to threat,
Whiles thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and criest
'Alack, why does he so?'

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

GON O vain fool!

ALB Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for
shame!
Bemonster 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.

GON Marry, your manhood mew!
Enter a Gentleman

ALB What news?

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

ALB Gloucester's eyes?

GENT A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword
To his great master; who, thereat enrag'd,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead;

But not without that harmful stroke which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

ALB This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge! But O poor Gloucester!
Lose he his other eye?

GENT Both, both, my lord
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer.
'Tis from your sister.

GON *Aside* One way I like this well;
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life. Another way
The news is not so tart.- I'll read, and answer.
Exit

ALB Where was his son when they did take his
eyes?

GENT Come with my lady hither

ALB He is not here

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

ALB Knows he the wickedness?

GENT Ay, my good lord
And quit the house on purpose, that their
punishment
Might have the freer course.

ALB 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

SCENE III

*The French camp near Dover.
Enter Kent and a Gentleman*

KENT Why the King of France is so suddenly gone
back know you the reason?

GENT Something he left imperfect in the state,
which since his coming forth is thought of, which
imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger
that his personal return was most required and
necessary.

KENT Who hath he left behind him general?

GENT The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far

KENT Did your letters pierce the Queen to any
demonstration of grief?

GENT Ay, sir
And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek. It seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion, who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

KENT O, then it mov'd her?

GENT Not to a rage

Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
Were like, a better way. Those happy smilets
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes, which parted
thence

As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,
If all could so become it.

KENT Made she no verbal question?

GENT Faith, once or twice she heav'd the name of
father
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;
Cried 'Sisters, sisters! Shame of ladies! Sisters!
Kent! father! sisters! What, i' th' storm? i' th'
night?

Let pity not be believ'd!' There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd. Then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

KENT It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her
since?

GENT No

KENT Was this before the King return'd?

GENT No, since

KENT Well, sir, the poor distressed Lear's i' th'
town;
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

GENT Why, good sir?

KENT A sovereign shame so elbows him; his own
unkindness,
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters- these things sting
His mind so venomously that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

GENT Alack, poor gentleman!

KENT Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you
heard not?

GENT 'Tis so; they are afoot

KENT Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear
And leave you to attend him. Some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile.
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you go
Along with me. *Exeunt*

 SCENE IV

The French camp.

Enter, with Drum and Colours, Cordelia, Doctor, and Soldiers

COR Alack, 'tis he! Why, he was met even now
 As mad as the vex'd sea, singing aloud,
 Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow weeds,
 With hardocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo flow'rs,
 Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
 In our sustaining corn. A century send forth
 Search every acre in the high-grown field
 And bring him to our eye. *Exit an Officer* What
 can man's

wisdom

In the restoring his bereaved sense?
 He that helps him take all my outward worth.

DOCT There is means, madam
 Our foster nurse of nature is repose,
 The which he lacks. That to provoke in him
 Are many simples operative, whose power
 Will close the eye of anguish.

COR All blest secrets,
 All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
 Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
 In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him!
 Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
 That wants the means to lead it.

Enter Messenger

MESS News, madam
 The British pow'rs are marching hitherward.

COR 'Tis known before
 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 ag'd father's right.
 Soon may I hear and see him!

Exeunt

 SCENE V

Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Regan and Oswald the Steward

REG But are my brother's pow'rs set forth?

OSW Ay, madam

REG Himself in person there?

OSW Madam, with much ado

Your sister is the better soldier.

REG Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at
 home?

OSW No, madam

REG What might import my sister's letter to him?

OSW I know not, lady

REG Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter
 It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being
 out,
 To let him live. Where he arrives he moves
 All hearts against us. Edmund, I think, is gone,
 In pity of his misery, to dispatch
 His nighted life; moreover, to descry
 The strength o' th' enemy.

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

REG Our troops set forth to-morrow
 The ways are dangerous.

OSW I may not, madam
 My lady charg'd my duty in this business.

REG Why should she write to Edmund? Might not
 you
 Transport her purposes by word? Belike,
 Something- I know not what- I'll love thee much-
 Let me unseal the letter.

OSW Madam, I had rather-

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

OSW I, madam?

REG I speak in understanding
 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. You may gather more.
 If you do find him, pray you give him this;
 And when your mistress hears thus much from
 you,
 I pray desire her call her wisdom to her.
 So farewell.
 If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
 Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

OSW Would I could meet him, madam! I should
 show

What party I do follow.

REG Fare thee well

 SCENE VI

The country near Dover.

Enter Gloucester, and Edgar (like a Peasant)

GLOU When shall I come to th' top of that same hill?

EDG You do climb up it now

GLOU Methinks the ground is even

EDG Horrible steep
Hark, do you hear the sea?

GLOU No, truly

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

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

EDG Y'are much deceiv'd
But in my garments.

GLOU Methinks y'are better spoken

EDG Come on, sir; here's the place
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. Halfway down
Hangs one that gathers sampire- dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge
That on th' unnumb'ed idle pebble chafes
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

GLOU Set me where you stand

EDG Give me your hand
Of th' extreme verge. For all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.

GLOU Let go my hand
Here, friend, is another purse; in it a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking. Fairies and gods
Prosper it with thee! Go thou further off;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

EDG Now fare ye well, good sir

GLOU With all my heart

EDG *Aside*
Is done to cure it.

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

EDG Gone, sir, farewell

And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life when life itself
Yields to the theft. Had he been where he
thought,
By this had thought been past.- Alive or dead?
Ho you, sir! friend! Hear you, sir? Speak!-
Thus might he pass indeed. Yet he revives.
What are you, sir?

GLOU Away, and let me die

EDG Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers,
air,
So many fadom down precipitating,
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg; but thou dost
breathe;
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art
sound.
Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell.
Thy life is a miracle. Speak yet again.

GLOU But have I fall'n, or no?

EDG From the dread summit of this chalky bourn
Look up a-height. The shrill-gorg'd lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard. Do but look up.

GLOU Alack, I have no eyes!
Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage
And frustrate his proud will.

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

GLOU Too well, too well

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

GLOU A poor unfortunate beggar

EDG As I stood here below, methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd and wav'd like the enridged sea.
It was some fiend. Therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them
honours
Of men's impossibility, have preserv'd thee.

GLOU I do remember now
Affliction till it do cry out itself
'Enough, enough,' and die. That thing you speak
of,
I took it for a man. Often 'twould say
'The fiend, the fiend'- he led me to that place.

EDG Bear free and patient thoughts
Enter Lear, mad, fantastically dressed with weeds

But who comes here?
The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

LEAR No, they cannot touch me for coming;
I am the King himself.

EDG O thou side-piercing sight!

LEAR Nature 's above art in that respect money.
That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper.
Draw me a clothier's yard. 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'
th' clout, i' th' clout! Hewgh! Give the word.

EDG Sweet marjoram

LEAR Pass

GLOU I know that voice

LEAR Ha! Goneril with a white beard? They
flatter'd me like a dog, and told me I had white
hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there.
To say 'ay' and 'no' to everything I said! 'Ay'
and 'no' too was no good divinity. 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 everything. 'Tis a lie- I am not
ague-proof.

GLOU The trick of that voice I do well remember
Is't not the 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.
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard
son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
To't, luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers.
Behold yond simp'ring dame,
Whose face between her forks presageth snow,
That minces virtue, and does shake the head
To hear of pleasure's name.
The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't
With a more riotous appetite.
Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
Though women all above.
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiend's.
There's hell, there's darkness, there's the
sulphurous pit; burning, scalding, stench,
consumption. Fie, fie, fie! pah, pah!
Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to
sweeten my imagination. There's money for thee.

GLOU O, let me kiss that hand!

LEAR Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality

GLOU O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world

Shall so wear out to naught. Dost thou know me?

LEAR I remember thine eyes well enough
No, do thy worst, blind Cupid! I'll not love. Read
thou this
challenge; mark but the penning of it.

GLOU Were all the letters suns, I could not see one

EDG *Aside* I would not take this from report
And my heart breaks at it.

LEAR Read

GLOU What, with the case of eyes?

LEAR O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in
your head, nor no money in your purse? Your
eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light. Yet
you see how this world goes.

GLOU I see it feelingly

LEAR What, art mad? A man may see how the
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?

GLOU Ay, sir

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 lusts to use her in that kind
For which thou whip'st her. The usurer hangs the
cozener.
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with
gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.
None does offend, none- I say none! I'll able 'em.
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal th' accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now,
now!
Pull off my boots. Harder, harder! So.

EDG O, matter and impertinency mix'd!
Reason, in madness!

LEAR If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes
I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester.
Thou must be patient. We came crying hither;
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air
We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee. Mark.

GLOU Alack, alack the day!

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

GENT O, here he is! Lay hand upon him
Your most dear daughter-

LEAR No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of fortune. Use me well;
You shall have ransom. Let me have a surgeon;
I am cut to th' brains.

GENT You shall have anything

LEAR No seconds? All myself?
Why, this would make a man a man of salt,
To use his eyes for garden waterpots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

GENT Good sir-

LEAR I will die bravely, like a smug bridegroom
I will be jovial. Come, come, I am a king;
My masters, know you that?

GENT You are a royal one, and we obey you

LEAR Then there's life in't
by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa!
Exit running. Attendants follow

GENT 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.

EDG Hail, gentle sir

GENT Sir, speed you

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

GENT Most sure and vulgar
Which can distinguish sound.

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

GENT Near and on speedy foot
Stands on the hourly thought.

EDG I thank you sir

GENT Though that the Queen on special cause is
here,
Her army is mov'd on.

EDG I thank you, sir
Exit Gentleman

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

EDG Well pray you, father

GLOU Now, good sir, what are you?

EDG 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.

GLOU Hearty thanks
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter Oswald the Steward

OSW A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh
To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember. The sword is out
That must destroy thee.

GLOU Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to't.

Edgar interposes

OSW Wherefore, bold peasant,
Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence!
Lest that th' infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

EDG Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'cagion

OSW Let go, slave, or thou diest!

EDG Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor
voke pass ha' bin zwagger'd out of my life,
'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight.
Nay, come not near th' old man. Keep out, che
vore ye, or Ise try whether your costard or my
ballow be the harder. Chill be plain with you.

OSW Out, dunghill!
They fight

EDG Chill pick your teeth, zir
Oswald falls

OSW Slave, thou hast slain me
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! Death!
He dies

EDG I know thee well
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

GLOU What, is he dead?

EDG Sit you down, father; rest you
Let's see his pockets; these letters that he speaks
of
May be my friends. He's dead. I am only sorry
He had no other deathsman. Let us see.
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not.
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their
hearts;
Their papers, is more lawful. *Reads the letter*

'Let our reciprocal vows be rememb'ed.
You have many opportunities to cut him
off. If your will want not, time and place
will be fruitfully offer'd. There is nothing
done, if he return the conqueror. Then am I

the prisoner, and his bed jail; from the
loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and
supply the place for your labour.
'Your (wife, so I would say)
affectionate servant,
Goneril.'

O indistinguish'd space of woman's will!
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life,
And the exchange my brother! Here in the sands
Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified
Of murderous lechers; and in the mature time
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practis'd Duke, For him 'tis well
That of thy death and business I can tell.

GLOU The King is mad
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract.
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
And woes by wrong imaginations lose
The knowledge of themselves.
A drum afar off

EDG Give me your hand
Far off methinks I hear the beaten drum.
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend.
Exeunt

SCENE VII

A tent in the French camp.
Enter Cordelia, Kent, Doctor, and Gentleman

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

COR Be better suited
These weeds are memories of those worser hours.
I prithee put them off.

KENT Pardon, dear madam
Yet to be known shortens my made intent.
My boon I make it that you know me not
Till time and I think meet.

COR Then be't so, my good lord

DOCT Madam, sleeps still

COR O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
Th' untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father!

DOCT So please your Majesty
That we may wake the King? He hath slept long.

COR Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' th' sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

Enter Lear in a chair carried by Servants

GENT Ay, madam
We put fresh garments on him.

DOCT Be by, good madam, when we do awake him
I doubt not of his temperance.

COR Very well
Music

DOCT Please you draw near

COR 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!

COR Had you not been their father, these white
flakes
Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face
To be oppos'd against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick cross lightning? to watch- poor perdu!-
With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that
night
Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.- He wakes. Speak to him.

DOCT Madam, do you; 'tis fittest

COR How does my royal lord? How fares your
Majesty?

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

COR Sir, do you know me?

LEAR You are a spirit, I know

COR Still, still, far wide!

DOCT He's scarce awake

LEAR Where have I been? Where am I? Fair
daylight,
I am mightily abus'd. 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 assur'd
Of my condition!

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

LEAR Pray, do not mock me
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;

And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For (as I am a man) I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

COR And so I am! I am!

LEAR Be your tears wet? Yes, faith
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.

COR No cause, no cause

LEAR Am I in France?

KENT In your own kingdom, sir

LEAR Do not abuse me

DOCT Be comforted, good madam
You see is kill'd in him; and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in. Trouble him no more
Till further settling.

COR Will't please your Highness walk?

LEAR You must bear with me
Pray you now, forget and forgive. I am old and
foolish.

Exeunt. Manent Kent and Gentleman

GENT Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall
was so slain?

KENT Most certain, sir

GENT Who is conductor of his people?

KENT As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester

GENT They say Edgar, his banish'd son, is with the
Earl of Kent in Germany.

KENT Report is changeable the kingdom approach
apace.

GENT The arbitrement is like to be bloody
Fare you well, sir. *Exit*

KENT My point and period will be throughly
wrought,
Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought. *Exit*

ACT V. SCENE I

*The British camp near Dover.
Enter, with Drum and Colours, Edmund, Regan,
Gentleman, and Soldiers*

EDM Know of the Duke if his last purpose hold,
Or whether since he is advis'd by aught
To change the course. He's full of alteration
And self-reproving. Bring his constant pleasure.

Exit an Officer

REG Our sister's man is certainly miscarried

EDM Tis to be doubted, madam

REG 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?

EDM In honour'd love

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

EDM That thought abuses you

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

EDM No, by mine honour, madam

REG I never shall endure her
Be not familiar with her.

EDM Fear me not
She and the Duke her husband!
*Enter, with Drum and Colours, Albany, Goneril,
Soldiers*

GON (*Aside*) I had rather lose the battle than that
sister
Should loosen him and me.

ALB Our very loving sister, well bemet
Sir, this I hear: the King is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigour of our state
Forc'd to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant. For this business,
It toucheth us as France invades our land,
Not bolds the King, with others whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

EDM Sir, you speak nobly

REG Why is this reason'd?

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

ALB Let's then determine

With th' ancient of war on our proceeding.

EDM I shall attend you presently at your tent

REG Sister, you'll go with us?

GON No

REG 'Tis most convenient

GON *Aside* O, ho, I know the riddle
(*As they are going out,*) *enter Edgar (disguised)*

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

ALB I'll overtake you
Exeunt all but Albany and Edgar

EDG Before you fight the battle, ope this letter
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it. Wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion that will prove
What is avouched there. If you miscarry,
Your business of the world hath so an end,
And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

ALB Stay till I have read the letter

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

ALB Why, fare thee well
*Exit Edgar
Enter Edmund*

EDM The enemy 's in view; draw up your powers
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
By diligent discovery; but your haste
Is now urg'd on you.

ALB We will greet the time

EDM 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; for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. *Exit*

SCENE II

*A field between the two camps.
Alarum within. Enter, with Drum and Colours,
the Powers of France over the stage, Cordelia
with her Father in her hand, and exeunt
Enter Edgar and Gloucester*

EDG 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.

GLOU Grace go with you, sir!
Exit Edgar
Alarum and retreat within. Enter Edgar

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

GLOU No further, sir

EDG What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither;
Ripeness is all. Come on.

GLOU And that's true too

SCENE III

*The British camp, near Dover.
Enter, in conquest, with Drum and Colours,
Edmund; Lear and Cordelia as prisoners;
Soldiers, Captain*

EDM Some officers take them away
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.

COR 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 outfrown false Fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters and these
sisters?

LEAR No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison
We two alone will sing like birds i' th' 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-
And take upon 's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies; and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones
That ebb and flow by th' moon.

EDM Take them away

LEAR Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,

The gods themselves throw incense. Have I
caught thee?

He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes.
The goodyears shall devour 'em, flesh and fell,
Ere they shall make us weep! We'll see 'em
starv'd first.

Come. *Exeunt Lear and Cordelia, guarded*

EDM Come hither, Captain; hark
Take thou this note *Gives a paper* Go follow
them to prison.
One step I have advanc'd thee. If thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes. Know thou this, that men
Are as the time is. To be tender-minded
Does not become a sword. Thy great employment
Will not bear question. Either say thou'lt do't,
Or thrive by other means.

CAPT I'll do't, my lord

EDM About it! and write happy when th' hast done
Mark- I say, instantly; and carry it so
As I have set it down.

CAPT I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
If it be man's work, I'll do't. *Exit*
*Flourish. Enter Albany, Goneril, Regan,
Soldiers*

ALB Sir, you have show'd to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well. You have the captives
Who were the opposites of this day's strife.
We do require them of you, so to use them
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

EDM Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable King
To some retention and appointed guard;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent the
Queen,
My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, t' appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his
friend;
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd
By those that feel their sharpness.
The question of Cordelia and her father
Requires a fitter place.

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

REG 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,

Bore the commission of my place and person,
The which immediacy may well stand up
And call itself your brother.

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

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

GON That were the most if he should husband you

REG Jesters do oft prove prophets

GON Holla, holla!
That eye that told you so look'd but asquint.

REG 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.

GON Mean you to enjoy him?

ALB The let-alone lies not in your good will

EDM Nor in thine, lord

ALB Half-blooded fellow, yes

REG *To Edmund* Let the drum strike, and prove my
title thine

ALB Stay yet; hear reason
On capital treason; and, in thine attaint,
This gilded serpent *Points to Goneril* For your
claim, fair sister,
I bar it in the interest of my wife.
'Tis she is subcontracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your banes.
If you will marry, make your loves to me;
My lady is bespoken.

GON An interlude!

ALB Thou art arm'd, Gloucester
If none appear to prove upon thy person
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge *Throws 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.

REG Sick, O, sick!

GON *Aside* If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine

EDM There's my exchange *Throws down a glove* he
is
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.
Call by thy trumpet. He that dares approach,
On him, on you, who not? I will maintain
My truth and honour firmly.

ALB A herald, ho!

EDM A herald, ho, a herald!

ALB Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,

All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

REG My sickness grows upon me

ALB She is not well

*Exit Regan, led
Enter a Herald*

Come hither, herald. Let the trumpet sound,
And read out this.

CAPT Sound, trumpet! *A trumpet sounds*

HER (reads) 'If any man of quality or degree within
the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund,
supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold
traitor, let him appear by the third sound of the
trumpet

EDM Sound! First trumpet

HER Again! Second trumpet

HER Again! Third trumpet

Trumpet answers within

ENTER EDGAR, ARMED, AT THE THIRD SOUND,
A TRUMPET BEFORE HIM

ALB Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' th' trumpet.

HER What are you?

Your name, your quality? and why you answer
This present summons?

EDG 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.

ALB Which is that adversary?

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

EDM Himself

EDG Draw thy sword,
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice. Here is mine.
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
My oath, and my profession. I protest-
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,
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;
And from th' extremest upward of thy head
To the descent and dust beneath thy foot,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'no,'
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

EDM 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,

What safe and nicely I might well delay
 By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn.
 Back do I toss those treasons to thy head;
 With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;
 Which- for they yet glance by and scarcely
 bruise-

This sword of mine shall give them instant way
 Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak!

Alarums. Fight. Edmund falls

ALB Save him, save him!

GON This is mere practice, Gloucester
 By th' law of arms thou wast not bound to answer
 An unknown opposite. Thou art not vanquish'd,
 But cozen'd and beguil'd.

ALB Shut your mouth, dame,
 Or with this paper shall I stop it. *Shows her her
 letter to Edmund-*
To Edmund Hold, sir.
To Goneril Thou worse than any name, read thine
 own evil.

No tearing, lady! I perceive you know it.

GON Say if I do- the laws are mine, not thine
 Who can arraign me for't?

ALB Most monstrous!
 Know'st thou this paper?

GON Ask me not what I know

ALB Go after her
Exit an Officer

EDM What, you have charg'd 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
 That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,
 I do forgive thee.

EDG Let's exchange charity
 I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
 If more, the more th' 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 scourge us.
 The dark and vicious place where thee he got
 Cost him his eyes.

EDM Th' hast spoken right; 'tis true
 The wheel is come full circle; I am here.

ALB Methought thy very gait did prophesy
 A royal nobleness. I must embrace thee.
 Let sorrow split my heart if ever I
 Did hate thee, or thy father!

EDG Worthy prince, I know't

ALB Where have you hid yourself?
 How have you known the miseries of your father?

EDG By nursing them, my lord
 And when 'tis told, O that my heart would burst!

The bloody proclamation to escape
 That follow'd me so near (O, our lives'
 sweetness!
 That with the pain of death would hourly die
 Rather than die at once!) taught me to shift
 Into a madman's rags, t' assume a semblance
 That very dogs disdain'd; and in this habit
 Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
 Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,
 Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair;
 Never (O fault!) reveal'd myself unto him
 Until some half hour past, when I was arm'd,
 Not sure, though hoping of this good success,
 I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
 Told him my pilgrimage. But his flaw'd heart
 (Alack, too weak the conflict to support!)
 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
 Burst smilingly.

EDM This speech of yours hath mov'd me,
 And shall perchance do good; but speak you on;
 You look as you had something more to say.

ALB If there be more, more woful, hold it in;
 For I am almost ready to dissolve,
 Hearing of this.

EDG This would have seem'd a period
 To such as love not sorrow; but another,
 To amplify too much, would make much more,
 And top extremity.
 Whilst I was big in clamour, came there a man,
 Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
 Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding
 Who 'twas that so endur'd, with his strong arms
 He fastened on my neck, and bellowed out
 As he'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;
 Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him
 That ever ear receiv'd; which in recounting
 His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
 Began to crack. Twice then the trumpets sounded,
 And there I left him tranc'd.

ALB But who was this?

EDG Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise
 Followed his enemy king and did him service
 Improper for a slave.

Enter a Gentleman with a bloody knife

GENT Help, help! O, help!

EDG What kind of help?

ALB Speak, man

EDG What means that bloody knife?

GENT 'Tis hot, it smokes
 It came even from the heart of- O! she's dead!

ALB Who dead? Speak, man

GENT Your lady, sir, your lady! and her sister
 By her is poisoned; she hath confess'd it.

EDM I was contracted to them both
 Now marry in an instant.

Enter Kent

EDG Here comes Kent

ALB Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead

Exit Gentleman

This judgement of the heavens, that makes us tremble

Touches us not with pity. O, is this he?

The time will not allow the compliment

That very manners urges.

KENT I am come

To bid my king and master aye good night.

Is he not here?

ALB Great thing of us forgot!

Speak, Edmund, where's the King? and where's Cordelia?

The bodies of Goneril and Regan are brought in
Seest thou this object, Kent?

KENT Alack, why thus?

EDM Yet Edmund was below'd

The one the other poisoned for my sake,

And after slew herself.

ALB Even so

EDM I pant for life

Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send

(Be brief in't) to the castle; for my writ

Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia.

Nay, send in time.

ALB Run, run, O, run!

EDG To who, my lord? Who has the office? Send

Thy token of reprieve.

EDM Well thought on

Give it the Captain.

ALB Haste thee for thy life

EDM 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.

ALB The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile

Edmund is borne off

*Enter Lear, with Cordelia (dead) in his arms,
Edgar, Captain, and others following*

LEAR Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stone

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 promis'd end?

EDG Or image of that horror?

ALB Fall and cease!

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 O my good master!

LEAR Prithee away!

EDG 'Tis noble Kent, your friend

LEAR A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!

I might have sav'd 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.

CAPT 'Tis true, my lords, he did

LEAR Did I not, fellow?

I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion

I would have made them skip. I am old now,

And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?

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

KENT If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated,

One of them we behold.

LEAR This' a dull sight

KENT The same-

Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius?

LEAR He's a good fellow, I can tell you that

He'll strike, and quickly too. He's dead and

rotten.

KENT No, my good lord; I am the very man-

LEAR I'll see that straight

KENT That from your first of difference and decay

Have followed your sad steps.

LEAR You're welcome hither

KENT Nor no man else! All's cheerless, dark, and

deadly

Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,

And desperately are dead.

LEAR Ay, so I think

ALB He knows not what he says; and vain is it

That we present us to him.

EDG Very bootless

Enter a Captain

CAPT Edmund is dead, my lord

ALB 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!

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! *He dies*

EDG He faints! My lord, my lord!

KENT Break, heart; I prithee break!

EDG Look up, my lord

KENT Vex not his ghost
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

EDG He is gone indeed

KENT The wonder is, he hath endur'd so long
He but usurp'd his life.

ALB Bear them from hence
Is general woe. (*To Kent and Edgar*) Friends of
my soul, you twain
Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain.

KENT I have a journey, sir, shortly to go
My master calls me; I must not say no.

ALB The weight of this sad time we must obey,
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest have borne most; we that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.
Exeunt with a dead march