

**УИЛЬЯМ
ШЕКСПИР**

THE TRAGEDY
OF KING LEAR

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The Tragedy of King Lear

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The Tragedy of King Lear:

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William Shakespeare

The Tragedy of King Lear

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. I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him that now I am braz'd to't.

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. Do you smell a fault?

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. Though this knave came

something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was

his mother fair, there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. – Do you know this noble

gentleman,

Edmund?

Edm. [comes forward] No, my lord.

Glou. My Lord of Kent. Remember him hereafter as my honourable

friend.

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. Speak again.

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. Ourselves, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name, and all 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. Dear sir, forbear!

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. Since thus thou wilt appear,
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. I think our father will hence
to-night.

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

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is. The observation
we

have made of it hath not been little. He always lov'd our
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-ingraffed 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. Pray you let's hit together. If our father carry
authority

with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of
his

will but offend us.

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. It is a letter from my
brother

that I have not all o'er-read; and for so much as I have
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. The contents,
as

in part I understand them, are to blame.

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. I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet. 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. But I have heard him oft maintain it to be fit

that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue. Glou. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah, seek him. I'll apprehend him. Abominable villain! Where is he? Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you should run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no other pretence of danger. 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. Though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourg'd by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide.

In cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond crack'd 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the King falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time. Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banish'd! his offence, honesty! 'Tis strange. Exit. 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. An admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's Tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Fut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. 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. I pray you have a continent forbearance
till

the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire
with me

to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my
lord speak. Pray ye, go! There's my key. If you do stir
abroad,

go arm'd.

Edg. Arm'd, brother?

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best. Go arm'd. I am no
honest man

if there be any good meaning toward you. I have told you
what I

have seen and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image and
horror of it. Pray you, away!

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. What wouldst thou?

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. That which
ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in, and the best of
me

is diligence.

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. I have years on my back
forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me. If I like thee no worse
after

dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho, dinner!

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. There's a great abatement of kindness appears

as well in the general dependants as in the Duke himself also

and your daughter.

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. I have

perceived a most faint neglect of late, which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence

and purpose of unkindness. I will look further into't. But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

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. Go you and tell my

daughter I would speak with her. [Exit Knight.] Go you, call

hither my fool.

[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 stricken, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripp'd neither, you base football player?

[Trips up his heels.]

Lear. I thank thee, fellow. Thou serv'st me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences. Away,

away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry; but

away! Go to! Have you wisdom? So.

[Pushes him out.]

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee. There's earnest of thy

service. [Gives money.]

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too. Here's my coxcomb.

[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. Nay, an thou

canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly.

There, take my coxcomb! Why, this fellow hath banish'd two on's

daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will. If

thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. –
How now,

nuncle? Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

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. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy. Nothing can be made out of nothing.
Fool. [to Kent] Prithee tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to. He will not believe a fool.

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. If I had a

monopoly out, they would have part on't. And ladies too, they

will not let me have all the fool to myself; they'll be snatching. Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

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. When thou clovest thy
crown

i'

th' middle and gav'st away both parts, thou bor'st thine ass
on

thy back o'er the dirt. Thou hadst little wit in thy bald
crown

when thou gav'st thy golden one away. If I speak like myself
in

this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so.

[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. They'll
have me

whipp'd for speaking true; thou'lt have me whipp'd for
lying;

and sometimes I am whipp'd for holding my peace. I had
rather be

any kind o' thing than a fool! And yet I would not be thee,
nuncle. Thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides and left
nothing

i' th' middle. Here comes one o' the parings.

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. Now thou art an O without a figure. I am
better

than thou art now: I am a fool, thou art nothing.

[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 worship 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. [To Goneril] Life and death! I am asham'd

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 wolvisH 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. – What, Oswald, ho!

[To the Fool] You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master!

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry! Take the fool with thee.

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