

RSC ASSOCIATE SCHOOLS  
PROGRAMME

**PLAYMAKING**  
FESTIVAL

**KING LEAR**  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

EDITED BY PAUL AINSWORTH

IN COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL THEATRES

The Core  
at Corby Cube

**Mayflower**

**THE GRAND**  
THEATRE | BLACKPOOL

BELGRADE  
THEATRE  
COVENTRY

EMBASSY  
THEATRE  
Skegness

ALHAMBRA  
THEATRE

**NEW VIC THEATRE**

**N**  
NORTHERN  
STAGE

**Theatre Royal**  
Newcastle upon Tyne

**Hull Truck**  
THEATRE

**N** Norwich  
Theatre

**THE  
MARLOWE**

THEATRE ROYAL  
ROYAL CONCERT  
HALL

**HALL**  
for CORNWALL

**SILHOUETTE YOUTH THEATRE**

**Y**  
YORK  
THEATRE  
ROYAL

The Associate Schools programme is our partnership programme with regional theatres and schools across England. It is built around the principle of schools working in local partnerships to develop communities of practice inspired by Shakespeare's work. Each local partnership consists of a theatre partner (either the RSC or the school's local theatre) and a Lead Associate School who in turn recruits a number of Associate Schools. The programme aims to enrich the teaching, learning and enjoyment of Shakespeare's work across the country.

The Associate Schools programme also supports young people to perform Shakespeare's plays, engaging with his work as actors and theatre makers; exploring character and staging, making interpretive choices and speaking the language with understanding and confidence.

This Playmaking pack – an abridged version of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* – has been created for young people and teachers. It is designed to support performances that will take place across the country through the Associate Schools programme and with our Stratford Schools partnership.

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The Associate Schools programme is supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, GRoW @ Annenberg, The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, The Eveson Trust, The Loppylugs and Barbara Morrison Charitable Trust and other generous supporters.

The Playmaking Festival is kindly supported by the Misses Barrie Charitable Trust

This Playmaking Pack is an abridged version of *King Lear*. \*Act 1 Scene 3 has been removed in this edit.

As well as the usual scene divisions, this script has been broken down further into units of action for ease in rehearsals.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

## Dramatis Personae

**LEAR**, King of Britain

**GONERIL**, Lear's eldest daughter

**REGAN**, Lear's middle daughter

**CORDELIA**, Lear's youngest daughter

Duke of **ALBANY**, Goneril's husband

Duke of **CORNWALL**, Regan's husband

King of **FRANCE**, suitor and later husband to Cordelia

Duke of **BURGUNDY**, suitor to Cordelia

Earl of **KENT**, later disguised as Caius

Earl of **GLOUCESTER**

**EDGAR**, Gloucester's son, later disguised as Poor Tom

**EDMUND**, Gloucester's illegitimate son

**OLD MAN**, Gloucester's tenant

**CURAN**, Gloucester's retainer

Lear's **FOOL**

**OSWALD**, Goneril's steward

**KNIGHT** serving Lear

**GENTLEMAN**, attendant on Cordelia

**SERVANT** of the Duke of Cornwall

**HERALD**

**CAPTAIN**

Lear's Knights, other Attendants, Messengers, Soldiers, Servants, and Trumpeters,  
other Attendants, Messengers, Soldiers, Servants, and Trumpeters

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# 1

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## ACT 1 SCENE 1

*Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER and EDMUND.*

### **KENT**

I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

### **GLOUCESTER**

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.

### **KENT**

Is not this your son, my lord?

### **GLOUCESTER**

I have so often blushed to acknowledge him that now I am brazed to't. Do you smell a fault?

### **KENT**

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

### **GLOUCESTER**

But I have a son, sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account – Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

### **EDMUND**

No, my lord.

### **GLOUCESTER**

My lord of Kent. The king is coming.

# 2

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*Sennet.*

*Enter (one bearing a crown, then) KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA and ATTENDANTS.*

### **LEAR**

Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

### **GLOUCESTER**

I shall, my lord.

*Exit GLOUCESTER.*

### **LEAR**

Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.  
Give me the map there.

*KENT or an Attendant gives LEAR a map.*

Know that we have divided  
In three our kingdom, and 'tis our fast intent  
To shake all cares and business from our age,  
Conferring them on younger strengths while we

Unburdened crawl toward death.  
Tell me, my daughters –  
Which of you shall we say doth love us most,  
That we our largest bounty may extend? Goneril,  
Our eldest born, speak first.

**GONERIL**

Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter,  
As much as child e'er loved or father found:  
A love that makes breath poor and speech unable:  
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

**CORDELIA**

*(Aside)* What shall Cordelia speak? Love and be silent.

**LEAR**

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this, *(Points to the map)*  
We make thee lady. What says our second daughter?  
Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall?

**REGAN**

I am made of that self-mettle as my sister,  
I find she names my very deed of love:  
Only she comes too short, that I profess  
Myself an enemy to all other joys.

**LEAR**

To thee and thine hereditary ever  
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom.–  
*(To CORDELIA)* Now, our joy, what can you say to draw  
A third more opulent than your sisters'? Speak.

**CORDELIA**

Nothing, my lord.

**LEAR**

Nothing?

**CORDELIA**

Nothing.

**LEAR**

Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

**CORDELIA**

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.

**CORDELIA**

Good my lord,  
 You have begot me, bred me, loved me:  
 I return those duties back as are right fit,  
 Obey you, love you and most honour you.

**LEAR**

But goes thy heart with this?

**CORDELIA**

Ay, my good lord.

**LEAR**

Let it be so.  
 Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
 And as a stranger to my heart and me  
 Hold thee from this forever.

**KENT**

Good my liege –

**LEAR**

Peace, Kent:  
 Come not between the dragon and his wrath.  
 I loved her most.  
 (To CORDELIA) Hence, and avoid my sight!  
 Call France. Who stirs?  
 Call Burgundy. – Cornwall and Albany,

*Exit Attendant.  
 (CORNWALL and ALBANY step forward).*

With my two daughters' dowers digest the third.  
 I do invest you jointly with my power,  
 Ourselves by monthly course,  
 With reservation of an hundred knights  
 Make with you by due turn: only we shall retain  
 The name and all th'addition to a king: the sway,  
 Revenue, execution of the rest,  
 Belovèd sons, be yours, which to confirm,  
 This coronet part between you.

*LEAR gives them (ALBANY, CORNWALL, GONERIL, REGAN)  
 the crown to break in half.*

**KENT**

Royal Lear!

**LEAR**

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

**KENT**

Let it fall rather. What wouldst thou do, old man?  
 Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least.

**LEAR**

Kent, on thy life, no more.  
Out of my sight!

**KENT**

See better, Lear.

**LEAR**

O, vassal! Miscreant!

*LEAR Puts his hand on his sword or attacks KENT.*

**ALBANY and CORDELIA**

Dear sir, forbear.

**LEAR**

*(To KENT)* Hear me!  
That thou hast sought to make us break our vows,  
take thy reward:  
Five days we do allot thee for provision,  
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back  
Upon our kingdom: if on the next day following  
Thy banished trunk be found in our dominions,  
The moment is thy death. Away!

**KENT**

Fare thee well, king:  
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu.  
He'll shape his old course in a country new.

*Exit KENT.*

**3**

*Flourish. Enter GLOUCESTER with FRANCE and BURGUNDY with Attendants.*

**LEAR**

My lord of Burgundy, what in the least  
Will you require in present dower with her?

**BURGUNDY**

Most royal majesty.

**LEAR**

When she was dear to us, we did hold her so,  
But now her price is fallen. She's there, and she is yours.  
Will you,  
Take her or leave her?

**BURGUNDY**

Election makes not up in such conditions.

**LEAR**

Then leave her, sir. *(To FRANCE)* For you, great king,  
I would not from your love make such a stray  
To match you where I hate.

**FRANCE**

This is most strange.

**CORDELIA**

I yet beseech your majesty that you make known  
It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,  
That hath deprived me of your grace and favour.

**LEAR**

Better thou hadst  
Not been born than not t'have pleased me better.

**FRANCE**

Is it but this? My lord of Burgundy,  
What say you to the lady?

**BURGUNDY**

(To LEAR) Royal king,  
Give but that portion which yourself proposed,  
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,  
Duchess of Burgundy.

**LEAR**

Nothing: I have sworn: I am firm.

**BURGUNDY**

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

**CORDELIA**

Since that respect and fortunes are his love,  
I shall not be his wife.

**FRANCE**

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich being poor,  
Be queen of us, of ours and our fair France.

**LEAR**

Thou hast her, France: let her be thine, for we  
Have no such daughter.

*Flourish. Exeunt. (FRANCE, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA remain).*

## 4

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**CORDELIA**

The jewels of our father, with washèd eyes  
Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are,  
And like a sister am most loath to call  
Your faults as they are named. Love well our father.

**REGAN**

Prescribe not us our duty.

**CORDELIA**

Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides.

**FRANCE**

Come, my fair Cordelia.

*Exit FRANCE and CORDELIA.*

**GONERIL**

Sister, I think our father will hence tonight.

**REGAN**

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

**GONERIL**

You see how full of changes his age is. He always loved our sister most, and with what poor judgement he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

**REGAN**

'Tis the infirmity of his age.

**GONERIL**

The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash.

**REGAN**

We shall further think of it.

**GONERIL**

We must do something, and i'th'heat.

*Exeunt.*

## 5

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**ACT 1 SCENE 2**

*Enter EDMUND (with a letter).*

**EDMUND**

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,  
Why brand they us  
With base? With baseness? Bastardy? Base, base?  
Well then,  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:  
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base  
Shall to th'legitimate. I grow, I prosper:  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

# 6

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*Enter GLOUCESTER.*

**GLOUCESTER**

Edmund, how now? What news?

**EDMUND**

So please your lordship, none.

*EDMUND Hides the letter.*

**GLOUCESTER**

What paper were you reading?

**EDMUND**

Nothing, my lord.

**GLOUCESTER**

No?

**EDMUND**

It is a letter from my brother I find it not fit for your o'erlooking.

**GLOUCESTER**

Give me the letter, sir.

**GLOUCESTER**

*(Reads)* 'If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever and live the beloved of your brother, Edgar.'

Hum! Conspiracy! My son Edgar? Had he a hand to write this?

**EDMUND**

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

**GLOUCESTER**

O villain, villain!

Where is he?

**EDMUND**

I do not well know, my lord suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent. I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, this very evening.

**GLOUCESTER**

He cannot be such a monster. Edmund, seek him out. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father. 'Tis strange.

*Exit GLOUCESTER.*

**EDMUND**

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and stars!

*Enter EDGAR.*

Pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy.

**EDGAR**

How now, brother Edmund

**EDMUND**

When saw you my father last?

**EDGAR**

The night gone by.

**EDMUND**

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.

**EDGAR**

Some villain hath done me wrong.

**EDMUND**

That's my fear. retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak. Pray ye go. *(Gives a key)* if you do stir abroad, go armed.

**EDGAR**

Armed, brother?

**EDMUND**

Brother, I advise you to the best. Pray you away.

*Exit EDGAR.*

A credulous father and a brother noble,  
Whose nature is so far from doing harms  
That he suspects none.  
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:  
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.

*Exit EDMUND.*

# 7

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## ACT 1 SCENE 4\*

*Enter KENT Disguised as Caius.*

**KENT**

Now, banished Kent,  
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemned,  
So may it come thy master whom thou lov'st,  
Shall find thee full of labours.

*Horns within. Enter LEAR and his KNIGHTS.*

**LEAR**

Let me not stay a jot for dinner: go get it ready.–

*Exit a KNIGHT.*

*(To KENT)* How now, what art thou?

**KENT**

A man, sir.

**LEAR**

What wouldst thou with us?

**KENT**

To serve him truly that will put me in trust.

**LEAR**

Who wouldst thou serve?

**KENT**

You.

**LEAR**

Dost thou know me, fellow?

**KENT**

No, sir.

**LEAR**

What services canst thou do?

**KENT**

I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, and deliver a plain message bluntly.

**LEAR**

Follow me, thou shalt serve me.— Dinner, ho, dinner! Where's my knave? My fool? Go you and call my fool hither.

*Exit another KNIGHT, Enter OSWALD (crossing the stage).*

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

**OSWALD**

So please you—

*Exit OSWALD.*

**LEAR**

What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back.—

*Exit another KNIGHT (following OSWALD).*

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

*Re-enter the 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 called him?

**KNIGHT**

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

**LEAR**

I have perceived a most faint neglect of late. I will look further into't. But where's my fool?

**KNIGHT**

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

**LEAR**

No more of that. – Go you and tell my daughter I would speak with her.–

*Exit a KNIGHT.*

Go you, call hither my fool.–

*Exit another KNIGHT, Enter OSWALD.*

O, you sir, you. Who am I, sir?

**OSWALD**

My lady's father.

**LEAR**

'My lady's father'? My lord's knave: you dog, you slave!

**OSWALD**

I am none of these, my lord.

**LEAR**

Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

*LEAR Strikes OSWALD.*

**OSWALD**

I'll not be stricken, my lord.

**KENT**

Nor tripped neither, you base football player.

*KENT Trips OSWALD.*

**LEAR**

I thank thee, fellow: thou serv'st me and I'll love thee.

**KENT**

Come, sir, arise, away!

*KENT Pushes OSWALD out. Enter FOOL.*

**FOOL**

Let me hire him too.

**LEAR**

How now, my pretty knave, how dost thou?

**FOOL**

*(To KENT)* Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

**LEAR**

Why, my boy?

**FOOL**

*(To KENT)* Why, this fellow has banished two on's daughters and did the third a blessing against his will: if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb.

**LEAR**

A pestilent gall to me!

*Enter GONERIL.*

**LEAR**

How now, daughter? You are too much of 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.

**GONERIL**

Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,  
But other of your insolent retinue  
Do hourly carp and quarrel, breaking forth  
In rank and not-to-be endured riots, sir.

**LEAR**

*(To GONERIL)* Are you our daughter?

**GONERIL**

I would you would make use of your good wisdom.  
As you are old and reverend, should be wise.  
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires,  
That this our court, infected with their manners,  
Shows like a riotous inn.  
Be then desired  
A little to disquantity your train.

**LEAR**

Darkness and devils!–  
*(To an ATTENDANT)* Saddle my horses, call my train together.–  
*(To GONERIL)* I'll not trouble thee.  
Yet have I left a daughter.

**GONERIL**

You strike my people, and your disordered rabble  
Make servants of their betters.

*Enter ALBANY.*

**LEAR**

*(To ALBANY)* Is it your will?

**ALBANY**

Pray, sir, be patient.

**LEAR**

*(To GONERIL)* My train are men of choice and rarest parts.  
O, most small fault,  
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!  
O Lear, Lear, Lear!  
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in, *(Hits his head)*  
And thy dear judgement out! Go, go, my people.

**ALBANY**

My lord, I am guiltless as I am ignorant  
Of what hath moved 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:  
And from her derogate body never spring  
A babe to honour her.  
Away, away!

**ALBANY**

Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

**LEAR**

I have another daughter,  
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable.

*Exeunt LEAR with KENT and KNIGHTS.*

**FOOL**

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

*Exit FOOL.*

**GONERIL**

This man hath had good counsel. A hundred knights?  
'Tis politic and safe to let him keep  
At point a hundred knights.— Oswald, I say!

**ALBANY**

Well, you may fear too far.

**GONERIL**

Safer than trust too far:  
What he hath uttered I have writ my sister:  
If she sustain him and his hundred knights  
When I have showed th'unfitness—

*Enter OSWALD.*

How now, Oswald?

**OSWALD**

Ay, madam.

**GONERIL**

*(Passing OSWALD a letter)* Take you some company and away to horse:  
Inform her full of my particular fear.

*Exeunt.*

# 8

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## ACT 2 SCENE 1

*Enter EDMUND and CURAN, severally (from different directions).*

### **CURAN**

I have been with your father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him this night.

### **EDMUND**

How comes that?

### **CURAN**

Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad?

### **EDMUND**

Not I: pray you, what are they?

### **CURAN**

Have you heard of no likely wars toward 'twixt the dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

### **EDMUND**

Not a word.

### **CURAN**

You may do then in time. Fare you well, sir.

*Exit CURAN.*

### **EDMUND**

The duke be here tonight? The better – best!  
This weaves itself perforce into my business.

*Enter EDGAR.*

Brother, a word!  
O sir, fly this place.  
Intelligence is given where you are hid;  
You have now the good advantage of the night.  
I hear my father coming, pardon me:  
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you: *(Draws)*  
Draw, seem to defend yourself. Now quit you well.

*EDGAR draws.*

Yield: come before my father.– Light, ho, here!–  
Fly, brother.– Torches, torches!– So, farewell.

*Exit EDGAR.*

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion *(Wounds his arm)*  
Of my more fierce endeavour.– Father, father!  
Stop, stop! No help?

*Enter GLOUCESTER and Servants with torches.*

**GLOUCESTER**

Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

**EDMUND**

Look, sir, I bleed.

**GLOUCESTER**

Where is the villain, Edmund?

**EDMUND**

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

**GLOUCESTER**

Pursue him, ho! Go after.

*Exeunt Servants.*

By no means what?

**EDMUND**

Persuade me to the murder of your lordship.

**GLOUCESTER**

Let him fly far:

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught,  
And found – dispatch.

All ports I'll bar: the villain shall not scape:  
And of my land,  
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means  
To make thee capable.

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN and Attendants.*

**CORNWALL**

How now, my noble friend? I have heard strangeness.

**REGAN**

How dost, my lord?

**GLOUCESTER**

O, madam, my old heart is cracked, it's cracked!

**REGAN**

What, did my father's godson seek your life?  
Your Edgar?

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**REGAN**

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

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**EDMUND**

Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

**REGAN**

No marvel, then, though he were ill affected:  
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death.  
Now if they come to sojourn at my house,  
I'll not be there.

**CORNWALL**

You know not why we came to visit you?

**REGAN**

Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,  
Of differences, which I best thought it fit  
To answer from our home.

**GLOUCESTER**

Your graces are right welcome.

*Exeunt. Flourish.*

# 10

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**ACT 2 SCENE 2**

*Enter KENT and OSWALD, severally (KENT disguised as Caius).*

**KENT**

Fellow, I know thee.

**OSWALD**

What dost thou know me for?

**KENT**

A knave, a rascal.

*KENT Draws a sword.*

**OSWALD**

Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

**KENT**

Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king.

*KENT attacks OSWALD.*

**OSWALD**

Help, ho! Murder! Help!

*Enter EDMUND, CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, Servants.*

**EDMUND**

How now, what's the matter? Part!

**CORNWALL**

Keep peace, upon your lives.

**REGAN**

The messengers from our sister and the king.

**CORNWALL**

What is your difference? Speak.

Why art thou angry?

**KENT**

That such a knave as this should wear a sword,

Who wears no honesty.

(To OSWALD) Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?

**CORNWALL**

What is his fault?

**KENT**

His countenance likes me not.

**CORNWALL**

(To OSWALD) What was th'offence you gave him?

**OSWALD**

I never gave him any.

**CORNWALL**

Fetch forth the stocks!

We'll teach you.

**KENT**

Sir, I am too old to learn.

Call not your stocks for me: I serve the king.

**CORNWALL**

Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life and honour,

There shall he sit till noon.

**REGAN**

Till noon? Till night, my lord, and all night too.

*Stocks brought out and KENT put in the stocks (by the legs).*

**CORNWALL**

(To GLOUCESTER) Come, my lord, away.

*Exeunt. (GLOUCESTER and KENT remain).*

**GLOUCESTER**

I am sorry for thee, friend: 'tis the duke's pleasure. I'll entreat for thee.

**KENT**

Pray do not, sir.

**GLOUCESTER**

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

*Exit GLOUCESTER.*

**KENT**

*(Pulls out a letter)*

I know 'tis from Cordelia,  
 Who hath most fortunately been informed  
 Of my obscurèd course, and shall find time  
 From this enormous state, seeking to give  
 Losses their remedies.  
 Fortune, goodnight: smile once more, turn thy wheel!

*KENT sleeps.*

## 11

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*Enter EDGAR.*

**EDGAR**

I heard myself proclaimed,  
 And by the happy hollow of a tree  
 Escaped the hunt. Whiles I may scape,  
 I will preserve myself, and am bethought  
 To take the basest and most poorest shape:  
     my face I'll grime with filth.  
 Poor Turlygod, poor Tom!  
 That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

*Exit EDGAR.*

## 12

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*Enter LEAR, FOOL and KNIGHT.*

**LEAR**

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

**KENT**

*(Waking)* Hail to thee, noble master!

**LEAR**

Ha? Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

**KENT**

No, my lord.

**FOOL**

Ha, ha, 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**

They durst not do't.

Resolve me with all modest haste which way

Thou might'st deserve or they impose this usage,

Coming from us.

**KENT**

I did commend your highness' letters to them,

My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,

Stewed in his haste,

From Goneril,

Delivered letters,

Which presently they read: on those contents

They summoned up their meiny, straight took horse:

And meeting here the other messenger,

Whose welcome I perceived had poisoned mine –

Having more man than wit about me, drew.

Your son and daughter found this trespass worth

The shame which here it suffers.

**LEAR**

Where is this daughter?

**KENT**

With the earl, sir, here within.

**LEAR**

Follow me not: stay here.

*Exit LEAR.*

**KNIGHT**

Made you no more offence but what you speak of?

**KENT**

None. How chance the king comes with so small a number?

*Enter LEAR and GLOUCESTER.*

**LEAR**

Deny to speak with me? They are sick, they are weary,

They have travelled all the night? Fetch me a better answer.

**GLOUCESTER**

My dear lord.

**LEAR**

Vengeance, plague, death, confusion!

The king would speak with Cornwall: the dear father

Would with his daughter speak, commands, tends, service.

Death on my state! *(Sees KENT)* Wherefore

Should he sit here? Give me my servant forth.

**GLOUCESTER**

I would have all well betwixt you.

*Exit GLOUCESTER.*

**LEAR**

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

**FOOL**

Cry to it, nuncle.

# 13

---

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, Servants.*

**CORNWALL**

Hail to your grace!

*KENT set free from the stocks.*

**REGAN**

I am glad to see your highness.

**LEAR**

Regan, I think you are. I know what reason

I have to think so. *(To KENT)* O, are you free?

Belovèd Regan,

Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied

Sharp-toothed unkindness, like a vulture, here. *(Points to his heart)*

**REGAN**

I cannot think my sister in the least

Would fail her obligation.

**LEAR**

My curses on her!

**REGAN**

O, sir, you are old. Therefore, I pray you,

That to our sister you do make return:

Say you have wronged her.

**LEAR**

Ask her forgiveness?

Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;  
Age is unnecessary. On my knees I beg  
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed and food.

**REGAN**

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

**LEAR**

Never, Regan:  
She hath abated me of half my train,  
All the stored vengeance of heaven fall  
On her ingrateful top!

**REGAN**

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.

**REGAN**

Good sir, to th'purpose.

*Bugle, fanfare within.*

**LEAR**

Who put my man i'th'stocks?

*Enter OSWALD.  
Enter GONERIL.*

**LEAR**

Who comes here?  
(To GONERIL) Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?  
O Regan, will you take her by the hand?

*REGAN and GONERIL join hands.*

**GONERIL**

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

**LEAR**

How came my man i'th'stocks?

**CORNWALL**

I set him there, sir.

**LEAR**

You? Did you?

**REGAN**

I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.  
If till the expiration of your month,  
You will return and sojourn with my sister,  
Dismissing half your train, come then to me.

**LEAR**

Return to her? And fifty men dismissed?  
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter  
To this detested groom. (*Points at OSWALD*)

**GONERIL**

At your choice, sir.

**LEAR**

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad.  
We'll no more meet, no more see one another.  
I can be patient, I can stay with Regan,  
I and my hundred knights.

**REGAN**

I looked not for you yet, nor am provided  
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister,

**LEAR**

Is this well spoken?

**REGAN**

I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?

**GONERIL**

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

**REGAN**

Why not, my lord? If you will come to me –  
I entreat you  
To bring but five-and-twenty.

**LEAR**

I gave you all–

**REGAN**

And in good time you gave it.

**LEAR**

(*To GONERIL*) I'll go with thee:  
Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,  
And thou art twice her love.

**GONERIL**

Hear me, my lord:  
What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five?

**REGAN**

What need one?

**LEAR**

O, reason not the need!

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!

*A storm and tempest.*

O fool, I shall go mad!

*Exeunt LEAR, GLOUCESTER, KENT and FOOL (and KNIGHT).*

# 14

---

**CORNWALL**

Let us withdraw: 'twill be a storm.

**REGAN**

This house is little: the old man and's people  
Cannot be well bestowed.

**GONERIL**

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

**REGAN**

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

**GONERIL**

So am I purposed.

*Enter GLOUCESTER.*

**GLOUCESTER**

The king is in high rage.

**CORNWALL**

Whither is he going?

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**CORNWALL**

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

**GONERIL**

My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**REGAN**

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

**CORNWALL**

Shut up your doors, my lord, 'tis a wild night.

*Exeunt.*

# 15

---

## ACT 3 SCENE 1

*Storm still. Enter KENT and a KNIGHT, severally.*

**KENT**

Who's there, besides foul weather?

**KNIGHT**

One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

**KENT**

I know you. Where's the king?

**KNIGHT**

Contending with the fretful elements;

**KENT**

But who is with him?

**KNIGHT**

None but the fool.

**KENT**

Sir, I do know you,  
 And dare, upon the warrant of my note  
 Commend a dear thing to you. There is division  
 'twixt Albany and Cornwall,  
 Who have servants, who seem no less,  
 Which are to France the spies and speculations  
 Intelligent of our state.  
 If on my credit you dare build so far  
 To make your speed to Dover, you shall find  
 Some that will thank you.

**KNIGHT**

I will talk further with you.

**KENT**

No, do not. *(Gives a purse)*  
 If you shall see Cordelia –  
 show her this ring, *(Gives a ring)*  
 And she will tell you who that fellow is  
 That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!  
 I will go seek the king.

**KNIGHT**

Give me your hand. Have you no more to say?

**KENT**

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 (separately).*

# 16

---

## ACT 3 SCENE 2

*Storm still. Enter LEAR and FOOL.*

**LEAR**

Blow winds and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow,  
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout  
Till you have drenched our steeples, drown the cocks!  
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,  
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,  
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,  
Strike flat the thick rotundity o'th'world!

**FOOL**

Good nunce, in, ask thy daughters' blessing: here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools.

**LEAR**

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit fire! Spout rain!  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.  
I never gave you kingdom, called you children;  
You owe me no subscription. O, ho, 'tis foul!

*Enter KENT (Disguised as Caius).*

**KENT**

Who's there?

**FOOL**

Marry, a wise man and a fool.

**KENT**

Alas, sir, are you here?

**LEAR**

I am a man  
More sinned against than sinning.

**KENT**

Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel:  
Some friendship will it lend you gainst the tempest.  
Repose you there while I to this hard house –  
    return and force  
Their scanted courtesy.

**LEAR**

My wits begin to turn.  
I am cold myself.— Where is this straw, my fellow?

**FOOL**

*(Singing)* He that has and a little tiny wit,  
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
Must make content with his fortunes fit,  
Though the rain it raineth every day.

**LEAR**

True, boy.— Come, bring us to this hovel.

*Exeunt.*

# 17

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## ACT 3 SCENE 3

*Enter GLOUCESTER and EDMUND (carrying torches).*

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**EDMUND**

Most savage and unnatural.

**GLOUCESTER**

Go to; say you nothing. There is division between the dukes, and a worse matter than that. I have received a letter this night — 'tis dangerous to be spoken — I have locked the letter in my closet. These injuries the king now bears will be revenged home; there is part of a power already footed. We must incline to the king: Go you and maintain talk with the duke: if he ask for me, I am ill and gone to bed: if I die for it the king my old master must be relieved. There is strange things toward, Edmund: pray you be careful.

*Exit GLOUCESTER.*

**EDMUND**

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

*Exit EDMUND.*

# 18

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## ACT 3 SCENE 4

*Storm still. Enter LEAR, KENT and FOOL (KENT disguised as Caius).*

**KENT**

Here is the place, my lord.

**LEAR**

Let me alone.

**KENT**

Good my lord, enter here.

**LEAR**

Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm  
Invades us to the skin so: the tempest in my mind  
Doth from my senses take all feeling else  
Save what beats there.

No, I will weep no more. In such a night  
To shut me out?

**KENT**

Good my lord, enter here.

**LEAR**

I'll go in.—

*(To the FOOL)* In, boy, go first.—

Nay, get thee in.— I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.

*Exit the FOOL (to the hovel),  
Enter FOOL (running from the hovel).*

**EDGAR**

*(Within the hovel)* Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor Tom!

**FOOL**

Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit. Help me, help me!

**KENT**

Give me thy hand. Who's there?

**FOOL**

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

**KENT**

Come forth.

*Enter EDGAR (Disguised as Poor Tom).*

**EDGAR**

Away! The foul fiend follows me!

**LEAR**

Did'st thou give all to thy daughters? And art thou come to this?

**EDGAR**

Who gives anything to poor Tom? Whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame!  
Tom's a-cold. O, do de, do de, do de.

*Storm still.*

**LEAR**

Has his daughters brought him to this pass?

**KENT**

He hath no daughters, sir.

**LEAR**

Death, traitor! Nothing could have subdued nature  
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.

**FOOL**

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

*Storm still.  
Enter Gloucester with a torch.*

**EDGAR**

This is the foul Flibbertigibbet.

**LEAR**

What's he?

**KENT**

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

**GLOUCESTER**

What are you there? Your names?

**EDGAR**

Poor Tom, that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water.

**GLOUCESTER**

*(To LEAR)* Our flesh and blood, my lord, is grown so vile,  
That it doth hate what gets it.

**EDGAR**

Poor Tom's a-cold.

**GLOUCESTER**

Go in with me: my duty cannot suffer  
T'obey in all your daughters' hard commands.

**LEAR**

First let me talk with this philosopher.—  
*(To EDGAR)* What is the cause of thunder?

**KENT**

Good my lord, take his offer: go into th'house.

**LEAR**

*(To EDGAR)* Let me me ask you one word in private.

*LEAR and EDGAR talk apart.*

**KENT**

*(To GLOUCESTER)* Importune him once more to go, my lord:  
His wits begin t'unsettle.

**GLOUCESTER**

Canst thou blame him?

*Storm still.*

*(To LEAR)* I do beseech your grace—

**LEAR**

O, cry you mercy, sir.–  
(To EDGAR) Noble philosopher, your company.

**EDGAR**

Tom's a-cold.

**GLOUCESTER**

(To EDGAR)  
In, fellow, there, into th'hovel: keep thee warm.

**LEAR**

Come let's in all.

**KENT**

This way, my lord.

*Exeunt.*

## 19

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**ACT 3 SCENE 5**

*Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND.*

**CORNWALL**

I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

**EDMUND**

(Shows a letter) This is the letter which he spoke of which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France.

**CORNWALL**

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

**EDMUND**

(Aside) If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully.

**CORNWALL**

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

*Exeunt.*

## 20

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**ACT 3 SCENE 6**

*Enter KENT and GLOUCESTER.*

**GLOUCESTER**

Here is better than the open air, take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.

*Exit GLOUCESTER.*

**KENT**

All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience: the gods reward your kindness!

*Enter LEAR, EDGAR and FOOL.*

**LEAR**

(To EDGAR)

You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred.

*Enter GLOUCESTER (at a distance).*

**KENT**

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

**LEAR**

Make no noise, make no noise: draw the curtains.

*LEAR sleeps.*

**FOOL**

And I'll go to bed at noon.

**GLOUCESTER**

(To KENT) Come hither, friend: where is the king my master?

**KENT**

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

**GLOUCESTER**

Good friend, I prithee take him in thy arms;  
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him:  
There is a litter ready, lay him in't  
And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet  
Both welcome and protection.

*LEAR is carried out.*

Come, come, away.

*Exeunt*

## 21

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**ACT 3 SCENE 7**

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND and Servants.*

**CORNWALL**

(To GONERIL) Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter: *(Gives a letter)* the army of France is landed.— Seek out the traitor Gloucester.

*Exeunt Servants.*

**REGAN**

Hang him instantly.

**GONERIL**

Pluck out his eyes.

**CORNWALL**

Leave him to my displeasure.

*Enter OSWALD.*

How now? Where's the king?

**OSWALD**

My lord of Gloucester hath conveyed him hence:  
Some five- or six-and-thirty of his knights,  
Are gone with him toward Dover, where they boast  
To have well-armèd friends.

**CORNWALL**

Get horses for your mistress.

**GONERIL**

Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

*Exeunt GONERIL, EDMUND and OSWALD.*

**CORNWALL**

Edmund, farewell.—  
Go seek the traitor Gloucester.

*Exeunt other Servants. Enter GLOUCESTER and Servants.*

Who's there? The traitor?

**REGAN**

Ingrateful fox! 'Tis he.

**CORNWALL**

Bind fast his corky arms.

**GLOUCESTER**

What means your graces?

**CORNWALL**

Bind him, I say.

*Servants bind GLOUCESTER.*

**REGAN**

Hard, hard. O, filthy traitor!

**GLOUCESTER**

Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

**CORNWALL**

To this chair bind him.

**REGAN**

Such a traitor.

**GLOUCESTER**

I am your host.

**CORNWALL**

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

**REGAN**

Be simple answered, for we know the truth.

**CORNWALL**

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

**REGAN**

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

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**CORNWALL**

Cunning.

**REGAN**

And false.

**CORNWALL**

Where hast thou sent the king?

**GLOUCESTER**

To Dover.

**REGAN**

Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charged at peril—

**CORNWALL**

Wherefore to Dover? Let him answer that.

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**REGAN**

Wherefore to Dover?

**GLOUCESTER**

Because I would not see thy cruel nails  
Pluck out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister  
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.  
but I shall see  
The wingèd vengeance overtake such children.

**CORNWALL**

See't shalt thou never.

**GLOUCESTER**

Give me some help! O cruel! O you gods!

*CORNWALL grinds out GLOUCESTER'S eye,*

**REGAN**

One side will mock another: th'other too.

**CORNWALL**

If you see vengeance—

**SERVANT**

Hold your hand, my lord:  
I have served you ever since I was a child,

But better service have I never done you  
Than now to bid you hold.

**REGAN**

How now, you dog?

**CORNWALL**

My villain?

*They draw and fight (CORNWALL is wounded).*

**SERVANT**

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

**REGAN**

Give me thy sword. *(To a SERVANT)* A peasant stand up thus?

*REGAN kills SERVANT.*

**SERVANT**

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

**CORNWALL**

Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!

*CORNWALL Puts out GLOUCESTER's other eye.*

Where is thy lustre now?

**GLOUCESTER**

All dark and comfortless. Where's my son Edmund?

**REGAN**

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

**GLOUCESTER**

O, my follies! Then Edgar was abused.

**REGAN**

Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell  
His way to Dover.

*Exit (another Servant) with GLOUCESTER.*

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

**CORNWALL**

I have received a hurt:  
Regan, I bleed apace.  
Give me your arm.

*Exeunt.*

## ACT 4 SCENE 1

*Enter EDGAR (Disguised as Poor Tom).*

**EDGAR**

Yet better thus, and known to be contemned,  
Than still contemned and flattered. Welcome, then,  
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!

But who comes here? My father, poorly led?  
World, world, O world!

*Enter GLOUCESTER led by an OLD MAN.*

**OLD MAN**

O, my good lord.

**GLOUCESTER**

Away, get thee away! Good friend, be gone.

**OLD MAN**

You cannot see your way.

**GLOUCESTER**

I have no way and therefore want no eyes:  
O dear son Edgar,  
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,  
I'd say I had eyes again!

**OLD MAN**

How now? Who's there?

**EDGAR**

O gods!

**OLD MAN**

'Tis poor mad Tom.

**GLOUCESTER**

Is it a beggar-man?

**OLD MAN**

Madman and beggar too.

**GLOUCESTER**

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.

**EDGAR**

*(Aside)* How should this be?  
Bless thee, master!

**GLOUCESTER**

(To OLD MAN) Get thee away: if for my sake  
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 poor soul,  
Which I’ll entreat to lead me.

**OLD MAN**

Alack, sir, he is mad.

**GLOUCESTER**

’Tis the time’s plague, when madmen lead the blind.

*Exit OLD MAN.*

**GLOUCESTER**

Sirrah—

**EDGAR**

Poor Tom’s a-cold. (*Aside*) I cannot daub it further.

**GLOUCESTER**

Come hither, fellow.

**EDGAR**

(*Aside*) And yet I must. (*To GLOUCESTER*) Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

**GLOUCESTER**

Know’st thou the way to Dover?

**EDGAR**

Both stile and gate, horseway and footpath.

**GLOUCESTER**

Here, take this purse (*Gives a purse*)  
There is a cliff, whose high and bending head  
Looks fearfully in the confinèd deep:  
Bring me but to the very brim of it  
from that place  
I shall no leading need.

**EDGAR**

Give me thy arm:  
Poor Tom shall lead thee.

*Exeunt.*

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ACT 4 SCENE 2

*Enter GONERIL, EDMUND and OSWALD.*

**GONERIL**

Welcome, my lord: I marvel our mild husband  
Not met us on the way.— Now, where’s your master?

**OSWALD**

Madam, within, but never man so changed.  
I told him of the army that was landed,  
He smiled at it: I told him you were coming,  
His answer was 'The worse'

**GONERIL**

*(To EDMUND)* Then shall you go no further.  
Back, Edmund, to my brother:  
Hasten his musters and conduct his powers.  
This trusty servant  
Shall pass between us: ere long you are like to hear –  
Wear this; spare speech. *(Gives a favour)*

**EDMUND**

Yours in the ranks of death.

*Exit EDMUND.*

**OSWALD**

Madam, here comes my lord.

*Exit OSWALD.  
Enter ALBANY.*

**GONERIL**

I have been worth the whistle.

**ALBANY**

O Goneril,  
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind  
Blows in your face.

**GONERIL**

Milk-livered man.

**ALBANY**

See thyself, devil!

**GONERIL**

O vain fool!

*Enter a Messenger.*

**MESSENGER**

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

**ALBANY**

Gloucester's eyes?

**MESSENGER**

A servant that he bred, thrilled with remorse,  
Flew on him and amongst them felled him dead.

**ALBANY**

This shows you are above,  
 You justices, that these our nether crimes  
 So speedily can venge. But, O, poor Gloucester!

**MESSENGER**

*(To GONERIL)* This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer: *(Gives a letter)*  
 'Tis from your sister.

**GONERIL**

*(Aside)* I'll read, and answer.

*Exit GONERIL.*

**ALBANY**

Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

**MESSENGER**

Come with my lady hither.

**ALBANY**

He is not here.

**MESSENGER**

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

**ALBANY**

Knows he the wickedness?

**MESSENGER**

Ay, my good lord: 'twas he informed against him.

**ALBANY**

Gloucester, I live  
 To thank thee for the love thou showed'st the king  
 And to revenge thine eyes.— Come hither, friend:  
 Tell me what more thou know'st.

*Exeunt.*

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### ACT 4 SCENE 3

*Enter with drum and colours CORDELIA, GENTLEMAN and Soldiers.*

**CORDELIA**

Alack, 'tis he: why, he was met even now  
 As mad as the vexed sea, singing aloud,  
 Crowned with rank fumiter and furrow weeds.  
 A sentry send forth;  
 Search every acre in the high-grown field  
 And bring him to our eye.

*Exit GENTLEMAN and a Soldier. Enter a Messenger.*

**MESSENGER**

News, madam:

The British powers are marching hitherward.

**CORDELIA**

'Tis known before: our preparation stands  
In expectation of them.

No blown ambition doth our arms incite,  
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right.

*Exeunt.*

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## ACT 4 SCENE 4

*Enter REGAN and OSWALD.*

**REGAN**

But are my brother's powers set forth?

**OSWALD**

Ay, madam.

**REGAN**

Himself in person there?

**OSWALD**

Madam, with much ado:  
Your sister is the better soldier.

**REGAN**

Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?

**OSWALD**

No, madam.

**REGAN**

What might import my sister's letter to him?

**OSWALD**

I know not, lady.

**REGAN**

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

Therefore I do advise you, take this note.  
My lord is dead: Edmund and I have talked,  
And more convenient is he for my hand  
Than for your lady's.  
If you do find him, pray you give him this,  
(*Gives a token or a letter*).

And when your mistress hears thus much from you,  
I pray desire her call her wisdom to her.

*Exeunt.*

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### ACT 4 SCENE 5

*Enter GLOUCESTER and EDGAR (disguised as Poor Tom).*

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**EDGAR**

You do climb up it now: look how we labour.

**GLOUCESTER**

Methinks the ground is even.

**EDGAR**

Horrible steep.

Hark, do you hear the sea?

**GLOUCESTER**

No, truly.

**EDGAR**

Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect

By your eyes' anguish.

**GLOUCESTER**

Methinks thy voice is altered and thou speak'st

In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

**EDGAR**

Come on, sir, here's the place: stand still. How fearful

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!

The crows and choughs that wing the midway air

Show scarce so gross as beetles.

I'll look no more,

Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight

Topple down headlong.

**GLOUCESTER**

Set me where you stand.

**EDGAR**

Give me your hand: you are now within a foot

Of th'extreme verge: for all beneath the moon

Would I not leap upright.

**GLOUCESTER**

Let go my hand.

Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

**EDGAR**

Now fare ye well, good sir.

**GLOUCESTER**

With all my heart.

**EDGAR**

*(Aside)* Why I do trifle thus with his despair  
Is done to cure it.

**GLOUCESTER**

O you mighty gods!  
This world I do renounce, and in your sights  
Shake patiently my great affliction off:  
If Edgar live, O, bless him!—  
Now, fellow, fare thee well.

*GLOUCESTER falls forward (onto the ground).*

**EDGAR**

Gone, sir: farewell.—  
*(Aside)* And yet I know not how conceit may rob  
The treasury of life, when life itself  
Yields to the theft.  
*(To GLOUCESTER)* Ho, you sir! Friend! Hear you, sir! Speak!—  
What are you, sir?

**GLOUCESTER**

Away, and let me die.

**EDGAR**

Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.

**GLOUCESTER**

But have I fall'n or no?

**EDGAR**

From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.  
Look up a-height.

**GLOUCESTER**

Alack, I have no eyes.

**EDGAR**

Give me your arm.

*EDGAR helps GLOUCESTER up.*

Upon the crown o'th'cliff what thing was that  
Which parted from you?

**GLOUCESTER**

A poor unfortunate beggar.

**EDGAR**

As I stood here below, methought his eyes  
Were two full moons:  
It was some fiend: therefore  
Think that the clearest gods, have preserved thee.

**GLOUCESTER**

I do remember now: henceforth I'll bear  
Affliction till it do cry out itself  
'Enough, enough' and die. That thing you speak of,  
I took it for a man: he led me to that place.

**EDGAR**

Bear free and patient thoughts.

*Enter LEAR (dressed with weeds).*

**LEAR**

No, they cannot touch me for crying: I am the king himself.

**EDGAR**

O thou side-piercing sight!

**LEAR**

Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace, this piece of toasted cheese will do't.

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**LEAR**

Ay, every inch a king.

**GLOUCESTER**

O, let me kiss that hand!

**LEAR**

Let me wipe it first: it smells of mortality.

**GLOUCESTER**

O, ruined piece of nature! Dost thou know me?

**LEAR**

I remember thine eyes well enough.  
No eyes in your head, yet you see how this world goes.

**GLOUCESTER**

I see it feelingly.

**LEAR**

What, art mad?  
I know thee well enough: thy name is Gloucester.

*Enter a GENTLEMAN (with Soldiers).*

**GENTLEMAN**

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

**LEAR**

No rescue? What, a prisoner?  
Come, an you get it, you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

*Exit LEAR (running, Soldiers follow).*

**GENTLEMAN**

A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,  
Past speaking of in a king!

**EDGAR**

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

**GENTLEMAN**

Most sure and vulgar.

**EDGAR**

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

**GENTLEMAN**

Near and on speedy foot.

*Exit GENTLEMAN.*

**EDGAR**

I thank you, sir.

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**EDGAR**

Well pray you, father.

**GLOUCESTER**

Now, good sir, what are you?

**EDGAR**

A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows.  
Give me your hand:  
I'll lead you to some biding. *(Takes his arm)*

**GLOUCESTER**

Hearty thanks.

*Enter OSWALD.*

**OSWALD**

A proclaimed prize! Thou old unhappy traitor (*Draws*).

**GLOUCESTER**

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

*EDGAR comes between them.*

**OSWALD**

Wherefore, bold peasant,  
Darest thou support a published traitor?

**EDGAR**

Nay, come not near th'old man.

*They fight.*

**OSWALD**

Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain, take my purse:  
And give the letters which thou find'st about me  
To Edmund, Earl of Gloucester. O, untimely death! Death!

*OSWALD dies.*

**GLOUCESTER**

What, is he dead?

**EDGAR**

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

*EDGAR opens the letter.*

*(Reading)*

'You have many opportunities to cut him off. There is nothing done if he return the conqueror:

Your – wife, so I would say – affectionate servant, Goneril.'

A plot upon her virtuous husband's life,

And the exchange my brother!

*(To GLOUCESTER)* Give me your hand

Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.

Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend.

*Exeunt.*

## ACT 4 SCENE 6

*Enter CORDELIA, KENT and GENTLEMAN (KENT still disguised as Caius).*

### **CORDELIA**

*(Meeting with KENT)* O thou good Kent!  
*(To GENTLEMAN)* How does the king?

### **GENTLEMAN**

Madam, sleeps still.

*Enter LEAR in a chair carried by Servants.*

### **CORDELIA**

O my dear father! Restoration hang *(Kisses him)*  
Thy medicine on my lips and let this kiss  
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters  
Have in thy reverence made!

### **KENT**

Kind and dear princess!

### **CORDELIA**

He wakes.

### **LEAR**

You do me wrong to take me out o'th'grave.

### **CORDELIA**

Sir, do you know me?

### **LEAR**

You are a spirit.  
Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?  
I am mightily abused.

### **CORDELIA**

O, look upon me, sir.

### **LEAR**

I am a very foolish fond old man,  
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.  
Methinks I should know you and know this man,  
Yet I am doubtful. I think this lady  
To be my child Cordelia.

### **CORDELIA**

And so I am, I am.

### **LEAR**

Am I in France?

**KENT**

In your own kingdom, sir.

**GENTLEMAN**

Be comforted, good madam: the great rage,  
You see, is killed in him.

**CORDELIA**

Will't please your highness walk?

**LEAR**

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

*Exeunt.*

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## ACT 5 SCENE 1

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

**EDMUND**

*(to a Soldier)* Know of the duke if his last purpose hold  
bring his constant pleasure

*Exit Soldier.*

**REGAN**

Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

**EDMUND**

'Tis to be doubted, madam.

**REGAN**

Now, sweet lord,  
Tell me but truly  
Do you not love my sister?

**EDMUND**

In honoured love.

**REGAN**

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

**EDMUND**

Fear not. She and the duke her husband!

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

**ALBANY**

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

**REGAN**

Why is this reasoned?

**GONERIL**

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

**ALBANY**

Let's then determine  
With th'ancient of war on our proceeding.

**REGAN**

Sister, you'll go with us?

**GONERIL**

No.

**REGAN**

'Tis most convenient: pray, go with us.

**GONERIL**

*(Aside)* I know the riddle.— I will go.

*Exeunt both the armies. ALBANY remains. Enter EDGAR (disguised).*

**EDGAR**

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

**ALBANY**

Speak.

**EDGAR**

Before you fight the battle, ope this letter:  
*(Gives a letter)*  
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound.  
I can produce a champion that will prove  
What is avouchèd there.

**ALBANY**

Stay till I have read the letter.

**EDGAR**

I'll appear again.

*Exit EDGAR.*

**ALBANY**

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

*Enter EDMUND.*

**EDMUND**

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

**ALBANY**

We will greet the time.

Exit ALBANY.

**EDMUND**

To both these sisters have I sworn my love,  
Each jealous of the other. Which of them shall I take?  
Both? One? Or neither? 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 EDMUND.

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ACT 5 SCENE 2

*A battle. Alarums within.*

*Enter with drum and colours LEAR, CORDELIA and Soldiers over the stage and Exeunt.  
Enter EDGAR (disguised) and GLOUCESTER*

**EDGAR**

Here, father, take the shadow of this tree.  
If ever I return to you again,  
I'll bring you comfort.

**GLOUCESTER**

Grace go with you, sir!

*Exit EDGAR.*

*Alarum and retreat within.*

*Enter EDGAR.*

**EDGAR**

King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter taken:  
Give me thy hand, come on.

*Exeunt.*

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ACT 5 SCENE 3

*Enter in conquest with drum and colours EDMUND,  
LEAR and CORDELIA (as prisoners), soldiers, and CAPTAIN.*

**EDMUND**

Some officers take them away.

**CORDELIA**

*(To LEAR)* We are not the first  
Who with best meaning have incurred the worst.  
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.

**EDMUND**

Take them away.

*Exeunt LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded.*

Take thou this note, go follow them to prison. *(Gives a paper)*

**CAPTAIN**

I'll do't, my lord.

*Exit CAPTAIN.*

*Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, Soldiers.*

**ALBANY**

Sir, you have showed today your valiant strain,  
And fortune led you well. You have the captives:  
I do require them of you.

**EDMUND**

Sir, I thought it fit  
To send the old and miserable king to some retention.  
With him I sent the queen.

**ALBANY**

I hold you but a subject of this war,  
Not as a brother.

**REGAN**

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

**GONERIL**

Holla, holla!  
That eye that told you so looked but asquint.

**REGAN**

Lady, I am not well, else I should answer  
From a full-flowing stomach.– *(To EDMUND)* General,  
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony:  
Witness the world that I create thee here  
My lord and master.  
Let the drum strike and prove my title thine.

**ALBANY**

Stay yet, hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee  
On capital treason. 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.

**GONERIL**

An interlude!

**ALBANY**

Thou art armed, Gloucester: let the trumpet sound:  
 If none appear to prove upon thy person  
 Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,  
 There is my pledge.

*ALBANY throws down (a challenge).*

**EDMUND**

There's my exchange: what in the world he's  
 That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.

*(EDMUND accepts the challenge).  
 Enter a HERALD.*

**REGAN**

My sickness grows upon me.

*Exit REGAN, led.*

**ALBANY**

Come hither, herald.

*A trumpet sounds.*

**HERALD**

*(Reading)* '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.'

*First trumpet.*

**HERALD**

Again!

*Second trumpet.*

**HERALD**

Again!

*Third trumpet.*

*Trumpet answers within.*

*Enter EDGAR (disguised) armed.*

**EDGAR**

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

**EDMUND**

Himself: what say'st thou to him?

**EDGAR**

*(Draws)* Draw thy sword,  
 Thou art a traitor:  
 False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father.

**EDMUND**

Back do I toss these treasons to thy head,  
*(Draws)* This sword of mine shall give them instant way!

*Alarums. Fight. EDMUND falls (injured).*

**ALBANY**

Save him, save him!

**GONERIL**

This is practice, Gloucester:

By th'law of war thou wast not bound to answer  
An unknown opposite.

**ALBANY**

Shut your mouth, dame,  
Or with this paper shall I stop it.  
Read thine own evil.  
No tearing, lady: I perceive you know it.

*ALBANY shows the letter.*

**GONERIL**

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

*Exit GONERIL.*

**ALBANY**

Most monstrous! Go after her.

*Exit attendants (following GONERIL).*

**EDMUND**

What you have charged me with, that have I done,  
And more, much more: the time will bring it out:  
'Tis past and so am I. *(To EDGAR)* But what art thou?

**EDGAR**

I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund.  
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.

*EDGAR removes his disguise.*

The gods are just:  
The dark and vicious place where thee he got  
Cost him his eyes.

**EDMUND**

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

**ALBANY**

*(To EDGAR)* Let sorrow split my heart if ever I  
Did hate thee or thy father!

**EDGAR**

Worthy prince, I know't.

**ALBANY**

How have you known the miseries of your father?

**EDGAR**

By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale,  
 And when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst!  
 The bloody proclamation to escape  
 That followed me so near taught me to shift  
 Into a madman's rags, and in this habit  
 Met I my father with his bleeding rings,  
 Led him, begged for him, saved him from despair,  
 Never – O, fault! – revealed myself unto him  
 Until some half-hour past, when I was armed.  
 I asked his blessing, and from first to last  
 Told him our pilgrimage: but his flawed heart –  
 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,  
 Burst smilingly.

**EDMUND**

This speech of yours hath moved me,  
 And shall perchance do good.

*Enter a Soldier (With a bloody knife).*

**EDGAR**

What means this bloody knife?

**SOLDIER**

It came even from the heart of – O, she's dead!

**ALBANY**

Who dead? Speak, man.

**SOLDIER**

Your lady, sir, your lady; and her sister  
 By her is poisoned: she confesses it.

**EDMUND**

I was contracted to them both.

**EDGAR**

Here comes Kent.

*Enter KENT.*

**KENT**

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

**ALBANY**

Great thing of us forgot!  
 Speak, Edmund, where's the king? And where's Cordelia?–

**EDMUND**

I pant for life. Quickly send –  
Be brief in it – to th'castle, for my writ  
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia:  
Nay, send in time.

**ALBANY**

Run, run, O, run!

*Exit Soldier.*

**EDMUND**

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

**ALBANY**

The gods defend her!

*EDMUND is borne off.*

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*Enter LEAR with CORDELIA in his arms (Soldier and others following).*

**LEAR**

Howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones:  
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so  
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone forever!

**KENT**

O my good master!

**LEAR**

Prithee, away.

**EDGAR**

'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

**LEAR**

A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!  
I might have saved her: now she's gone forever!–  
Cordelia, Cordelia! Stay a little. Ha?  
I killed the slave that was a-hanging thee.  
(To KENT) Who are you?  
This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

**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 are welcome hither.

**KENT**

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

*Enter a Messenger.*

**MESSENGER**

Edmund is dead, my lord.

**ALBANY**

That's but a trifle here.  
You lords and noble friends, know our intent:  
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.  
O, see, see!

**LEAR**

And my poor fool is hanged! 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!

*LEAR dies.*

**KENT**

Break, heart, I prithee, break.

**EDGAR**

He is gone, indeed.

**ALBANY**

Bear them from hence. Our present business  
Is general woe.—  
(*To KENT and EDGAR*) Friends of my soul, you twain  
Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

**KENT**

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

**EDGAR**

The weight of this sad time we must obey:  
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.  
The oldest hath borne most: we that are young  
Shall never see so much nor live so long.

*Exeunt with a dead march.*