

RSC ASSOCIATE SCHOOLS
PROGRAMME

PLAYMAKING
FESTIVAL

KING LEAR

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SHORTER VERSION

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.

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

1

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

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

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

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 baseness? 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? Baseness? 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.

6

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

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.



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?

9

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

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

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

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 nuncle, 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 scantred 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

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

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

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

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

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-armed friends.

CORNWALL

Get horses for your mistress.

GONERIL

Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

Exeunt GONERIL, EDMUND and OSWALD.

CORNWALL

Edmund, farewell.—

(To Servants) Go seek the traitor Gloucester.

Exeunt.

22

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!

Enter GLOUCESTER led by an OLD MAN.

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

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.

GLOUCESTER

Sirrah—

Exit OLD MAN.

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)*

EDGAR

Give me thy arm:

Poor Tom shall lead thee.

Exeunt.

23

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.

24

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.

25

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.

26

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.

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

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 bidding. *(Takes his arm)*

GLOUCESTER

Hearty thanks.

27

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.

28

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.

29

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.

30

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.