

SCENE I. King Lear's palace.

Enter GLOUCESTER

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

KING LEAR  
Attend the lords of France and Burgundy,  
Gloucester.

GLOUCESTER  
I shall, my liege.

Exeunt GLOUCESTER

KING LEAR  
Give me the map there. Know that we have  
divided  
In three our kingdom: Our son of Cornwall  
And son of Albany,  
We have this hour a constant will to publish  
Our daughters' several dowers. The princes,  
France and Burgundy,  
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,  
here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my  
daughters,--  
Which of you shall we say doth love us  
most?  
Goneril, speak first.

GONERIL  
Sir, I love you more than words can wield  
the matter;  
No less than life, As much as child e'er  
loved.

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

LEAR  
Of all these bounds, from this line to this,  
We make thee lady: What says our second  
daughter,  
Regan?

REGAN  
Sir, I am made

Of the self-same metal that my sister is,  
Only she comes too short.

CORDELIA  
[Aside] I am sure my love's  
More richer than my tongue.

KING LEAR  
To thee and thine hereditary ~~ever~~  
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom.  
[to CORDELIA] Now,  
Although the last, not least; what can you  
say?

CORDELIA  
Nothing.

KING LEAR  
Nothing!

CORDELIA  
Nothing.

KING LEAR  
Nothing will come of nothing.

CORDELIA  
I love your majesty  
According to my bond.

KING LEAR  
Cordelia! mend your speech!

CORDELIA  
Good my lord,  
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say  
They love you all? Sure, I shall never marry  
like my sisters,  
To love my father all.

KING LEAR  
goes thy heart with this?

CORDELIA  
Ay.

KING LEAR  
Let it be so; thy truth, then, be thy dower:  
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
And as a stranger to my heart and me

Hold thee, from this, for ever.

KENT  
Good my liege—

KING LEAR  
Peace, Kent!  
Come not between the dragon and his wrath.  
Call France; who stirs?  
Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,  
With my two daughters' dowers digest this  
third:  
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry  
her.

[Giving the crown]

KENT  
Royal Lear—

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

KENT  
Reverse thy doom.

KING LEAR  
Out of my sight!

KENT  
See better, Lear.

KING LEAR  
Now, by Apollo,—

KENT  
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

KING LEAR  
O, vassal! miscreant!

Laying his hand on his sword

KENT  
Revoke thy doom;  
Or, I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

KING LEAR  
Hear me, recreant!

Five days we do allot thee. If following,  
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our  
dominions,  
The moment is thy death. Away!  
This shall not be revoked.

KENT  
Fare thee well, king.

Exit

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

GLOUCESTER  
Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

KING LEAR  
noble Burgundy,  
her price is fall'n. If all of it,  
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,  
She's there, and she is yours.

BURGUNDY  
Pardon me, royal sir;  
Election makes not up on such conditions.

KING LEAR  
Then leave her, for I tell you all her wealth.  
[To KING OF FRANCE]  
For you, great king,  
I would not match you where I hate;  
therefore beseech you  
To avert your liking a more worthier way  
Than on a wretch.

KING OF FRANCE  
This is most strange.  
My lord of Burgundy,  
Will you have her?  
She is herself a dowry.

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

CORDELIA  
Peace be with Burgundy!

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

KING OF FRANCE

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being  
poor;  
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my  
chance,  
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.

KING LEAR

Let her be thine.  
Come, noble Burgundy.

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

CORDELIA

Use well our father:  
I would prefer him to a better place.

REGAN

Prescribe not us our duties.

CORDELIA

Time shall unfold what plaited cunning  
hides:  
Who cover faults, at last shame them  
derides.

KING OF FRANCE

Come, my fair Cordelia.

Exeunt KING OF FRANCE and  
CORDELIA

Exeunt GONERIL and REGAN

SCENE II. The Earl of Gloucester's castle.

Enter EDMUND, with a letter

EDMUND

Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law  
My services are bound. Why bastard?  
wherefore base?  
Why brand they us with base? Well, then,  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:  
fine word,--legitimate!

Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,  
Edmund the base shall top the legitimate. I  
grow; I prosper:  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

[Enter GLOUCESTER]

GLOUCESTER

Kent banish'd thus! and France in choler  
parted!  
And the king gone to-night! Edmund, how  
now! what news?

EDMUND

none.  
[Putting up the letter]

GLOUCESTER

Why so earnestly seek you to put up that  
letter?

EDMUND

I know no news.

GLOUCESTER

What paper were you reading?

EDMUND

Nothing.

GLOUCESTER

No? the quality of nothing hath  
not such need to hide itself. Let's see.

EDMUND

it is a letter  
from my brother.

GLOUCESTER

Give me the letter.

EDMUND

I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The  
Contents are to blame.

GLOUCESTER

let's see.

{\* EDMUND hands letter to Gloucester\*}

GLOUCESTER

[Reads] 'This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, EDGAR.' Hum—conspiracy! When came this to you? who brought it?

EDMUND  
I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

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

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

GLOUCESTER  
O villain! Abhorred villain! Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him: Where is he?

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

GLOUCESTER  
Think you so?

EDMUND  
I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, without any further delay than this very evening.

GLOUCESTER  
Edmund, seek him  
Out, I pray you.

EDMUND  
I will seek him, sir

GLOUCESTER  
These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father. Find out this villain, Edmund; do it carefully.

Exit

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 the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion.  
[Enter EDGAR]  
And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy: my cue is villainous melancholy. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions!

EDGAR  
How now, brother Edmund!

EDMUND  
when saw you my father last?

EDGAR  
Why, the night gone by.

EDMUND  
Spake you with him?

EDGAR  
Ay, two hours together.

EDMUND  
Parted you in good terms?—Found you no

Displeasure?

EDGAR  
None at all.

EDMUND  
you may have offended  
him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence  
till some little time hath qualified the heat of  
his displeasure. Retire with me to my  
lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you  
to  
hear my lord speak: go; there's my key:  
if you do stir abroad, go armed.

EDGAR  
Armed, brother!

EDMUND  
Brother, go armed: I have told you what I  
have seen  
and heard.  
[Exit EDGAR]  
A credulous father! and a brother noble,  
on whose foolish honesty  
My practises ride easy! I see the business.  
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:  
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.

Exit

SCENE III. The Duke of Albany's palace.

Enter GONERIL, and OSWALD, her  
steward  
GONERIL  
Did my father strike my gentleman for  
chiding of his fool?

OSWALD  
Yes, madam.

GONERIL  
Put on what weary negligence you please,  
You and your fellows. Now  
Remember what I tell you.

OSWALD  
Well, madam.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. A hall in the same.

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

Horns within. Enter KING LEAR, Knights,  
and Attendants

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

Exit an Attendant

How now! what art thou?

KENT  
A man, sir.

KING LEAR  
What dost thou profess? what wouldst thou  
with us?

KENT  
to serve  
him truly that will put me in trust:

KING LEAR  
What art thou?

KENT  
A very honest-hearted fellow.

KING LEAR  
What wouldst thou?

KENT  
Service.

KING LEAR  
Who wouldst thou serve?

KENT  
You.

KING LEAR  
Dost thou know me, fellow?

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

KING LEAR  
What's that?

KENT  
Authority.

KING LEAR  
What services canst thou do?

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

KING LEAR  
How old art thou?

KENT  
I have years on my back forty eight.

KING LEAR  
Follow me; thou shalt serve me.  
[Enter OSWALD]  
You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

OSWALD  
So please you,--

Exit

KING LEAR  
What says the fellow there?

enter Knight

How now!

KING 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.

Re-enter OSWALD

O, you sir. who am I?

OSWALD  
My lady's father.

KING LEAR  
'My lady's father'! you  
whoreson dog! you slave!

OSWALD  
I am neither of these, my lord.

King Lear strikes him

OSWALD  
I'll not be struck.

KENT  
Nor tripped neither, you base football  
player.

Tripping up his heels

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

KENT  
Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you  
differences:  
[Pushes OSWALD out]

enter FOOL

KING LEAR  
How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

FOOL  
I'll teach thee a speech.

KING LEAR  
Do.

FOOL  
Mark it, nuncle:  
Have more than thou showest,  
Speak less than thou knowest,  
Lend less than thou owest,  
Ride more than thou goest,  
Learn more than thou trowest,  
Set less than thou throwest;

KENT  
This is nothing, fool.

FOOL  
Can you make no use of  
nothing, nuncle?

KING LEAR  
Why, no, nothing can be made out of  
nothing.

FOOL  
[To KENT] he will not believe a fool.

Enter GONERIL

KING LEAR  
How now, daughter!  
Methinks you are too much of late i' the  
frown.

FOOL  
Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst  
no need to  
care for her frowning; now thou art an O  
without a  
figure: I am better than thou art now; I am a  
fool,  
thou art nothing.  
[To GONERIL] Yes, forsooth, I will hold  
my tongue.

GONERIL  
Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,  
But other of your insolent retinue  
Do hourly carp and quarre. Sir,  
I now grow fearful,  
By what yourself too late have spoke and  
done.

Necessity will call discreet proceeding.

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

KING LEAR  
This is not Lear:  
Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus?  
Who is it that can tell me who I am?

FOOL  
Lear's shadow.

KING LEAR  
by the  
marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and  
reason,  
I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

FOOL  
Which they will make an obedient father.

GONERIL  
Here do you keep a hundred knights and  
squires;  
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd and bold,  
That this our court, shows more like a tavern  
or a brothel  
Than a graced palace.

KING LEAR  
Darkness and devils!

Enter ALBANY  
[To ALBANY] O, sir, are you come?  
Is it your will? Prepare my horses.

ALBANY  
Pray, sir, be patient.

KING LEAR  
[To GONERIL] Detested kite! thou liest.  
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,

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

KING LEAR  
Hear, nature, hear!

Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend  
To make this creature fruitful!  
If she must teem,  
Create her child of spleen; that it may live,  
To turn all her mother's pains and benefits  
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel  
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
To have a thankless child! Away, away!

Exit

ALBANY  
whereof comes this?

GONERIL  
Never afflict yourself to know the cause;

Re-enter KING LEAR

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

ALBANY  
What's the matter, sir?

KING LEAR  
I'll tell thee:

To GONERIL

Life and death! I am ashamed  
That thou hast power to shake my manhood  
thus;  
I left a daughter,  
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:  
When she shall hear this of thee, with her  
nails  
She'll flay thy wolvisish visage.

Exeunt KING LEAR, KENT, and  
Attendants

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

Exit

Re-enter OSWALD

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

OSWALD  
Yes, madam.

GONERIL  
Take you some company:  
Inform her full of my particular fear;  
And thereto add such reasons of your own  
As may compact it more. Get you gone;

Exit OSWALD

ALBANY  
How far your eyes may pierce I can not tell:  
Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Exeunt

SCENE V. Court before the same.

Enter KING LEAR, KENT, and Fool  
KING LEAR  
Go you before to Gloucester with these  
letters.

KENT  
I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered  
It.

Exit

KING LEAR  
[to FOOL]Come, boy.

Exeunt

SCENE VI GLOUCESTER's castle.

Enter EDMUND  
My father hath set guard to take my brother;  
briefness and fortune, work!  
Brother, brother, I say!  
[Enter EDGAR]  
O sir, fly this place;  
You have now the good advantage of the  
night:

EDMUND

I hear my father coming—now quit you well.

Exit EDGAR

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion.

Wounds his arm

Father, father!

Enter GLOUCESTER, and Servants with torches

GLOUCESTER

Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

EDMUND

Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out—

GLOUCESTER

But where is he?

EDMUND

Look, I bleed.

GLOUCESTER

Where is the villain, Edmund?

EDMUND

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

GLOUCESTER

Pursue him, ho!

Exeunt some Servants

By no means what?

EDMUND

Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;

GLOUCESTER

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and Attendants

REGAN

How dost, my lord?

GLOUCESTER

my old heart is crack'd!

REGAN

What, did your Edgar seek your life?

GLOUCESTER

O, lady, shame would have it hid!

REGAN

Was he not companion with the riotous knights

That tend upon my father?

EDMUND

Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

REGAN

No marvel, then, though he were ill affected: I have this present evening from my sister Been well inform'd of them; if they come to sojourn at my house, I'll not be there.

Exeunt

SCENE VII. Before Gloucester's castle.

Enter KENT and OSWALD, severally

OSWALD

Good dawning to thee, friend: Where may we set our horses?

KENT

I' the mire.

OSWALD

Prithee, if thou lovest me, tell me.

KENT

I love thee not.

OSWALD

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

KENT

I know thee for  
A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats;  
a  
base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited,  
hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking  
knave  
and art nothing but  
the composition of a knave, beggar, coward,  
pandar,  
and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one  
whom I  
will beat into clamorous whining, if thou  
deniest  
the least syllable of thy addition.

OSWALD

Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus  
to rail--

KENT

What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny  
thou  
knowest me! Is it two days ago since I  
tripped up  
thy heels, and beat thee before the king?  
draw, you whoreson cullionly barber-  
monger, draw.

Drawing his sword

KENT

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

OSWALD

Help, ho! murder! help!

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

EDMUND

How now! What's the matter?

CORNWALL

Keep peace,  
He dies that strikes again.

CORNWALL

What is your difference? speak.

KENT

You  
cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee.

CORNWALL

how grew your quarrel?

OSWALD

This ancient ruffian, whose life I have  
spared--

KENT

Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary  
letter!

CORNWALL

Peace,  
(To KENT) know you no reverence?  
Why art thou angry?

KENT

That such a knave as this should wear a  
sword,  
Who wears no honesty.

CORNWALL

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

KENT

His countenance likes me not.  
I have seen better faces in my time  
Than stands on any shoulder that I see  
Before me at this instant.

CORNWALL

[to OSWALD]What was the offence you  
gave him?

OSWALD

I never gave him any:

CORNWALL

Fetch forth the stocks!

KENT

Sir, I serve the king--

CORNWALL

Fetch forth the stocks!

GLOUCESTER

Let me beseech your grace not to do so:  
His fault is much, and the good king his  
master  
Will cheque him for 't: your purposed low  
correction  
Is for pilferings and most common  
trespasses  
Are punish'd with: the king must take it ill.

REGAN

Put in his legs.

KENT is put in the stocks

Come, my good lord, away.

Exeunt all but KENT

KENT

Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,  
That by thy comfortable beams I may  
Peruse this letter! Nothing almost sees  
miracles  
But misery: I know 'tis from Cordelia,  
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd  
Of my obscured course; and shall find time  
From this enormous state, seeking to give  
Losses their remedies  
Fortune, turn thy wheel!

Sleeps

SCENE VIII. A wood.

Enter EDGAR

EDGAR

No port is free; no place,  
That guard, Does not attend my taking.  
Whiles I may 'scape,  
I will preserve myself: and am bethought  
To take the basest shape in contempt of  
man,  
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime  
with filth;  
Blanket my loins: elf all my hair in knots;  
poor Tom!

That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

Exit

SCENE IX. Before GLOUCESTER's castle.  
KENT in the stocks.

Enter KING LEAR, Fool, and Gentleman

KING LEAR

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

KENT

Hail to thee, noble master!

Fool

Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters.

KING 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.

KING LEAR

No.

KENT

Yes.

KING LEAR

No.

KENT

yea.

KING LEAR

they would not.

KENT

they have.

KING LEAR

No!

KENT

Ay!

KING LEAR

They durst not do 't;  
'tis worse than murder,

KENT

My lord,  
I did commend your highness' letters to  
them,  
Which presently they read: on whose  
contents,  
They straight took horse;  
Commanded me to follow;  
And meeting here the other messenger,  
I drew:  
He raised the house with loud and coward  
cries.  
Your son and daughter found this trespass  
worth  
The shame which here it suffers.

KING LEAR

Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing  
sorrow,  
Thy element's below! Where is this  
daughter?

KENT

With the earl.

KING LEAR

Follow me not;

Exit

KENT

How chance the king comes with so small a  
train?

FOOL

And thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that  
question, thou hadst well deserved it.

KENT

Why, fool?

Fool

When a wise man  
gives thee better counsel, give me mine  
again: I

would have none but knaves follow it, since  
a fool gives it.

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

KENT

Where learned you this, fool?

Fool

Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter KING LEAR with GLOUCESTER

KING LEAR

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

GLOUCESTER

My dear lord,  
You know the fiery quality of the duke--

KING LEAR

Go tell the duke and 's wife I'd speak with  
them.

bid them come forth and hear me,  
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum  
Till it cry sleep to death.

Exit GLOUCESTER

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

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN,  
GLOUCESTER, and Servants

KING LEAR

Good morrow to you both.

CORNWALL

Hail to your grace!

KENT is set at liberty

REGAN

I am glad to see your highness.

KING LEAR

Regan, I think you are...

To KENT

O, are you free?  
--O Regan!

REGAN  
I pray you take patience: I have hope.

KING LEAR  
how is that?

REGAN  
I cannot think my sister in the least  
Would fail her obligation: if, sir, perchance  
She have restrain'd the riots of your  
followers---

KING LEAR  
My curses on her!

REGAN  
O, sir, you are old.  
I pray you,  
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

KING LEAR  
Ask her forgiveness?

'Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;

Kneeling

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

REGAN  
Good sir, no more. Return you to my sister.

KING LEAR  
[Rising] Never, Regan:  
She struck me with her tongue,  
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart:  
Strike her young bones,  
You taking airs, with lameness!

REGAN  
O the blest gods! so will you wish on me,

When the rash mood is on.

KING LEAR  
No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse:  
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give  
Thee o'er to harshness—Who put my man i'  
the stocks?

Enter OSWALD

Is your lady come?

KING LEAR  
This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride  
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.

CORNWALL  
What means your grace?

KING LEAR  
Who stock'd my servant?

Enter GONERIL  
O heavens!  
[To GONERIL] Art not ashamed to look  
upon this beard?  
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

GONERIL  
Why not by the hand, sir?

KING LEAR  
How came my man i' the stocks?

CORNWALL  
I set him there, sir.

KING LEAR  
You!

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

KING LEAR  
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?

GONERIL  
At your choice, sir.

KING LEAR

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:  
thou art a boil,  
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide  
thee;  
Let shame come when it will,  
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,  
I and my hundred knights.

REGAN

I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?  
What should you need of more?

KING LEAR

I made you my guardians,  
But kept a reservation to be follow'd  
With such a number.

REGAN

no more with me.

KING LEAR

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

GONERIL

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

KING LEAR

you unnatural hags!  
I will have such revenges on you both,  
What they are, yet I know not: O fool, I shall  
go mad!

Exeunt KING LEAR, GLOUCESTER,  
KENT, and Fool

Exeunt GONERIL, REGAN

Storm and tempest

SCENE X. A heath.

Storm still. Enter KENT

KENT

There is division,  
'twixt Albany and Cornwall;  
Who have servants,  
Which are to France the spies and  
speculations  
Intelligent of our state.  
From France there comes a power  
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,  
have secret feet  
In some of our best ports.  
Fie on this storm!  
I will go seek the king.

Exit

SCENE XI. Another part of the heath. Storm  
still.

Enter KING LEAR and Fool

KING LEAR

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage!  
blow!  
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,  
Singe my white head!  
here I stand, your slave,  
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man:  
O! O! 'tis foul!

FOOL

O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry  
house is better than this rain-water out o'  
door.  
Good nuncle, in  
here's a night pities neither wise man nor  
fool.

Enter KENT

KENT

Alas, sir, are you here?

KING LEAR

Tremble, thou wretch,  
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,  
Unwhipp'd of justice: I am a man  
More sinn'd against than sinning.

KENT

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

KING LEAR

The art of our necessities is strange,  
That can make vile things precious. Come,  
bring us to this hovel.

Exeunt KING LEAR and KENT

Fool

This is a brave night to cool a courtesan.

Exit

SCENE XII. Gloucester's castle.

Enter GLOUCESTER and EDMUND

GLOUCESTER

Edmund, say you nothing. There's a division  
betwixt  
the dukes; and a worse matter than that: I  
have  
received a letter this night;  
these injuries the king now bears will be  
revenged  
home. we  
must incline to the king. I will seek him-

Exit

EDMUND

This courtesy shall the duke  
Instantly know; and of that letter too:

Exit

SCENE XIII. The heath. Before a hovel.

Enter KING LEAR, KENT, and Fool

KENT

Here is the place, my lord; enter:

Storm continues

KING LEAR

Let me alone.

KENT

Good my lord, enter

KING LEAR

Wilt break my heart?

KENT

I had rather break mine own. enter.

KING LEAR[to the storm]

Filial ingratitude!

Pour on; I will endure.

KENT

Good my lord, enter here.

KING LEAR

[to KENT]I'll go in.

To the Fool

In, boy.

[Fool goes in]

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
defend you  
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en  
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel.

EDGAR

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

The Fool runs out from the hovel

KENT

Who's there?

Fool

A spirit, a spirit

KENT

Come forth.

Enter EDGAR disguised as a mad man

EDGAR

Away! the foul fiend follows me!

KING LEAR

Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?  
And art thou come to this?

EDGAR

Who gives any thing to poor Tom? Do poor  
Tom some  
charity, whom the foul fiend vexes: there  
and there,--and there, and there.

Storm still

KING LEAR

Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give  
them all?

KENT

He hath no daughters, sir.

KING 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.

EDGAR

Dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa! let him trot  
by.

Storm still

KING LEAR

Is man no more than this? {referring to  
clothes}  
Off, off, you lendings!  
come unbutton here.

Tearing off his clothes

Fool

Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 'tis a naughty  
night  
to swim in.

Enter GLOUCESTER, with a torch

EDGAR

This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet

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

What, hath your grace no better company?

EDGAR

The prince of darkness is a gentleman:  
Poor Tom's a-cold.

GLOUCESTER

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

All go into the cave but GLOUCESTER,  
KENT

KENT

His wits begin to unsettle.

GLOUCESTER

Canst thou blame him?

Storm still

His daughters seek his death: ah, that good  
Kent!  
He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!

Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I.

*A chamber in a farmhouse adjoining the castle.*

Enter GLOUCESTER, KING LEAR, KENT,  
Fool, and EDGAR

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

EDGAR

The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool

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

EDGAR

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

KENT [TO king]

How do you, sir?

KENT

Good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

KING LEAR

Make no noise, make no noise; draw the  
curtains: so, so, so. We'll go to supper i' he  
morning. So, so, so.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER

Where is the king my master?

KENT

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

GLOUCESTER

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

KENT *To the Fool*

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

GLOUCESTER

Come, come, away.

Exeunt all but EDGAR

EDGAR

When we our betters see bearing our woes,  
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.  
How light and portable my pain seems now,  
When that which makes me bend makes the king  
bow,  
When false opinion, whose wrong thought  
defiles thee,  
In thy just proof, repeals and reconciles thee.  
What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the  
king!  
Lurk, lurk.

Exit

SCENE II.

*Gloucester's castle.*

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL,  
EDMUND, and Servants

CORNWALL

Seek out the villain Gloucester.

Exeunt some of the Servants

REGAN

Hang him instantly.

GONERIL

Pluck out his eyes.

CORNWALL

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

*Enter OSWALD*

How now! where's the king?

OSWALD

My lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence:  
Some five or six and thirty of his knights,  
Are gone with him towards Dover; where they  
boast to have well-armed friends.

CORNWALL

Get horses for your mistress.

GONERIL

Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

CORNWALL

Edmund, farewell.

Exeunt GONERIL, EDMUND, and OSWALD

Go seek the traitor Gloucester,  
Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

*Exeunt other Servants*

Our power shall do a courtesy to our wrath,  
which men may blame, but not control.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, brought in by two*

REGAN

Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

GLOUCESTER

What mean your graces?  
Do me no foul play, friends.

REGAN

O filthy traitor!

REGAN plucks his beard

GLOUCESTER

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

CORNWALL

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

REGAN

We know the truth.

CORNWALL

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

REGAN

To whose hands have you sent the lunatic king?

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?

GLOUCESTER

I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the  
course.

REGAN

Wherefore to Dover, sir?

GLOUCESTER

Because I would not see thy cruel nails  
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister  
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.  
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head  
In hell-black night endured, thou shouldst have  
Said 'Good porter, turn the key,'  
All cruels else subscribed: but I shall see  
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

CORNWALL

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

*Burns one of GLOUCESTER's eyes*

GLOUCESTER

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

REGAN

One side will mock another; the other too.

*Servant lets go of one hand*

REGAN

How now, you dog!

First Servant

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

CORNWALL

My villain!

They draw and fight

First Servant

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

*REGAN takes a sword, and runs at him behind*

First Servant

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

Dies

CORNWALL

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

*blinds GLOUCESTER in other eye*

GLOUCESTER

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

REGAN

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

GLOUCESTER

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

REGAN

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

*Exit CORNWALL, and REGAN*

Exit one with GLOUCESTER

Second Servant

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

Third Servant

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

Second Servant

Let's follow the old earl, and get the Bedlam

To lead him where he would: his roguish  
madness  
Allows itself to any thing.

Third Servant

Go thou: I'll fetch some flax and whites of eggs  
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help  
him!

Exeunt severally

SCENE III.

*The heath.*

Enter EDGAR

EDGAR

Who comes here?

*Enter GLOUCESTER, led by an Old Man*

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

GLOUCESTER

Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:  
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;  
O dear son Edgar,  
The food of thy abused father's wrath!

Old Man

Who's there?

EDGAR

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

Old Man

'Tis poor mad Tom.

EDGAR

[Aside] How should this be?  
Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,  
Angering itself and others.--Bless thee, master!

GLOUCESTER

Is that the naked fellow?

Old Man

Ay, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

Then, prithee, get thee gone:  
And bring some covering for this naked soul,  
Who I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man

Alack, sir, he is mad.

GLOUCESTER

'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind.

*Exit OLD MAN*

GLOUCESTER

Sirrah, naked fellow,--

EDGAR

Poor Tom's a-cold.

Aside

I cannot daub it further.

GLOUCESTER

Come hither, fellow.

EDGAR

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

GLOUCESTER

Dost thou know Dover?

EDGAR

Ay, master.

GLOUCESTER

There is a cliff, whose high and bending head  
Looks fearfully in the confined 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*

SCENE IV.

*Before ALBANY's palace.*

Enter GONERIL, ALBANY and EDMUND

ALBANY

O Goneril!

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind  
Blows in your face. What have you done?

What have you perform'd?

A father, and a gracious aged man,  
have you madded.

If that the heavens do not their visible spirits

Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,  
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,  
Like monsters of the deep.

GONERIL

Milk-liver'd man!

ALBANY

See thyself, devil!

GONERIL

O vain fool!

Marry, your manhood now--

Enter a Messenger

ALBANY

What news?

Messenger

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

ALBANY

Gloucester's eye!

O poor Gloucester!

Lost he his other eye?

Messenger

Both, my lord.

This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;  
'Tis from your sister.

GONERIL

I'll read, and answer.

Exit

ALBANY

Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

ALBANY

Knows he the wickedness?

Messenger

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

ALBANY

Gloucester, I live

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

And to revenge thine eyes.

*Exeunt*

SCENE V. *The same. A tent.*

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

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

*Exit an Officer*

He that helps him take all my outward worth.  
Seek, seek for him;  
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life  
That wants the means to lead it.

*Enter a Messenger*

Messenger  
News, madam;  
The British powers are marching hitherward.

CORDELIA  
'Tis known before; our preparation stands  
In expectation of them. O dear father,  
It is thy business that I go about;  
Soon may I hear and see him!

*Exeunt*

SCENE VI. Fields near Dover.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, and EDGAR dressed like a peasant*

GLOUCESTER  
When shall we come to the top of that same hill?

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

GLOUCESTER  
Methinks the ground is even.

EDGAR  
Horrible steep.  
Hark, do you hear the sea?

GLOUCESTER  
No-

EDGAR

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

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

EDGAR  
You're much deceived: in nothing am I changed  
But in my garments.

GLOUCESTER  
Methinks you're better spoken.

EDGAR  
Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still.  
Now fare you well, good sir.

GLOUCESTER  
With all my heart.

GLOUCESTER  
[Kneeling] O you mighty gods!  
This world I do renounce,  
If Edgar live, O, bless him!

*He falls forward*

EDGAR  
Alive or dead?  
Ho, you sir! friend!  
What are you, sir?

GLOUCESTER  
Away: let me die.

EDGAR  
Ten masts at each make not the altitude  
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:  
Thy life's a miracle.

GLOUCESTER  
But have I fall'n, or no?

EDGAR  
From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.

EDGAR  
Give me your arm:  
Up: so. How is 't?

GLOUCESTER  
Too well, too well.

*Enter KING LEAR, fantastically dressed with wild flowers*

KING LEAR

No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am the king himself.

EDGAR

O thou side-piercing sight!

KING LEAR

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

EDGAR

Sweet marjoram.

KING LEAR

Pass.

GLOUCESTER

I know that voice.

KING LEAR

Ha! Goneril, with a white beard!

GLOUCESTER

Is 't not the king?

KING LEAR

Ay, every inch a king:

When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.  
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son

Was kinder to his father than my daughters  
There's hell, there's darkness, there's the  
sulphurous pit,  
fie, fie, fie! pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet,  
good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination.

GLOUCESTER

O, let me kiss that hand!

KING LEAR

Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

KING LEAR

O, ho, are you there with me? Your eyes are in  
a heavy case, your purse in a light; yet you see  
how  
this world goes.

GLOUCESTER

I see it feelingly.

KING LEAR

What, art mad? A man may see how this world  
goes with no eyes.

GLOUCESTER

Ay, sir.

KING LEAR

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;  
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with  
gold,

And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks:  
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.

Get thee glass eyes;

And like a scurvy politician, seem

To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now,  
now:

Pull off my boots: harder, harder: so.

EDGAR

Reason in madness!

*Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants*

Gentleman

O, here he is: lay hand upon him. Sir,

Your most dear daughter--

KING LEAR

No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even  
The natural fool of fortune.

Gentleman

Good sir,--

KING LEAR

I will die bravely, like a bridegroom. What!

I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king,

My masters, know you that.

Gentleman

You are a royal one, and we obey you.

KING LEAR

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

*Exit running*

Gentleman

Thou hast one daughter,

Who redeems nature from the general curse

Which twain have brought her to.

*Exit Gentleman*

EDGAR

Give me your hand,  
I'll lead you to some bidding.

*takes GLOUCESTER by arm*

Enter OSWALD

OSWALD  
A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!  
That eyeless head of thine was first framed flesh  
To raise my fortunes.

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

*EDGAR interposes*

OSWALD  
Wherefore, bold peasant,  
Darest thou support a publish'd traitor?  
Let go his arm.  
Out, dunghill!

*They fight, and EDGAR knocks him down*

OSWALD  
Slave, thou hast slain me:  
O, untimely death!

*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.

*Reads*

'Let our reciprocal vows be remembered.  
If he return the conqueror: then am I the  
prisoner, and his bed my goal; from  
the loathed warmth whereof deliver me,  
'Your--wife, so I would say--  
'Affectionate servant,  
'GONERIL.'  
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;  
And the exchange my brother! Here, in the  
sands,  
Thee I'll rake up and in the mature time  
With this ungracious paper strike the sight  
Of the death practised duke.

*Drum afar off*

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

*Exeunt*

SCENE VII.  
*A tent in the French camp. LEAR on a bed  
asleep, soft music playing; Gentleman, and  
others attending.*

Enter CORDELIA, KENT

CORDELIA  
O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,  
To match thy goodness? My life will be too  
short.

KENT  
To be acknowledged, madam, is o'erpaid.

CORDELIA  
Be better suited:  
These weeds are memories of those worsen  
hours: I prithee, put them off.

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

CORDELIA  
Then be't so, my good lord.

KING LEAR  
Where am I? Fair daylight?  
I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity,  
To see another thus.

CORDELIA  
O, look upon me, sir,  
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.

KING LEAR  
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.  
Methinks I should know you, and know this  
man; do not laugh at me;  
For, as I am a man, I think this lady  
To be my child Cordelia.

CORDELIA  
And so I am, I am.

KING LEAR

I pray, weep not:  
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.  
I know you do not love me.

CORDELIA  
No cause, no cause.

KING LEAR  
Am I in France?

KENT  
In your own kingdom, sir.

CORDELIA  
Will't please your highness walk?

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

*Exeunt all but KENT*

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

*Exit*

SCENE VIII.  
*The British camp, near Dover.*

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

REGAN  
Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

EDMUND  
'Tis to be doubted, madam.

REGAN  
Now, sweet lord, speak the truth,  
Do you not love my sister?

EDMUND  
In honour'd love.

REGAN  
I am doubtful that you have been conjunct  
And bosom'd with her.

EDMUND  
No, madam.

REGAN  
Dear my lord,

Be not familiar with her.

EDMUND  
Fear me not:

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

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

ALBANY  
Our very loving sister, well be-met.  
Sir, this I hear; the king is come to his daughter,  
The business it toucheth us, as France invades  
our land,  
Not bolds the king, with others, whom, I fear,  
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

EDMUND  
Sir, you speak nobly.

REGAN  
Why is this reason'd?

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

EDMUND {to ALBANY}  
I shall attend you presently at your tent.

REGAN  
Sister, you'll go with us?

GONERIL  
No.

REGAN  
Pray you, go with us.

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

As they are going out, enter EDGAR disguised

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

ALBANY  
Speak.

*Exeunt all but ALBANY and EDGAR*

EDGAR

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

ALBANY

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

Exit EDGAR

Re-enter EDMUND

EDMUND

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

ALBANY

We will greet the time.

*Exit*

EDMUND

To both these sisters have I sworn my love;  
Each jealous of the other, as the stung  
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?  
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,  
If both remain alive.  
As for the mercy  
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,  
The battle done, and they within our power,  
Shall never see his pardon; for my state  
Stands on me to defend, not to debate.

Exit

SCENE IX.

*A field between the two camps.*

*Enter EDGAR and GLOUCESTER*

EDGAR

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

GLOUCESTER

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

EDGAR

What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure  
Their going hence, even as their coming hither;

Ripeness is all: come on.

*Exeunt*

SCENE X.

*The British camp near Dover.*

*Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours,  
EDMUND, KING LEAR and CORDELIA, and  
Soldier*

EDMUND

Take them away.

CORDELIA

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

EDMUND

Take them away.

KING LEAR

Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,  
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I  
caught thee?  
He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,  
And fire us hence like foxes. Come.

*Exeunt KING LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded*

*Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN and Solider*

ALBANY

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

EDMUND

Sir, I thought it fit  
To send the old and miserable king  
To some retention and appointed guard;  
With him I sent the queen; and they are ready  
To-morrow to appear  
Where you shall hold your session. At this time  
We sweat and bleed:  
The question of Cordelia and her father  
Requires a fitter place.

ALBANY

Sir, I hold you but a subject of this war,

Not as a brother.

REGAN

That's as we list to grace him.  
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

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

REGAN

By me invested, he compeers the best.

GONERIL

That were the most, if he should husband you.

REGAN

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

GONERIL

Mean you to enjoy him?

ALBANY

Half-blooded fellow, yes.

REGAN

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

ALBANY

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

*Pointing to Goneril*

ALBANY

Let the trumpet sound:  
If none appear to prove upon thy head  
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,  
There is my pledge;

Throwing down a glove

REGAN

Sick, O, sick!

EDMUND

There's my exchange:

*Throwing down a glove*

what in the world he is  
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:  
I will maintain my truth and honour firmly.

ALBANY

A herald, ho!

EDMUND

Ho, a herald!

ALBANY

Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,  
All levied in my name, have in my name  
Took their discharge.

*REGAN faints to the ground, where she is rushed  
by Albany*

ALBANY

Let the trumpet sound,  
And read out this.

*A trumpet sounds*

[*Reads*] 'If any man of quality or degree within  
the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund,  
supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a  
manifold traitor, let him appear by the third  
sound of the trumpet: he is bold in his defence.'

EDMUND

Sound!

*First trumpet*

*Second trumpet*

*Third trumpet*

Trumpet answers within

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

ALBANY

[*Aside*] I'll ask him his purposes, why he  
appears upon this call o' the trumpet.

And why you answer  
This present summons?

EDGAR

Know, my name is lost;

By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit:  
Yet am I noble as the adversary  
I come to cope.

ALBANY  
Which is that adversary?

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

EDMUND  
Himself: what say'st thou to him?

EDGAR  
Draw thy sword,  
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,  
Thy arm may do thee justice: here is mine.  
thou art a traitor; False to thy gods, thy brother,  
and thy father; Conspirant 'gainst this high-  
illustrious prince. Say thou 'No,'  
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are  
bent to prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,  
Thou liest.

EDMUND  
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head;  
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;  
Which, for they yet glance by and scarcely  
bruise,  
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,  
Where they shall rest for ever.  
*Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls*

ALBANY  
Save him!

GONERIL  
This is practise, Gloucester:  
thou art not vanquish'd,  
But cozen'd and beguiled.

ALBANY  
Shut your mouth, dame,  
Hold, sir:  
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:  
No tearing, lady: I perceive you know it.

*Gives the letter to EDMUND*

GONERIL  
Ask me not what I know.

*Exit*

ALBANY

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

EDMUND  
What you have charged me with, that have I  
done;  
And more, much more; But what art thou  
That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,  
I do forgive thee.

EDGAR  
Let's exchange charity.  
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;  
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.  
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to plague us:  
The dark and vicious place where thee he got  
Cost him his eyes.

ALBANY  
I must embrace thee--

*Enter a Gentleman, with a bloody knife*

Gentleman  
Help, help, O, help!

EDGAR  
What kind of help?

EDGAR  
What means that bloody knife?

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

ALBANY  
Who dead? speak, man.

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

EDMUND  
I was contracted to them both: all three  
Now marry in an instant.

EDGAR  
Here comes Kent.

*Exit Gentleman*

*Enter KENT*

O, is this he?  
The time will not allow the compliment

Which very manners urges.

KENT

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

ALBANY

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

EDMUND

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

ALBANY

Run, run, O, run!

ALBANY

Haste thee, for thy life.

*EDGAR begins to leave, preparing his weapon*

ALBANY

The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.

*EDGAR stabs EDMUND*

EDMUND

O, I am slain! May gods stand up for bastards!

*Re-enter KING LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms*

KING LEAR

Howl, howl, howl, howl! She's gone for ever!  
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;  
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;  
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,  
Why, then she lives.

KENT

Is this the promised end?

ALBANY

Fall, and cease!

KING LEAR

This feather stirs; she lives!

KENT

[Kneeling] O my good master!

KING LEAR

Prithee, away.

EDGAR

'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

KING LEAR

A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!  
I might have saved her; now she's gone for ever!  
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little.

Captain

'Tis true, my lords, he did.

KENT

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

KING LEAR

Are you not Kent?

KENT

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

KING LEAR

You are welcome hither.

KENT

Your eldest daughters have fordone them selves,  
And desperately are dead.

KING LEAR

Ay, so I think.

ALBANY

That's but a trifle here.  
You lords and noble friends, know our intent.  
To him our absolute power:

*To EDGAR and KENT*

you, to your rights:

All friends shall taste  
The wages of their virtue, and all foes  
The cup of their deservings.

KING LEAR

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

Look there...

*Dies*

EDGAR  
My lord, my lord!

KENT  
Break, heart; I prithee, break!

EDGAR  
He is gone, indeed.

KENT  
The wonder is, he hath endured so long:

ALBANY

*To KENT and EDGAR*

Friends of my soul, you twain  
Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

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

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

*Exeunt, with a dead march*