

*Corn.* I will answer that.

[*KENT is put in the stocks.*

[*Exeunt all except GLOSTER and KENT.*

*Glo.* I'm sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the duke's pleasure,

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

*Kent.* Pray, do not, sir: I've watch'd, and travell'd hard;

Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.  
Give you good morrow.

*Glo.* The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken. [Exit.

*Kent.* Good king, that must approve the common saw,—

Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st  
To the warm sun!

Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,  
That by thy comfortable beams I may

Peruse this letter!—I know 'tis from Cordelia,  
Who hast most fortunately been informed

Of my obscured course, all weary and o'erwatch'd,  
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold

This shameful lodging.

Fortune, good night: smile once more; turn thy  
wheel!

SCENE 2.—*The Open Country.*

*Enter EDGAR.*

*Edgar,*

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

I will preserve myself. My face I'll grime with filth  
 Blanket my loins; elf all my hair in knots;  
 And with presented nakedness out-face  
 The winds and persecutions of the sky.  
 The country gives me proof and precedent  
 Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,  
 Strike in their numb'd and mortifi'd bare arms  
 Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;  
 And with this horrible object, from low farms  
 Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,  
 Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,  
 Enforce their charity.—“Poor Turlygood! poor  
 Tom!”  
 That's something yet:—Edgar I nothing am.

SCENE 3.—*Court within GLOSTER'S Castle; KENT in  
 the stocks.*

*Enter, from Castle, LEAR and the Fool.*

*Lear.*

**T**HIS strange that they should so depart from  
 home,

*Fool.* And not send back my messenger.  
 'Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee  
 kindly; for though she's as like this as a crab's like  
 an apple, yet I can what I can tell.

*Lear.* What canst tell, boy?

*Fool.* She will taste as like this as a crab does to a  
 crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' the  
 middle on's face?

*Lear.* No.

*Fool.* Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose;  
 that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

*Lear.* I did her wrong—to take't again perforce!—  
monster ingratitude!

*Fool.* Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

*Lear.* No.

*Fool.* Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has  
a house.

*Lear.* Why?

*Fool.* Why, to put his head in; not to give it away  
to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

*Lear.* O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!  
Keep me in temper: I would not be mad!

*Kent.* [*From the stocks.*] Hail to thee, noble master.

*Fool.* Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters.

*Lear.* Ha!

Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

*Kent.* No, my lord.

*Lear.* What's he that hath so much thy place  
mistook

To set thee here?

*Kent.* It is both he and she,—

Your son and daughter.

*Lear.* No.

*Kent.* Yes.

*Lear.* No, I say.

*Kent.* I say, yea.

*Lear.* No, no, they would not.

*Kent.* Yes, they have.

*Lear.* By Jupiter, I swear, no.

*Kent.* By Juno, I swear, ay.

*Lear.* They durst not do't;

They could not, would not do't; 'tis worse than  
murder,

To do upon respect such violent outrage,  
Coming from us.

*Kent.* My lord, when at their home

I did commend your highness' letters to them,

Ere I was risen, came there a reeking post,

Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth

From Goneril his mistress, salutations;  
 Deliver'd letters, upon whose contents,  
 They summon'd up their men and straight took  
 horse;

Commanded me to follow, and attend  
 The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:  
 And meeting here the other messenger,—  
 Being the very fellow which of late  
 Display'd so saucily against your highness,—  
 Having more man than wit about me, drew:  
 He rais'd the house with loud and coward cries.  
 Your son and daughter found this trespass worth  
 The shame which here it suffers.

*Fool.* Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly  
 that way.

*Lear.* O, how this mother swells up toward my  
 heart!

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

*Kent.* With the earl, sir, here within.

*Lear.* Follow me not;  
 Stay here. *[Exit.]*

*Gent.* Made you no more offence but what you  
 speak of?

*Kent.* None.

How chance the king comes with so small a train?

*Fool.* An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that  
 question, thou hadst well deserv'd it.

*Kent.* Why, fool?

*Fool.* 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 learn'd you this, fool?

*Fool.* Not i' the stocks, fool.

*Re-enter LEAR with GLOSTER.*

*Lear.* Deny to speak with me? They're sick,—  
they're weary?

They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches!—  
The images of revolt and flying off.  
Fetch me a better answer.

*Glo.* My dear lord,  
You know the fiery quality of the duke.

*Lear.* Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!—  
Fiery! what quality? Why, Gloster, Gloster,  
I'd speak to the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

*Glo.* Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

*Lear.* Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me,  
man?

The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear  
father

Would with his daughter speak, commands her  
service:

Are they inform'd of this?—My breath and blood!—  
Fiery? the fiery duke?—Tell the hot duke that—

No, but not yet:—may be he is not well:

Infirmity doth still neglect all office

Whereto our health is bound; we're not ourselves

When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind

To suffer with the body: I'll forbear.

Death on my state! wherefore

[*Looking on KENT.*

Should he sit here? give me my servant forth.

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

Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,

Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum

Till it cry *sleep to death.*

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER and Servants,*

*Corn.*

Hail to your grace!

*Lear.* Good morrow to you both. [*Aside.* O, me! my heart, my rising heart!—keep down.

[*KENT is set at liberty.*

*Reg.* I am glad to see your highness.

*Lear.* Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so; if thou should'st not be glad, I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, Sepulchring an adultress.—[*To KENT.*] O, are you free?

Some other time for that.—Belovèd Regan, Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here,—  
[*Points to his heart.*

I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe Of how deprav'd a quality—O Regan!

*Reg.* I pray you, sir, take patience: I have hope You less know how to value her desert Than she to scant her duty.

*Lear.* Say, how is that?

*Reg.* I cannot think my sister in the least Would fail her obligation.

*Lear.* My curses on her!

*Reg.* O, sir, you are old. You should be rul'd, and led; therefore, I pray you, That to our sister you do make return; Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

*Lear.* Ask her forgiveness? Do you but mark how this becomes the house:

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

*Reg.* Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:

Return you to my sister.

*Lear.* Never, Regan:  
She hath abated me of half my train;

Look'd black upon me ; struck me with her tongue,  
 Most serpent-like, upon the very heart :—  
 All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall  
 On her ingrateful top ! Infect her beauty,  
 You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,  
 To fall and blast her pride !

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

*Lear.* No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse :  
 Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give  
 Thee o'er to harshness : her eyes are fierce ; but thine  
 Do comfort, and not burn : thou better know'st  
 The offices of nature, bond of childhood,  
 Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude ;  
 Thy half 'o the kingdom hast thou not forgot,  
 Wherein I thee endow'd.

*Reg.* Good sir, to the purpose.

*Lear.* Who put my man i' the stocks ?

*Trumpets within.*

*Corn.* What trumpet's that ?

*Reg.* I know't,—my sister's.

*Enter OSWALD.*

Is your lady come ?

*Lear.* Out, varlet, from my sight !

[*Trumpets.*] Ah ! Who comes here ? O heavens,  
 If you do love old men, if your sweet sway  
 Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,  
 Make it your cause ; send down, and take my part !—

*Enter GONERIL, Ladies, and Attendants.*

Art not asham'd to look upon this beard ?—

O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand ?

*Gon.* Why not by the hand, sir ? How have I  
 offended ?

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

*Lear.* [*Aside.*] O sides, you are too tough!  
Will you yet hold?—[*Aloud.*] How came my man  
i'th' stocks?

*Corn.* I set him there, sir.

*Lear.* You! did you?

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

*Lear.* Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?  
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose  
To wage against the enmity o' th' air;  
To be a comrade with the wolf, and owl,—  
Necessity's sharp pinch!—Return with her?  
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter  
To this detested groom.

*Gon.* At your choice, sir.

*Lear.* I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad  
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:  
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:—  
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;  
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,  
Which I must needs call mine; but I'll not chide  
thee;

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

*Reg.* Not altogether so:  
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided  
For your fit welcome.

*Lear.* Is this well spoken now?

*Reg.* I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?  
Is it not well? What should you need of more?



*Gon.* Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance

From those that she calls servants or from mine?

*Reg.* Why not, my lord! If you will come to me,—  
For now I spy a danger,—I entreat you  
To bring but five-and-twenty: to no more  
Will I give place or notice.

*Lear.* I gave you all—

*Reg.* And in good time you gave it.

*Lear.* Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd!

When others are more wicked, not being the worst  
Stands in some rank of praise.—[*To GONERIL.*] I'll  
go with thee:

Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,  
And thou art twice her love.

*Gon.* Hear me, my lord:  
What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,  
To follow in a house where twice so many  
Have a command to tend you?

*Reg.* What need one?

*Lear.* O, reason not the need: our basest beggars  
Are, in the poorest thing, superfluous:  
Allow not nature more than nature needs,  
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady;  
If only to go warm were gorgeous,  
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st  
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true  
need,—

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need  
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,  
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!  
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts  
Against their father, fool me not so much  
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,  
O, let not women's weapons, water-drops,  
Stain my man's cheeks!—No, you unnatural hags,

I will have such revenges on you both,  
That all the world shall—I will do such things—  
What they are, yet I know not ; but they shall be  
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep ;  
No, I'll not weep :—

I have full cause of weeping ; but this heart

*[Storm heard at a distance.]*

Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,  
Or e'er I'll weep.—O, fool, I shall go mad !

*[Exit.]*



ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Heath.*

*A storm, with thunder and lightning. Enter KENT  
and a Gentleman, meeting.*

*Kent.*



HO'S there, besides foul weather?

*Gent.* One minded like the weather  
most unquietly.

*Kent.* I know you. Where's the king?

*Gent.* Contending with the fretful elements;  
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,  
Or swell the curlèd waters 'bove the main,  
That things might change or cease.

*Kent.* But who is with him?

*Gent.* None but the fool; who labours to out-jest  
His heart-struck injuries.

*Kent.* Sir, I do know you;  
And dare commend a dear thing to you. There's  
Division 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;  
And, true it is, from France there comes a power  
Into this scatter'd kingdom; and are at point  
To show their open banner. Now to you:  
If on my credit you dare build so far  
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find

Some that will thank you. If you shall see Cordelia,—  
As fear not but you shall,—show her this ring;  
And she will tell you who your fellow is  
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!  
I will go seek the king.

*Gent.* Have you no more to say?

*Kent.* Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet,—  
That, when we've found the king,—he that first  
lights on him

Holloa the other.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE 2.—*Another part of the Heath, with a Hovel.*  
[*Storm continues.*]

*Lear.*

**B**LOW, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage!  
blow!  
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout  
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the  
cocks!  
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,  
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking-  
thunder,  
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!  
Crack nature's moulds, all germents spill at once,  
That make ingrateful man!

*Enter Fool.*

*Fool.* O nuncle, in and ask thy daughters' blessing:  
here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools.

*Lear.* Rumble thy bellyfull! Spit, fire! spout rain!  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:  
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;  
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,

You owe me no subscription : then let fall  
 Your horrible pleasure ; here I stand, your slave,  
 A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.  
 But yet I call you servile ministers,  
 That have with two pernicious daughters join'd  
 Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head  
 So old and white as this. O, O, 'tis foul.

*Fool.* He that has a house to put's head in has a  
 good head-piece.

*Kent.* [*within.*] Who's there ?

*Fool.* Marry, a wise man and a fool.

*Enter KENT.*

*Kent.* Alas, sir, are you here ? Alack, bare-headed !  
 Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel ;  
 Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest ;  
 Repose you there.

*Lear.* My wits begin to turn.—  
 Come on, my boy : how dost, my boy ? art cold ?  
 I'm cold myself.—Where is the straw, my fellow ?  
 The art of our necessities is strange,  
 That can make vile things precious. Come, your  
 hovel.—

Poor fool and knave, I've one part in my heart  
 That's sorry yet for thee.

*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, my good boy.

*Kent.* Here is the place, my lord ; good my lord,  
 enter.

*Lear.* Let me alone.

*Kent.* Good my lord, enter here.

*Lear.* Wilt break my heart?

*Kent.* I had rather break mine own.

*Lear.* Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm

Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee;  
But where the greater malady is fix'd,  
The lesser is scarce felt. The tempest in my mind  
Doth from my senses take all feeling else  
Save what beats there.—Filial ingratitude!  
No, I will weep no more.—In such a night  
To shut me out!—Pour on; I will endure:—  
In such a night as this! O, Regan, Goneril!—  
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,—  
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;  
No more of that.

*Kent.* Good my lord, enter here.

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

[*Fool goes in.*]

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en  
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just.

*Fool.* [*Within.*] Help! Help!

*Edgar.* [*Within.*] Fathom and half, fathom and half!  
Poor Tom! [*The Fool runs out from the hovel.*]

*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.* What art thou that dost grumble there i' the straw? Come forth.

*Enter EDGAR disguised as a madman.*

*Edg.* Away the foul fiend follows me!—

*Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind—*  
Hum! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

*Lear.* Didst thou give all to thy two daughters?  
And art thou come to this?

*Edg.* Who gives anything to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inch'd bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor.—Bless thy five wits!—Tom's a-cold,—O do de, do de, do de.—Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes:—there could I have him now,—and there,—and there again, and there.

*Lear.* What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?—

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

*Kent.* He hath no daughters, sir.

*Lear.* Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd  
nature

To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.—  
Is it the fashion that discarded fathers  
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?  
Judicious punishment! 'twas the flesh begot  
Those pelican daughters.

*Edg.* *Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill:—*

Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

*Lear.* Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncover'd body this extremity of the skies.—Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume.—Ha! here's three on's are sophisticated!—Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art.—Off, off, you lendings!—come, unbutton here.

*[Tearing off his clothes.]*

*Fool.* Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 'tis a naughty night to swim in.—Look, here comes a walking fire.

*Edg.* This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.

*Swiwithold footed thrice the wold;*

*He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;*

*Bid her alight,*

*And her troth plight,*

*And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee right!*

*Kent.* How fares your Grace?

*Lear.* What's he?

*Kent.* Who's there? What is't you seek?

*Enter GLOSTER with a torch.*

*Glo.* What, are you there? Your names?

*Edg.* Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog.

*But mice and rats, and such small deer,*

*Have been Tom's food for seven long year.*

Beware my follower.—Peace, Smulkin; peace, thou fiend.

*Glo.* What, hath your grace no better company?

*Edg.* Poor Tom's a-cold



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

*Lear.* First let me talk with this philosopher.—  
What is the cause of thunder?

*Kent.* Good my lord, take his offer.

*Lear.* I'll talk a word with this same learnèd  
Theban.—

What is your study?

*Edg.* How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

*Lear.* Let me ask you one word in private.

*Kent.* Impórtune him once more to go, my lord;  
His wits begin t' unsettle.

*Glo.* Canst thou blame him?  
His daughters seek his death:—ah, that good  
Kent!—

He said it would be thus,—poor banish'd man!—  
Thou say'st the king grows mad; I'll tell thee,  
friend,

I'm almost mad myself: I had a son,  
Now outlaw'd from my blood: he sought my life,  
But lately, very late: true to tell thee,  
The grief hath craz'd my wits.—What a night's  
this!—

I do beseech your grace,—

*Lear.* O, cry you mercy, sir.  
Noble philosopher, your company.

*Edg.* Tom's a-cold.

*Glo.* In, fellow, there, into th' hovel: keep thee  
warm.

*Lear.* Come, let's in all.

*Kent.* This way, my lord.

*Lear.* With him;  
I will keep still with my philosopher.

*Kent.* Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.

*Glo.* Take him you on.

*Kent.* Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

*Lear.* Come, good Athenian.

*Glo.* No words, no words: hush.

*Edg.* Child Rowland to the dark tower came,  
His word was still—*Fie, foh, and fum,*  
*I smell the blood of a British man.*

[*Exeunt. Storm continues.*]

SCENE 3.—*Farm House adjoining GLOSTER'S Castle.*

*Enter GLOSTER and KENT.*

*Gloster.*

**H**ERE is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will not be long from you.

*Kent.* The Gods reward your kindness!

[*Exit GLOSTER and KENT.*]

*Enter LEAR, EDGAR and Fool.*

*Edg.* Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, [*To Fool*] innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

*Fool.* Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman?

*Lear.* A king, a king!

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

*Lear.* To have a thousand with red burning spits  
Come hissing in upon 'em,—

*Edg.* The foul fiend bites my back.

*Lear.* It shall be done; I will arraign them straight.

ACT III. SCENE III.

[To EDGAR.] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer;

[To the Fool.] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she foxes!

*Re-enter KENT.*

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] Look, where he stands and glares!  
[*Aloud.*] Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?

*Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me.*

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

*Lear.* I'll see their trial first.—Bring in the evidence.—

[To EDGAR.] Thou robèd man of justice, take thy place;—

[To the Fool.] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,  
Bench by his side.—[To KENT.] You are o' the commission,  
Sit you too.

*Edg.* Let us deal justly.

Pur! the cat is gray.

*Lear.* Arraign her first! 'tis Goneril. I here take  
my oath before this honourable assembly, she kick'd  
the poor king, her father.

*Fool.* Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

*Lear.* She cannot deny it.

*Fool.* Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

*Lear.* And here's another, whose warp'd looks  
proclaim

What store her heart is made on.—Stop her there!  
Arms, arms, sword, fire!—Corruption in the palace!—  
False justicer, why hast thou let her scape?

*Edg.* Bless thy five wits! [*Aside.*] My tears  
begin to take his part so much,  
They'll mar my counterfeiting.

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KING LEAR.

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

*Edg.* Tom will throw his head at them.—Avaunt,  
you curs!

*Be thy mouth or black or white,  
Tooth that poisons if it bite ;  
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,  
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,  
Or bobtail like or trundle-tail,—  
Tom will make them weep and wail :  
For, with throwing thus my head,  
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.*

Do de, de, de.—

*Sissy, come march to wakes,  
And fairs and market towns.—*

[*Aside.*] Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

*Lear.* Then, let them anatomize Regan, see what  
breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature,  
that makes these hard hearts?—[*To EDGAR.*] You,  
sir, I entertain for one of my hundred; only I do  
not like the fashion of your garments: you will say  
they are Persian attire; but let them be chang'd.

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

*Lear.* Make no noise, make no noise; draw the  
curtains: so, so, so: we'll go to supper i' the  
morning: so, so, so.

*Fool.* And I'll go to bed at noon.

*Re-enter GLOSTER.*

*Glo.* Where is the king, my master?

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

*Glo.* Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy  
arms;  
I have overheard 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.

*Kent.* Oppress'd nature sleeps :  
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews.  
[*To the Fool.*] Come help to bear thy master ;  
Thou must not stay behind.

[*KENT and the Fool bear the King.*]



ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Before the DUKE OF ALBANY's Castle.*

*Enter GONERIL, EDMUND and OSWALD.*

*Goneril.*

**B**ACK, Edmund, to my brother ;  
Hasten his musters and conduct his  
powers :  
I must change arms at home, and give  
the distaff

Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant  
Shall pass between us. Wear this ; spare speech ;  
Decline your head ; this kiss if it durst speak  
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air !

*[Giving a favour.]*

Conceive, and fare thee well.

*Edm.* Yours in the ranks of death.

*Gon.* My most dear Gloster ! *[Exit EDMUND.]*

O, the difference of man and man !

*Osw.* Madam, here comes my lord. *[Exit.]*

*Enter ALBANY.*

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

ACT IV. SCENE I.

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*Gon.* No more.

*Alb.* What have you done?

Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?  
A father, and a gracious aged man,  
Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.

*Gon.* Milk-liver'd man!

Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning  
Thine honour from thy suffering; where's thy  
drum?

France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;  
Whiles thou, a moral fool, sitt'st still, and criest  
"Alack, why does he so?"

*Alb.* See thyself, devil!

*Gon.* O, vain fool! *[Exit.*

*Enter CURAN.*

*Curan.* O my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's  
dead;  
Slain by his servant, going to put out  
The eyes of Gloster.

*Alb.* Gloster's eyes!

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

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

*Gon.* I'll read, and answer. *[Exit.*

*Alb.* Where was his son, when they did take his  
eyes?

*Curan.* Come with my lady, hither.

*Alb.* He is not here?

*Curan.* No, my good lord; I met him back again.

*Alb.* Knows he the wickedness?

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

*Alb.* Gloster, I live  
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend:  
Tell me what more thou know'st. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE 2.—*Open Country.*

*Enter EDGAR.*

*Edgar.*



ET better thus, and known to be contemn'd,  
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be  
worst,

The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,  
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.

Welcome, then,

Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!

The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst

Owes nothing to thy blasts.—But who comes here?

*Enter GLOSTER, led by an Old Man.*

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

*Old Man.* O, my good lord,  
I've been your tenant, and your father's tenant,  
These fourscore years.

*Glo.* Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone.

*Old Man.* Alack sir, you cannot see your way.

*Glo.* I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;  
I stumbled when I saw: Ah! 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?

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] O gods! Who is't can say, "I'm at the worst"?

I'm worse than e'er I was.

*Old Man.* 'Tis poor mad Tom.

*Glo.* Is it a beggar-man?

*Old Man.* Madman and beggar too.

*Glo.* He has some reason, else he could not beg.  
I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;  
Which made me think a man a worm.

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] Bless thee, master!

*Glo.* Is that the naked fellow?

*Old Man.* Ay, my lord.

*Glo.* Then, prithee, get thee gone;  
And bring some covering for this naked soul,  
Which I'll entreat to lead me.

*Old Man.* Alack, sir, he is mad.

*Glo.* Do as I bid thee; above the rest, be gone.

*Old Man.* I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,  
Come on't what will. [*Exit.*]

*Glo.* Sirrah, naked fellow,—

*Edg.* Poor Tom's a-cold.— [*Aside.*] I cannot daub it further.

*Glo.* Come hither, fellow.

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] And yet I must. Bless thy sweet eyes!

*Glo.* Dost thou know Dover?

*Edg.* Ay, master.

*Glo.* There is a cliff, whose high and bending head  
Looks fearfully in the confinèd deep:  
Bring me but to the very brim of it,  
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear  
With something rich about me: from that place  
I shall no leading need.


*Edg.* Give me thy arm:

Poor Tom shall lead thee. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE 3.—Country near Dover.

*Enter GLOSTER, and EDGAR dressed like a peasant.*

*Gloster.*

HEN shall I come to the top of that same hill?

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

*Glo.* Methinks the ground is even.

*Edg.* Horrible steep,

Hark, do you hear the sea?

*Glo.* No, truly.

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

*Glo.* So may it be, indeed:

Methinks thy voice is alter'd; and thou speak'st  
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

*Edg.* You're much deceiv'd: in nothing am I  
chang'd

But in my garments.

*Glo.* Methinks you're better spoken,

*Edg.* Come on, sir: here's the place:—stand still.

—How fearful.

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!  
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire,—dreadful trade!  
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:  
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,  
Appear like mice: the murmuring surge  
That on th' unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,  
Cannot be heard so high.—I'll look no more;  
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight  
Topple down headlong.

*Glo.* Set me where you stand.

*Edg.* Give me your hand:—you're now within a  
foot

Of th' extreme verge: for all beneath the moon  
Would I not leap upright.

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

*Edg.* Now fare you well, good sir.

*Glo.* With all my heart.

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] Why I do trifle thus with his  
despair

Is done to cure it.

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

[*GLOSTER is about to leap, when EDGAR  
catches him.*]

*Edg.* Had'st thou been aught but gossamer,  
feathers, air,  
So many fathom down precipitating,  
Thoud'st shiver'd like an egg: but thou dost  
breathe;  
Thy life's a miracle.

Hold! Who comes here?

*Enter LEAR, fantastically dressed with wild flowers.*

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

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] O thou side-piercing sight!

*Lear.* Nature's above art in that respect.—There's your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's yard.—Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace;—this piece of toasted cheese will do't.—There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant.—Bring up the brown bills.—O, well flown, bird!—i' the clout, i' the clout: hewgh!—Give the word.

*Edg.* Sweet marjoram.

*Lear.* Pass.

*Glo.* I know that voice.

*Lear.* Ha! Goneril,—with a white beard!—They flatter'd me like a dog; and told me I had white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there.—To say "ay" and "no" to every thing that I said "ay" and "no" to, was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie,—I am not ague-proof.

*Glo.* The trick of that voice I do well remember: Is't not the king!

*Lear.* Ay, every inch a king:  
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes!  
I pardon that man's life.—What was thy cause?—

*Adultery?—*

Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:  
For Gloucester's bastard son  
Was kinder to his father than my daughters.  
Down from the waist they are Centaurs.  
There's hell, there's darkness, there's the sulphurous  
pit,  
Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie!  
pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet, good  
apothecary, to sweeten my imagination: there's  
money for thee.

*Glo.* O, let me kiss that hand!

*Lear.* Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

*Glo.* O ruin'd peace of nature!—Dost thou know me?

*Lear.* I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid; I'll not love.—Read thou this challenge; mark but the penning of it.

*Glo.* Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

*Lear.* Read.

*Glo.* What, with this case of eyes?

*Lear.* O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Yet you see how this world goes.

*Glo.* I see it feelingly.

*Lear.* What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?—Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

*Glo.* Ay, sir.

*Lear.* And the creature run from the cur? There thou might'st behold the great image of authority: A dog's obey'd in office.—  
The usurer hangs the cozener.  
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;  
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with  
gold,

And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;  
Arm it in rags, a 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.

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] O, matter and impertinency mix'd  
Reason in madness!

*Lear.* If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.  
I know thee well enough! thyname is Gloster:  
Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:  
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,  
We waul and cry.—I will preach to thee: mark.

*Glo.* Alack, alack the day!

*Lear.* When we are born, we cry, that we are  
come

To this great stage of fools. This' a good block;

[*Taking EDGAR'S hat.*]

It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe  
A troop of horse with felt: I'll put 't in proof;  
And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,  
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

*Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants.*

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

*Lear.* No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even  
The natural fool of fortune.—Use me well;  
You shall have ransom. Let me have a surgeon;  
I am cut t' the brains.

*Gent.* You shall have anything.

*Lear.* What!

I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king,  
My masters, know you that?

*Gent.* You are a royal one, and we obey you.

*Lear.* Then there's life in't. Nay, an  
You get it, you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

[*Exit.*]

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

[*Exeunt Gentleman and Attendants.*]

*Glo.* You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from  
me;

Let not my worser spirit tempt me again  
To die before you please!

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. A proclaim'd prize!  
Thou old unhappy traitor,  
Briefly thyself remember:—the sword is out  
That must destroy thee.

Glo. Now, let thy friendly hand  
Put strength enough to't. [EDGAR interposes.

Osw. Wherefore, bold peasant,  
Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence;  
Let go his arm.

Edg. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

Osw. Let go, slave, or thou diest!

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor  
volk pass. An chud ha' been zwaggered out of my  
life, 'twould not ha' been zo long as 'tis by a vort-  
night. Nay, come not near the old man; or ise try  
whether your costard or my bat be the harder.

Osw. Out, dunghill! [They fight.

Edg. Chill pick your teeth, zir. [OSWALD falls.

Osw. Slave, thou hast slain me.  
Give the letters which thou find'st about me  
To Edmund Earl of Gloster: seek him out  
Upon the British party:—O, untimely death!

[Dies.

Edg. I know thee well—a serviceable villain.

Glo. What, is he dead?

Edg. Sit you down, father; rest you.—

Let's see his pockets: these letters that he speaks of  
May be my friends.—He's dead; I'm only sorry  
He had no other death's-man.—Let us see:—

[Reads.] “Let our reciprocal vows be remember'd.  
You have many opportunities to cut him off: if your will  
want not, time and place will be fruitfully offer'd.  
There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror; then  
am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol.

“Your—wife, so I would say—affectionate servant,

“GONERIL.”

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!  
 A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;  
 And the exchange my brother! In the mature time,  
 With this ungracious scroll, I'll strike the sight  
 Of the death-practis'd Duke. Give me your hand:

[Distant drum.

Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum:  
 Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. [Exeunt.

SCENE 4.—*The French Camp.*

*Enter KENT and a Gentleman.*

*Kent.*

**W**HY the King of France is so suddenly gone  
 back know you the reason?

*Gent.* Something he left imperfect in the  
 state, which since his coming forth is thought  
 of.

*Kent.* Did your letters pierce the queen to any  
 demonstration of grief?

*Gent.* Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my  
 presence;

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

*Kent.*

O, then it mov'd her.

*Gent.* Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove  
 Who should express her goodliest. You have seen  
 Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears  
 Were like a better way: those happy smilets,  
 That played on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know  
 What guests were in her eyes. In brief,  
 Sorrow would be a rarity most below'd,  
 If all could so become it.

*Kent.*

Made she no verbal question?



*Gent.* Faith, once or twice she heav'd the name of  
 "father"  
 Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;  
 Cried "Sisters! sisters! What, i' the storm? i' the  
 night?  
 Let pity not be believ'd!" There she shook  
 The holy water from her heavenly eyes,  
 And clamour moisten'd: then away she started  
 To deal with grief alone.

*Kent.* You spoke not with her since?

*Gent.* No.

*Kent.* Was this before the king return'd?

*Gent.* No, since.

*Kent.* Well, sir, the poor distress'd Lear's i' the  
 town;

Who sometime in his better tune remembers  
 What we are come about, and by no means  
 Will yield to see his daughter.

*Gent.* Why, good sir?

*Kent.* His own unkindness,  
 That stripp'd her from his benediction, stings  
 His mind so venomously, that burning shame  
 Detains him from Cordelia.

*Gent.* Alack, poor gentleman!

*Kent.* Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you  
 heard not?

*Gent.* 'Tis so, they are afoot.

*Kent.* Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,  
 And leave you to attend him:  
 When I am known aright, you shall not grieve  
 Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you,  
 Go along with me. [Exeunt.]


SCENE 5.—*A Tent in the French Camp.*

LEAR on a bed asleep.

*Soft music playing.*

CORDELIA and KENT. Physician, Gentleman, and  
*others watching.*

*Cordelia.*

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

And every measure fail me.

*Kent.* To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'erpaid.

*Cor.* How does the king?

*Phy.* Madam, sleeps well.

*Cor.* O you kind gods,

Cure this great breach in his abusèd nature!  
Th' untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up  
Of this child-changèd father!

*Phy.* So please your majesty  
That we may wake the king: he hath slept long.

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

*Phy.* Ay, madam; in the heaviness of sleep  
We put fresh garments on him.

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

*Cor.* Very well.

*Phy.* Please you, draw near. Louder the music there!

*Cor.* O my dear father! Restoration hang  
Thy med'cine on my lips; and let this kiss  
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters  
Have in thy reverence made!

*Kent.*

Kind and dear princess!

*Cor.* Had you not been their father, these white  
flakes

Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face  
 To be oppos'd against the warring winds?  
 Mine enemy's dog,  
 Though he had bit me, should have stood that night  
 Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,  
 To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,  
 In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!  
 'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once  
 Had not concluded all.—He wakes; speak to him.

*Phy.* Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

*Cor.* How does my royal lord? how fares your  
 majesty?

*Lear.* You do me wrong to take me out o' the  
 grave:—

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound  
 Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears  
 Do scald like molten lead.

*Cor.* Sir, do you know me?

*Lear.* You are a spirit, I know: when did you  
 die?

*Cor.* Still, still, far wide!

*Phy.* He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.

*Lear.* Where have I been? Where am I?—Fair  
 daylight?—

I'm mightily abus'd.—I should e'en die with pity,  
 To see another thus.—I know not what to say.—  
 I will not swear these are my hands:—let's see;  
 I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd  
 Of my condition!

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

*Lear.* Pray do not mock me:  
 I am a very foolish, fond, old man,  
 Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less;  
 And, to deal plainly,  
 I fear I am not in my perfect mind.

Methinks I should know you, and know this man ;  
Yet I am doubtful : for I'm mainly ignorant  
What place this is : and all the skill I have  
Remembers not these garments ; nor I know not  
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me ;  
For, as I am a man, I think this lady  
To be my child Cordelia.

*Cor.* And so I am, I am.

*Lear.* Be your tears wet ? yes, faith. I pray you  
weep not :

If you have poison for me, I will drink it.  
I know you do not love me ; for your sisters  
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong :  
You have some cause, they have not.

*Cor.* No cause, no cause.

*Lear.* Am I in France ?

*Kent.* In your own kingdom, sir.

*Lear.* Do not abuse me.

*Phy.* Be comforted, good madam : the great rage,  
You see, is cur'd in him : desire him to go in.

*Cor.* Will't please your highness walk ?

*Lear.* You must bear with me ;  
Pray you now, forget and forgive : I'm old and  
foolish.



ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Camp of the British Forces, near  
Dover.*

EDMUND, REGAN, Officers, Soldiers, and others.

*Edmund.*

**K**NOW of the duke if his last purpose hold.  
He's full of alteration  
And self-reproving:—bring his constant  
pleasure.

*[To an Officer, who goes out.]*

*Reg.* Now, sweet lord,  
You know the goodness I intend upon you:  
Tell me,—but truly,—but then speak the truth,  
Do you not love my sister?

*Edm.* No, by mine honour, madam.

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

*Edm.* Fear me not:—  
She and the duke her husband! *[Trumpet.]*

*Enter, ALBANY, GONERIL, and Soldiers.*

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

*Alb.* Our very loving sister, well be-met.—  
Sir, this I hear,—the king is come to his daughter,  
With others whom the rigour of our state  
Forc'd to cry out. Where I could not be honest,

I never yet was valiant : for this business,  
It toucheth us, as France invades our land.

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

*Alb.* Let us, then, determine  
With the consent of all on our proceeding.

*Edm.* I shall attend you presently at your tent.

*Reg.* Sister, you'll go with us ?

*Gon.* No.

*Reg.* 'Tis most convenient ; pray you, go with us.

*Gon.* [*Aside.*] O, ho, I know the riddle.—I will  
go.

*As they are going out, enter EDGAR disguised.*

*Edg.* If e'er your grace had speech with man so  
poor,

Hear me one word.

*Alb.* I'll overtake you.—Speak.

[*Exeunt all except ALBANY and EDGAR.*]

*Edg.* Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.  
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound  
For him that brought it : wretched though I seem,  
I can produce a champion that will prove  
What is avouchèd there. Fortune love you !

*Alb.* Stay till I've read the letter.

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

[*Exit EDGAR.*]

*Re-enter EDMUND.*

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


*Alb.* We will greet the time. [*Exit.*]

*Edm.* To both these sisters have I sworn my love:  
 Each jealous of the other, as the stung  
 Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?  
 Both? one? or neither? To take the widow  
 Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;  
 And hardly shall I carry out my side,  
 Her husband being alive. Now, then, we'll use  
 His countenance for the battle; which being done,  
 Let her who would be rid of him devise  
 His speedy taking off. As for the mercy  
 Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,—  
 The battle done, and they within our power,  
 Shall never see his pardon; for my state  
 Stands on me to defend, not to debate. *[Exit.]*

SCENE 2.—*The Same.*

*Enter, in conquest, EDMUND; LEAR and CORDELIA  
 prisoners; Officers, Soldiers, &c.*

*Edmund.*

OME officers take them away: good guard,  
 Until their greater pleasures first be known  
 That are to censure them.

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

*Lear.* No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to  
 prison:

We two alone, will sing like birds i' the cage:  
 When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,  
 And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,  
 And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh;  
 And take upon's the mystery of things,  
 As if we were God's spies.

*Edm.* Take them away.

*Lear.* Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,  
The God's themselves throw incense. Have I caught  
thee?

He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,  
And fire us hence, like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;  
Ere they shall make us weep, w'e'll see 'em starve.  
Come. [*Exeunt LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded.*]

*Edm.* Come hither, captain; hark.  
Take thou this note [*giving a warrant*]; go follow them  
to prison:

One step I have advanc'd thee; if thou dost  
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way  
To noble fortunes: either say thou'lt do't,  
Or thrive by other means.

*Off.* I'll do't my lord.

*Edm.* About it; and write happy when thou'st  
done. [*Exit Officer.*]

*Flourish.* Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, Officers,  
and Attendants.

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

*Edm.* Sir, I thought it fit  
To send the old and miserable king  
To some retention. With him I sent the queen;  
My reason all the same; and they are ready  
To-morrow, or at farther space, t'appear  
Where you may hold your session.

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



*Reg.* That's as we list to grace him.  
 [To *Edmund*] Witness the world, that I create thee  
 here  
 My lord and master.

*Gon.* Mean you to possess him?

*Alb.* The let-alone lies not in your good will.

*Edm.* Nor in thine, Lord,

*Alb.* Half-blooded fellow, yes.

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

*Alb.* Edmund, I arrest thee.  
 On capital treason; and, in thy arrest,  
 This gilded serpent. [Pointing to *GONERIL*.]  
 Thou art arm'd, Gloster.—Let the trumpet sound:  
 If none appear to prove upon thy person  
 Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,  
 I'll prove it on thy heart.

*Reg.* Sick, O, sick!

*Gon.* [Aside.] If not, I'll ne'er trust poison.

*Edm.* What in the world he is  
 That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.  
 Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,  
 On him, on you, I will maintain my truth  
 And honour firmly.

*Reg.* My sickness grows upon me.

*Alb.* Convey her to my tent.

[*REGAN is led out.*]

*Enter a Herald.*

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

*Her.* Sound, trumpet! [Trumpet sounds. Reads.]  
 "If any man of quality or degree within the lists of  
 the army will maintain upon Edmund, supposed  
 Earl of Gloster, that he is a manifold traitor, let him

appear by the third sound of the trumpet: he's bold  
in his defence."

*Edm.* Sound!

[*First trumpet.*

*Her.* Again!

[*Second trumpet.*

*Her.* Again!

[*Third trumpet.*

[*Trumpet answers within.*

*Enter EDGAR, armed, and preceded by a trumpet.*

*Her.* What are you?

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

*Edg.* Know, my name is lost;  
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn, and canker-bit:  
Yet am I noble as the adversary  
I come to cope.

*Alb.* Which is that adversary?

*Edg.* What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of  
Gloster?

*Edm.* Himself:—what say'st thou to him?

*Edg.* Draw thy sword,  
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,  
Thy arm may do thee justice. Thou art a traitor;  
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;  
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince;  
And, from th' extremest upward of thy head  
To the descent and dust below thy foot,  
A most toad-spotted traitor.

*Edm.* 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.—Trumpets, speak!

[*Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls.*

*Gon.* O, save him, save him!

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*Alb.* Hold, sir!  
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:—  
[Gives the letter to EDMUND.]

No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it.

*Gon.* Say, if I do,—the laws are mine not thine.

*Alb.* Know'st thou this paper?

*Gon.* Ask me not what I know.  
[Exit.]

*Alb.* Go after her; she's desperate: govern her.  
[Exeunt Officers.]

*Edm.* What you have charg'd me with, that have  
I done;

And more, much more; the time will bring it out.  
The wheel is come full circle; I am here.

*Enter a Gentleman.*

*Gent.* Help, help! she's dead!  
Your lady, sir, your lady; and her sister  
By her is poison'd; she hath confess'd it.

*Edm.* I was contracted to them both! all three  
Now marry in an instant.—Quickly send—  
Be brief in it—to the castle; for my writ  
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia.

*Edg.* Send thy token of reprieve.

*Edm.* Well thought on: take my sword;  
Give it the captain.

*Alb.* Haste thee, for thy life. [Exit EDGAR.]

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

*Alb.* The gods defend her!—Bear him hence  
awhile. [EDMUND is borne off.]

*Re-enter* LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms;  
EDGAR, KENT, and others following.

*Lear.* Howl, howl, howl, howl!—O, you are men  
of stone:  
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so  
That heaven's vault should crack.—She's gone for  
ever!

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

*Kent.* Is this the promis'd end?

*Edg.* Or image of that horror?

*Alb.* Fall, and cease!

*Lear.* This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,  
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows  
That ever I have felt.

*Kent.* O my good master!

*Lear.* Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!  
What is't thou say'st?—Her voice was ever soft,  
Gentle, and low,—an excellent thing in woman.—  
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

*Kent.* 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

*Lear.* Did I not, fellow?

I've seen the day, with my good biting falchion  
I would have made them skip: I am old now,  
And these same crosses spoil me.—Who are you?  
Mine eyes are not of the best:—I'll tell you straight.  
This' a dull light. Are you not Kent?

*Kent.* The same,

Your servant Kent.

*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.

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*Lear.* Ay, so I think.

*Alb.* He knows not what he says: and vain it is  
That we present us to him.

*Edg.* Very bootless.

*Alb.* O see, see!

*Lear.* And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no! No  
life!

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!—

[*Dies.*

*Edg.* He faints! Look up, my lord.

*Kent.* Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he  
hates him much,

That would upon the rack of this tough world

Stretch him out longer.

CURTAIN.

