

Enter ALBANY

GONERIL

I have been worth the whistle.

ALBANY

O Goneril!

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition:
That nature, which contemns its origin,
Cannot be border'd certain in itself;
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither
And come to deadly use.

GONERIL

No more; the text is foolish.

ALBANY

Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile:
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.
Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
A man, a prince, by him so benefited!
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
It will come,
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.

GONERIL

Milk-liver'd man!

That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st
Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum?
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;
With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats;
Whiles thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and criest
'Alack, why does he so?'

ALBANY

See thyself, devil!
Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
So horrid as in woman.

GONERIL

O vain fool!

ALBANY

Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
Be-monster not thy feature. Were't my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones: howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

GONERIL

Marry, your manhood now--

Edgar and Edmund

EDGAR

How now, brother Edmund! what serious contemplation are you in?

EDMUND

I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

EDGAR

Do you busy yourself about that?

EDMUND

I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed

unhappily; 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 in him by word or countenance?

EDGAR

None at all.

EDMUND

Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended

him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth

in him, that with the mischief of your person it

would scarcely allay.

EDGAR

Some villain hath done me wrong.

EDMUND

That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance till the spied of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to

hear my lord speak: pray ye, go; there's my key:

if you do stir abroad, go armed.

EDGAR

Armed, brother!

EDMUND

Brother, I advise you to the best; go armed: I am no honest man if there be any good

meaning

towards you: I have told you what I have seen

and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image

and horror of it: pray you, away.

EDGAR

Shall I hear from you anon?

EDMUND

I do serve you in this business.

Exit EDGAR

A credulous father! and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none: on whose foolish honesty

My 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.

Edmund and Regan

REGAN

Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

EDMUND

'Tis to be doubted, madam.

REGAN

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?

EDMUND

In honour'd love.

REGAN

But have you never found my brother's way

To the forfended place?

EDMUND

No, by mine honour, madam.

REGAN

I never shall endure her: dear my lord,

Be not familiar with her.

EDMUND

Fear me not:

She and the duke her husband!

Fool and Lear

Fool

If a man's brains were in's heels, were't not in
danger of kibes?

KING LEAR

Ay, boy.

Fool

Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall ne'er
go
slip-shod.

KING LEAR

Ha, ha, ha!

Fool

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 tell what I can tell.

KING LEAR

Why, what canst thou tell, my 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?

KING 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.

KING LEAR

I did her wrong--

Fool

Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

KING LEAR

No.

Fool

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

KING LEAR

Why?

Fool

Why, to put his head in; not to give it away
to his

daughters, and leave his horns without a
case.

KING LEAR

I will forget my nature. So kind a father! Be
my
horses ready?

Fool

Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason
why the
seven stars are no more than seven is a
pretty reason.

KING LEAR

Because they are not eight?

Fool

Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

KING LEAR

To take 't again perforce! Monster
ingratitude!

Fool

If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee
beaten
for being old before thy time.

KING LEAR

How's that?

Fool

Thou shouldst not have been old till thou
hadst
been wise.

KING LEAR

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

Goneril and Regan

GONERIL

Sister, it is not a little I have to say of what most nearly appertains to us both. I think our father will hence to-night.

REGAN

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

GONERIL

You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little: he always loved our sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

REGAN

'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

GONERIL

The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

REGAN

Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

GONERIL

There is further compliment of leavetaking between France and him. Pray you, let's hit together: if our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

REGAN

We shall further think on't.

GONERIL

We must do something, and i' the heat.

1 **King Lear**

2 **ACT I**

3 **KENT**

4 Good my liege,--

5 **KING LEAR**

6 Peace, Kent!

7 Come not between the dragon and his wrath.

8 I loved her most, and thought to set my rest

9 On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!

10 So be my grave my peace, as here I give

11 Her father's heart from her! Call France; who stirs?

12 Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,

13 With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:

14 Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.

15 I do invest you jointly with my power,

16 Pre-eminence, and all the large effects

17 That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,

18 With reservation of an hundred knights,

19 By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode

20 Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain

21 The name, and all the additions to a king;

22 The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,

23 Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,

24 This coronet part betwixt you.

25 *Giving the crown*

26 **KENT**

27 Royal Lear,

28 Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,

29 Loved as my father, as my master follow'd,

30 As my great patron thought on in my prayers,--

31 **KING LEAR**

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

33 **KENT**

34 Let it fall rather, though the fork invade

35 The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,

36 When Lear is mad. What wilt thou do, old man?

37 Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,

38 When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound,

39 When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom;

40 And, in thy best consideration, cheque

41 This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,

Kingmen Shakespeare Festival
Acting Script

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42 Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
43 Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
44 Reverbs no hollowness.

45 **KING LEAR**

46 Kent, on thy life, no more.

47 **KENT**

48 My life I never held but as a pawn
49 To wage against thy enemies; nor fear to lose it,
50 Thy safety being the motive.

51 **KING LEAR**

52 Out of my sight!

53 **KENT**

54 See better, Lear; and let me still remain
55 The true blank of thine eye.

56 **KING LEAR**

57 Now, by Apollo,--

58 **KENT**

59 Now, by Apollo, king,
60 Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

61 **KING LEAR**

62 O, vassal! miscreant!

63

SCENE II. Before Gloucester's castle.

Enter KENT and OSWALD, severally

OSWALD

Good dawning to thee, friend: art of this house?

KENT

Ay.

OSWALD

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

Fellow, I know thee.

OSWALD

What dost thou know me for?

KENT

A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking knave, a whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service, 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 on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

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 rogue:

Drawing his sword

you come with letters against the king; and take vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father: draw, you rascal.

OSWALD

Help, ho! murder! help!

KING LEAR

Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

CORDELIA

Nothing, my lord.

KING LEAR

Nothing!

CORDELIA

Nothing.

KING LEAR

Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

CORDELIA

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more nor less.

KING LEAR

How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

CORDELIA

Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

KING LEAR

But goes thy heart with this?

CORDELIA

Ay, good my lord.

KING LEAR

So young, and so untender?

CORDELIA

So young, my lord, and true.

CORDELIA

How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?

KING 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 moulten lead.

CORDELIA

Sir, do you know me?

KING LEAR

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

CORDELIA

Still, still, far wide!

Doctor

He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.

KING LEAR

Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?

I am mightily abused. 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 assured

Of my condition!

CORDELIA

O, look upon me, sir,

And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:

No, sir, you must not kneel.

KING LEAR

Pray, do not mock me:

I am a very foolish fond old man,

Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor 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 am 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.

CORDELIA

And so I am, I am.

KING LEAR

Be your tears wet? yes, 'faith. I pray, 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.

CORDELIA

No cause, no cause.

Lear, Goneril, Regan

REGAN

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

KING LEAR

Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,--
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like; pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom.

Pointing at OSWALD

GONERIL

At your choice, sir.

KING 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: thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. 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.

REGAN

Not altogether so:
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion

Must be content to think you old, and so--
But she knows what she does.

KING LEAR

Is this well spoken?

REGAN

I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?
Is it not well? What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

GONERIL

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

REGAN

Why not, my lord? If then they chanced to slack you,
We could control them. 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.

KING LEAR

I gave you all--

REGAN

And in good time you gave it.

KING LEAR

Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number. What, must I come to you
With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?

REGAN

And speak't again, my lord; no more with me.

KING 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.

GONERIL

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?

REGAN

What need one?

KING 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's as cheap as beast's:
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,
And 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
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

Exeunt KING LEAR, GLOUCESTER, KENT, and Fool

Regan and Oswald

Enter REGAN and OSWALD

REGAN

But are my brother's powers set forth?

OSWALD

Ay, madam.

REGAN

Himself in person there?

OSWALD

Madam, with much ado:

Your sister is the better soldier.

REGAN

Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?

OSWALD

No, madam.

REGAN

What might import my sister's letter to him?

OSWALD

I know not, lady.

REGAN

'Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.

It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,

To let him live: where he arrives he moves

All hearts against us: Edmund, I think, is gone,

In pity of his misery, to dispatch

His nighted life: moreover, to descry

The strength o' the enemy.

OSWALD

I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

REGAN

Our troops set forth to-morrow: stay with us;

The ways are dangerous.

OSWALD

I may not, madam:

My lady charged my duty in this business.

REGAN

Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you

Transport her purposes by word? Belike,

Something--I know not what: I'll love thee much,

Let me unseal the letter.

OSWALD

Madam, I had rather--

REGAN

I know your lady does not love her husband;

I am sure of that: and at her late being here

She gave strange oeillades and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

OSWALD

I, madam?

REGAN

I speak in understanding; you are; I know't:
Therefore I do advise you, take this note:
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd;
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's: you may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you, give him this;
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.
So, fare you well.
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

OSWALD

Would I could meet him, madam! I should show
What party I do follow.

REGAN

Fare thee well.

Exeunt