

## 1.1

### **KING LEAR**

Give me the map there. Know that we have divided  
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent  
To shake all cares and business from our age;  
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we  
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Tell me, my daughters,--  
Since now we will divest us both of rule,  
Interest of territory, cares of state,--  
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?  
That we our largest bounty may extend  
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,  
Our eldest-born, speak first.

### **GONERIL**

Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;  
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;  
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;  
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;  
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

### **CORDELIA**

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

### **LEAR**

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,  
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,  
We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue  
Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,  
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

### **REGAN**

Sir, I am made  
Of the self-same metal that my sister is,  
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart  
I find she names my very deed of love;  
Only she comes too short: that I profess  
Myself an enemy to all other joys,  
And find I am alone felicitate  
In your dear highness' love.

### **CORDELIA**

[Aside] Then poor Cordelia!  
And yet not so; since, 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;  
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,  
Than that conferr'd on Goneril. 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?  
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.

**KING LEAR**

Let it be so; thy truth, then, be thy dower:  
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
Propinquity and property of blood,  
And as a stranger to my heart and me  
Hold thee, from this, for ever.  
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest  
On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!

So be my grave my peace, as here I give  
Her father's heart from her!  
Cornwall and Albany,  
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:  
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.

**CORDELIA**

I yet beseech your majesty,--  
If for I want that glib and oily art,  
To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,  
I'll do't before I speak,--that you make known  
It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,  
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,  
That hath deprived me of your grace and favour;  
But even for want of that for which I am richer,  
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue  
As I am glad I have not, though not to have it  
Hath lost me in your liking.

**KING LEAR**

Better thou  
Hadst not been born than not to have pleased me better.

## 2.4

### REGAN

O, sir, you are old.  
Nature in you stands on the very verge  
Of her confine: you should be ruled and led  
By some discretion, that discerns your state  
Better than you yourself. Therefore, I pray you,  
That to our sister you do make return;  
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

### KING LEAR

Ask her forgiveness?  
[Rising] 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 stored vengeance of heaven fall  
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,  
You taking airs, with lameness!  
You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames  
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,  
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,  
To fall and blast her pride!  
Who comes here? O heavens,  
*Enter GONERIL*  
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!  
*To GONERIL*  
Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?

### 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:

### 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;

### 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 can be patient; I can stay with Regan,  
I and my hundred knights.

**REGAN**

Not altogether so:  
what, fifty followers?  
Is it not well? What should you need of more?

**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?

**GONERIL**

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

**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: 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,  
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!

### 3.4

#### KING 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, whereso'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 mayst shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just.

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Thou wert better in thy grave than to answer  
with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies.  
Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou  
owest 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.

## 4.6

### **KING LEAR**

Ha! Goneril, with a white beard! They flattered 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' too 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.

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### **KING 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? And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.  
Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!  
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;  
Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind  
For which thou whipp'st her. 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.  
None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:  
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power  
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;  
And like a scurvy politician, seem  
To see the things thou dost not.

#### 4.7

##### **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.  
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:

##### **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,  
Yet I am doubtful for I am mainly ignorant  
What place this is. 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.

##### **KING LEAR**

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

### 5.3

#### **KING LEAR**

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  
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues  
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,  
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;  
And take upon's the mystery of things,  
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,  
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,  
That ebb and flow by the moon.

*Exeunt KING LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded*