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*****The Tragedie of King Lear*****

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The Tragedie of King Lear

by William Shakespeare

July, 2000 [Etext #2266]

The Project Gutenberg's Etext of Shakespeare's First Folio
*****The Tragedie of King Lear*****

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Printers of the 1st Folio had limited type pieces, and so they would substitute similar letters when the correct letter was unavailable. Those "mistakes" have been retained. However, we have taken the liberty of separating speeches and stage instructions when they were run together in the original. Also, cojoined "æ" have been restored in this version.

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* Act 4 Scene 6 is not missing, but rather Scene 3 has been left out, a minor scene between Kent and a Gentleman, and the numbering is then incorrect until Scene 7.

The Tragedie of King Lear

Actus Primus. Scoena Prima.

Enter Kent, Gloucester, and Edmond.

Kent. I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany, then Cornwall

Glou. It did alwayes seeme so to vs: But now in the diuision of the Kingdome, it appears not which of the Dukes hee valewes most, for qualities are so weigh'd, that curiosity in neither, can make choise of eithers moity

Kent. Is not this your Son, my Lord?

Glou. His breeding Sir, hath bin at my charge. I haue so often blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am braz'd too't

Kent. I cannot conceiue you

Glou. Sir, this yong Fellowes mother could; wherevpon she grew round womb'd, and had indeede (Sir) a Sonne for her Cradle, ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

Kent. I cannot wish the fault vndone, the issue of it, being so proper

Glou. But I haue a Sonne, Sir, by order of Law, some yeere elder then this; who, yet is no deerer in my account, though this Knaue came something sawcily to the world before he was sent for: yet was his Mother fayre, there was good sport at his making, and the horson must be acknowledged. Doe you know this Noble Gentleman,

Edmond?

Edm. No, my Lord

Glou. My Lord of Kent:
Remember him heereafter, as my Honourable Friend

Edm. My seruices to your Lordship

Kent. I must loue you, and sue to know you better

Edm. Sir, I shall study deseruing

Glou. He hath bin out nine yeares, and away he shall againe. The King is comming.

Sennet. Enter King Lear, Cornwall, Albany, Goncrill, Regan, Cordelia, and attendants.

Lear. Attend the Lords of France & Burgundy, Gloster

Glou. I shall, my Lord.

Enter.

Lear. Meane time we shal expresse our darker purpose. Giue me the Map there. Know, that we haue diuided In three our Kingdome: and 'tis our fast intent, To shake all Cares and Businesse from our Age, Conferring them on yonger strengths, while we Vnburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall, And you our no lesse louing Sonne of Albany, We haue this houre a constant will to publish Our daughters seuerall Dowes, that future strife May be preuented now. The Princes, France & Burgundy, Great Riuals in our yongest daughters loue, Long in our Court, haue made their amorous sojourne, And heere are to be answer'd. Tell me my daughters

(Since now we will diuest vs both of Rule,
Interest of Terrítory, Cares of State)
Which of you shall we say doth loue vs most,
That we, our largest bountie may extend
Where Nature doth with merit challenge. Gonerill,
Our eldest borne, speake first

Gon. Sir, I loue you more then word can weild y matter,
Deerer then eye-sight, space, and libertie,
Beyond what can be valewed, rich or rare,
No lesse then life, with grace, health, beauty, honor:
As much as Childe ere lou'd, or Father found.
A loue that makes breath poore, and spech vnable,
Beyond all manner of so much I loue you

Cor. What shall Cordelia speake? Loue, and be silent

Lear. Of all these bounds euen from this Line, to this,
With shadowie Forrests, and with Champains rich'd
With plenteous Riúers, and wide-skirted Meades
We make thee Lady. To thine and Albanies issues
Be this perpetuall. What sayes our second Daughter?
Our deere Regan, wife of Cornwall?

Reg. I am made of that selfe-mettle as my Sister,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart,
I finde she names my very deede of loue:
Onely she comes too short, that I professe
My selfe an enemy to all other ioyes,
Which the most precious square of sense professes,
And finde I am alone felicitate
In your deere Highnesse loue

Cor. Then poore Cordelia,
And yet not so, since I am sure my loue's
More ponderous then my tongue

Lear. To thee, and thine hereditarie euer,

Remaine this ample third of our faire Kingdome,
No lesse in space, validitie, and pleasure
Then that conferr'd on Gonerill. Now our Ioy,
Although our last and least; to whose yong loue,
The Vines of France, and Milke of Burgundie,
Striue to be interest. What can you say, to draw
A third, more opilent then your Sisters? speake

Cor. Nothing my Lord

Lear. Nothing?

Cor. Nothing

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing, speake againe

Cor. Vnhappie that I am, I cannot heaue
My heart into my mouth: I loue your Maiesty
According to my bond, no more nor lesse

Lear. How, how Cordelia? Mend your speech a little,
Least you may marre your Fortunes

Cor. Good my Lord,
You haue begot me, bred me, lou'd me.
I returne those duties backe as are right fit,
Obey you, Loue you, and most Honour you.
Why haue my Sisters Husbands, if they say
They loue you all? Happily when I shall wed,
That Lord, whose hand must take my plight, shall carry
Halfe my loue with him, halfe my Care, and Dutie,
Sure I shall neuer marry like my Sisters

Lear. But goes thy heart with this?

Cor. I my good Lord

Lear. So young, and so vntender?

Cor. So young my Lord, and true

Lear. Let it be so, thy truth then be thy dowre:
For by the sacred radience of the Sunne,
The misteries of Heccat and the night:
By all the operation of the Orbes,
From whom we do exist, and cease to be,
Heere I disclaime all my Paternall care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me,
Hold thee from this for euer. The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosome
Be as well neighbour'd, pittied, and releu'd,
As thou my sometime Daughter

Kent. Good my Liege

Lear. Peace Kent,
Come not betweene the Dragon and his wrath,
I lou'd her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery. Hence and avoid my sight:
So be my graue my peace, as here I giue
Her Fathers heart from her; call France, who stirres?
Call Burgundy, Cornwall, and Albanie,
With my two Daughters Dowres, digest the third,
Let pride, which she cal's plainnesse, marry her:
I doe inuest you ioyntly with my power,
Preheminnence, and all the large effects
That troope with Maiesty. Our selfe by Monthly course,
With reseruatiou of an hundred Knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turne, onely we shall retaine
The name, and all th' addition to a King: the Sway,
Reuennue, Execution of the rest,
Beloued Sonnes be yours, which to confirme,
This Coronet part betweene you

Kent. Royall Lear,
Whom I haue euer honor'd as my King,
Lou'd as my Father, as my Master follow'd,
As my great Patron thought on in my praiers

Le. The bow is bent & drawne, make from the shaft

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the forke inuade
The region of my heart, be Kent vnmanerly,
When Lear is mad, what wouldest thou do old man?
Think'st thou that dutie shall haue dread to speake,
When power to flattery bowes?
To plainnesse honour's bound,
When Maiesty falls to folly, reserue thy state,
And in thy best consideration checke
This hideous rashnesse, answere my life, my iudgement:
Thy yongest Daughter do's not loue thee least,
Nor are those empty hearted, whose low sounds
Reuerbe no hollownesse

Lear. Kent, on thy life no more

Kent. My life I neuer held but as pawne
To wage against thine enemies, nere feare to loose it,
Thy safety being motiue

Lear. Out of my sight

Kent. See better Lear, and let me still remaine
The true blanke of thine eie

Lear. Now by Apollo,

Kent. Now by Apollo, King
Thou swear'st thy Gods in vaine

Lear. O Vassall! Miscreant

Alb. Cor. Deare Sir forbear

Kent. Kill thy Physition, and thy fee bestow
Vpon the foule disease, reuoke thy guift,
Or whil'st I can vent clamour from my throate,
Ile tell thee thou dost euill

Lea. Heare me recreant, on thine allegeance heare me;
That thou hast sought to make vs breake our vowes,
Which we durst neuer yet; and with strain'd pride,
To come betwixt our sentences, and our power,
Which, nor our nature, nor our place can beare;
Our potencie made good, take thy reward.
Fiue dayes we do allot thee for prouision,
To shield thee from disasters of the world,
And on the sixt to turne thy hated backe
Vpon our kingdome: if on the tenth day following,
Thy banisht trunk be found in our Dominions,
The moment is thy death, away. By Iupiter,
This shall not be reuok'd,

Kent. Fare thee well King, sith thus thou wilt appeare,
Freedome liues hence, and banishment is here;
The Gods to their deere shelter take thee Maid,
That iustly think'st, and hast most rightly said:
And your large speeches, may your deeds approue,
That good effects may spring from words of loue:
Thus Kent, O Princes, bids you all adew,
Hee'l shape his old course, in a Country new.

Enter.

Flourish. Enter Gloster with France, and Burgundy, Attendants.

Cor. Heere's France and Burgundy, my Noble Lord

Lear. My Lord of Burgundie,

We first addresse toward you, who with this King
Hath riuall'd for our Daughter; what in the least
Will you require in present Dower with her,
Or cease your quest of Loue?

Bur. Most Royall Maicesty,
I craue no more then hath your Highnesse offer'd,
Nor will you tender lesse?

Lear. Right Noble Burgundy,
When she was deare to vs, we did hold her so,
But now her price is fallen: Sir, there she stands,
If ought within that little seeming substance,
Or all of it with our displeasure pic'd,
And nothing more may fitly like your Grace,
Shee's there, and she is yours

Bur. I know no answer

Lear. Will you with those infirmities she owes,
Vnfriended, new adopted to our hate,
Dow'rd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her or, leaue her

Bur. Pardon me Royall Sir,
Election makes not vp in such conditions

Le. Then leaue her sir, for by the powre that made me,
I tell you all her wealth. For you great King,
I would not from your loue make such a stray,
To match you where I hate, therefore beseech you
T' auert your liking a more worthier way,
Then on a wretch whom Nature is asham'd
Almost t' acknowledge hers

Fra. This is most strange,
That she whom euen but now, was your obiect,
The argument of your praise, balme of your age,

The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favour: sure her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree,
That monsters it: Or your fore-voucht affection
Fall into taint, which to beleue of her
Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Should neuer plant in me

Cor. I yet beseech your Maiesty.
If for I want that glib and oylie Art,
To speake and purpose not, since what I will intend,
Ile do't before I speake, that you make knowne
It is no vicious blot, murther, or foulnesse,
No vnchaste action or dishonoured step
That hath depri'd me of your Grace and fauour,
But euen for want of that, for which I am richer,
A still soliciting eye, and such a tongue,
That I am glad I haue not, though not to haue it,
Hath lost me in your liking

Lear. Better thou had'st
Not bene borne, then not t'haue pleas'd me better

Fra. Is it but this? A tardinesse in nature,
Which often leaues the history vnspoke
That it intends to do: my Lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the Lady? Loue's not loue
When it is mingled with regards, that stands
Aloofe from th' intire point, will you haue her?
She is herselfe a Dowrie

Bur. Royall King,
Giue but that portion which your selfe propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Dutchesse of Burgundie

Lear. Nothing, I haue sworne, I am firme

Bur. I am sorry then you haue so lost a Father,
That you must loose a husband

Cor. Peace be with Burgundie,
Since that respect and Fortunes are his loue,
I shall not be his wife

Fra. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich being poore,
Most choise forsaken, and most lou'd despis'd,
Thee and thy vertues here I seize vpon,
Be it lawfull I take vp what's cast away.
Gods, Gods! 'Tis strange, that from their cold'st neglect
My Loue should kindle to enflam'd respect.
Thy dowresse Daughter King, throwne to my chance,
Is Queene of vs, of ours, and our faire France:
Not all the Dukes of watrish Burgundy,
Can buy this vnpriz'd precious Maide of me.
Bid them farewell Cordelia, though vnkinde,
Thou loosest here a better where to finde

Lear. Thou hast her France, let her be thine, for we
Haue no such Daughter, nor shall euer see
That face of hers againe, therefore be gone,
Without our Grace, our Loue, our Benizon:
Come Noble Burgundie.

Flourish. *Excunt.*

Fra. Bid farewell to your Sisters

Cor. The Jewels of our Father, with wash'd eies
Cordelia leaues you, I know you what you are,
And like a Sister am most loth to call
Your faults as they are named. Loue well our Father:
To your professed bosomes I commit him,
But yet alas, stood I within his Grace,
I would prefer him to a better place,

So farewell to you both

Regn. Prescribe not vs our dutie

Gon. Let your study
Be to content your Lord, who hath recei'd you
At Fortunes almes, you haue obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you haue wanted

Cor. Time shall vnfold what plighted cunning hides,
Who couers faults, at last with shame derides:
Well may you prosper

Fra. Come my faire Cordelia.

Exit France and Cor.

Gon. Sister, it is not little I haue to say,
Of what most neerely appertaines to vs both,
I thinke our Father will hence to night

Reg. That's most certaine, and with you: next moneth with vs

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is, the obseruation
we haue made of it hath beene little; he alwaies
lou'd our Sister most, and with what poore iudgement he
hath now cast her off, appeares too grossely

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age, yet he hath euer but
slenderly knowne himselfe

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath bin but
rash, then must we looke from his age, to receiue not alone
the imperfections of long ingraffed condition, but
therewithall the vnruely way-wardnesse, that infirme and
cholericke yeares bring with them

Reg. Such vnconstant starts are we like to haue from

him, as this of Kents banishment

Gon. There is further complement of leaue-taking betweene
France and him, pray you let vs sit together, if our
Father carry authority with such disposition as he beares,
this last surrender of his will but offend vs

Reg. We shall further thinke of it

Gon. We must do something, and i'th' heate.

Exeunt.

Scena Secunda.

Enter Bastard.

Bast. Thou Nature art my Goddess, to thy Law
My seruices are bound, wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custome, and permit
The curiosity of Nations, to deprive me?
For that I am some twelue, or fourteene Moonshines
Lag of a Brother? Why Bastard? Wherefore base?
When my Dimensions are as well compact,
My minde as generous, and my shape as true
As honest Madams issue? Why brand they vs
With Base? With basenes Bastardie? Base, Base?
Who in the lustie stealth of Nature, take
More composition, and fierce qualitie,
Then doth within a dull stale tyred bed
Goe to th' creating a whole tribe of Fops
Got 'twene a sleepe, and wake? Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must haue your land,
Our Fathers loue, is to the Bastard Edmond,
As to th' legitimate: fine word: Legitimate.
Well, my Legitimate, if this Letter speed,
And my inuention thrive, Edmond the base
Shall to th' Legitimate: I grow, I prosper:
Now Gods, stand vp for Bastards.

Enter Gloucester.

Glo. Kent banish'd thus? and France in choller parted?
And the King gone to night? Prescrib'd his powre,
Confin'd to exhibition? All this done
Vpon the gad? Edmond, how now? What newes?

Bast. So please your Lordship, none

Glo. Why so earnestly seeke you to put vp y Letter?

Bast. I know no newes, my Lord

Glo. What Paper were you reading?

Bast. Nothing my Lord

Glo. No? what needed then that terrible dispatch of
it into your Pocket? The quality of nothing, hath not
such neede to hide it selfe. Let's see: come, if it bee nothing,
I shall not neede Spectacles

Bast. I beseech you Sir, pardon mee; it is a Letter
from my Brother, that I haue not all ore-read; and for so
much as I haue perus'd, I finde it not fit for your ore-looking

Glo. Giue me the Letter, Sir

Bast. I shall offend, either to detain, or giue it:
The Contents, as in part I vnderstand them,
Are too blame

Glo. Let's see, let's see

Bast. I hope for my Brothers iustification, hee wrote
this but as an essay, or taste of my Vertue

Glo. reads. This policie, and reuerence of Age, makes the
world bitter to the best of our times: keeps our Fortunes from
vs, till our oldnesse cannot relish them. I begin to finde an idle
and fond bondage, in the oppression of aged tyranny, who swayes
not as it hath power, but as it is suffer'd. Come to me, that of
this I may speake more. If our Father would sleepe till I wak'd
him, you should enioy halfe his Reuennew for euer, and liue the
beloued of your Brother. Edgar.
Hum? Conspiracy? Sleepe till I wake him, you should
enioy halfe his Reuennew: my Sonne Edgar, had hee a
hand to write this? A heart and braine to breede it in?
When came you to this? Who brought it?

Bast. It was not brought mee, my Lord; there's the cunning of it. I found it throwne in at the Casement of my Closset

Glou. You know the character to be your Brothers?

Bast. If the matter were good my Lord, I durst swear it were his: but in respect of that, I would faine thinke it were not

Glou. It is his

Bast. It is his hand, my Lord: but I hope his heart is not in the Contents

Glo. Has he neuer before sounded you in this busines?

Bast. Neuer my Lord. But I haue heard him oft maintaine it to be fit, that Sonnes at perfect age, and Fathers declin'd, the Father should bee as Ward to the Son, and the Sonne manage his Reuennew

Glou. O Villain, villain: his very opinion in the Letter. Abhorred Villaine, vnnaturall, detested, brutish Villaine; worse then brutish: Go sirrah, seeke him: Ile apprehend him. Abhominable Villaine, where is he?

Bast. I do not well know my L^{ord}. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my Brother, til you can deriue from him better testimony of his intent, you shold run a certaine course: where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your owne Honor, and shake in peeces, the heart of his obedience. I dare pawne downe my life for him, that he hath writ this to feele my affection to your Honor, & to no other pretence of danger

Glou. Thinke you so?

Bast. If your Honor iudge it meete, I will place you where you shall heare vs conferre of this, and by an Auricular assurance haue your satisfaction, and that without any further delay, then this very Euening

Glou. He cannot bee such a Monster. Edmond seeke him out: winde me into him, I pray you: frame the Businesse after your owne wisdom. I would vnstate my selfe, to be in a due resolution

Bast. I will seeke him Sir, presently: conuey the businesse as I shall find meanes, and acquaint you withall

Glou. These late Eclipses in the Sun and Moone portend no good to vs: though the wisdom of Nature can reason it thus, and thus, yet Nature finds it selfe scourg'd by the sequent effects. Loue cooles, friendship falls off, Brothers diuide. In Cities, mutinies; in Countries, discord; in Pallaces, Treason; and the Bond crack'd, 'twixt Sonne and Father. This villaine of mine comes vnder the prediction; there's Son against Father, the King fals from byas of Nature, there's Father against Childe. We haue scene the best of our time. Machinations, hollownesse, treacherie, and all ruinous disorders follow vs disquietly to our Graues. Find out this Villain, Edmond, it shall lose thee nothing, do it carefully: and the Noble & true-harted Kent banish'd; his offence, honesty. 'Tis strange.

Exit

Bast. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sicke in fortune, often the surfets of our own behauiour, we make guilty of our disasters, the Sun, the Moone, and Starres, as if we were villaines on necessitie, Fooles by heauenly compulsion, Knaues, Theeues, and Treachers by Sphericall predominance. Drunkards, Lyars, and Adulterers by an inforc'd obedience of Planatary influence; and all that we are euill in, by a diuine thrusting

on. An admirable euasion of Whore-master-man,
to lay his Goatish disposition on the charge of a Starre,
My father compounded with my mother vnder the Dragons
taile, and my Natiuity was vnder Vrsa Maior, so
that it followes, I am rough and Leacherous. I should
haue bin that I am, had the maidenlest Starre in the Firmament
twinkled on my bastardizing.

Enter Edgar.

Pat: he comes like the Catastrophe of the old Comedie:
my Cuc is villanous Melancholly, with a sighe like Tom
o' Bedlam. - O these Eclipses do portend these diuisions.
Fa, Sol, La, Me

Edg. How now Brother Edmond, what serious contemplation
are you in?

Bast. I am thinking Brother of a prediction I read this
other day, what should follow these Eclipses

Edg. Do you busie your selfe with that?

Bast. I promise you, the effects he writes of, succede
vnhappily.
When saw you my Father last?

Edg. The night gone by

Bast. Spake you with him?

Edg. I, two houres together

Bast. Parted you in good termes? Found you no displeasure
in him, by word, nor countenance?

Edg. None at all,

Bast. Bethink your selfe wherein you may haue offended
him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence, vntill
some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure,
which at this instant so rageth in him, that with the mischiefe
of your person, it would scarsely alay

Edg. Some Villaine hath done me wrong

Edm. That's my feare, I pray you haue a continent
forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower: and as
I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will
fitly bring you to heare my Lord speake: pray ye goe,
there's my key: if you do stirre abroad, goe arm'd

Edg. Arm'd, Brother?

Edm. Brother, I aduise you to the best, I am no honest
man, if ther be any good meaning toward you: I haue told
you what I haue scene, and heard: But faintly. Nothing
like the image, and horror of it, pray you away

Edg. Shall I heare from you anon?

Enter.

Edm. I do serue you in this businesse:
A Credulous Father, and a Brother Noble,
Whose nature is so farre from doing harmes,
That he suspects none: on whose foolish honestie
My practises ride easie: I see the businesse.
Let me, if not by birth, haue lands by wit,
All with me's meete, that I can fashion fit.

Enter.

Scena Tertia.

Enter Gonerill, and Steward.

Gon. Did my Father strike my Gentleman for chiding
of his Foole?

Ste. I Madam

Gon. By day and night, he wrongs me, euery howre
He flashes into one grosse crime, or other,
That sets vs all at ods: Ile not endure it;
His Knights grow riotous, and himselfe vpbraides vs
On euery trifle. When he returnes from hunting,
I will not speake with him, say I am sicke,
If you come slacke of former seruices,
You shall do well, the fault of it Ile answer

Ste. He's comming Madam, I heare him

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your Fellowes: I'de haue it come to question;
If he distaste it, let him to my Sister,
Whose mind and mine I know in that are one,
Remember what I haue said

Ste. Well Madam

Gon. And let his Knights haue colder lookes among
you: what growes of it no matter, aduise your fellowes
so, Ile write straight to my Sister to hold my course; prepare
for dinner.

Excunt.

Scena Quarta.

Enter Kent.

Kent. If but as will I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent
May carry through it selfe to that full issue
For which I raiz'd my likenesse. Now banisht Kent,
If thou canst serue where thou dost stand condemn'd,
So may it come, thy Master whom thou lou'st,
Shall find thee full of labours.

Hornes within. Enter Lear and Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a iot for dinner, go get it ready:
how now, what art thou?

Kent. A man Sir

Lear. What dost thou professe? What would'st thou
with vs?

Kent. I do professe to be no lesse then I seeme; to serue
him truely that will put me in trust, to loue him that is
honest, to conuerse with him that is wise and saies little, to
feare iudgement, to fight when I cannot choose, and to
eate no fish

Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest hearted Fellow, and as poore as
the King

Lear. If thou be'st as poore for a subiect, as hee's for a
King, thou art poore enough. What wouldst thou?

Kent. Seruice

Lear. Who wouldst thou serue?

Kent. You

Lear. Do'st thou know me fellow?

Kent. No Sir, but you haue that in your countenance,
which I would faine call Master

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority

Lear. What seruices canst thou do?

Kent. I can keepe honest counsaile, ride, run, marre a
curious tale in telling it, and deliuer a plaine message
bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am quallified
in, and the best of me, is Dilligence

Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young Sir to loue a woman for singing,
nor so old to dote on her for any thing. I haue yeares on
my backe forty eight

Lear. Follow me, thou shalt serue me, if I like thee no
worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner
ho, dinner, where's my knaue? my Foole? Go you and call
my Foole hither. You you Sirrah, where's my Daughter?

Enter Steward.

Ste. So please you-

Enter.

Lear. What saies the Fellow there? Call the Clotpole

backe: wher's my Foole? Ho, I thinke the world's
asleepe, how now? Where's that Mungrell?

Knigh. He saies my Lord, your Daughters is not well

Lear. Why came not the slaue backe to me when I
call'd him?

Knigh. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he
would not

Lear. He would not?

Knigh. My Lord, I know not what the matter is,
but to my iudgement your Highnesse is not entertain'd
with that Ceremonious affection as you were wont,
theres a great abatement of kindnesse appeares as well in
the generall dependants, as in the Duke himselfe also, and
your Daughter

Lear. Ha? Saist thou so?

Knigh. I beseech you pardon me my Lord, if I bee
mistaken, for my duty cannot be silent, when I thinke
your Highnesse wrong'd

Lear. Thou but remembrest me of mine owne Conception,
I haue perceiued a most faint neglect of late,
which I haue rather blamed as mine owne icalous curiositie,
then as a very pretence and purpose of vnkindnesse;
I will looke further intoo't: but where's my Foole? I
haue not scene him this two daies

Knigh. Since my young Ladies going into France
Sir, the Foole hath much pined away

Lear. No more of that, I haue noted it well, goe you
and tell my Daughter, I would speake with her. Goe you

call hither my Foole; Oh you Sir, you, come you hither
Sir, who am I Sir?

Enter Steward.

Ste. My Ladies Father

Lear. My Ladies Father? my Lords knaue, you whorson
dog, you slaue, you curre

Ste. I am none of these my Lord,
I beseech your pardon

Lear. Do you bandy lookes with me, you Rascal?
Ste. Ile not be strucken my Lord

Kent. Nor tript neither, you base Foot-ball plaier

Lear. I thanke thee fellow.
Thou seru'st me, and Ile loue thee

Kent. Come sir, arise, away, Ile teach you differences:
away, away, if you will measure your lubbers length againe,
tarry, but away, goe too, haue you wisdom, so

Lear. Now my friendly knaue I thanke thee, there's
earnest of thy seruice.

Enter Foole.

Foole. Let me hire him too, here's my Coxcombe

Lear. How now my pretty knaue, how dost thou?

Foole. Sirrah, you were best take my Coxcombe

Lear. Why my Boy?

Foole. Why? for taking ones part that's out of fauour,
nay, & thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch
colde shortly, there take my Coxcombe; why this fellow
ha's banish'd two on's Daughters, and did the third a
blessing against his will, if thou follow him, thou must
needs weare my Coxcombe. How now Nunckle? would
I had two Coxcombes and two Daughters

Lear. Why my Boy?

Foole. If I gaue them all my liuing, I'd keepe my Coxcombes
my selfe, there's mine, beg another of thy
Daughters

Lear. Take heed Sirrah, the whip

Foole. Truth's a dog must to kennell, hee must bee
whipt out, when the Lady Brach may stand by'th' fire
and stinke

Lear. A pestilent gall to me

Foole. Sirha, Ile teach thee a speech

Lear. Do

Foole. Marke it Nuncle;
Haue more then thou showest,
Speake lesse then thou knowest,
Lend lesse then thou owest,
Ride more then thou goest,
Learne more then thou trowest,
Set lesse then thou throwest;
Leaue thy drinke and thy whore,
And keepe in a dore,
And thou shalt haue more,
Then two tens to a score

Kent. This is nothing Foole

Foole. Then 'tis like the breath of an vnfeed Lawyer,
you gaue me nothing for't, can you make no vse of nothing
Nunckle?

Lear. Why no Boy,
Nothing can be made out of nothing

Foole. Prythee tell him, so much the rent of his land
comes to, he will not belecue a Foole

Lear. A bitter Foole

Foole. Do'st thou know the difference my Boy, betweene
a bitter Foole, and a sweet one

Lear. No Lad, teach me

Foole. Nunckle, giue me an egge, and Ile giue thee
two Crownes

Lear. What two Crownes shall they be?

Foole. Why after I haue cut the egge i'th' middle and
eate vp the meate, the two Crownes of the egge: when
thou clouest thy Crownes i'th' middle, and gau'st away
both parts, thou boar'st thine Asse on thy backe o're the
durt, thou hadst little wit in thy bald crowne, when thou
gau'st thy golden one away; if I speake like my selfe in
this, let him be whipt that first findes it so.
Foolles had nere lesse grace in a yeere,
For wisemen are growne foppish,
And know not how their wits to weare,
Their manners are so apish

Le. When were you wont to be so full of Songs sirrah?

Foole. I haue vsed it Nunckle, ere since thou mad'st
thy Daughters thy Mothers, for when thou gau'st them
the rod, and put'st downe thine owne breeches, then they
For sodaine ioy did weepe,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a King should play bo-peepe,
And goe the Foole among.
Pry'thy Nunckle keepe a Schoolemaster that can teach
thy Foole to lie, I would faine learne to lie

Lear. And you lie sirrah, wee'l haue you whipt

Foole. I maruell what kin thou and thy daughters are,
they'l haue me whipt for speaking true: thou'lt haue me
whipt for lying, and sometimes I am whipt for holding
my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing then a foole,
and yet I would not be thee Nunckle, thou hast pared thy
wit o' both sides, and left nothing i'th' middle; heere
comes one o'the parings.

Enter Gonerill.

Lear. How now Daughter? what makes that Frontlet
on? You are too much of late i'th' frowne

Foole. 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 then thou art now, I am a Foole,
thou art nothing. Yes forsooth I will hold my tongue, so
your face bids me, though you say nothing.
Mum, mum, he that keepes nor crust, nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some. That's a sheald' Pescod

Gon. Not only Sir this, your all-lycenc'd Foole,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourelly Carpe and Quarrell, breaking forth
In ranke, and (not to be endur'd) riots Sir.
I had thought by making this well knowne vnto you,

To haue found a safe redresse, but now grow fearefull
By what your selfe too late haue spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance, which if you should, the fault
Would not scape censure, nor the redresses sleepe,
Which in the tender of a wholesome weale,
Mighty in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessitie
Will call discreet proceeding

Foole. For you know Nunckle, the Hedge-Sparrow
fed the Cuckoo so long, that it's had it head bit off by it
young, so out went the Candle, and we were left darkling

Lear. Are you our Daughter?

Gon. I would you would make vse of your good wisdom
(Whereof I know you are fraught), and put away
These dispositions, which of late transport you
From what you rightly are

Foole. May not an Asse know, when the Cart drawes
the Horse?
Whoop Iugge I loue thee

Lear. Do's any heere know me?
This is not Lear:
Do's Lear walke thus? Speake thus? Where are his eies?
Either his Notion weakens, his Discernings
Are Lethargied. Ha! Waking? 'Tis not so?
Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Foole. Lears shadow

Lear. Your name, faire Gentlewoman?

Gon. This admiration Sir, is much o'th' sauour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you

To vnderstand my purposes aright:
As you are Old, and Reuerend, should be Wise.
Heere do you keepe a hundred Knights and Squires,
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd and bold,
That this our Court infected with their manners,
Shewes like a riotous Inne; Epicurisme and Lust
Makes it more like a Tauerne, or a Brothell,
Then a grac'd Pallace. The shame it selfe doth speake
For instant remedy. Be then desir'd
By her, that else will take the thing she begges,
A little to disquantity your Trainee,
And the remainders that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your Age,
Which know themselues, and you

Lear. Darknesse, and Diuels.
Saddle my horses: call my Trainee together.
Degenerate Bastard, Ile not trouble thee;
Yet haue I left a daughter

Gon. You strike my people, and your disorder'd rabble,
make Seruants of their Betters.

Enter Albany.

Lear. Woe, that too late repents:
Is it your will, speake Sir? Prepare my Horses.
Ingratitude! thou Marble-hearted Fiend,
More hideous when thou shew'st thee in a Child,
Then the Sea-monster

Alb. Pray Sir be patient

Lear. Detested Kite, thou lvest.
My Trainee are men of choice, and rarest parts,
That all particulars of dutie know,
And in the most exact regard, support
The worships of their name. O most small fault,

How vgly did'st thou in Cordelia shew?
Which like an Engine, wrencht my frame of Nature
From the fixt place: drew from my heart all loue,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beate at this gate that let thy Folly in,
And thy deere Iudgement out. Go, go, my people

Alb. My Lord, I am guiltlesse, as I am ignorant
Of what hath moued you

Lear. It may be so, my Lord.
Heare Nature, heare deere Goddesses, heare:
Suspend thy purpose, if thou did'st intend
To make this Creature fruitfull:
Into her Wombe conuey stirrility,
Drie vp in her the Organs of increase,
And from her derogate body, neuer spring
A Babe to honor her. If she must teeme,
Create her childe of Spleene, that it may liue
And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her.
Let it stampe wrinkles in her brow of youth,
With cadent Teares fret Channels in her cheekes,
Turne all her Mothers paines, and benefits
To laughter, and contempt: That she may feele,
How sharper then a Serpents tooth it is,
To haue a thanklesse Childe. Away, away.

Enter.

Alb. Now Gods that we adore,
Whereof comes this?

Gon. Neuer afflict your selfe to know more of it:
But let his disposition haue that scope
As dotage giues it.

Enter Lear.

Lear. What fiftie of my Followers at a clap?
Within a fortnight?

Alb. What's the matter, Sir?

Lear. Ile tell thee:
Life and death, I am asham'd
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus,
That these hot teares, which breake from me perforce
Should make thee worth them.
Blastes and Fogges vpon thee:
Th' vntented woundings of a Fathers curse
Pierce euerie sense about thee. Old fond eyes,
Beweepe this cause againe, Ile plucke ye out,
And cast you with the waters that you loose
To temper Clay. Ha? Let it be so.
I haue another daughter,
Who I am sure is kinde and comfortable:
When she shall heare this of thee, with her nailes
Shee'l flea thy Woluish visage. Thou shalt finde,
That Ile resume the shape which thou dost thinke
I haue cast off for euer.

Exit

Gon. Do you marke that?

Alb. I cannot be so partiall Gonerill,
To the great loue I beare you

Gon. Pray you content. What Oswald, hoa?
You Sir, more Knaue then Foole, after your Master

Foole. Nunkle Lear, Nunkle Lear,
Tarry, take the Foole with thee:
A Fox, when one has caught her,
And such a Daughter,
Should sure to the Slaughter,

If my Cap would buy a Halter,
So the Foole followes after.

Exit

Gon. This man hath had good Counsell,
A hundred Knights?
'Tis politike, and safe to let him keepe
At point a hundred Knights: yes, that on euerie dreame,
Each buz, each fancie, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their powres,
And hold our liues in mercy. Oswald, I say

Alb. Well, you may feare too farre

Gon. Safer then trust too farre;
Let me still take away the harmes I feare,
Not feare still to be taken. I know his heart,
What he hath vtter'd I haue writ my Sister:
If she sustaine him, and his hundred Knights
When I haue shew'd th' vnfitnesse.

Enter Steward.

How now Oswald?
What haue you writ that Letter to my Sister?

Stew. I Madam

Gon. Take you some company, and away to horse,
Informe her full of my particular feare,
And thereto adde such reasons of your owne,
As may compact it more. Get you gone,
And hasten your returne; no, no, my Lord,
This milky gentlenesse, and course of yours
Though I condemne not, yet vnder pardon
You are much more at task for want of wisdome,
Then prais'd for harmefull mildnesse

Alb. How farre your eies may pierce I cannot tell;
Striuing to better, oft we marre what's well

Gon. Nay then-

Alb. Well, well, th' euent.

Exeunt.

Scena Quinta.

Enter Lear, Kent, Gentleman, and Foole.

Lear. Go you before to Gloster with these Letters; acquaint my Daughter no further with any thing you know, then comes from her demand out of the Letter, if your Dilligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you

Kent. I will not sleepe my Lord, till I haue deliuered your Letter.

Enter.

Foole. If a mans braines were in's heeles, wert not in danger of kybes?

Lear. I Boy

Foole. Then I prythee be merry, thy wit shall not go slip-shod

Lear. Ha, ha, ha

Fool. Shalt see thy other Daughter will vse thee kindly, for though she's as like this, as a Crabbe's like an Apple, yet I can tell what I can tell

Lear. What can'st tell Boy?

Foole. She will taste as like this as, a Crabbe do's to a Crab: thou canst, tell why ones nose stands i'th' middle on's face?

Lear. No

Foole. Why to keepe ones eyes of either side 's nose, that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into

Lear. I did her wrong

Foole. Can'st tell how an Oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No

Foole. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a Snaile ha's a house

Lear. Why?

Foole. Why to put's head in, not to giue it away to his daughters, and leaue his hornes without a case

Lear. I will forget my Nature, so kind a Father? Be my Horsses ready?

Foole. Thy Asses are gone about 'em; the reason why the seuen Starres are no mo then seuen, is a pretty reason

Lear. Because they are not eight

Foole. Yes indeed, thou would'st make a good Foole

Lear. To tak't againe perforce; Monster Ingratitude!

Foole. If thou wert my Foole Nunckle, Il'd haue thee beaten for being old before thy time

Lear. How's that?

Foole. Thou shouldst not haue bin old, till thou hadst bin wise

Lear. O let me not be mad, not mad sweet Heauen: keepe me in temper, I would not be mad. How now are

the Horses ready?

Gent. Ready my Lord

Lear. Come Boy

Fool. She that's a Maid now, & laughs at my departure,
Shall not be a Maid long, vnlesse things be cut shorter.

Excunt.

Actus Secundus. Scena Prima.

Enter Bastard, and Curan, seuerally.

Bast. Saue thee Curan

Cur. And you Sir, I haue bin
With your Father, and giuen him notice
That the Duke of Cornwall, and Regan his Duchesse
Will be here with him this night

Bast. How comes that?

Cur. Nay I know not, you haue heard of the newes abroad,
I meane the whisper'd ones, for they are yet but
ear-kissing arguments

Bast. Not I: pray you what are they?

Cur. Haue you heard of no likely Warres toward,
Twixt the Dukes of Cornwall, and Albany?

Bast. Not a word

Cur. You may do then in time,
Fare you well Sir.

Enter.

Bast. The Duke be here to night? The better best,
This weaues it selfe perforce into my businesse,
My Father hath set guard to take my Brother,
And I haue one thing of a queazie question
Which I must act, Briefenesse, and Fortune worke.

Enter Edgar.

Brother, a word, discend; Brother I say,

My Father watches: O Sir, fly this place,
Intelligence is giuen where you are hid;
You haue now the good aduantage of the night,
Haue you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?
Hee's comming hither, now i'th' night, i'th' haste,
And Regan with him, haue you nothing said
Vpon his partie 'gainst the Duke of Albany?
Aduise your selfe

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word

Bast. I heare my Father comming, pardon me:
In cunning, I must draw my Sword vpon you:
Draw, seeme to defend your selfe,
Now quit you well.
Yeeld, come before my Father, light hoa, here,
Fly Brother, Torches, Torches, so farewell.

Exit Edgar.

Some blood drawne on me, would beget opinion
Of my more fierce endeaour. I haue scene drunkards
Do more then this in sport; Father, Father,
Stop, stop, no helpe?

Enter Gloster, and Seruants with Torches.

Glo. Now Edmund, where's the villaine?

Bast. Here stood he in the dark, his sharpe Sword out,
Mumbling of wicked charmes, coniuring the Moone
To stand auspicious Mistris

Glo. But where is he?

Bast. Looke Sir, I bleed

Glo. Where is the villaine, Edmund?

Bast. Fled this way Sir, when by no meanes he could

Glo. Pursue him, ho: go after. By no meanes, what?

Bast. Perswade me to the murther of your Lordship,
But that I told him the reuenging Gods,
'Gainst Paricides did all the thunder bend,
Spoke with how manifold, and strong a Bond
The Child was bound to'th' Father; Sir in fine,
Seeing how lothly opposite I stood
To his vnnaturall purpose, in fell motion
With his prepared Sword, he charges home
My vnprouided body, latch'd mine arme;
And when he saw my best alarum'd spirits
Bold in the quarrels right, rouz'd to th' encounter,
Or whether gasted by the noyse I made,
Full sodainely he fled

Glost. Let him fly farre:

Not in this Land shall he remaine vncaught
And found; dispatch, the Noble Duke my Master,
My worthy Arch and Patron comes to night,
By his authoritie I will proclaime it,
That he which finds him shall deserue our thanks,
Bringing the murderous Coward to the stake:
He that conceales him death

Bast. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight to doe it, with curst speech
I threaten'd to discouer him; he replied,
Thou vnpossessing Bastard, dost thou thinke,
If I would stand against thee, would the reposall
Of any trust, vertue, or worth in thee
Make thy words faith'd? No, what should I denie,
(As this I would, though thou didst produce
My very Character) I'd turne it all
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practise:
And thou must make a dullard of the world,

If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potentiall spirits
To make thee seeke it.

Tucket within.

Glo. O strange and fastned Villaine,
Would he deny his Letter, said he?
Harke, the Dukes Trumpets, I know not wher he comes;
All Ports Ile barre, the villaine shall not scape,
The Duke must grant me that: besides, his picture
I will send farre and neere, that all the kingdome
May haue due note of him, and of my land,
(Loyall and naturall Boy) Ile worke the meanes
To make thee capable.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, and Attendants.

Corn. How now my Noble friend, since I came hither
(Which I can call but now,) I haue heard strangenesse

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short
Which can pursue th' offender; how dost my Lord?

Glo. O Madam, my old heart is crack'd, it's crack'd

Reg. What, did my Fathers Godsonne seeke your life?
He whom my Father nam'd, your Edgar?

Glo. O Lady, Lady, shame would haue it hid

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous Knights
That tended vpon my Father?

Glo. I know not Madam, 'tis too bad, too bad

Bast. Yes Madam, he was of that consort

Reg. No maruaile then, though he were ill affected,
'Tis they haue put him on the old mans death,
To haue th' expence and wast of his Reuenues:
I haue this present euening from my Sister
Beene well inform'd of them, and with such cautions,
That if they come to sojourne at my house,
Ile not be there

Cor. Nor I, assure thee Regan;
Edmund, I heare that you haue shewne your Father
A Child-like Office

Bast. It was my duty Sir

Glo. He did bewray his practise, and receiu'd
This hurt you see, striuing to apprehend him

Cor. Is he pursued?

Glo. I my good Lord

Cor. If he be taken, he shall neuer more
Be fear'd of doing harme, make your owne purpose,
How in my strength you please: for you Edmund,
Whose vertue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend it selfe, you shall be ours,
Nature's of such deepe trust, we shall much need:
You we first seize on

Bast. I shall serue you Sir truely, how euer else

Glo. For him I thanke your Grace

Cor. You know not why we came to visit you?

Reg. Thus out of season, thredding darke ey'd night,
Occasions Noble Gloster of some prize,
Wherein we must haue vse of your aduise.

Our Father he hath writ, so hath our Sister,
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home: the seuerall Messengers
From hence attend dispatch, our good old Friend,
Lay comforts to your bosome, and bestow
Your needfull counsaile to our businesses,
Which craues the instant vse

Glo. I serue you Madam,
Your Graces are right welcome.

Excunt. Flourish.

Scena Secunda.

Enter Kent, and Steward seuerally.

Stew. Good dawning to thee Friend, art of this house?

Kent. I

Stew. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I'th' myre

Stew. Prythee, if thou lou'st me, tell me

Kent. I loue thee not

Stew. Why then I care not for thee

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury Pinfold, I would make
thee care for me

Stew. Why do'st thou vse me thus? I know thee not

Kent. Fellow I know thee

Stew. What do'st thou know me for?

Kent. A Knaue, a Rascall, an eater of broken meates, a
base, proud, shallow, beggerly, three-suited-hundred
pound, filthy woosted-stocking knaue, a Lilly-liuered,
action-taking, whoreson glasse-gazing super-seruiceable
finicall Rogue, one Trunke-inheriting slaue, one that
would'st be a Baud in way of good seruice, and art nothing
but the composition of a Knaue, Begger, Coward,
Pandar, and the Sonne and Heire of a Mungrill Bitch,
one whom I will beate into clamours whining, if thou
deny'st the least sillable of thy addition

Stew. Why, what a monstrous Fellow art thou, thus to raile on one, that is neither knowne of thee, nor knowes thee?

Kent. What a brazen-fac'd Varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me? Is it two dayes since I tript vp thy heeles, and beate thee before the King? Draw you rogue, for though it be night, yet the Moone shines, Ile make a sop oth' Moonshine of you, you whoreson Cullyenly Barber-monger, draw

Stew. Away, I haue nothing to do with thee

Kent. Draw you Rascall, you come with Letters against the King, and take Vanitie the puppets part, against the Royaltie of her Father: draw you Rogue, or Ile so carbonado your shanks, draw you Rascall, come your waies

Ste. Helpe, ho, murther, helpe

Kent. Strike you slaue: stand rogue, stand you neat slaue, strike

Stew. Helpe ho, murther, murther.
Enter Bastard, Cornwall, Regan, Gloster, Seruants.

Bast. How now, what's the matter? Part

Kent. With you goodman Boy, if you please, come, Ile flesh ye, come on yong Master

Glo. Weapons? Armes? what's the matter here?

Cor. Keepe peace vpon your liues, he dies that strikes againe, what is the matter?

Reg. The Messengers from our Sister, and the King?

Cor. What is your difference, speake?

Stew. I am scarce in breath my Lord

Kent. No Maruell, you haue so bestir'd your valour, you cowardly Rascall, nature disclaimes in thee: a Taylor made thee

Cor. Thou art a strange fellow, a Taylor make a man?

Kent. A Taylor Sir, a Stone-cutter, or a Painter, could not haue made him so ill, though they had bin but two yeares oth' trade

Cor. Speake yet, how grew your quarrell?

Ste. This ancient Ruffian Sir, whose life I haue spar'd at sute of his gray-beard

Kent. Thou whoreson Zed, thou vnecessary letter: my Lord, if you will giue me leaue, I will tread this vnbovlted villaine into mortar, and daube the wall of a Iakes with him. Spare my gray-beard, you wagtaile?

Cor. Peace sirrah,
You beastly knaue, know you no reuerence?

Kent. Yes Sir, but anger hath a priuiledge

Cor. Why art thou angric?

Kent. That such a slaue as this should weare a Sword, Who weares no honesty: such smiling rogues as these, Like Rats oft bite the holy cords a twaine, Which are t' intrince, t' vnloose: smooth euery passion That in the natures of their Lords rebell, Being oile to fire, snow to the colder moodes,

Reuenge, affirme, and turne their Halcion beakes
With euery gall, and varry of their Masters,
Knowing naught (like dogges) but following:
A plague vpon your Epilepticke visage,
Smoile you my speeches, as I were a Foole?
Goose, if I had you vpon Sarum Plaine,
Ild driue ye cackling home to Camelot

Corn. What art thou mad old Fellow?

Glost. How fell you out, say that?

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy,
Then I, and such a knaue

Corn. Why do'st thou call him Knaue?
What is his fault?

Kent. His countenance likes me not

Cor. No more perchance do's mine, nor his, nor hers

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plaine,
I haue scene better faces in my Time,
Then stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me, at this instant

Corn. This is some Fellow,
Who hauing beene prais'd for bluntnesse, doth affect
A saucy roughnes, and constraines the garb
Quite from his Nature. He cannot flatter he,
An honest mind and plaine, he must speake truth,
And they will take it so, if not, hee's plaine.
These kind of Knaues I know, which in this plainnesse
Harbour more craft, and more corrupter ends,
Then twenty silly-ducking obseruants,
That stretch their duties nicely

Kent. Sir, in good faith, in sincere verity,
Vnder th' allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickring Phoebus front

Corn. What mean'st by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend
so much; I know Sir, I am no flatterer, he that beguiled
you in a plaine accent, was a plaine Knaue, which
for my part I will not be, though I should win your
displeasure to entreat me too't

Corn. What was th' offence you gaue him?

Ste. I neuer gaue him any:
It pleas'd the King his Master very late
To strike at me vpon his misconstruction,
When he compact, and flattering his displeasure
Tript me behind: being downe, insulted, rail'd,
And put vpon him such a deale of Man,
That worthied him, got praises of the King,
For him attempting, who was selfe-subdued,
And in the fleshment of this dead exploit,
Drew on me here againe

Kent. None of these Rogues, and Cowards
But Ajax is there Foole

Corn. Fetch forth the Stocks?
You stubborne ancient Knaue, you reuerent Bragart,
Wee'l teach you

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learne:
Call not your Stocks for me, I serue the King.
On whose imployment I was sent to you,
You shall doe small respects, show too bold malice
Against the Grace, and Person of my Master,

Stocking his Messenger

Corn. Fetch forth the Stocks;
As I haue life and Honour, there shall he sit till Noone

Reg. Till noone? till night my Lord, and all night too

Kent. Why Madam, if I were your Fathers dog,
You should not vse me so

Reg. Sir, being his Knaue, I will.

Stocks brought out.

Cor. This is a Fellow of the selfe same colour,
Our Sister speakes of. Come, bring away the Stocks

Glo. Let me beseech your Grace, not to do so,
The King his Master, needs must take it ill
That he so slightly valued in his Messenger,
Should haue him thus restrained

Cor. Ile answere that

Reg. My Sister may recieue it much more worsse,
To haue her Gentleman abus'd, assaulted

Corn. Come my Lord, away.

Enter.

Glo. I am sorry for thee friend, 'tis the Dukes pleasure,
Whose disposition all the world well knowes
Will not be rub'd nor stopt, Ile entreat for thee

Kent. Pray do not Sir, I haue watch'd and trauail'd hard,
Some time I shall sleepe out, the rest Ile whistle:
A good mans fortune may grow out at heeles:

Giue you good morrow

Glo. The Duke's too blame in this,
Twill be ill taken.

Enter.

Kent. Good King, that must approue the common saw,
Thou out of Heauens benediction com'st
To the warme Sun.
Approach thou Beacon to this vnder Globe,
That by thy comfortable Beames I may
Peruse this Letter. Nothing almost sees miracles
But miserie. I know 'tis from Cordelia,
Who hath most fortunately beene inform'd
Of my obscured course. And shall finde time
From this enormous State, seeking to giue
Losses their remedies. All weary and o're-watch'd,
Take vantage heauie eyes, not to behold
This shamefull lodging. Fortune goodnight,
Smile once more, turne thy wheele.

Enter Edgar.

Edg. I heard my selfe proclaim'd,
And by the happy hollow of a Tree,
Escap'd the hunt. No Port is free, no place
That guard, and most vnusall vigilance
Do's not attend my taking. Whiles I may scape
I will preserue myselfe: and am bethought
To take the basest, and most poorest shape
That euer penury in contempt of man,
Brought neere to beast; my face Ile grime with filth,
Blanket my loines, else all my haire in knots,
And with presented nakednesse out-face
The Windes, and persecutions of the skie;
The Country giues me prooffe, and president
Of Bedlam beggers, who with roaring voices,

Strike in their num'd and mortified Armes.
Pins, Wodden-prickes, Nayles, Sprigs of Rosemarie:
And with this horrible obiect, from low Farmes,
Poore pelting Villages, Sheeps-Coates, and Milles,
Sometimes with Lunaticke bans, sometime with Praiers
Inforce their charitie: poore Turlygod poore Tom,
That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

Enter.

Enter Lear, Foole, and Gentleman.

Lea. 'Tis strange that they should so depart from home,
And not send backe my Messengers

Gent. As I learn'd,
The night before, there was no purpose in them
Of this remoue

Kent. Haile to thee Noble Master

Lear. Ha? Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

Kent. No my Lord

Foole. Hah, ha, he weares Cruell Garters Horses are
tide by the heads, Dogges and Beares by'th' necke,
Monkies by'th' loynes, and Men by'th' legs: when a man
ouerlustie at legs, then he weares wodden nether-stocks

Lear. What's he,
That hath so much thy place mistooke
To set thee heere?

Kent. It is both he and she,
Your Son, and Daughter

Lear. No

Kent. Yes

Lear. No I say

Kent. I say yea

Lear. By Iupiter I sweare no

Kent. By Iuno, I sweare I

Lear. They durst not do't:
They could not, would not do't: 'tis worse then murther,
To do vpon respect such violent outrage:
Resolue me with all modest haste, which way
Thou might'st deserue, or they impose this vsage,
Comming from vs

Kent. My Lord, when at their home
I did commend your Highnesse Letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place, that shewed
My dutie kneeling, came there a reeking Poste,
Stew'd in his haste, halfe breathlesse, painting forth
From Gonerill his Mistris, salutations;
Deliu'er'd Letters spight of intermission,
Which presently they read; on those contents
They summon'd vp their meiney, straight tooke Horse,
Commanded me to follow, and attend
The leisure of their answer, gaue me cold lookes,
And meeting heere the other Messenger,
Whose welcome I perceiu'd had poison'd mine,
Being the very fellow which of late
Displaid so sawcily against your Highnesse,
Hauing more man then wit about me, drew;
He rais'd the house, with loud and coward cries,
Your Sonne and Daughter found this trespasse worth
The shame which heere it suffers

Foole. Winters not gon yet, if the wil'd Geese fly that way,
Fathers that weare rags, do make their Children blind,
But Fathers that beare bags, shall see their children kind.
Fortune that arrant whore, nere turns the key toth' poore.
But for all this thou shalt haue as many Dolours for thy
Daughters, as thou canst tell in a yeare

Lear. Oh how this Mother swels vp toward my heart!
Historica passio, downe thou climbing sorrow,
Thy Elements below where is this Daughter?

Kent. With the Earle Sir, here within

Lear. Follow me not, stay here.

Enter.

Gen. Made you no more offence,
But what you speake of?

Kent. None:
How chance the King comes with so small a number?

Foole. And thou hadst beene set ith' Stockes for that
question, thoud'st well deseru'd it

Kent. Why Foole?

Foole. Wee'l set thee to schoole to an Ant, to teach
thee ther's no labouring ith' winter. All that follow their
noses, are led by their eyes, but blinde men, and there's
not a nose among twenty, but can smell him that's stinking;
let go thy hold when a great wheele runs downe a
hill, least it breake thy necke with following. But the
great one that goes vpward, let him draw thee after:
when a wiseman giues thee better counsell giue me mine
agaïne, I would haue none but knaues follow it, since a
Foole giues it.

That Sir, which serues and seekes for gaine,
And followes but for forme;
Will packe, when it begins to raine,
And leaue thee in the storme,
But I will tarry, the Foole will stay,
And let the wiseman flie:
The knaue turnes Foole that runnes away,
The Foole no knaue perdie.

Enter Lear, and Gloster] :

Kent. Where learn'd you this Foole?

Foole. Not ith' Stocks Foole

Lear. Deny to speake with me?
They are sicke, they are weary,
They haue trauail'd all the night? meere fetches,
The images of reuolt and flying off.
Fetch me a better answer

Glo. My deere Lord,
You know the fiery quality of the Duke,
How vnremoueable and fixt he is
In his owne course

Lear. Vengeance, Plague, Death, Confusion:
Fiery? What quality? Why Gloster, Gloster,
Ild speake with the Duke of Cornwall, and his wife

Glo. Well my good Lord, I haue inform'd them so

Lear. Inform'd them? Do'st thou vnderstand me man

Glo. I my good Lord

Lear. The King would speake with Cornwall,
The deere Father

Would with his Daughter speake, commands, tends, seruice,
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 are not our selues,
When Nature being opprest, commands the mind
To suffer with the body; Ile forbear,
And am fallen out with my more headier will,
To take the indispos'd and sickly fit,
For the sound man. Death on my state: wherefore
Should he sit heere? This act perswades me,
That this remotion of the Duke and her
Is practise only. Giue me my Seruant forth;
Goe tell the Duke, and's wife, Il'd speake with them:
Now, presently: bid them come forth and heare me,
Or at their Chamber doore Ile beate the Drum,
Till it crië sleepe to death

Glo. I would haue all well betwixt you.

Enter.

Lear. Oh me my heart! My rising heart! But downe

Foole. Cry to it Nunckle, as the Cockney did to the
Eeles, when she put 'em i'th' Paste aliue, she knapt 'em
o'th' coxcombs with a sticke, and cryed downe wantons,
downe; 'twas her Brother, that in pure kindnesse to his
Horse buttered his Hay.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, Gloster, Seruants.

Lear. Good morrow to you both

Corn. Haile to your Grace.

Kent here set at liberty.

Reg. I am glad to see your Highnesse

Lear. Regan, I thinke you are. I know what reason
I haue to thinke so, if thou should'st not be glad,
I would diuorce me from thy Mother Tombe,
Sepulchring an Adultresse. O are you free?
Some other time for that. Beloued Regan,
Thy Sisters naught: oh Regan, she hath tied
Sharpe-tooth'd vnkindnesse, like a vulture heere,
I can scarce speake to thee, thou'lt not belecue
With how deprauid a quality. Oh Regan

Reg. I pray you Sir, take patience, I haue hope
You lesse know how to value her desert,
Then she to scant her dutie

Lear. Say? How is that?

Reg. I cannot thinke my Sister in the least
Would faile her Obligation. If Sir perchance
She haue restrained the Riots of your Followres,
Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As cleeres her from all blame

Lear. My curses on her

Reg. O Sir, you are old,
Nature in you stands on the very Verge
Of his confine: you should be rul'd, and led
By some discretion, that discernes your state
Better then you your selfe: therefore I pray you,
That to our Sister, you do make returne,
Say you haue wrong'd her

Lear. Aske her forgiuenesse?
Do you but marke how this becomes the house?
Deere daughter, I confesse that I am old;

Age is vnnecessary: on my knees I begge,
That you'l vouchsafe me Rayment, Bed, and Food

Reg. Good Sir, no more: these are vnsightly trickes:
Returne you to my Sister

Lear. Neuer Regan:
She hath abated me of halfe my Traine;
Look'd blacke vpon me, strooke me with her Tongue
Most Serpent-like, vpon the very Heart.
All the stor'd Vengeances of Heauen, fall
On her ingratefull top: strike her yong bones
You taking Ayres, with Lamenesse

Corn. Fye sir, fie

Lc. You nimble Lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornfull eyes: Infect her Beauty,
You Fen-suck'd Foggges, drawne by the powrfull Sunne,
To fall, and blister

Reg. O the blest Gods!
So will you wish on me, when the rash moode is on

Lear. No Regan, thou shalt neuer haue my curse:
Thy tender-hefted Nature shall not giue
Thee o're to harshnesse: Her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort, and not burne. 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my Traine,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
Against my comming in. Thou better know'st
The Offices of Nature, bond of Childhood,
Effects of Curtesie, dues of Gratitude:
Thy halfe o'th' Kingdome hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd

Reg. Good Sir, to'th' purpose.

Tucket within.

Lear. Who put my man i'th' Stockes?

Enter Steward.

Corn. What Trumpet's that?

Reg. I know't, my Sisters: this approues her Letter,
That she would soone be heere. Is your Lady come?

Lear. This is a Slaue, whose easie borrowed pride
Dwels in the sickly grace of her he followes.
Out Varlet, from my sight

Corn. What meanes your Grace?

Enter Gonerill.

Lear. Who stockt my Seruant? Regan, I haue good hope
Thou did'st not know on't.
Who comes here? O Heauens!
If you do loue old men; if your sweet sway
Allow Obedience; if you your selues are old,
Make it your cause: Send downe, and take my part.
Art not asham'd to looke vpon this Beard?
O Regan, will you take her by the hand?

Gon. Why not by'th' hand Sir? How haue I offended?
All's not offence that indiscretion findes,
And dotage termes so

Lear. O sides, you are too tough!
Will you yet hold?
How came my man i'th' Stockes?

Corn. I set him there, Sir: but his owne Disorders

Deseru'd much lesse aduancement

Lear. You? Did you?

Reg. I pray you Father being weake, seeme so.
If till the expiration of your Moneth
You will returne and sojourne with my Sister,
Dismissing halfe your traine, come then to me,
I am now from home, and out of that prouision
Which shall be needfull for your entertainment

Lear. Returne to her? and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abiure all roofes, and chuse
To wage against the enmity oth' ayre,
To be a Comrade with the Wolfe, and Owle,
Necessities sharpe pinch. Returne with her?
Why the hot-bloodied France, that dowerlesse tooke
Our yongest borne, I could as well be brought
To knee his Throne, and Squire-like pension beg,
To keepe base life a foote; returne with her?
Perswade me rather to be slaue and sumpter
To this detested groome

Gon. At your choice Sir

Lear. I prythee Daughter do not make me mad,
I will not trouble thee my Child; farewell:
Wee'l no more meete, 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 Byle,
A plague sore, or imbossed Carbuncle
In my corrupted blood. But Ile not chide thee,
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it,
I do not bid the Thunder-bearer shoote,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-iudging Ioue,
Mend when thou can'st, 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 prouided
For your fit welcome, giue care Sir to my Sister,
For those that mingle reason with your passion,
Must be content to thinke you old, and so,
But she knowes what she doe's

Lear. Is this well spoken?

Reg. I dare auouch 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,
Speake 'gainst so great a number? How in one house
Should many people, vnder two commands
Hold amity? 'Tis hard, almost impossible

Gon. Why might not you my Lord, receiue attendance
From those that she cals Seruants, or from mine?

Reg. Why not my Lord?
If then they chanc'd to slacke ye,
We could comptroll them; if you will come to me,
(For now I spie a danger) I entreate you
To bring but fiue and twentie, to no more
Will I giue place or notice

Lear. I gaue you all

Reg. And in good time you gaue it

Lear. Made you my Guardians, my Depositaries,
But kept a reseruatiion to be followed
With such a number? What, must I come to you
With fiue and twenty? Regan, said you so?

Reg. And speak't againe my Lord, no more with me

Lea. Those wicked Creatures yet do look wel fauor'd
When others are more wicked, not being the worst
Stands in some ranke of praise, Ile go with thee,
Thy fifty yet doth double fiue and twenty,
And thou art twice her Loue

Gon. Heare me my Lord;
What need you fiue and twenty? Ten? Or fiue?
To follow in a house, where twice so many
Haue 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 then Nature needs:
Mans life is cheape as Beastes. Thou art a Lady;
If onely to go warme were gorgeous,
Why Nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warme, but for true need:
You Heauens, giue me that patience, patience I need,
You see me heere (you Gods) a poore old man,
As full of griefe as age, wretched in both,
If it be you that stirres these Daughters hearts
Against their Father, foole me not so much,
To beare it tamely: touch me with Noble anger,
And let not womens weapons, water drops,
Staine my mans cheekes. No you vnnaturall Hags,
I will haue such reuenges on you both,
That all the world shall- I will do such things,
What they are yet, I know not, but they shalbe
The terrors of the earth? you thinke Ile weepe,
No, Ile not weepe, I haue full cause of weeping.

Storme and Tempest.

But this heart shal break into a hundred thousand flawes

Or ere Ile weepe; O Foole, I shall go mad.

Exeunt.

Corn. Let vs withdraw, 'twill be a Storme

Reg. This house is little, the old man and's people,
Cannot be well bestow'd

Gon. 'Tis his owne blame hath put himselfe from rest,
And must needs taste his folly

Reg. For his particular, Ile receiue him gladly,
But not one follower

Gon. So am I purpos'd,
Where is my Lord of Gloster?

Enter Gloster.

Corn. Followed the old man forth, he is return'd

Glo. The King is in high rage

Corn. Whether is he going?

Glo. He cals to Horse, but will I know not whether

Corn. 'Tis best to giue him way, he leads himselfe

Gon. My Lord, entreate him by no meanes to stay

Glo. Alacke the night comes on, and the high windes
Do sorely ruffle, for many Miles about
There's scarce a Bush

Reg. O Sir, to wilfull men,
The iniuries that they themselues procure,

Must be their Schoole-Masters: shut vp your doores,
He is attended with a desperate traine,
And what they may incense him too, being apt,
To haue his care abus'd, wisdome bids feare

Cor. Shut vp your doores my Lord, 'tis a wil'd night,
My Regan counsels well: come out oth' storme.

Excunt.

Actus Tertius. Scena Prima.

Storme still. Enter Kent, and a Gentleman, seuerally.

Kent. Who's there besides foule weather?

Gen. One minded like the weather, most vnquietly

Kent. I know you: Where's the King?

Gen. Contending with the fretfull Elements;
Bids the winde blow the Earth into the Sea,
Or swell the curled Waters 'boue the Maine,
That things might change, or cease

Kent. But who is with him?

Gen. None but the Foole, who labours to out-iest
His heart-strooke iniuries

Kent. Sir, I do know you,
And dare vpon the warrant of my note
Commend a deere thing to you. There is diuision
(Although as yet the face of it is couer'd
With mutuall cunning) 'twixt Albany, and Cornwall:
Who haue, as who haue not, that their great Starres
Thron'd and set high; Seruants, who seeme no lesse,
Which are to France the Spies and Speculations
Intelligent of our State. What hath bin scene,
Either in snuffes, and packings of the Dukes,
Or the hard Reine which both of them hath borne
Against the old kinde King; or something deeper,
Whereof (perchance) these are but furnishings

Gen. I will talke further with you

Kent. No, do not:
For confirmation that I am much more

Then my out-wall; open this Purse, and take
What it containes. If you shall see Cordelia,
(As feare not but you shall) shew her this Ring,
And she will tell you who that Fellow is
That yet you do not know. Fye on this Storme,
I will go seeke the King

Gent. Giue me your hand,
Haue you no more to say?

Kent. Few words, but to effect more then all yet;
That when we haue found the King, in which your pain
That way, Ile this: He that first lights on him,
Holla the other.

Excunt.

Scena Secunda.

Storme still. Enter Lear, and Foole.

Lear. Blow windes, & crack your cheeks; Rage, blow
You Cataracts, and Hyrricano's spout,
Till you haue drench'd our Steeples, drown the Cockes.
You Sulph'rous and Thought-executing Fires,
Vaunt-curriours of Oake-cleauing Thunder-bolts,
Sindge my white head. And thou all-shaking Thunder,
Strike flat the thicke Rotundity o'th' world,
Cracke Natures moulds, all germaines spill at once
That makes ingratefull Man

Foole. O Nunkle, Court holy-water in a dry house, is
better then this Rain-water out o' doore. Good Nunkle,
in, aske thy Daughters blessing, heere's a night pitties
neither Wisemen, nor Fooles

Lear. Rumble thy belly full: spit Fire, spowt Raine:
Nor Raine, Winde, Thunder, Fire are my Daughters;
I taxe not you, you Elements with vnkindnesse.
I neuer gaue you Kingdome, call'd you Children;
You owe me no subscription. Then let fall
Your horrible pleasure. Heere I stand your Slaue,
A poore, infirme, weake, and dispis'd old man:
But yet I call you Seruile Ministers,
That will with two pernicious Daughters ioyne
Your high-engender'd Battailes, 'gainst a head
So old, and white as this. O, ho! 'tis foule

Foole. He that has a house to put's head in, has a good
Head-peece:
The Codpiece that will house, before the head has any;
The Head, and he shall Lowse: so Beggers marry many.
The man y makes his Toe, what he his Hart shold make,
Shall of a Corne cry woe, and turne his sleepe to wake.
For there was neuer yet faire woman, but shee made

mouthes in a glasse.

Enter Kent

Lear. No, I will be the patterne of all patience,
I will say nothing

Kent. Who's there?

Foole. Marry here's Grace, and a Codpiece, that's a
Wiseman, and a Foole

Kent. Alas Sir are you here? Things that loue night,
Loue not such nights as these: The wrathfull Skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the darke
And make them keepe their Caues: Since I was man,
Such sheets of Fire, such bursts of horrid Thunder,
Such groanes of roaring Winde, and Raine, I neuer
Remember to haue heard. Mans Nature cannot carry
Th' affliction, nor the feare

Lear. Let the great Goddes
That keepe this dreadfull pudder o're our heads,
Finde out their enemies now. Tremble thou Wretch,
That hast within thee vndiuidged Crimes
Vnwhipt of Iustice. Hide thee, thou Bloudy hand;
Thou Periur'd, and thou Simular of Vertue
That art Incestuous. Caytiffe, to peeces shake
That vnder couert, and conuenient seeming
Ha's practis'd on mans life. Close pent-vp guilts,
Riue your concealing Continents, and cry
These dreadfull Summoners grace. I am a man,
More sinn'd against, then sinning

Kent. Alacke, bare-headed?
Gracious my Lord, hard by heere is a Houell,
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the Tempest:
Repose you there, while I to this hard house,

(More harder then the stones whereof 'tis rais'd,
Which euen but now, demanding after you,
Deny'd me to come in) returne, and force
Their scanted curtesie

Lear. My wits begin to turne.
Come on my boy. How dost my boy? Art cold?
I am cold my selfe. Where is this straw, my Fellow?
The Art of our Necessities is strange,
And can make vilde things precious. Come, your Houel;
Poore Foole, and Knaue, I haue one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee

Foole. He that has and a little-tyne wit,
With heigh-ho, the Winde and the Raine,
Must make content with his Fortunes fit,
Though the Raine it raineth eury day

Le. True Boy: Come bring vs to this Houell.

Enter.

Foole. This is a braue night to coole a Curtizan:
Ile speake a Prophesie ere I go:
When Priests are more in word, then matter;
When Brewers marre their Malt with water;
When Nobles are their Taylors Tutors,
No Heretiques burn'd, but wenches Sutors;
When eury Case in Law, is right;
No Squire in debt, nor no poore Knight;
When Slanders do not liue in Tongues;
Nor Cut-purses come not to throngs;
When Vsurers tell their Gold 'ith' Field,
And Baudes, and whores, do Churches build,
Then shal the Realme of Albion, come to great confusion:
Then comes the time, who liues to see't,
That going shalbe vs'd with feet.
This prophecie Merlin shall make, for I liue before his time.

Enter.

Scæna Tertiã.

Enter Gloster, and Edmund.

Glo. Alacke, alacke Edmund, I like not this vnnaturall dealing; when I desired their leaue that I might pity him, they tooke from me the vse of mine owne house, charg'd me on paine of perpetuall displeasure, neither to speake of him, entreat for him, or any way sustaine him

Bast. Most sauage and vnnaturall

Glo. Go too; say you nothing. There is diuision betweene the Dukes, and a worsse matter then that: I haue receiued a Letter this night, 'tis dangerous to be spoken, I haue lock'd the Letter in my Closset, these iniuries the King now beares, will be reuenged home; ther is part of a Power already footed, we must incline to the King, I will looke him, and priuily relieue him; goe you and maintaine talke with the Duke, that my charity be not of him perceiued; If he aske for me, I am ill, and gone to bed, if I die for it, (as no lesse is threatned me) the King my old Master must be relieued. There is strange things toward Edmund, pray you be carefull.

Enter.

Bast. This Curtesie forbid thee, shall the Duke Instantly know, and of that Letter too; This seemes a faire deseruing, and must draw me That which my Father looses: no lesse then all, The yonger rises, when the old doth fall.

Enter.

Scena Quarta.

Enter Lear, Kent, and Foole.

Kent. Here is the place my Lord, good my Lord enter,
The tirrany of the open night's too rough
For Nature to endure.

Storme still

Lear. Let me alone

Kent. Good my Lord enter heere

Lear. Wilt breake my heart?

Kent. I had rather breake mine owne,
Good my Lord enter

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentiuous storme
Inuades vs to the skin so: 'tis to thee,
But where the greater malady is fixt,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a Beare,
But if thy flight lay toward the roaring sea,
Thou'dst meete the Beare i'th' mouth, when the mind's free,
The bodies delicate: the tempest in my mind,
Doth from my sences take all feeling else,
Saue what beates there, Filliall ingratitude,
Is it not as this mouth should teare this hand
For lifting food too't? But I will punish home;
No, I will weepe no more; in such a night,
To shut me out? Poure on, I will endure:
In such a night as this? O Regan, Gonerill,
Your old kind Father, whose franke heart gaue all,
O that way madnesse lies, let me shun that:
No more of that

Kent. Good my Lord enter here

Lear. Prythee go in thy selfe, seeke thine owne ease,
This tempest will not giue me leaue to ponder
On things would hurt me more, but Ile goe in,
In Boy, go first. You houselesse pouertie,
Enter.

Nay get thee in; Ile pray, and then Ile sleepe.
Poore naked wretches, where so ere you are
That bide the pelting of this pittilesse storme,
How shall your House-lesse heads, and vnfed sides,
Your lop'd, and window'd raggednesse defend you
From seasons such as these? O I haue tane
Too little care of this: Take Physicke, Pompe,
Expose thy selfe to feele what wretches feele,
That thou maist shake the superflux to them,
And shew the Heauens more iust.

Enter Edgar, and Foole.

Edg. Fathom, and halfe, Fathom and halfe; poore Tom

Foole. Come not in heere Nuncle, here's a spirite, helpe
me, helpe me

Kent. Giue my thy hand, who's there?

Foole. A spirite, a spirite, he sayes his name's poore
Tom

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i'th'
straw? Come forth

Edg. Away, the foule Fiend followes me, through the
sharpe Hauthorne blow the windes. Humh, goe to thy
bed and warme thee

Lear. Did'st thou giue all to thy Daughters? And art

thou come to this?

Edgar. Who giues any thing to poore Tom? Whom the foule fiend hath led through Fire, and through Flame, through Sword, and Whirle-Poole, o're Bog, and Quagmire, that hath laid Knives vnder his Pillow, and Halters in his Pue, set Rats-bane by his Porredge, made him Proud of heart, to ride on a Bay trotting Horse, ouer foure incht Bridges, to course his owne shadow for a Traitor. Blisse thy fiue Wits, Toms a cold. O do, de, do, de, do, de, blisse thee from Whirle-Windes, Starre-blasting, and taking, do poore Tom some charitie, whom the foule Fiend vexes. There could I haue him now, and there, and there againe, and there.

Storme still.

Lear. Ha's his Daughters brought him to this passe?
Could'st thou saue nothing? Would'st thou giue 'em all?

Foole. Nay, he reseru'd a Blanket, else we had bin all sham'd

Lea. Now all the plagues that in the pendulous ayre
Hang fated o're mens faults, light on thy Daughters

Kent. He hath no Daughters Sir

Lear. Death Traitor, nothing could haue subdu'd Nature
To such a lownesse, but his vnkind Daughters.
Is it the fashion, that discarded Fathers,
Should haue thus little mercy on their flesh:
Iudicious punishment, 'twas this flesh begot
Those Pelicane Daughters

Edg. Pillicock sat on Pillicock hill, alow: alow, loo, loo

Foole. This cold night will turne vs all to Fooles, and

Madmen

Edgar. Take heed o'th' foule Fiend, obey thy Parents,
keepe thy words Iustice, swears not, commit not,
with mans sworne Spouse: set not thy Sweet-heart on
proud array. Tom's a cold

Lear. What hast thou bin?

Edg. A Seruingman? Proud in heart, and minde; that
curl'd my haire, wore Gloues in my cap; seru'd the Lust
of my Mistris heart, and did the acte of darknesse with
her. Swore as many Oathes, as I spake words, & broke
them in the sweet face of Heauen. One, that slept in the
contriuing of Lust, and wak'd to doe it. Wine lou'd I
deerely, Dice deerely; and in Woman, out-Paramour'd
the Turke. False of heart, light of care, bloody of hand;
Hog in sloth, Foxe in stealth, Wolfe in greedinesse, Dog
in madnes, Lyon in prey. Let not the creaking of shooes,
Nor the rustling of Silkes, betray thy poore heart to woman.
Keepe thy foote out of Brothels, thy hand out of
Plackets, thy pen from Lenders Bookes, and defye the
foule Fiend. Still through the Hauthorne blowes the
cold winde: Sayes suum, mun, nonny, Dolphin my Boy,
Boy Seseys: let him trot by.

Storme still.

Lear. Thou wert better in a Graue, then to answere
with thy vnouer'd body, this extremitie of the Skies. Is
man no more then this? Consider him well. Thou ow'st
the Worme no Silke; the Beast, no Hide; the Sheepe, no
Wooll; the Cat, no perfume. Ha? Here's three on's are
sophisticated. Thou art the thing it selfe; vnaccommodated
man, is no more but such a poore, bare, forked Animall
as thou art. Off, off you Lendings: Come, vnbutton
heere.

Enter Gloucester, with a Torch.

Foole. Prythee Nunckle be contented, 'tis a naughtie night to swimme in. Now a little fire in a wilde Field, were like an old Letchers heart, a small spark, all the rest on's body, cold: Looke, heere comes a walking fire

Edg. This is the foule Flibbertigibbet; hee begins at Curfew, and walkes at first Cocke: Hee giues the Web and the Pin, squints the eye, and makes the Hare-lippe; Mildewes the white Wheate, and hurts the poore Creature of earth.

Swithold footed thrice the old,
He met the Night-Mare, and her nine-fold;
Bid her a-light, and her troth-plight,
And aroynt thee Witch, aroynt thee

Kent. How fares your Grace?

Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? What is't you seeke?

Glou. What are you there? Your Names?

Edg. Poore Tom, that eats the swimming Frog, the Toad, the Tod-pole, the wall-Neut, and the water: that in the furie of his heart, when the foule Fiend rages, eats Cow-dung for Sallets; swallowes the old Rat, and the ditch-Dogge; drinkes the green Mantle of the standing Poole: who is whipt from Tything to Tything, and stockt, punish'd, and imprison'd: who hath three Suites to his backe, sixe shirts to his body: Horse to ride, and weapon to weare: But Mice, and Rats, and such small Deare, Haue bin Toms food, for seuen long yeare: Beware my Follower. Peace Smulkin, peace thou Fiend

Glou. What, hath your Grace no better company?

Edg. The Prince of Darkenesse is a Gentleman. Modo he's call'd, and Mahu

Glou. Our flesh and blood, my Lord, is growne so vilde, that it doth hate what gets it

Edg. Poore Tom's a cold

Glou. Go in with me; my duty cannot suffer T' obey in all your daughters hard commands: Though their Iniunction be to barre my doores, And let this Tyrannous night take hold vpon you, Yet haue I ventured to come seeke you out, And bring you where both fire, and food is ready

Lear. First let me talke with this Philosopher, What is the cause of Thunder?

Kent. Good my Lord take his offer,
Go into th' house

Lear. Ile talke a word with this same lerned Theban: What is your study?

Edg. How to preuent the Fiend, and to kill Vermine

Lear. Let me aske you one word in priuate

Kent. Importune him once more to go my Lord,
His wits begin t' vnsettle

Glou. Canst thou blame him?

Storm still

His Daughters seeke his death: Ah, that good Kent,

He said it would be thus: poore banish'd man:
Thou sayest the King growes mad, Ile tell thee Friend
I am almost mad my selfe. I had a Sonne,
Now out-law'd from my blood: he sought my life
But lately: very late: I lou'd him (Friend)
No Father his Sonne deerer: true to tell thee,
The greefe hath craz'd my wits. What a night's this?
I do beseech your grace

Exeunt.

Lear. O cry you mercy, Sir:
Noble Philosopher, your company

Edg. Tom's a cold

Glou. In fellow there, into th' Houel; keep thee warm

Lear. Come, let's in all

Kent. This way, my Lord

Lear. With him;
I will keepe still with my Philosopher

Kent. Good my Lord, sooth him:
Let him take the Fellow

Glou. Take him you on

Kent. Sirra, come on: go along with vs

Lear. Come, good Athenian

Glou. No words, no words, hush

Edg. Childe Rowland to the darke Tower came,
His word was still, fie, foh, and fumme,
I smell the blood of a Brittain man.

Scena Quinta.

Enter Cornwall, and Edmund.

Corn. I will haue my reuenge, ere I depart his house

Bast. How my Lord, I may be censured, that Nature thus giues way to Loyaltie, something feares mee to thinke of

Cornw. I now perceiue, it was not altogether your Brothers euill disposition made him seeke his death: but a prouoking merit set a-worke by a reprobable badnesse in himselfe

Bast. How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be iust? This is the Letter which hee spoake of; which approues him an intelligent partie to the aduantages of France. O Heauens! that this Treason were not; or not I the detector

Corn. Go with me to the Dutchesse

Bast. If the matter of this Paper be certain, you haue mighty businesse in hand

Corn. True or false, it hath made thee Earle of Gloucester: seeke out where thy Father is, that hee may bee ready for our apprehension

Bast. If I finde him comforting the King, it will stufte his suspition more fully. I will perseuer in my course of Loyalty, though the conflict be sore betweene that, and my blood

Corn. I will lay trust vpon thee: and thou shalt finde a deere Father in my loue.

Excunt.

Scena Sexta.

Enter Kent, and Gloucester.

Glou. Heere is better then the open ayre, take it thankfully:
I will peece out the comfort with what addition I
can: I will not be long from you.

Exit

Kent. All the powre of his wits, haue giuen way to his
impatience: the Gods reward your kindnesse.

Enter Lear, Edgar, and Foole.

Edg. Fraterretto cals me, and tells me Nero is an Angler
in the Lake of Darknesse: pray Innocent, and beware
the foule Fiend

Foole. Prythee Nunkle tell me, whether a madman be
a Gentleman, or a Yeoman

Lear. A King, a King

Foole. No, he's a Yeoman, that ha's a Gentleman to
his Sonne: for hee's a mad Yeoman that sees his Sonne a
Gentleman before him

Lear. To haue a thousand with red burning spits
Come hissing in vpon 'em

Edg. Blesse thy fiue wits

Kent. O pittie: Sir, where is the patience now
That you so oft haue boasted to retaine?

Edg. My teares begin to take his part so much,
They marre my counterfetting

Lear. The little dogges, and all;
Trey, Blanch, and Sweet-heart: see, they barke at me

Edg. Tom, will throw his head at them: Auaunt you
Curses, be thy mouth or blacke or white:
Tooth that poysons if it bite:
Mastiffe, Grey-hound, Mongrill, Grim,
Hound or Spaniell, Brache, or Hym:
Or Bobtaile tight, or Troudle taile,
Tom will make him weepe and waile,
For with throwing thus my head;
Dogs leapt the hatch, and all are fled.
Do, de, de, de: sese: Come, march to Wakes and Fayres,
And Market Townes: poore Tom thy horne is dry,

Lear. Then let them Anatomize Regan: See what
breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in Nature that
make these hard-hearts. You sir, I entertaime for one of
my hundred; only, I do not like the fashion of your garments.
You will say they are Persian; but let them bee
chang'd.

Enter Gloster.

Kent. Now good my Lord, lye heere, and rest awhile

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise, draw the Curtaines:
so, so, wee'l go to Supper i'th' morning

Foole. And Ile go to bed at noone

Glou. Come hither Friend:
Where is the King my Master?

Kent. Here Sir, but trouble him not, his wits are gon

Glou. Good friend, I prythee take him in thy armes;

I haue ore-heard a plot of death vpon him:
There is a Litter ready, lay him in't,
And driue toward Douer friend, where thou shalt meete
Both welcome, and protection. Take vp thy Master,
If thou should'st dally halfe an houre, his life
With thine, and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assured losse. Take vp, take vp,
And follow me, that will to some prouision
Giue thee quicke conduct. Come, come, away.

Excunt.

Scena Septima.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, Gonerill, Bastard, and Seruants.

Corn. Poste speedily to my Lord your husband, shew him this Letter, the Army of France is landed: seeke out the Traitor Glouster

Reg. Hang him instantly

Gon. Plucke out his eyes

Corn. Leaue him to my displeasure. Edmond, keepe you our Sister company: the reuenges wee are bound to take vpon your Traitorous Father, are not fit for your beholding. Aduice the Duke where you are going, to a most festinate preparation: we are bound to the like. Our Postes shall be swift, and intelligent betwixt vs. Farewell deere Sister, farewell my Lord of Glouster.

Enter Steward.

How now? Where's the King?

Stew. My Lord of Glouster hath conuey'd him hence Some fiue or six and thirty of his Knights Hot Questrists after him, met him at gate, Who, with some other of the Lords, dependants, Are gone with him toward Douer; where they boast To haue well armed Friends

Corn. Get horses for your Mistris

Gon. Farewell sweet Lord, and Sister.

Exit

Corn. Edmund farewell: go seek the Traitor Gloster,

Pinnion him like a Theefe, bring him before vs:
Though well we may not passe vpon his life
Without the forme of Iustice: yet our power
Shall do a curt'sie to our wrath, which men
May blame, but not comptroll.

Enter Gloucester, and Seruants.

Who's there? the Traitor?

Reg. Ingratefull Fox, 'tis he

Corn. Binde fast his corky armes

Glou. What meanes your Graces?
Good my Friends consider you are my Ghests:
Do me no foule play, Friends

Corn. Binde him I say

Reg. Hard, hard: O filthy Traitor

Glou. Vnmercifull Lady, as you are, I'me none

Corn. To this Chaire binde him,
Villaine, thou shalt finde

Glou. By the kinde Gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To plucke me by the Beard

Reg. So white, and such a Traitor?

Glou. Naughty Ladie,
These haïres which thou dost rauish from my chin
Will quicken and accuse thee. I am your Host,
With Robbers hands, my hospitable faouours
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Corn. Come Sir.
What Letters had you late from France?

Reg. Be simple answer'd, for we know the truth

Corn. And what confederacie haue you with the Traitors,
late footed in the Kingdome?

Reg. To whose hands
You haue sent the Lunaticke King: Speake

Glou. I haue a Letter guessingly set downe
Which came from one that's of a newtrall heart,
And not from one oppos'd

Corn. Cunning

Reg. And false

Corn. Where hast thou sent the King?

Glou. To Douer

Reg. Wherefore to Douer?
Was't thou not charg'd at perill

Corn. Wherefore to Douer? Let him answer that

Glou. I am tyed to'th' Stake,
And I must stand the Course

Reg. Wherefore to Douer?

Glou. Because I would not see thy cruell Naïles
Plucke out his poore old eyes: nor thy fierce Sister,
In his Annoïnted flesh, sticke boarish phangs.
The Sea, with such a storme as his bare head,
In Hell-blacke-night indur'd, would haue buoy'd vp

And quench'd the Stelled fires:
Yet poore old heart, he holpe the Heauens to raïne.
If Wolues had at thy Gate howl'd that sterne time,
Thou should'st haue said, good Porter turne the Key:
All Cruels else subscribe: but I shall see
The winged Vengeance ouertake such Children

Corn. See't shalt thou neuer. Fellowes hold y Chaïre,
Vpon these eyes of thine, Ile set my foote

Glou. He that will thinke to liue, till he be old,
Giue me some helpe. - O cruell! O you Gods

Reg. One side will mocke another: Th' other too

Corn. If you see vengeance

Seru. Hold your hand, my Lord:
I haue seru'd you euer since I was a Childe:
But better seruice haue I neuer done you,
Then now to bid you hold

Reg. How now, you dogge?

Ser. If you did weare a beard vpon your chin,
I'd shake it on this quarrell. What do you meane?

Corn. My Villaine?

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

Reg. Giue me thy Sword. A pezant stand vp thus?

Killes him.

Ser. Oh I am slaïne: my Lord, you haue one eye left
To see some mischefe on him. Oh

Corn. Lest it see more, preuent it; Out vilde gelly:
Where is thy luster now?

Glou. All darke and comfortlesse?
Where's my Sonne Edmund?
Edmund, enkindle all the sparkes of Nature
To quit this horrid acte

Reg. Out treacherous Villaine,
Thou call'st on him, that hates thee. It was he
That made the ouerture of thy Treasons to vs:
Who is too good to pittty thee

Glou. O my Follies! then Edgar was abus'd,
Kinde Gods, forgiue me that, and prosper him

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

Exit with Glouster.

How is't my Lord? How looke you?

Corn. I haue receiu'd a hurt: Follow me Lady;
Turne out that eyelesse Villaine: throw this Slaue
Vpon the Dunghill: Regan, I bleed apace,
Vntimely comes this hurt. Giue me your arme.

Excunt.

Actus Quartus. Scena Prima.

Enter Edgar.

Edg. Yet better thus, and knowne to be contemn'd,
Then still contemn'd and flatter'd, to be worst:
The lowest, and most dejected thing of Fortune,
Stands still in esperance, liues not in feare:
The lamentable change is from the best,
The worst returnes to laughter. Welcome then,
Thou vnsubstantiall ayre that I embrace:
The Wretch that thou hast blowne vnto the worst,
Owes nothing to thy blasts.

Enter Glouster, and an Oldman.

But who comes heere? My Father poorely led?
World, World, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make vs hate thee,
Life would not yeelde to age

Oldm. O my good Lord, I haue bene your Tenant,
And your Fathers Tenant, these fourescore yeares

Glou. Away, get thee away: good Friend be gone,
Thy comforts can do me no good at all,
Thee, they may hurt

Oldm. You cannot see your way

Glou. I haue no way, and therefore want no eyes:
I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis scene,
Our meanes secure vs, and our meere defects
Proue our Commodities. Oh deere Sonne Edgar,
The food of thy abused Fathers wrath:
Might I but liue to see thee in my touch,
I'd say I had eyes againe

Oldm. How now? who's there?

Edg. O Gods! Who is't can say I am at the worst?
I am worse then ere I was

Old. 'Tis poore mad Tom

Edg. And worse I may be yet: the worst is not,
So long as we can say this is the worst

Oldm. Fellow, where goest?

Glou. Is it a Beggar-man?

Oldm. Madman, and beggar too

Glou. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
Ith' last nights storme, I such a fellow saw;
Which made me thinke a Man, a Worme. My Sonne
Came then into my minde, and yet my minde
Was then scarce Friends with him.
I haue heard more since:
As Flies to wanton Boyes, are we to th' Gods,
They kill vs for their sport

Edg. How should this be?
Bad is the Trade that must play Foole to sorrow,
Ang'ring it selfe, and others. Blesse thee Master

Glou. Is that the naked Fellow?

Oldm. I, my Lord

Glou. Get thee away: If for my sake
Thou wilt ore-take vs hence a mile or twaine
Ith' way toward Douer, do it for ancient loue,
And bring some couering for this naked Soule,
Which Ile intreate to leade me

Old. Alacke sir, he is mad

Glou. 'Tis the times plague,
When Madmen leade the blinde:
Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure:
Aboue the rest, be gone

Oldm. Ile bring him the best Parrell that I haue
Come on't what will.

Exit

Glou. Sirrah, naked fellow

Edg. Poore Tom's a cold. I cannot daub it further

Glou. Come hither fellow

Edg. And yet I must:
Blesse thy sweete eyes, they bleede

Glou. Know'st thou the way to Douer?

Edg. Both stile, and gate; Horseway, and foot-path:
poore Tom hath bin scarr'd out of his good wits. Blesse
thee good mans sonne, from the foule Fiend

Glou. Here take this purse, y whom the heau'ns plagues
Haue humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier: Heauens deale so still:
Let the superfluous, and Lust-dieted man,
That slaues your ordinance, that will not see
Because he do's not feele, feele your powre quickly:
So distribution should vndoo excesse,
And each man haue enough. Dost thou know Douer?

Edg. I Master

Glou. There is a Cliffe, whose high and bending head
Lookes fearfully in the confined Deepe:
Bring me but to the very brimme of it,
And Ile repayre the misery thou do'st beare
With something rich about me: from that place,
I shall no leading neede

Edg. Giue me thy arme;
Poore Tom shall leade thee.

Excunt.

Scena Secunda.

Enter Gonerill, Bastard, and Steward.

Gon. Welcome my Lord. I meruell our mild husband
Not met vs on the way. Now, where's your Master?

Stew. Madam within, but neuer man so chang'd:
I told him of the Army that was Landed:
He smil'd at it. I told him you were comming,
His answer was, the worse. Of Glosters Treachery,
And of the loyall Seruice of his Sonne
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me Sot,
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out:
What most he should dislike, seemes pleasant to him;
What like, offensiuē

Gon. Then shall you go no further.
It is the Cowish terror of his spirit
That dares not vndertake: Hee'l not feele wrongs
Which tye him to an answer: our wishes on the way
May proue effects. Backe Edmond to my Brother,
Hasten his Musters, and conduct his powres.
I must change names at home, and giue the Distaffe
Into my Husbands hands. This trustie Seruant
Shall passe betweene vs: ere long you are like to heare
(If you dare venture in your owne behalfe)
A Mistresses command. Weare this; spare speech,
Decline your head. This kisse, if it durst speake
Would stretch thy Spirits vp into the ayre:
Conceiue, and fare thee well

Bast. Yours in the rankes of death.

Enter.

Gon. My most deere Gloster.
Oh, the difference of man, and man,

To thee a Womans seruices are due,
My Foole vsurpes my body

Stew. Madam, here come's my Lord.

Enter Albany.

Gon. I haue beene worth the whistle

Alb. Oh Gonerill,
You are not worth the dust which the rude winde
Blowes in your face

Gon. Milke-Liuer'd man,
That bear'st a cheeke for blowes, a head for wrongs,
Who hast not in thy browes an eye-discerning
Thine Honor, from thy suffering

Alb. See thy selfe diuell:
Proper deformitie seemes not in the Fiend
So horrid as in woman

Gon. Oh vaine Foole.

Enter a Messenger.

Mes. Oh my good Lord, the Duke of Cornwall dead,
Slaine by his Seruant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloucester

Alb. Gloucesters eyes

Mes. A Seruant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Oppos'd against the act: bending his Sword
To his great Master, who, threat-enrag'd
Flew on him, and among'st them fell'd him dead,
But not without that harmefull stroke, which since
Hath pluckt him after

Alb. This shewes you are about
You Iustices, that these our neather crimes
So speedily can venge. But (O poore Glouster)
Lost he his other eye?

Mes. Both, both, my Lord.
This Leter Madam, craues a speedy answer:
'Tis from your Sister

Gon. One way I like this well.
But being widdow, and my Glouster with her,
May all the building in my fancie plucke
Vpon my hatefull life. Another way
The Newes is not so tart. Ile read, and answer

Alb. Where was his Sonne,
When they did take his eyes?
Mes. Come with my Lady hither

Alb. He is not heere

Mes. No my good Lord, I met him backe againe

Alb. Knowes he the wickednesse?

Mes. I my good Lord: 'twas he inform'd against him
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might haue the freer course

Alb. Glouster, I liue
To thanke thee for the loue thou shew'dst the King,
And to reuenge thine eyes. Come hither Friend,
Tell me what more thou know'st.

Exeunt.

Scena Tertia.

Enter with Drum and Colours, Cordelia, Gentlemen, and
Souldiours.

Cor. Alacke, 'tis he: why he was met euen now
As mad as the vext Sea, singing aloud.
Crown'd with ranke Fenitar, and furrow weeds,
With Hardokes, Hemlocke, Nettles, Cuckoo flowres,
Darnell, and all the idle weedes that grow
In our sustaining Corne. A Centery send forth;
Search euery Acre in the high-growne field,
And bring him to our eye. What can mans wisdome
In the restoring his bereaued Sense; he that helps him,
Take all my outward worth

Gent. There is meanes Madam:
Our foster Nurse of Nature, is repose,
The which he lackes: that to prouoke in him
Are many Simples operatiue, whose power
Will close the eye of Anguish

Cord. All blest Secrets,
All you vnpublish'd Vertues of the earth
Spring with my teares; be aydant, and remediate
In the Goodmans desires: seeke, seeke for him,
Least his vngouern'd rage, dissolue the life
That wants the meanes to leade it.

Enter Messenger.

Mes. Newes Madam,
The Brittish Powres are marching hitherward

Cor. 'Tis knowne before. Our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O deere Father,
It is thy businesse that I go about: Therefore great France
My mourning, and importun'd teares hath pittied:

No blowne Ambition doth our Armes incite,
But loue, deere loue, and our ag'd Fathers Rite:
Soone may I heare, and see him.

Excunt.

Scena Quarta.

Enter Regan, and Steward.

Reg. But are my Brothers Powres set forth?

Stew. I Madam

Reg. Himselfe in person there?

Stew. Madam with much ado:
Your Sister is the better Souldier

Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your Lord at home?

Stew. No Madam

Reg. What might import my Sisters Letter to him?

Stew. I know not, Lady

Reg. Faith he is poasted hence on serious matter:
It was great ignorance, Glousters eyes being out
To let him liue. Where he arriues, he moues
All hearts against vs: Edmund, I thinke is gone
In pittie of his misery, to dispatch
His nighted life: Moreouer to descry
The strength o'th' Enemy

Stew. I must needs after him, Madam, with my Letter

Reg. Our troopes set forth to morrow, stay with vs:
The wayes are dangerous

Stew. I may not Madam:
My Lady charg'd my dutie in this busines

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund?

Might not you transport her purposes by word? Belike,
Some things, I know not what. Ile loue thee much
Let me vnseale the Letter

Stew. Madam, I had rather-

Reg. I know your Lady do's not loue her Husband,
I am sure of that: and at her late being heere,
She gaue strange Eliads, and most speaking lookes
To Noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosome

Stew. I, Madam?

Reg. I speake in vnderstanding: Y'are: I know't,
Therefore I do aduise you take this note:
My Lord is dead: Edmond, and I haue talk'd,
And more conuenient is he for my hand
Then for your Ladies: You may gather more:
If you do finde him, pray you giue him this;
And when your Mistris heares thus much from you,
I pray desire her call her wisdome to her.
So fare you well:
If you do chance to heare of that blinde Traitor,
Preferment fals on him, that cuts him off

Stew. Would I could meet Madam, I should shew
What party I do follow

Reg. Fare thee well.

Exeunt.

Scena Quinta.

Enter Gloucester, and Edgar.

Glou. When shall I come to th' top of that same hill?

Edg. You do climbe vp it now. Look how we labor

Glou. Me thinkes the ground is ceuen

Edg. Horrible steepe.
Hearke, do you heare the Sea?

Glou. No truly

Edg. Why then your other Senses grow imperfect
By your eyes anguish

Glou. So may it be indeed.
Me thinkes thy voyce is alter'd, and thou speak'st
In better phrase, and matter then thou did'st

Edg. Y'are much deceiu'd: In nothing am I chang'd
But in my Garments

Glou. Me thinkes y'are better spoken

Edg. Come on Sir,
Heere's the place: stand still: how fearefull
And dizie 'tis, to cast ones eyes so low,
The Crowes and Choughes, that wing the midway ayre
Shew scarce so grosse as Beetles. Halfe way downe
Hangs one that gathers Sampire: dreadfull Trade:
Me thinkes he seemes no bigger then his head.
The Fishermen, that walk'd vpon the beach
Apppeare like Mice: and yond tall Anchoring Barke,
Diminish'd to her Cocke: her Cocke, a Buoy
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring Surge,

That on th' vnnumbred idle Pebble chafes
Cannot be heard so high. He looke no more,
Least my braine turne, and the deficient sight
Topple downe headlong

Glou. Set me where you stand

Edg. Giue me your hand:
You are now within a foote of th' extreme Verge:
For all beneath the Moone would I not leape vpright

Glou. Let go my hand:
Heere Friend's another purse: in it, a Jewell
Well worth a poore mans taking. Fayries, and Gods
Prosper it with thee. Go thou further off,
Bid me farewell, and let me heare thee going

Edg. Now fare ye well, good Sir

Glou. With all my heart

Edg. Why I do trifle thus with his dispaire,
Is done to cure it

Glou. O you mighty Gods!
This world I do renounce, and in your sights
Shake patiently my great affliction off:
If I could beare it longer, and not fall
To quarrell with your great opposelesse willes,
My snuffe, and loathed part of Nature should
Burne it selfe out. If Edgar liue, O blesse him:
Now Fellow, fare thee well

Edg. Gone Sir, farewell:
And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The Treasury of life, when life it selfe
Yeelds to the Theft. Had he bin where he thought,
By this had thought bin past. Aliue, or dead?

Ho, you Sir: Friend, heare you Sir, speake:
Thus might he passe indeed: yet he reuiues.
What are you Sir?

Glou. Away, and let me dye

Edg. Had'st thou beene ought
But Gozemore, Feathers, Ayre,
(So many fathome downe precipitating)
Thou'dst shiuer'd like an Egge: but thou do'st breath:
Hast heauy substance, bleed'st not, speak'st, art sound,
Ten Masts at each, make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell,
Thy life's a Myracle. Speake yet againe

Glou. But haue I falne, or no?

Edg. From the dread Somnet of this Chalkie Bourne
Looke vp a height, the shrill-gorg'd Larke so farre
Cannot be seene, or heard: Do but looke vp

Glou. Alacke, I haue no eyes:
Is wretchednesse depriv'd that benefit
To end it selfe by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the Tyrants rage,
And frustrate his proud will

Edg. Giue me your arme.
Vp, so: How is't? Feele you your Legges? You stand

Glou. Too well, too well

Edg. This is about all strangenesse,
Vpon the crowne o'th' Cliffe. What thing was that
Which parted from you?

Glou. A poore vnfortunate Beggar

Edg. As I stood heere below, me thought his eyes
Were two full Moones: he had a thousand Noses,
Hornes wealk'd, and waued like the enraged Sea:
It was some Fiend: Therefore thou happy Father,
Thinke that the cleerest Gods, who make them Honors
Of mens Impossibilities, haue preserued thee

Glou. I do remember now: henceforth Ile beare
Affliction, till it do cry out it selfe
Enough, enough, and dye. That thing you speake of,
I tooke it for a man: often 'twould say
The Fiend, the Fiend, he led me to that place

Edgar. Beare free and patient thoughts.

Enter Lear.

But who comes heere?
The safer sense will ne're accommodate
His Master thus

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for crying. I am the
King himselfe

Edg. O thou side-piercing sight!

Lear. Nature's about Art, in that respect. Ther's your
Presse-money. That fellow handles his bow, like a Crowkeeper:
draw mee a Cloathiers yard. Looke, looke, a
Mouse: peace, peace, this peece of toasted Cheese will
doo't. There's my Gauntlet, Ile proue it on a Gyant.
Bring vp the browne Billes. O well flowne Bird: i'th'
clout, i'th' clout: Hewgh. Giue the word

Edg. Sweet Mariorum

Lear. Passe

Glou. I know that voice

Lear. Ha! Gonerill with a white beard? They flatter'd
me like a Dogge, and told mee I had the white hayres in
my Beard, ere the blacke ones were there. To say I, and
no, to euery thing that I said: I, and no too, was no good
Diuinity. When the raïne came to wet me once, and the
winde to make me chatter: when the Thunder would not
peace at my bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em
out. Go too, they are not men o'their words; they told
me, I was euery thing: 'Tis a Lye, I am not Agu-prooffe

Glou. The tricke of that voyce, I do well remember:
Is't not the King?

Lear. I, euery inch a King.
When I do stare, see how the Subiect quakes.
I pardon that mans life. What was thy cause?
Adultery? thou shalt not dye: dye for Adultery?
No, the Wren goes too't, and the small gilded Fly
Do's letcher in my sight. Let Copulation thriue:
For Glousters bastard Son was kinder to his Father,
Then my Daughters got 'twene the lawfull sheets.
Too't Luxury pell-mell, for I lacke Souldiers.
Behold yond simpring Dame, whose face betweene her
Forkes presages Snow; that minces Vertue, & do's shake
the head to heare of pleasures name. The Fitchew, nor
the soyled Horse goes too't with a more riotous appetite:
Downe from the waste they are Centaures, though
Women all about: but to the Girdle do the Gods inherit,
beneath is all the Fiends. There's hell, there's darkenes,
there is the sulphurous pit; burning, scalding, stench,
consumption: Fye, fie, fie; pah, pah: Giue me an Ounce
of Ciuet; good Apothecary sweeten my imagination:
There's money for thee

Glou. O let me kisse that hand

Lear. Let me wipe it first,
It smells of Mortality

Glou. O ruin'd peece of Nature, this great world
Shall so weare out to naught.
Do'st thou know me?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough: dost thou
squiny at me? No, doe thy worst blinde Cupid, Ile not
loue. Reade thou this challenge, marke but the penning
of it

Glou. Were all thy Letters Sunnes, I could not see

Edg. I would not take this from report,
It is, and my heart breakes at it

Lear. Read

Glou. What with the Case of eyes?

Lear. Oh ho, are you there with me? No eies in your
head, nor no mony in your purse? Your eyes are in a heauy
case, your purse in a light, yet you see how this world
goes

Glou. I see it feelingly

Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how this world
goes, with no eyes. Looke with thine cares: See how
yond Iustice railes vpon yond simple theefe. Hearke in
thine care: Change places, and handy-dandy, which is
the Iustice, which is the theefe: Thou hast scene a Farmers
dogge barke at a Beggar?

Glou. I Sir

Lear. And the Creature run from the Cur: there thou

might'st behold the great image of Authoritie, a Dogg's
obey'd in Office. Thou, Rascall Beadle, hold thy bloody
hand: why dost thou lash that Whore? Strip thy owne
backe, thou hotly lusts to vse her in that kind, for which
thou whip'st her. The Vsurer hangs the Cozener. Thorough
tatter'd cloathes great Vices do appeare: Robes,
and Furr'd gownes hide all. Place sinnes with Gold, and
the strong Lance of Iustice, hurtlesse breakes: Arme it in
ragges, a Pigmies straw do's pierce it. None do's offend,
none, I say none, Ile able 'em; take that of me my Friend,
who haue the power to seale th' accusers lips. Get thee
glasse-eyes, and like a scuruy Politician, seeme to see the
things thou dost not. Now, now, now, now. Pull off my
Bootes: harder, harder, so

Edg. O matter, and impertinency mixt,
Reason in Madnesse

Lear. If thou wilt weepe my Fortunes, take my eyes.
I know thee well enough, thy name is Glouster:
Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the Ayre
We wawle, and cry. I will preach to thee: Marke

Glou. Alacke, alacke the day

Lear. When we are borne, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of Fooles. This a good blocke:
It were a delicate stratagem to shoo
A Troope of Horse with Felt: Ile put't in prooffe,
And when I haue stolne vpon these Son in Lawes,
Then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill.

Enter a Gentleman.

Gent. Oh heere he is: lay hand vpon him, Sir.
Your most deere Daughter-

Lear. No rescue? What, a Prisoner? I am euen
The Naturall Foole of Fortune. Vse me well,
You shall haue ransome. Let me haue Surgeons,
I am cut to'th' Braines

Gent. You shall haue any thing

Lear. No Seconds? All my selfe?
Why, this would make a man, a man of Salt
To vse his eyes for Garden water-pots. I wil die brauely,
Like a smugge Bridegroom. What? I will be Iouiall:
Come, come, I am a King, Masters, know you that?

Gent. You are a Royall one, and we obey you

Lear. Then there's life in't. Come, and you get it,
You shall get it by running: Sa, sa, sa, sa.

Enter.

Gent. A sight most pittifull in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a King. Thou hast a Daughter
Who redeemes Nature from the generall curse
Which twaine haue brought her to

Edg. Haile gentle Sir

Gent. Sir, speed you: what's your will?

Edg. Do you heare ought (Sir) of a Battell toward

Gent. Most sure, and vulgar:
Euery one heares that, which can distinguish sound

Edg. But by your fauour:
How neere's the other Army?

Gent. Neere, and on speedy foot: the maine descry

Stands on the hourelly thought

Edg. I thanke you Sir, that's all

Gent. Though that the Queen on special cause is here
Her Army is mou'd on.

Enter.

Edg. I thanke you Sir

Glou. You euer gentle Gods, take my breath from me,
Let not my worser Spirit tempt me againe
To dye before you please

Edg. Well pray you Father

Glou. Now good sir, what are you?

Edg. A most poore man, made tame to Fortunes blows
Who, by the Art of knowne, and feeling sorrowes,
Am pregnant to good pittie. Giue me your hand,
Ile leade you to some biding

Glou. Heartie thanks:
The bountie, and the benizon of Heauen
To boot, and boot.

Enter Steward.

Stew. A proclaim'd prize: most happie
That eyelesse head of thine, was first fram'd flesh
To raise my fortunes. Thou old, vnhappy Traitor,
Breefely thy selfe remember: the Sword is out
That must destroy thee

Glou. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough too't

Stew. Wherefore, bold Pezant,
Dar'st thou support a publish'd Traitor? Hence,
Least that th' infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arme

Edg. Chill not let go Zir,
Without vurther 'casion

Stew. Let go Slaue, or thou dy'st

Edg. Good Gentleman goe your gate, and let poore
volke passe: and 'chud ha' bin zwaggerd out of my life,
'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis, by a vortnight. Nay,
come not neere th' old man: keepe out che vor' ye, or Ile
try whither your Costard, or my Ballow be the harder;
chill be plaine with you

Stew. Out Dunghill

Edg. Chill picke your teeth Zir: come, no matter vor
your foynes

Stew. Slaue thou hast slaine me: Villain, take my purse;
If euer thou wilt thriue, bury my bodie,
And giue the Letters which thou find'st about me,
To Edmund Earle of Glouster: seeke him out
Vpon the English party. Oh vntimely death, death

Edg. I know thee well. A seruiceable Villaine,
As duteous to the vices of thy Místris,
As badnesse would desire

Glou. What, is he dead?

Edg. Sit you downe Father: rest you.
Let's see these Pockets; the Letters that he speakes of
May be my Friends: hee's dead; I am onely sorry

He had no other Deathsmán. Let vs see:
Leaue gentle waxe, and manners: blame vs not
To know our enemies mindes, we rip their hearts,
Their Papers is more lawfull.

Reads the Letter.

Let our reciprocally vowes be remembred. You haue manie
opportunities to cut him off: if your will want not, time and
place will be fruitfully offer'd. There is nothing done. If hee
returne the Conqueror, then am I the Prisoner, and his bed, my
Gaole, from the loathed warmth whereof, deliuer me, and supply
the place for your Labour.

Your (Wife, so I would say) affectionate
Seruant. Gonerill.

Oh indistinguish'd space of Womans will,
A plot vpon her vertuous Husbands life,
And the exchange my Brother: heere, in the sands
Thee Ile rake vp, the poste vnsanctified
Of murtherous Letchers: and in the mature time,
With this vngracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practis'd Duke: for him 'tis well,
That of thy death, and businesse, I can tell

Glou. The King is mad:
How stiffe is my vilde sense
That I stand vp, and haue ingenious feeling
Of my huge Sorrowes? Better I were distract,
So should my thoughts be seuer'd from my greefes,

Drum afarre off.

And woes, by wrong imaginations loose
The knowledge of themselues

Edg. Giue me your hand:
Farre off methinkes I heare the beaten Drumme.
Come Father, Ile bestow you with a Friend.

Excunt.

Scæna Septima.

Enter Cordelia, Kent, and Gentleman.

Cor. O thou good Kent,
How shall I liue and worke
To match thy goodnesse?
My life will be too short,
And euery measure faile me

Kent. To be acknowledg'd Madam is ore-pai'd,
All my reports go with the modest truth,
Nor more, nor clipt, but so

Cor. Be better suited,
These weedes are memories of those worser houres:
I prythee put them off

Kent. Pardon deere Madam,
Yet to be knowne shortens my made intent,
My boone I make it, that you know me not,
Till time, and I, thinke meet

Cor. Then be't so my good Lord:
How do's the King?

Gent. Madam sleepes still

Cor. O you kind Gods!
Cure this great breach in his abused Nature,
Th' vntun'd and iarring senses, O winde vp,
Of this childe-changed Father

Gent. So please your Maiesty,
That we may wake the King, he hath slept long?

Cor. Be gouern'd by your knowledge, and proccede
Ith' sway of your owne will: is he array'd?

Enter Lear in a chaire carried by Seruants]

Gent. I Madam: in the heauinesse of sleepe,
We put fresh garments on him.
Be by good Madam when we do awake him,
I doubt of his Temperance

Cor. O my deere Father, restauration hang
Thy medicine on my lippes, and let this kisse
Repaire those violent harmes, that my two Sisters
Haue in thy Reuerence made

Kent. Kind and deere Princesse

Cor. Had you not bin their Father, these white flakes
Did challenge pittie of them. Was this a face
To be oppos'd against the iarring windes?
Mine Enemies dogge, though he had bit me,
Should haue stood that night against my fire,
And was't thou faine (poore Father)
To houell thee with Swine and Rogues forlorne,
In short, and musty straw? Alacke, alacke,
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits, at once
Had not concluded all. He wakes, speake to him

Gen. Madam do you, 'tis fittest

Cor. How does my Royall Lord?
How fares your Maicesty?

Lear. You do me wrong to take me out o'th' graue,
Thou art a Soule in blisse, but I am bound
Vpon a wheele of fire, that mine owne teares
Do scal'd, like molten Lead

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit I know, where did you dye?

Cor. Still, still, farre wide

Gen. He's scarce awake,
Let him alone a while

Lear. Where haue I bin?
Where am I? Faire day light?
I am mightily abus'd; I should eu'n dye with pittie
To see another thus. I know not what to say:
I will not sweare these are my hands: let's see,
I feele this pin pricke, would I were assur'd
Of my condition

Cor. O looke vpon me Sir,
And hold your hand in benediction o're me,
You must not kneele

Lear. Pray do not mocke me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourescore and vpward,
Not an houre more, nor lesse:
And to deale plainely,
I feare I am not in my perfect mind.
Me thinkes I should know you, and know this man,
Yet I am doubtfull: For I am mainly ignorant
What place this is: and all the skill I haue
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 thinke this Lady
To be my childe Cordelia

Cor. And so I am: I am

Lear. Be your teares wet?
Yes faith: I pray weepe not,
If you haue poyson for me, I will drinke it:

I know you do not loue me, for your Sisters
Haue (as I do remember) done me wrong.
You haue some cause, they haue not

Cor. No cause, no cause

Lear. Am I in France?

Kent. In your owne kingdome Sir

Lear. Do not abuse me

Gent. Be comforted good Madam, the great rage
You see is kill'd in him: desire him to go in,
Trouble him no more till further setling

Cor. Wilt please your Highnesse walke?

Lear. You must beare with me:
Pray you now forget, and forgiue,
I am old and foolish.

Excunt.

Actus Quintus. Scena Prima.

Enter with Drumme and Colours, Edmund, Regan. Gentlemen,
and Souldiers.

Bast. Know of the Duke if his last purpose hold,
Or whether since he is aduis'd by ought
To change the course, he's full of alteration,
And selfereprouing, bring his constant pleasure

Reg. Our Sisters man is certainly miscarried

Bast. 'Tis to be doubted Madam

Reg. Now sweet Lord,
You know the goodnesse I intend vpon you:
Tell me but truly, but then speake the truth,
Do you not loue my Sister?

Bast. In honour'd Loue

Reg. But haue you neuer found my Brothers way,
To the fore-fended place?

Bast. No by mine honour, Madam

Reg. I neuer shall endure her, deere my Lord
Be not familiar with her

Bast. Feare not, she and the Duke her husband.
Enter with Drum and Colours, Albany, Gonerill, Soldiers.

Alb. Our very louing Sister, well be-met:
Sir, this I heard, the King is come to his Daughter
With others, whom the rigour of our State
Forc'd to cry out

Regan. Why is this reasond?

Gonc. Combine together 'gainst the Enemie:
For these domesticke and particular broiles,
Are not the question heere

Alb. Let's then determine with th' ancient of warre
On our proceeding

Reg. Sister you'le go with vs?

Gon. No

Reg. 'Tis most conuenient, pray go with vs

Gon. Oh ho, I know the Riddle, I will goe.

Exeunt. both the Armies.

Enter Edgar.

Edg. If ere your Grace had speech with man so poore,
Heare me one word

Alb. Ile ouertake you, speake

Edg. Before you fight the Battaile, ope this Letter:
If you haue victory, let the Trumpet sound
For him that brought it: wretched though I seeme,
I can produce a Champion, that will proue
What is auouched there. If you miscarry,
Your businesse of the world hath so an end,
And machination ceases. Fortune loues you

Alb. Stay till I haue read the Letter

Edg. I was forbid it:
When time shall serue, let but the Herald cry,
And Ile appeare againe.

Enter.

Alb. Why farethee well, I will o're-looke thy paper.
Enter Edmund.

Bast. The Enemy's in view, draw vp your powers,
Heere is the guesse of their true strength and Forces,
By dilligent discouerie, but your hast
Is now vrg'd on you

Alb. We will greet the time.

Enter.

Bast. To both these Sisters haue I sworne my loue:
Each ielous of the other, as the stung
Are of the Adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? One? Or neither? Neither can be enioy'd
If both remaine aliue: To take the Widdow,
Exasperates, makes mad her Sister Gonerill,
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being aliue. Now then, wee'l vse
His countenance for the Battaile, which being done,
Let her who would be rid of him, deuise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercie
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,
The Battaile done, and they within our power,
Shall neuer see his pardon: for my state,
Stands on me to defend, not to debate.

Enter.

Scena Secunda.

Alarum within. Enter with Drumme and Colours, Lear, Cordelia,
And Souldiers, ouer the Stage, and Exeunt. Enter Edgar, and
Gloster.

Edg. Heere Father, take the shadow of this Tree
For your good hoast: pray that the right may thriue:
If euer I returne to you againe,
Ile bring you comfort

Glo. Grace go with you Sir.

Enter.

Alarum and Retreat within. Enter Edgar.

Edgar. Away old man, giue me thy hand, away:
King Lear hath lost, he and his Daughter tane,
Giue me thy hand: Come on

Glo. No further Sir, a man may rot euen heere

Edg. What in ill thoughts againe?
Men must endure
Their going hence, euen as their comming hither,
Ripenesse is all come on

Glo. And that's true too.

Exeunt.

Scena Tertia.

Enter in conquest with Drum and Colours, Edmund, Lear, and
Cordelia, as prisoners, Souldiers, Capitaine.

Bast. Some Officers take them away: good guard,
Vntill their greater pleasures first be knowne
That are to censure them

Cor. We are not the first,
Who with best meaning haue incurr'd the worst:
For thee oppressed King I am cast downe,
My selfe could else out-frowne false Fortunes frowne.
Shall we not see these Daughters, and these Sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no: come let's away to prison,
We two alone will sing like Birds i'th' Cage:
When thou dost aske me blessing, Ile kneele downe
And aske of thee forgiuenesse: So wee'l liue,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded Butterflies: and heere (poore Rogues)
Talke of Court newes, and wee'l talke with them too,
Who looses, and who wins; who's in, who's out;
And take vpon's the mystery of things,
As if we were Gods spies: And wee'l weare out
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebbe and flow by th' Moone

Bast. Take them away

Lear. Vpon such sacrifices my Cordelia,
The Gods themselues throw Incense.
Haue I caught thee?
He that parts vs, shall bring a Brand from Heauen,
And fire vs hence, like Foxes: wipe thine eyes,
The good yeares shall deuoure them, flesh and fell,
Ere they shall make vs weepe?
Weele see 'em staru'd first: come.

Enter.

Bast. Come hither Captaine, hearke.
Take thou this note, go follow them to prison,
One step I haue aduanc'd thee, if thou do'st
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To Noble Fortunes: know thou this, that men
Are as the time is; to be tender minded
Do's not become a Sword, thy great imployment
Will not beare question: either say thou'lt do't,
Or thrue by other meanes

Capt. Ile do't my Lord

Bast. About it, and write happy, when th'hast done,
Marke I say instantly, and carry it so
As I haue set it downe.

Exit Captaine.

Flourish. Enter Albany, Gonerill, Regan, Soldiers.

Alb. Sir, you haue shew'd to day your valiant straine
And Fortune led you well: you haue the Captiues
Who were the opposites of this dayes strife:
I do require them of you so to vse them,
As we shall find their merites, and our safety
May equally determine

Bast. Sir, I thought it fit,
To send the old and miserable King to some retention,
Whose age had Charmes in it, whose Title more,
To plucke the common bosome on his side,
And turne our imprest Launces in our eies
Which do command them. With him I sent the Queen:
My reason all the same, and they are ready
To morrow, or at further space, t' appeare

Where you shall hold your Session

Alb. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subiect of this Warre,
Not as a Brother

Reg. That's as we list to grace him.
Methinkes our pleasure might haue bin demanded
Ere you had spoke so farre. He led our Powers,
Bore the Commission of my place and person,
The which immediacie may well stand vp,
And call it selfe your Brother

Gon. Not so hot:
In his owne grace he doth exalt himselfe,
More then in your addition

Reg. In my rights,
By me inuested, he compeeres the best

Alb. That were the most, if he should husband you

Reg. Iesters do oft proue Prophets

Gon. Hola, hola,
That eye that told you so, look'd but a squint

Rega. Lady I am not well, else I should answere
From a full flowing stomack. Generall,
Take thou my Souldiers, prisoners, patrimony,
Dispose of them, of me, the walls is thine:
Witnessse the world, that I create thee heere
My Lord, and Master

Gon. Meane you to enioy him?

Alb. The let alone lies not in your good will

Bast. Nor in thine Lord

Alb. Halfe-blooded fellow, yes

Reg. Let the Drum strike, and proue my title thine

Alb. Stay yet, heare reason: Edmund, I arrest thee
On capitall Treason; and in thy arrest,
This guilded Serpent: for your claime faire Sisters,
I bare it in the interest of my wife,
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this Lord,
And I her husband contradict your Banes.
If you will marry, make your loues to me,
My Lady is bespoke

Gon. An enterlude

Alb. Thou art armed Gloster,
Let the Trumpet sound:
If none appeare to proue vpon thy person,
Thy heynous, manifest, and many Treasons,
There is my pledge: Ile make it on thy heart
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing lesse
Then I haue heere proclaim'd thee

Reg. Sicke, O sicke

Gon. If not, Ile nere trust medicine

Bast. There's my exchange, what in the world hes
That names me Traitor, villain-like he lies,
Call by the Trumpet: he that dares approach;
On him, on you, who not, I will maintaine
My truth and honor firmly.

Enter a Herald.

Alb. A Herald, ho.

Trust to thy single vertue, for thy Souldiers
All leuied in my name, haue in my name
Tooke their discharge

Regan. My sicknesse growes vpon me

Alb. She is not well, conuey her to my Tent.
Come hither Herald, let the Trumpet sound,
And read out this.

A Trumpet sounds.

Herald reads.

If any man of qualitie or degree, within the lists of the Army,
will maintaine vpon Edmund, supposed Earle of Gloster,
that he is a manifold Traitor, let him appeare by the third
sound of the Trumpet: he is bold in his defence.

1 Trumpet.

Her. Againe.

2 Trumpet.

Her. Againe.

3 Trumpet.

Trumpet answers within.

Enter Edgar armed.

Alb. Aske him his purposes, why he appeares
Vpon this Call o'th' Trumpet

Her. What are you?
Your name, your quality, and why you answer

This present Summons?

Edg. Know my name is lost
By Treasons tooth: bare-gnawne, and Canker-bit,
Yet am I Noble as the Aduersary
I come to cope

Alb. Which is that Aduersary?

Edg. What's he that speakes for Edmund Earle of Gloster?

Bast. Himselfe, what saist thou to him?

Edg. Draw thy Sword,
That if my speech offend a Noble heart,
Thy arme may do thee Iustice, heere is mine:
Behold it is my priuiledge,
The priuiledge of mine Honours,
My oath, and my profession. I protest,
Maugre thy strength, place, youth, and eminence,
Despise thy victor-Sword, and fire new Fortune,
Thy valor, and thy heart, thou art a Traitor:
False to thy Gods, thy Brother, and thy Father,
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious Prince,
And from th' extremest vpward of thy head,
To the discent and dust below thy foote,
A most Toad-spotted Traitor. Say thou no,
This Sword, this arme, and my best spirits are bent
To proue vpon thy heart, where to I speake,
Thou lvest

Bast. In wisdom I should aske thy name,
But since thy out-side lookes so faire and Warlike,
And that thy tongue (some say) of breeding breathes,
What safe, and nicely I might well delay,
By rule of Knight-hood, I disdain and spurne:
Backe do I tesse these Treasons to thy head,
With the hell-hated Lye, ore-whelme thy heart,

Which for they yet glance by, and scarcely bruise,
This Sword of mine shall giue them instant way,
Where they shall rest for euer. Trumpets speake

Alb. Saue him, saue him.

Alarums. Fights.

Gon. This is practise Gloster,
By th' law of Warre, thou wast not bound to answer
An vnknowne opposite: thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozend, and beguild

Alb. Shut your mouth Dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it: hold Sir,
Thou worse then any name, reade thine owne cuill:
No tearing Lady, I perceiue you know it

Gon. Say if I do, the Lawes are mine not thine,
Who can araigne me for't?

Enter.

Alb. Most monstrous! O, know'st thou this paper?

Bast. Aske me not what I know

Alb. Go after her, she's desperate, gouerne her

Bast. What you haue charg'd me with,
That haue I done,
And more, much more, the time will bring it out.
'Tis past, and so am I: But what art thou
That hast this Fortune on me? If thou'rt Noble,
I do forgie thee

Edg. Let's exchange charity:
I am no lesse in blood then thou art Edmond,

If more, the more th'hast wrong'd me.
My name is Edgar and thy Fathers Sonne,
The Gods are iust, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague vs:
The darke and vitious place where thee he got,
Cost him his eyes

Bast. Th'hast spoken right, 'tis true,
The Wheele is come full circle, I am heere

Alb. Me thought thy very gate did prophesie
A Royall Noblenesse: I must embrace thee,
Let sorrow split my heart, if euer I
Did hate thee, or thy Father

Edg. Worthy Prince I know't

Alb. Where haue you hid your selfe?
How haue you knowne the miseries of your Father?

Edg. By nursing them my Lord. List a breefe tale,
And when 'tis told, O that my heart would burst.
The bloody proclamation to escape
That follow'd me so neere, (O our liues sweetnesse,
That we the paine of death would hourelly dye,
Rather then die at once) taught me to shift
Into a mad-mans rags, t' assume a semblance
That very Dogges disdain'd: and in this habit
Met I my Father with his bleeding Rings,
Their precious Stones new lost: became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, sau'd him from dispaire.
Neuer (O fault) reueal'd my selfe vnto him,
Vntill some halfe houre past when I was arm'd,
Not sure, though hoping of this good successe,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him our pilgrimage. But his flaw'd heart
(Alacke too weake the conflict to support)
Twixt two extremes of passion, ioy and greefe,

Burst smilingly

Bast. This speech of yours hath mou'd me,
And shall perchance do good, but speake you on,
You looke as you had something more to say

Alb. If there be more, more wofull, hold it in,
For I am almost ready to dissolue,
Hearing of this.

Enter a Gentleman.

Gen. Helpe, helpe: O helpe

Edg. What kinde of helpe?

Alb. Speake man

Edg. What meanes this bloody Knife?

Gen. 'Tis hot, it smoakes, it came euen from the heart
of- O she's dead

Alb. Who dead? Speake man

Gen. Your Lady Sir, your Lady; and her Sister
By her is poyson'd: she confesses it

Bast. I was contracted to them both, all three
Now marry in an instant

Edg. Here comes Kent.

Enter Kent.

Alb. Produce the bodies, be they aliue or dead;

Gonerill and Regans bodies brought out.

This iudgement of the Heauens that makes vs tremble.
Touches vs not with pittty: O, is this he?
The time will not allow the complement
Which very manners vrges

Kent. I am come
To bid my King and Master aye good night.
Is he not here?

Alb. Great thing of vs forgot,
Speake Edmund, where's the King? and where's Cordelia?
Seest thou this obiect Kent?

Kent. Alacke, why thus?

Bast. Yet Edmund was belou'd:
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herselfe

Alb. Euen so: couer their faces

Bast. I pant for life: some good I meane to do
Despight of mine owne Nature. Quickly send,
(Be briefe in it) to'th' Castle, for my Writ
Is on the life of Lear, and on Cordelia:
Nay, send in time

Alb. Run, run, O run

Edg. To who my Lord? Who ha's the Office?
Send thy token of reprecue

Bast. Well thought on, take my Sword,
Giue it the Captaine

Edg. Hast thee for thy life

Bast. He hath Commission from thy Wife and me,
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame vpon her owne dispaire,
That she for-did her selfe

Alb. The Gods defend her, beare him hence awhile.

Enter Lear with Cordelia in his armes.

Lear. Howle, howle, howle: O you are men of stones,
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd vse them so,
That Heauens vault should crack: she's gone for euer.
I know when one is dead, and when one liues,
She's dead as earth: Lend me a Looking-glasse,
If that her breath will mist or staine the stone,
Why then she liues

Kent. Is this the promis'd end?

Edg. Or image of that horror

Alb. Fall and cease

Lear. This feather stirs, she liues: if it be so,
It is a chance which do's redeeme all sorrowes
That euer I haue felt

Kent. O my good Master

Lear. Prythee away

Edg. 'Tis Noble Kent your Friend

Lear. A plague vpon you Murderors, Traitors all,
I might haue sau'd her, now she's gone for euer:
Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha:
What is't thou saist? Her voice was euer soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.

I kill'd the Slaue that was a hanging thee

Gent. 'Tis true (my Lords) he did

Lear. Did I not fellow?
I haue seene the day, with my good biting Faulchion
I would haue made him skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoile me. Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o'th' best, Ile tell you straight

Kent. If Fortune brag of two, she lou'd and hated,
One of them we behold

Lear. This is a dull sight, are you not Kent?

Kent. The same: your Seruant Kent,
Where is your Seruant Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that,
He'le strike and quickly too, he's dead and rotten

Kent. No my good Lord, I am the very man

Lear. Ile see that straight

Kent. That from your first of difference and decay,
Haue follow'd your sad steps

Lear. You are welcome hither

Kent. Nor no man else:
All's cheerlesse, darke, and deadly,
Your eldest Daughters haue fore-done themselues,
And desperately are dead

Lear. I so I thinke

Alb. He knowes not what he saies, and vaine is it

That we present vs to him.

Enter a Messenger.

Edg. Very bootlesse

Mess. Edmund is dead my Lord

Alb. That's but a trifle heere:
You Lords and Noble Friends, know our intent,
What comfort to this great decay may come,
Shall be appli'd. For vs we will resigne,
During the life of this old Maiesty
To him our absolute power, you to your rights,
With boote, and such addition as your Honours
Haue more then merited. All Friends shall
Taste the wages of their vertue, and all Foes
The cup of their deseruings: O see, see

Lear. And my poore Foole is hang'd: no, no, no life?
Why should a Dog, a Horse, a Rat haue life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Neuer, neuer, neuer, neuer, neuer.
Pray you vndo this Button. Thanke you Sir,
Do you see this? Looke on her? Looke her lips,
Looke there, looke there.

He dies.

Edg. He faints, my Lord, my Lord

Kent. Breake heart, I prythee breake

Edg. Looke vp my Lord

Kent. Vex not his ghost, O let him passe, he hates him,
That would vpon the wracke of this tough world
Stretch him out longer

Edg. He is gon indeed

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endur'd so long,
He but vsurpt his life

Alb. Beare them from hence, our present businesse
Is generall woe: Friends of my soule, you twaine,
Rule in this Realme, and the gor'd state sustaine

Kent. I haue a iourney Sir, shortly to go,
My Master calls me, I must not say no

Edg. The waight of this sad time we must obey,
Speake what we feele, not what we ought to say:
The oldest hath borne most, we that are yong,
Shall neuer see so much, nor liue so long.

Exeunt. with a dead March.

FINIS. THE TRAGEDIE OF KING LEAR.

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Executive Director's Notes:

In addition to the notes below, and so you will *NOT* think all the spelling errors introduced by the printers of the time have been corrected, here are the first few lines of Hamlet, as they are presented herein:

Barnardo. Who's there?
Fran. Nay answer me: Stand & vnfold
your selfe

Bar. Long liue the King

As I understand it, the printers often ran out of certain words or letters they had often packed into a "cliche". . .this is the original meaning of the term cliche. . .and thus, being unwilling to unpack the cliches, and thus you will see some substitutions that look very odd. . .such as the exchanges of u for v, v for u, above. . .and you may wonder why they did it this way, presuming

Shakespeare did not actually write the play in this manner. . . .

The answer is that they MAY have packed "liue" into a cliché at a time when they were out of "v"'s. . . possibly having used "vv" in place of some "w"'s, etc. This was a common practice of the day, as print was still quite expensive, and they didn't want to spend more on a wider selection of characters than they had to.

You will find a lot of these kinds of "errors" in this text, as I have mentioned in other times and places, many "scholars" have an extreme attachment to these errors, and many have accorded them a very high place in the "canon" of Shakespeare. My father read an assortment of these made available to him by Cambridge University in England for several months in a glass room constructed for the purpose. To the best of my knowledge he read ALL those available . . . in great detail. . . and determined from the various changes, that Shakespeare most likely did not write in nearly as many of a variety of errors we credit him for, even though he was in/famous for signing his name with several different spellings.

So, please take this into account when reading the comments below made by our volunteer who prepared this file: you may see errors that are "not" errors. . . .

So . . . with this caveat. . . we have NOT changed the canon errors, here is the Project Gutenberg Etext of Shakespeare's The Tragedie of King Lear.

Michael S. Hart
Project Gutenberg
Executive Director

Scanner's Notes: What this is and isn't. This was taken from a copy of Shakespeare's first folio and it is as close as I can come in ASCII to the printed text.

The elongated S's have been changed to small s's and the conjoined ae have been changed to ae. I have left the spelling, punctuation, capitalization as close as possible to the printed text. I have corrected some spelling mistakes (I have put together a spelling dictionary devised from the spellings of the Geneva Bible and Shakespeare's First Folio and have unified spellings according to this template), typo's and expanded abbreviations as I have come across them. Everything within brackets [] is what I have added. So if you don't like that you can delete everything within the brackets if you want a purer Shakespeare.

Another thing that you should be aware of is that there are textual differences between various copies of the first folio. So there may

be differences (other than what I have mentioned above) between this and other first folio editions. This is due to the printer's habit of setting the type and running off a number of copies and then proofing the printed copy and correcting the type and then continuing the printing run. The proof run wasn't thrown away but incorporated into the printed copies. This is just the way it is. The text I have used was a composite of more than 30 different First Folio editions' best pages.

If you find any scanning errors, out and out typos, punctuation errors, or if you disagree with my spelling choices please feel free to email me those errors. I wish to make this the best etext possible. My email address for right now are haradda@aol.com and davidr@inconnect.com. I hope that you enjoy this.

David Reed