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| Shakespeare: King Lear | C:\Users\Skip\Desktop\fleuron_1.png | Act 1, Scene 1 |

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|  |  | | Enter Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund. |
|  | *Kent* | | I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany |
|  |  | | than Cornwall. |
|  | *Gloucester* | | It did always seem so to us; but now in the division of the |
|  |  | | kingdom, it appears not which of the Dukes he values |
|  |  | | most, for *equalities* are so weighed, that curiosity in |
|  |  | | neither can make choice of either's moiety. |
|  | *Kent* | | Is not this your son, my lord? |
|  | *Gloucester* | | His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge. I have so often |
|  |  | | blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to't. |
| 10 | *Kent* | | I cannot conceive you. |
|  | *Gloucester* | | Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she |
|  |  | | grew round wombed, and had indeed, sir, a son for her |
|  |  | | cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a |
|  |  | | fault? |
| 15 | *Kent* | | I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so |
|  |  | | proper. |
|  | *Gloucester* | | But I have a son, sir, by order of law, some year elder than |
|  |  | | this, who yet is no dearer in my account. Though this |
|  |  | | knave came something saucily to the world before he was |
| 20 |  | | sent for, yet was his mother fair, there was good sport at |
|  |  | | his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do |
|  |  | | you know this noble gentleman, Edmund? |
|  | *Edmund* | | No, my lord. |
|  | *Gloucester* | | My Lord of Kent. Remember him hereafter as my |
|  |  | | honourable friend. |
| 25 | *Edmund* | | My services to your lordship. |
|  | *Kent* | | I must love you, and sue to know you better. |
|  | *Edmund* | | Sir, I shall study deserving. |
|  | *Gloucester* | | He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. |
|  |  | | [Sound a sennet.] The King is coming. |
|  |  | | Enter one with a coronet, King Lear, Cornwall, Albany, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, and attendants. |
| 30 | *Lear* | | Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester. |
|  | *Gloucester* | | I shall, my lord. |
|  |  | | Exit with Edmund |
|  | *Lear* | | Mean time we shall express our darker purpose. |
|  |  | | Give me the map there. Know that we have divided |
|  |  | | In three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent |
| 35 |  | | To shake all cares and business from our age, |
|  |  | | Conferring them on younger strengths, while we |
|  |  | | Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall, |
|  |  | | And you, our no less loving son of Albany, |
|  |  | | We have this hour a constant will to publish |
| 40 |  | | Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife |
|  |  | | May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy, |
|  |  | | Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love, |
|  |  | | Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn, |
|  |  | | And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters |
| 45 |  | | (Since now we will divest us both of rule, |
|  |  | | Interest of territory, cares of state), |
|  |  | | Which of you shall we say doth love us most, |
|  |  | | That we our largest bounty may extend |
|  |  | | Where nature doth with merit challenge? Goneril, |
| 50 |  | | Our eldest born, speak first. |
|  | *Goneril* | | Sir, I love you more than *words* can wield the matter, |
|  |  | | Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty, |
|  |  | | Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare, |
|  |  | | No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour; |
| 55 |  | | As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found; |
|  |  | | A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable: |
|  |  | | Beyond all manner of so much I love you. |
|  | *Cordelia* | | [Aside] What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent. |
|  | *Lear* | | Of all these bounds, even from this line to this, |
| 60 |  | | With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd, |
|  |  | | With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads, |
|  |  | | We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's [issue] |
|  |  | | Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter, |
|  |  | | Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall? *Speak.* |
| 65 | *Regan* | | I am made of that self metal as my sister, |
|  |  | | And prize me at her worth. In my true heart |
|  |  | | I find she names my very deed of love; |
|  |  | | Only she comes too short, that I profess |
|  |  | | Myself an enemy to all other joys |
| 70 |  | | Which the most precious square of sense *possesses*, |
|  |  | | And find I am alone felicitate |
|  |  | | In your dear Highness' love. |
|  | *Cordelia* | | [Aside] Then poor Cordelia! |
|  |  | | And yet not so, since I am sure my love's |
| 75 |  | | More ponderous than my tongue. |
|  | *Lear* | | To thee and thine hereditary ever |
|  |  | | Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom, |
|  |  | | No less in space, validity, and pleasure, |
|  |  | | Than that conferred on Goneril. — Now, our joy, |
| 80 |  | | Although our last and least, to whose young love |
|  |  | | The vines of France and milk of Burgundy |
|  |  | | Strive to be interess'd, what can you say to draw |
|  |  | | A third more opulent than your sisters'? Speak. |
|  | *Cordelia* | | Nothing, my lord. |
| 85 | *Lear* | | Nothing? |
|  | *Cordelia* | | Nothing. |
|  | *Lear* | | Nothing will come of nothing, speak again. |
|  | *Cordelia* | | Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave |
|  |  | | My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty |
| 90 |  | | According to my bond, no more nor less. |
|  | *Lear* | | How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a little, |
|  |  | | Lest you may mar your fortunes. |
|  | *Cordelia* | | Good my lord, |
|  |  | | You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I |
|  |  | | Return those duties back as are right fit, |
| 95 |  | | Obey you, love you, and most honour you. |
|  |  | | Why have my sisters husbands, if they say |
|  |  | | They love you all? Happily, when I shall wed, |
|  |  | | That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry |
|  |  | | Half my love with him, half my care and duty. |
| 100 |  | | Sure I shall never marry like my sisters, |
|  |  | | To love my father all. |
|  | *Lear* | | But goes thy heart with this? |
|  | *Cordelia* | | Ay, my good lord. |
|  | *Lear* | | So young, and so untender? |
|  | *Cordelia* | | So young, my lord, and true. |
| 105 | *Lear* | | Let it be so: thy truth then be thy dower! |
|  |  | | For by the sacred radiance of the sun, |
|  |  | | The *mysteries* of Hecate and the night; |
|  |  | | By all the operation of the orbs, |
|  |  | | From whom we do exist and cease to be; |
| 110 |  | | Here I disclaim all my paternal care, |
|  |  | | Propinquity and property of blood, |
|  |  | | And as a stranger to my heart and me |
|  |  | | Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian, |
|  |  | | Or he that makes his generation messes |
| 115 |  | | To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom |
|  |  | | Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd, |
|  |  | | As thou my sometime daughter. |
|  | *Kent* | | Good my liege — |
|  | *Lear* | | Peace, Kent! |
|  |  | | Come not between the dragon and his wrath; |
| 120 |  | | I loved her most, and thought to set my rest |
|  |  | | On her kind nursery. [to Cordelia.] Hence, and avoid my sight! |
|  |  | | So be my grave my peace, as here I give |
|  |  | | Her father's heart from her. Call France. Who stirs? |
|  |  | | Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany, |
| 125 |  | | With my two daughters' dowers digest the third; |
|  |  | | Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her. |
|  |  | | I do invest you jointly with my power, |
|  |  | | Pre‑eminence, and all the large effects |
|  |  | | That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course, |
| 130 |  | | With reservation of an hundred knights |
|  |  | | By you to be sustained, shall our abode |
|  |  | | Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain |
|  |  | | The name, and all th' addition to a king; |
|  |  | | The sway, revenue, execution of the rest, |
| 135 |  | | Beloved sons, be yours, which to confirm, |
|  |  | | This coronet part between you. |
|  | *Kent* | | Royal Lear, |
|  |  | | Whom I have ever honoured as my king, |
|  |  | | Loved as my father, as my master followed, |
|  |  | | As my great patron thought on in my prayers — |
| 140 | *Lear* | | The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft. |
|  | *Kent* | | Let it fall rather, though the fork invade |
|  |  | | The region of my heart; be Kent unmannerly |
|  |  | | When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man? |
|  |  | | Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak |
| 145 |  | | When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour’s bound, |
|  |  | | When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state, |
|  |  | | And in thy best consideration check |
|  |  | | This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgment, |
|  |  | | Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least, |
| 150 |  | | Nor are those empty‑hearted whose low sounds |
|  |  | | Reverb no hollowness. |
|  | *Lear* | | Kent, on thy life, no more. |
|  | *Kent* | | My life I never held but as *a* pawn |
|  |  | | To wage against thine enemies, *nor fear* to lose it, |
|  |  | | Thy safety being motive. |
|  | *Lear* | | Out of my sight! |
| 155 | *Kent* | | See better, Lear, and let me still remain |
|  |  | | The true blank of thine eye. |
|  | *Lear* | | Now, by Apollo — |
|  | *Kent* | | Now, by Apollo, King, |
|  |  | | Thou swear'st thy gods in vain. |
|  | *Lear* | | O vassal! Miscreant [Starts to draw his sword.] |
|  | *Alb & Corn.* | | Dear sir, forbear. |
| 160 | *Kent* | | Kill thy physician, and *the* fee bestow |
|  |  | | Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift, |
|  |  | | Or whilst I can vent clamor from my throat, |
|  |  | | I'll tell thee thou dost evil. |
|  | *Lear* | | Hear me, recreant, |
|  |  | | On thine allegiance, hear me! |
| 165 |  | | That thou hast sought to make us break our vows, |
|  |  | | Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride |
|  |  | | To come betwixt our sentence and our power, |
|  |  | | Which nor our nature nor our place can bear, |
|  |  | | Our potency made good, take thy reward. |
| 170 |  | | Five days we do allot thee, for provision |
|  |  | | To shield thee from disasters of the world, |
|  |  | | And on the sixth to turn thy hated back |
|  |  | | Upon our kingdom. If, on the tenth day following, |
|  |  | | Thy banished trunk be found in our dominions, |
| 175 |  | | The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter, |
|  |  | | This shall not be revok'd. |
|  | *Kent* | | Fare thee well, King; sith thus thou wilt appear, |
|  |  | | Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here. |
|  |  | | [To Cordelia.] The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid, |
| 180 |  | | That justly think'st and hast most rightly said! |
|  |  | | [To Regan and Goneril.] And your large speeches may your deeds approve, |
|  |  | | That good effects may spring from words of love. |
|  |  | | Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu, |
|  |  | | He'll shape his old course in a country new. |
|  |  | | Exit |
|  |  | Flourish. Enter Gloucester with France and Burgundy, attendants. | |
| 185 | *Cordelia ?* | | Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord. |
|  | *Lear* | | My Lord of Burgundy, |
|  |  | | We first address toward you, who with this king |
|  |  | | Hath rivalled for our daughter. What, in the least, |
|  |  | | Will you require in present dower with her, |
| 190 |  | | Or cease your quest of love? |
|  | *Burgundy* | | Most royal Majesty, |
|  |  | | I crave no more than hath your Highness offered, |
|  |  | | Nor will you tender less. |
|  | *Lear* | | Right noble Burgundy, |
|  |  | | When she was dear to us, we did hold her so, |
|  |  | | But now her price is fallen. Sir, there she stands: |
| 195 |  | | If aught within that little seeming substance, |
|  |  | | Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced, |
|  |  | | And nothing more, may fitly like your Grace, |
|  |  | | She's there, and she is yours. |
|  | *Burgundy* | | I know no answer. |
|  | *Lear* | | Will you, with those infirmities she owes, |
| 200 |  | | Unfriended, new adopted to our hate, |
|  |  | | Dowered with our curse, and strangered with our oath, |
|  |  | | Take her, or leave her? |
|  | *Burgundy* | | Pardon me, royal sir, |
|  |  | | Election makes not up in such conditions. |
|  | *Lear* | | Then leave her, sir, for by the power that made me, |
| 205 |  | | I tell you all her wealth. [To France.] For you, great King, |
|  |  | | I would not from your love make such a stray |
|  |  | | To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you |
|  |  | | T' avert your liking a more worthier way |
|  |  | | Than on a wretch whom Nature is ashamed |
| 210 |  | | Almost t' acknowledge hers. |
|  | *France* | | This is most strange, |
|  |  | | That she, whom even but now was your *best* object, |
|  |  | | The argument of your praise, balm of your age, |
|  |  | | The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time |
|  |  | | Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle |
| 215 |  | | So many folds of favour. Sure her offence |
|  |  | | Must be of such unnatural degree |
|  |  | | That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection |
|  |  | | Fall into taint; which to believe of her |
|  |  | | Must be a faith that reason without miracle |
| 220 |  | | Should never plant in me. |
|  | *Cordelia* | | I yet beseech your Majesty — |
|  |  | | If for I want that glib and oily art |
|  |  | | To speak and purpose not, since what I *well* intend, |
|  |  | | I'll do't before I speak — that you make known |
|  |  | | It is no vicious blot, murther, or foulness, |
| 225 |  | | No unchaste action, or dishonoured step, |
|  |  | | That hath deprived me of your grace and favour, |
|  |  | | But even for want of that for which I am richer — |
|  |  | | A still‑soliciting eye, and such a tongue |
|  |  | | That I am glad I have not, though not to have it |
| 230 |  | | Hath lost me in your liking. |
|  | *Lear* | | Better thou |
|  |  | | Hadst not been born than not t' have pleased me better. |
|  | *France* | | Is it but this — a tardiness in nature |
|  |  | | Which often leaves the history unspoke |
|  |  | | That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy, |
| 235 |  | | What say you to the lady? Love's not love |
|  |  | | When it is mingled with regards that stands |
|  |  | | Aloof from th' entire point. Will you have her? |
|  |  | | She is herself a dowry. |
|  | *Burgundy* | | Royal King, |
|  |  | | Give but that portion which yourself proposed, |
| 240 |  | | And here I take Cordelia by the hand, |
|  |  | | Duchess of Burgundy. |
|  | *Lear* | | Nothing. I have sworn, I am firm. |
|  | *Burgundy* | | I am sorry then you have so lost a father |
|  |  | | That you must lose a husband. |
|  | *Cordelia* | | Peace be with Burgundy! |
| 245 |  | | Since that *respect and fortune* are his love, |
|  |  | | I shall not be his wife. |
|  | *France* | | Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich being poor, |
|  |  | | Most choice forsaken, and most loved despised, |
|  |  | | Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon, |
| 250 |  | | Be it lawful I take up what's cast away. |
|  |  | | Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect |
|  |  | | My love should kindle to inflamed respect. |
|  |  | | Thy dowerless daughter, King, thrown to my chance, |
|  |  | | Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France. |
| 255 |  | | Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy |
|  |  | | Can buy this unprized precious maid of me. |
|  |  | | Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind, |
|  |  | | Thou losest here, a better where to find. |
|  | *Lear* | | Thou hast her, France, let her be thine, for we |
| 260 |  | | Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see |
|  |  | | That face of hers again. [to Cordelia.] Therefore be gone, |
|  |  | | Without our grace, our love, our benison. — |
|  |  | | Come, noble Burgundy. |
|  |  | | [Flourish. Exeunt all but France, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia] |
|  | *France* | | Bid farewell to your sisters. |
| 265 | *Cordelia* | | The jewels of our father, with washed eyes |
|  |  | | Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are, |
|  |  | | And like a sister am most loath to call |
|  |  | | Your faults as they are named. Love well our father; |
|  |  | | To your professed bosoms I commit him, |
| 270 |  | | But yet, alas, stood I within his grace, |
|  |  | | I would prefer him to a better place. |
|  |  | | So farewell to you both. |
|  | *Regan* | | Prescribe not us our duty. |
|  | *Goneril* | | Let your study |
|  |  | | Be to content your lord, who hath received you |
| 275 |  | | At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted, |
|  |  | | And well are worth the want that you have wanted. |
|  | *Cordelia* | | Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides, |
|  |  | | Who covers faults, at last with shame derides. |
|  |  | | Well may you prosper! |
|  | *France* | | Come, my fair Cordelia. |
|  |  | | [Exeunt France and Cordelia.] |
| 280 | *Goneril* | | Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most nearly |
|  |  | | appertains to us both. I think our father will hence |
|  |  | | to-night. |
|  | *Regan* | | That's most certain, and with you; next month with us. |
|  | *Goneril* | | You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we |
| 285 |  | | have made of it hath not been little. He always loved our |
|  |  | | sister most, and with what poor judgment he hath now |
|  |  | | cast her off appears too grossly. |
|  | *Regan* | | 'Tis the infirmity of his age, yet he hath ever but slenderly |
|  |  | | known himself. |
| 290 | *Goneril* | | The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; |
|  |  | | then must we look from his age to receive not alone the |
|  |  | | imperfections of long-ingraffed condition, but therewithal |
|  |  | | the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years |
|  |  | | bring with them. |
| 295 | *Regan* | | Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as |
|  |  | | this of Kent's banishment. |
|  | *Goneril* | | There is further compliment of leave‑taking between |
|  |  | | France and him. Pray *you* let us *hit* together; if our father |
|  |  | | carry authority with such disposition as he bears, this last |
| 300 |  | | surrender of his will but offend us. |
|  | *Regan* | | We shall further think of it. |
|  | *Goneril* | | We must do something, and i' th' heat. *[Exeunt.]* |
|  |  | |  |