

Act I

Act I Scene I

Gloucester and Kent speak of the division of the kingdom, and Kent meets Edmund, the bastard son of the Earl of Gloucester. King Lear announces his intention of dividing the kingdom into three parts, and giving one part to each of his daughters. The largest share will be given to the daughter who can say that she loves him the most. Goneril is the first to speak, and she is duly rewarded. Regan speaks next, and is given her share of the kingdom. But when Lear turns to his favorite daughter, Cordelia, who is the youngest of the three, he is very disappointed. Cordelia refuses to flatter Lear as her sisters have done. In a rage, Lear disowns Cordelia, and distributes her land between Goneril and Regan. Kent remonstrates with the king; and Lear banishes him from the kingdom. Cordelia's two suitors are called in, and Lear gives his daughter in marriage to the Duke of Burgundy. But Cordelia now has no dowry, and Burgundy rejects King Lear's offer. The King of France, however, asks to know the reason for Lear's displeasure. When he learns the truth, he takes Cordelia as his wife, and they leave for France. Goneril and Regan exchange a few words together.

1-32 Kent and Gloucester chat in an easy, colloquial prose, which gives way to a formal blank verse when the king begins to speak.

1 more affected: rather preferred.

2 Albany: Brute, the first king of Britain, gave to his younger son Albanus the territory north of the river Humber, which was thereafter called Albanus or Albany.

3 values: esteems.

5-6 equalities: moiety: their shares (which are meant to be equal) are in fact

Scene I

King Lear's palace

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 weigh'd 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 blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am braz'd to't.

Kent

I cannot conceive you.

Gloucester

Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-womb'd, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

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 sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson

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so evenly balanced that no amount of careful scrutiny ('curiosity') in comparing them could make either duke prefer the other's part ('moiety').

8 *breeding* . . . *charge*: they said I was his father; or, I've paid for his upbringing.

10 *braz'd to't*: brazen (= no longer embarrassed) about it.

11 *conceive you*: understand your meaning; Gloucester makes a pun with 'conceive' (= become pregnant) in the next line.

15 *smell a fault*: find anything wrong in this.

16 *issue* . . . *proper*: since it has had such a fine result.

18 *by order of law*: legitimately.
some year: about a year.

19 *no dearer in my account*: worth no more in my estimation.

20 *knave*: lad. *dishonest* - *villain boy/youth*
something: somewhat.

22 *whoreson*: little bastard—Gloucester's tone is rough but affectionate.

28 *services*: respectful duty.

29 *sue*: do what I can.

30 *study deserving*: make every effort to earn your good opinion.

31 *out*: out of the country.

32s.d. *Sennet*: A trumpet fanfare heralds the king's entrance.

coronet: crown—an emblem for the kingdom; the stage property will be used at line 138.

must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edmund

25 No, my lord.

Gloucester

My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edmund

My services to your lordship.

Kent

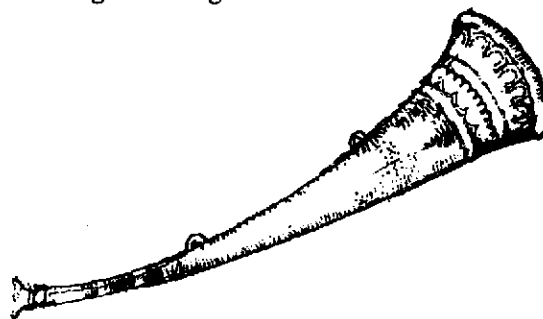
I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edmund

30 Sir, I shall study deserving.

Gloucester

He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. The king is coming.



Sennet. Enter one bearing a coronet, King Lear, Cornwall, Albany, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, and Attendants

Lear

Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

Gloucester

I shall, my liege.

[Exeunt Gloucester and Edmund]

Lear

35 Meantime, 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 To shake all cares and business from our age, Conferring them on younger strengths, while we

33 *Attend*: escort into the royal presence.

35 *we*: Lear speaks with the 'royal plural'.
express our darker purpose: explain my secret intention (i.e. to reward his daughters for their declarations of love—and give the best portion to Cordelia); the division of the kingdom will not be straightforward.

37 *fast*: fixed, unalterable.

40 *son*: i.e. son-in-

42 *constant will*: firm

43 *publish*: to m

43 *daughters' seven*

44 *dowries of each*

44 *prevented*: fore

45 *Great*: noble.

46 *Long* . . . *sojour*

time in their co

48 *Interest*: posses

52-2 Lear will gi

daughter who

by what she de

as by her natur

54 *more* . . . *matter*

say.

55 *space and liberty*

to enjoy it.

57 *grace*: favour, h

59 *unable*: inadeq

63 *shadowy*: shady

champaigns: open

rich'd: enriched

64 *wide-skirted me*

65 *lady*: queen, ru

66 *Be this perpetua*

intends to divi

68 *self mettle*: exac

makes a pun w

69 *prize me at her*

value on mysel

70 *she names* . . . *k*

my love is (as t

same 'deed' =

71 *comes too short*

thar: in that.

73 *the most* . . . *sen*

human being (f

perfectly fitting

way).

74 *alone felicitate*:

40 son: i.e. son-in-law.

42 constant will: firm purpose.
to publish: to make known.

43 daughters' several dowers: the different dowries of each daughter.

44 prevented: forestalled.

45 Great: noble.

46 Long . . . sojourn: have stayed here a long time in their courtship of Cordelia.

49 Interest: possession.

51-2 Lear will give most generously to the daughter who can claim ('challenge') it by what she deserves (her 'merit') as well as by her natural right.

54 more . . . matter: more than words can say.

55 space and liberty: freedom, and the ability to enjoy it.

57 grace: favour, happiness.

59 unable: inadequate.

63 shadowy: shady.
champains: open plains.
rich'd: enriched.

64 wide-skirted meads: extensive meadows.

65 lady: queen, ruler.

66 Be this perpetual: in perpetuity; Lear intends to divide the kingdom for ever.

68 self mettle: exactly the same nature; Regan makes a pun with 'metal'.

69 prize me at her worth: put exactly the same value on myself.

70 she names . . . love: she tells you just what my love is (as though she produced the same 'deed' = legal document).

71 comes too short: does not go far enough. short: in that.

73 she most . . . sense: the most perfect human being (to be 'square' is to be perfectly fitting, harmonious in every way).

74 alone felicitate: only really made joyful.

40 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 ^{angry, bitter}
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife ^{conflict}
May be prevented now. The princes, France and
Burgundy, ^{competitor, opponent}

45 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,
(Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, ^{possession} cares of state),

50 Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Goneril

Sir, I love you more than word can ^{say} wield the matter;

55 Dearer than eye-sight, space and liberty; ^{freedom and ability to enjoy it}
Beyond what can be valued rich or rare;

← No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor and speech unable;

60 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,
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd ^{open plains (fields)}
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads, ^{meadow}
We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issues
Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter
Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall?

Regan

I am made of that self mettle as my sister, ^{same nature} (Pun) → metal
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart ^{same value}

70 I find she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short: that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys

Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
And find I am alone felicitate.

75 In your dear highness' love.

Cordelia

[Aside]

Then poor Cordelia!

words sound
alike but have
different meanings

← Pun → play on words (double meaning)
mettle → same nature metal → solid material

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77 *more . . . tongue*: more weighty than my tongue can express.

78 *hereditary ever*: see line 66.

80 *validity*: value.

82 *last, and least*: youngest child, who would legally be entitled to only the smallest portion.

83 *vines*: vineyards.
milk: pasture-land (for grazing dairy herds).

84 *interest'd*: concerned with.

89 *Nothing will come of nothing*: Lear quotes a common Latin proverb, *ex nihilo nihil fit*.

92 *bond*: bounden duty.

95 *bred me*: fathered me; see line 8.
96 *right fit*: in the proper proportions.

99 *Happily*: when it happens that.
100 *plight*: troth-plight, pledge of marriage.

103 *all*: with all their hearts.

104 *goes . . . this?*: do you really mean all this?

And yet not so; since I am sure my love's
More ponderous than my tongue.

Lear

To thee and thine, *he draws her share showing land he gave*
hereditary ever,
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,
80 No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy,
Although our last, and least; to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to draw
85 A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cordelia

Nothing, my lord.

Lear

Nothing?

Cordelia

Nothing.

Lear

Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

Cordelia

90 Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave *(sigh)*
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
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,

→ 95 You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Happily, when I shall wed,
100 That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

Lear

But goes thy heart with this?

Cordelia

Ay, my good lord.

Lear

105 So young, and so untender?

*rough/unkind
not tender or soft*

Cordelia

So young, my lord, and true.

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,

110 By all the operation of the orbs

From whom we do exist and cease to be,

Here I disclaim all my paternal care,

Propinquity and property of blood,

And as a stranger to my heart and me

115 Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,

Or he that makes his generation messes

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

120 Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.

I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest

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



So be my grave my peace, as here I give

125 Her father's heart from her! Call France. Who stirs?

Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,

With my two daughters' dowers digest the third;

Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.

I do invest you jointly with my power,

130 Pre-eminence, and all the large effects

That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,

With reservation of an hundred knights

By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode

Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain

107 thy... dower: you can take this honesty for your (only) dowry.

108 mysteries: secret rites. *are many ritual*
Hecate: In classical mythology, Hecate was goddess of the underworld and of witchcraft.

109 operation... be: influences of the planets which affect our lives and deaths.

110 Propinquity... blood: blood relationship and the obligations of kinship.

111 from this: from this time.

112 barbarous Scythian: The inhabitants of Scythia (= modern Russia) were traditionally thought to be savage.

113 makes... messes: chops up into food the parents—or children—of his own breeding.

114 To... appetite: in mere gluttony.

115 sometime: former; Lear renounces Cordelia.

116 dragon: Lear personifies himself as the heraldic beast of Wales, a red lion rampant, which is borne on the arms of all British monarchs.

117 wrath: i.e. the object of his wrath.

118 set my rest: settle everything I had (Lear uses a gambler's phrase).

119 kind nursery: tender loving care.

120 So... peace: may I find peace only in my grave.

121 Who stirs?: Lear calls for some action from the courtiers.

122 Let pride... marry her: let her pride (which she calls plain-speaking—see line 107) be her dowry and find a husband for her.

123 jointly: both together.

124 Pre-eminence: first position.
all... effects: all the magnificent accompaniments.

125 troop with majesty: are associated with kingship.

monthly course: month by month.

126 With reservation: Lear uses a legal term to make an exception; he will give up everything except the hundred knights.

127 sustain'd: supported.

128 our abode... due turn: stay with each of you in turn.

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- 135 *name and all th'addition to*: title and proper ceremonious treatment due to. *sway*: government.
 137 *Revenue*: The word is stressed on the second syllable—'Revénué'.
 138 *Royal Lear*: Kent addresses King Lear with proper formality.
 142 *make . . . shaft*: get away from the arrow, or, let go of the arrow.
 143 *fork*: two-pointed arrowhead.



- 144–5 *unmannerly . . . mad*: Kent is prepared to speak bluntly when he sees the king acting so rashly.
 146 *thou*: This form of the second person ('you') is an intimate address, which was used only with equals or inferiors.
dread: fear.
 147 *plainness*: plain speaking.
 148 *Reserve thy state*: keep hold of everything you have.
 149 *in thy best consideration*: when you have thought things over carefully.
 150 *answer . . . judgment*: I'll stake my life on this opinion.
 152–3 Kent seems to be offering an opposite sentence for the proverbial saying, 'empty vessels make most sound'.
 153 *Reverb*: re-echo; the word is Shakespeare's own coinage from 'reverberate'.
 154 *held*: valued.
pawn: the stake in a wager.
 155 *wage*: gamble, risk.
 156 *thy . . . motive*: for your sake.
 157 *still*: always.
 158 *true blank*: the white spot in the centre of a target; if Lear would fix his sights on Kent, his intentions would not misfire.
 159 *Apollo*: Lear swears by the Roman sun-god—an indication that the play is set in a pre-Christian world.
 160 *miscreant*: misbeliever; Kent has denied Lear's god.

- gives his power to his daughter but wishes to keep the title.*
 135 The name and all th'addition to a king; the sway, Revenue, execution of the rest, Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm, This coronet part between you.
 Kent
 Royal Lear,
 Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
 140 Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd, As my great patron thought on in my prayers,—
 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,
 145 When Lear is mad. What would'st thou do, old man? Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound
 When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state; And, in thy best consideration, check
 150 This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment, Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least; 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
 155 To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it, Thy safety being motive.
 Lear
learn to see better and let me stay here where you can look for good advice.
 Kent
 See better, Lear; and let me still remain The true blank of thine eye.
 Lear
 Now, by Apollo,—
 Kent
 Now, by Apollo, king,
 160 Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.
 Lear
 O, vassal! miscreant!
 Laying his hand upon his sword

Albany, Cornwall

Dear sir, forbear.

Kent

Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
165 I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Lear

traitor
Hear me, recreant!

On thine allegiance, hear me!
That thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride
To come betwixt our sentence and our power,
170 Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
Our potency made good, take thy reward:
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
175 Upon our kingdom: if on the tenth day following
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter,
This shall not be revok'd.

Kent

Fare thee well, king; sith thus thou wilt appear,
180 Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.
[To Cordelia] The gods to their dear shelter take thee,
maid,
That justly think'st and hast most rightly said!
[To Goneril and Regan] And your large speeches may
your deeds approve,
That good effects may spring from words of love.
185 Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu!
He'll shape his old course in a country new.

[Exit

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

Gloucester

Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

Lear

My lord of Burgundy,
We first address toward you, who with this king
190 Hath rivall'd for our daughter. What, in the least,

164 vent: utter.

165 recreant: traitor, one who is false to his allegiance.

167 That: seeing that.

168 durst never yet: have never yet dared to do.

strain'd: unnatural.

169 'To intervene between the sentence and its execution.'

171 Our . . . good: since my power is confirmed.

172 for provision: to get all that you need.

176 trunk: body.

177 moment is thy death: you will die immediately.

Jupiter: The king of the Roman gods was also, in ancient times, worshipped in Britain; Lear's oaths help to establish the pre-Christian setting of the play.

179 sith: since.

180-86 Kent's rhyming couplets bring the episode to a close, summing up the situation and pointing the moral.

183 approve: confirm.

184 effects: deeds.

186 shape his old course: carry on in his usual manner—i.e. of speaking plainly.

173.d. Flourish: A trumpet-call heralds the approach of the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy.

189 address toward: address our remarks to.

190 rivall'd: competed.

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191 *present dower with her*: for her immediate dowry.

194 *tender*: offer.

195 *so*: i.e. dearly, highly valued.

197 *little-seeming substance*: The phrase is difficult to explain. Lear is offering Cordelia to Burgundy just as she is, without any addition to her person, and she does not appear to be very valuable; but 'little-seeming' could also mean 'unpretentious'.

198 *piec'd*: joined.

199 *fitly like*: be pleasing and seem suitable.

201 *infirmities*: disadvantages.
owes: owns.

202 *new-adopted*; . . . *hate*: whom I have just begun to hate.

203 *Dower'd with our curse*: given my curse for her only dowry.
stranger'd: made a stranger.

205 *Election . . . conditions*: I cannot reach a decision on such terms.

207 *tell*: describe, count up.
For: as for.

208 *make . . . stray*: stray so far.

209 *To match*: as to expect you to marry.

210 'To look in some different direction for a wife who is more deserving of you.'

213 *best object*: main object of your love, favourite.

214 *argument*: subject.
balm: comfort.

215 *trice*: instant.

216 *dismantle*: strip off.

217 *folds of favour*: layers of your affection.

218-19 *such . . . monsters it*: so unnatural as to be monstrous.

219-20 *your . . . taint*: your former love must be discredited.

Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

Burgundy

Most royal majesty,

I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

Lear

Right noble Burgundy,

195 When she was dear to us we did hold her so,
But now her price is fallen. Sir, there she stands:
If aught within that little-seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
200 She's there, and she is yours.

Burgundy

I know no answer.

Lear

Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

Burgundy

Pardon me, royal sir;

205 Election makes not up in such conditions.

Lear

Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made me,
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
210 T' avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom Nature is asham'd
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,

215 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-vouch'd affection
220 Fall into taint; which to believe of her,

221 *a faith . . . miracle*: it would take a miracle to make me believe this.

223 *If for*: even though.
want: lack.

224 *purpose not*: without meaning to do.

226 *vicious blot*: vice, moral stain.

227 *dishonour'd*: dishonourable.

229 *for which*: for want of which.

230 *still-soliciting*: always looking out for something.

232 *lost*: ruined.

234 *but*: no more than.

tardiness in nature: natural reticence.

235 *leaves the history unspoke*: does not talk about.

237 *What . . . to*: i.e. will you have?

238 *regards*: considerations.

239 *stand . . . point*: have nothing to do with the real issue.

241 *respect . . . his love*: what he really cares about is status and money.

Must be a faith that reason without miracle
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,
225 I'll do't before I speak), that you make known
It is no vicious blot, murder or foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour,
But even for want of that for which I am richer,
230 A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
That I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear

Hadst not been born than not t'have pleased me better. *that she hadn't been born than to displease him as she did.*

France

Is it but this? a tardiness in nature
235 Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love's not love
When it is mingled with regards that stand
Aloof from th'entire point. Will you have her?
240 She is herself a dowry.

Burgundy

Royal king,
Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear

Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Burgundy

245 I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father
That you must lose a husband.

Cordelia

Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respect and fortunes are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
250 Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:

253 *from . . . neglect*: because Cordelia has been cruelly neglected by the gods.

255 *chance*: lot.

257 *wat'rish*: Burgundy is a land with many streams and rivers—but France's adjective also serves to accuse the duke of weakness.

258 *unpriz'd*: unappreciated (by her father).

259 *though unkind*: although they have behaved unnaturally.

260 'You are losing this place in order to find a better one somewhere else.'

264 *benison*: blessing.

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 inflam'd respect.

255 Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:

Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy
Can buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.

Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:

260 Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

Lear

Thou hast her, France; let her be thine, for we

Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see

That face of hers again; therefore be gone

Without our grace, our love, our benison.

265 Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish. Exeunt Lear, Burgundy, Cornwall,
Albany, Gloucester, and Attendants*]



France

Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cordelia

The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes

Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are;

And like a sister am most loth to call

267 *The jewels*: you, who are the jewels.

wash'd eyes: tears in my eyes (and perhaps also 'clearer sight').

270 *as they are named*: for what they are.

271 *professed bosoms*: the love which you claim to have.

272 *within his grace*: in favour with him.

273 *prefer*: recommend.

277 *At Fortune's alms*: as a charitable hand-out.

obedience scanted: failed in your obedience (as a daughter).

277–280 Here again—as in lines 180–86—the rhymed couplets serve to close the episode and to point a moral.

278 'And deserve to be shown the same lack of affection (by your husband) that you have shown (to your father).'

270 Your faults as they are named. Love well our father:
To your professed bosoms I commit him:

But yet, alas! stood I within his grace,

I would prefer him to a better place.

So farewell to you both.

Regan

275 Prescribe not us our duty.

Goneril

Let your study

Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you

At Fortune's alms; you have obedience scanted,

And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

279 *plighted*: folded up
280 *What*: i.e. Time.

280–304 A complete mood is marked by unemotional prose
289 *will hence*: will go

289 *graspy*: obviously.

289 *rash*: impetuous, h
289 *look*: expect.

289 *long-engrafted cond*
nature.

289 *unconstant starts*: su

289 *compliment*: formali
289 *hit together*: agree w

289–2 *carry . . . bears*: o
such authority.

289 *this last surrender*: th
given up to us.

289 *afford us*: become a
289 *do*: i.e. not just think

289 *hear*: right now,
is hot.

*we will
within
duty*

279 *plighted*: folded up, concealed.
280 *Who*: i.e. Time.

Cordelia
Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides;
280 Who covers faults, at last with shame derides.
Well may you prosper!

France

Come, my fair Cordelia.
[*Exeunt France and Cordelia*]

282-304 A complete change of pace and mood is marked by the use of cold, unemotional prose.
283 *will hence*: will go hence.

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

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

Goneril

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

Regan

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

Goneril

The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look from his age, to receive not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted condition, but 295 therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Regan

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

Goneril

300 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 surrender of his will but offend us.

Regan

We shall further think of it.

Goneril

We must do something, and i'th'heat.

[*Exeunt*]

292 *rash*: impetuous, hot-headed.
293 *look*: expect.
294 *long-engrafted condition*: deeply-rooted nature.
297 *unconstant starts*: sudden impulses.
298 *compliment*: formality.
299 *hit together*: agree with each other.
300-2 *carry... bears*: continues to act with such authority.
301 *this last surrender*: this power he has just given up to us.
302 *offend us*: become a problem for us.
303 *it*: i.e. not just think about it.
304 *'th'heat*: right now, strike while the iron is hot.

his old age caused bad judgment in disowning his favourite Cordelia (he loved Cordelia best)
Cont-pine against father
we will witness more outburst from him (Cordelia disowned Kent banishment)
must act fast turning against their father