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Lear's Labour's Lost

by William Shakespeare &
Jeff Goode

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LEAR'S LABOUR'S LOST

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#1845-B

GENERAL PREFACE TO THE SERIES

They say that familiarity breeds contempt and there is no playwright, living or dead, whose work is more familiar to audiences the world over, than William Shakespeare. Four hundred years of almost continuous production, adaptation and recitation have ensured that even the completely uninitiated have a working knowledge of the Bard that can render some of his finest works formulaic.

What grade-schooler doesn't know that the love affair in *ROMEO AND JULIET* turns out badly? Or that the famous speech in *HAMLET* goes: "To be, or not to be, yadda yadda yadda..."? And in a medium where suspense is everything—where dramatic twists and comic turns both depend upon the element of surprise—having such a well-versed fan-base can be problematic. Ironically, the most gifted dramatist in history is often hard-pressed to impress our jaded modern audience, simply because it is impossible to remove their foreknowledge of the story and allow them to experience the plays in the unadulterated context in which Shakespeare's contemporaries saw them for the very first time.

The New Plays of William Shakespeare were developed as a means to a fresh perspective on these classic texts. Each play in the series intertwines two of the extant works to create an original script with authentically Shakespearean language, verse and characters, in new and unexpected situations whose outcome may still be in doubt.

The plays in this series are designed to be read, performed and enjoyed just as you would the traditional works of Shakespeare. Performers familiar with the canon will find that great lengths have been taken to preserve the integrity and intention of the original verse, rhyme and imagery. Conventions of Elizabethan stagecraft, dramaturgical analysis and scansion apply to the new plays as to the originals. Only the action is up in the air.

The series also seeks to address challenges common to present day production companies, such as cast size and imbalance of male and female roles.

It is hoped that these plays might offer both performers and audiences new insight into the genius and mastery of Shakespeare, freed of a few centuries' preconception, and perhaps with a few surprises still intact.

LEAR'S LABOUR'S LOST was first performed May 4th, 2008, at the Attic Theatre Center in Los Angeles.

Producing Artistic Director: James Carey

Artistic Director: Brian Shnipper

KING LEAR William Salyers

COSTARD Mark Fite

KENT Eric Jorgenson

GLOUCESTER David Fruechting

EDMUND Eric Curtis Johnson

EDGAR David Paul Wichert

PRINCESS Johanna McKay

GONERIL Robin Roy

REGAN Tisha Terrasini Banker

CORDELIA Kathleen Rose Perkins

JAQUENETTA Nora L. Frankovich

BOYET Allynde Joseph

OSWALD Dane Whitlock

NARRATION Adam Hahn

LEAR'S NAVARRE

Setting aside his sword, after a lifetime of battle, retiring King Lear doffs his crown and sues for peace to the rival French, hoping to leave his kingdom in the care of his three beloved daughters, and dedicate himself and his court to philosophical pursuits.

The king's loyal confidantes, the earls of Kent and Gloucester, as well as Costard the fool, have agreed to join him in three years of scholarly contemplation, enforced by vows of abstinence and strict royal edicts to that effect.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LEAR, *King of Navarre*

EARL OF KENT

EARL OF GLOUCESTER

COSTARD, *Lear's fool*

EDGAR, *Gloucester's elder son*

EDMUND, *Gloucester's younger, bastard son*

PRINCESS, *daughter of the King of France*

BOYET, *a lady attending the Princess*

GONERIL, *Lear's eldest daughter*

REGAN, *Lear's second daughter*

CORDELIA, *Lear's youngest daughter*

JAQUENETTA, *a maidservant*

OSWALD, *a steward*

*Servants, Officers, Captain, Herald, Gentlemen, Soldiers, Musicians, Lords,
Ladies, and Attendants*

SOURCES

The sources for this play are William Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* (1595-6) and *The Tragedy of King Lear* (1605-6).

The author is indebted to the invaluable online resources of MIT's Shakespeare website (<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/>) and the Complete Moby™ Shakespeare.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

Every effort was made to preserve the rhythm, language and poetry of the original sources, particularly in the verse sections of the play.

A certain amount of rewording is necessary as a practical matter of fusing the two texts. For example, combining the role of the King of France (Lear) with the Princess of France (LLL) requires that numerous instances of "he" be replaced with "she," and "him" with "her," etc.

Whenever possible, replacement text is matched syllable-for-syllable. Thus, in verse sections, "man" might be replaced with "maid," rather than "woman," to preserve the meter.

Always, the objective is to ensure that the original rhyme scheme, pronunciation and operative words are not inadvertently affected by modifications in the storyline.

DOUBLING OF ROLES

In Elizabethan and Jacobean England, it was illegal for women to appear upon the public stage. Hence, the plays of Shakespeare were written to be performed by an all-male company of actors with only a handful of female characters—largely secondary roles played by boys.

These male-heavy casts present a challenge in modern-day stagings, where acting companies usually consist of a more balanced troupe of men and women. To accommodate this, gender-blind casting¹ is recommended for the plays of Shakespeare, as well as gender-reversal², to adapt the plays to the available talent pool.

The following breakdown for this play yields an abbreviated cast of twelve actors—six men, six women:

MALE	FEMALE
KING LEAR	PRINCESS OF FRANCE
COSTARD	GONERIL
KENT	REGAN
GLOUCESTER	CORDELIA
EDMUND	JAQUENETTA
EDGAR	BOYET

¹ Casting the best actor for the part, regardless of their gender.

² Changing the sex of the character to fit the actor who will be playing the part.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

William Shakespeare is an English poet and playwright, generally regarded as the greatest writer in the English language, and by many as the greatest dramatist in history. His extant work includes 37 plays, 154 sonnets, and a number of other poems and collaborations. His plays have been translated into virtually every language and performed throughout the world.

Jeff Goode is an American director, playwright and screenwriter. He is the creator of the Disney Channel's animated series *American Dragon: Jake Long*, and the author of over 50 plays and musicals, including *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*.

NEW PLAYS BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

& JEFF GOODE:

Romeo & Julius [Caesar]

Ham/thello: the Moor of Denmark

Lear's Labour's Lost

ACT I - Vowers & Dowers

SCENE 1 - King Lear's palace.

(Enter KENT and GLOUCESTER.)

GLOUCESTER

Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back know
you the reason?

KENT

Something he left imperfect in the state, that his personal
return was most required and necessary.

GLOUCESTER

Who hath he left behind him general?

KENT

The Princess of France, his daughter heir,
A maid of grace and complete majesty—
For well you know she comes in embassy
On serious business, with the king to speak
About surrender up of Aquitaine.

GLOUCESTER

You are not ignorant, all-telling fame
Doth noise abroad, that Lear hath made a vow,
Till painful study shall outwear three years,
No woman may approach his silent court.

KENT

The trick of that vow I do well remember.

GLOUCESTER

Else your memory is bad.

KENT

But who comes here?

(Enter EDMUND.)

EDMUND

This letter, father, craves a speedy answer;
'Tis from the country servant Jaquenetta.

GLOUCESTER

O, thy letter, thy letter! she's a good friend of mine.

(Takes the letter.)

Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

EDMUND

No, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

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

EDMUND

My services to your lordship.

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 it.

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?

KENT

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

GLOUCESTER

Though this knave came something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account,—

EDMUND

My brother Edgar.

GLOUCESTER

And his troth plight,
That he would wed the one or else the other
Of King Lear's eldest daughters.

KENT

I thought your son had more affected the Princess
Goneril than Regan.

GLOUCESTER

It did always seem so to us: but now, in the division of
his affection, it appears not which of the two he values
most.

EDMUND

But what to me, my lord? but what to me? A wife?

GLOUCESTER

Your wife, so I would say, shall be Cordelia,
The younger daughter of our noble king.

EDMUND

[Aside] Whose daughters profit very greatly under
him.

(GLOUCESTER gives him a jewel pouch.)

GLOUCESTER

If you will marry, ope this purse, and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,—
As fear not but you shall,—show her this ring;
And to her sweet hand see thou do commend it;
And she will tell you who your fortune is
If yet you do not know.

EDMUND

She is a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods,
A wife of such means were felicity.

(Exit. Sennet.)

GLOUCESTER

The king is coming.

(Enter KING LEAR, COSTARD the king's fool, and Attendants.)

KING LEAR

Our late edict shall strongly stand in force;
Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;
Our court shall be a little Academe,
Still and contemplative in living art.
You three, Lord Kent, Lord Gloucester, and the
fool,—

COSTARD

Your servant, and Costard.

KING LEAR

Have sworn for three years' term to live with me,
My fellow-scholars, and to keep those statutes
That are recorded in this schedule here:

(Presents a proclamation for them to sign.)

If you are arm'd to do as sworn to do,
Subscribe to your deep oaths, and keep it too.

KENT

So much, dear liege, I have already sworn,
That is, to live and study here three years.
But there are other strict observances;
As, not to see a woman in that term,
Which I hope well is not enrollèd there;
And one day in a week to touch no food,
And then, to sleep but three hours in the night,
And not be seen to wink of all the day—
O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,
Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep!

KING LEAR

Your oath is pass'd to pass away from these.

KENT

Let me say no, my liege, an if you please:
I only swore to study with your grace
And stay here in your court for three years' space.

KING LEAR

You swore to that, Lord Kent, and to the rest.

KENT

By yea and nay, sir, then I swore in jest.

KING LEAR

Hear me, recreant; on thine allegiance, hear me!
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
Which we durst never yet, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world;
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
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 revoked.

KENT

But good my liege,—

KING LEAR

Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

(Storms out.)

KENT

Nay, then will I be gone.

(Withdraws.)

GLOUCESTER

Kent banish'd thus! the king in choler parted!
Navarre become a cloister! All this done
Upon the gad!

COSTARD

I'll lay my head to any good man's hat,
These oaths and laws will prove an idle scorn.

(Re-enter KING LEAR.)

KING LEAR

Well, sit you out, as well: go home: adieu.

GLOUCESTER

No, my good lord; we have sworn to stay with you:
Give me the paper; let me read the same;
And to the strict'st decrees I'll write my name.

KING LEAR

How well this yielding rescues thee from shame!

GLOUCESTER

I am resolved; 'tis but a three years' fast:
The mind shall banquet, though the body pine.

(Subscribes.)

KING LEAR

[To COSTARD] What says my fellow?

COSTARD

My loving lord, thy fool is mortified:
The grosser manner of these world's delights
He throws upon the gross world's baser slaves:
To love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die;
With all these living in philosophy.
So to the laws at large I write my name.

(Subscribes.)

KING LEAR

And he that breaks them in the least degree
Stands in attainder of eternal shame.

(Re-enter KENT above, unseen by those below.)

GLOUCESTER

[Reads] 'Item, If any woman shall come within a mile
of my court: she shall endure such public shame as the
rest of the court can possibly devise.'
This article, my liege, yourself must break;
Your daughters come to sojourn at your house;—

KING LEAR

But yet they are my flesh, my blood, my daughters.

GLOUCESTER

As well, the daughter of the King of France
Importunes personal conference with your grace:
Therefore this article is made in vain,
Or vainly comes the admirèd princess hither.

KING LEAR

What say you, lords? Why, this was quite forgot.

KENT

[Aside] So study evermore is overshot:
While it doth study to have what it would
It doth forget to do the thing it should.

KING LEAR

We must of force dispense with this decree;
She must lie here on mere necessity.
Therefore to's seemeth it a needful course,
Before she enter these forbidden gates,
To know her pleasure; and in that behalf,
Haste, signify so much; we will attend.

(Exeunt all but KENT.)

KENT

Necessity will make us all forsworn
Three thousand times within this three years' space;
If I break faith, this word shall speak for me;
I am forsworn on 'mere necessity.'

(Subscribes.)

Suggestions are to other as to me;
But I believe, although I seem so loath,
I am the last that will last keep his oath.

(Disguises himself.)

If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I razed my likeness. Now, banish'd Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lovest,
Shall find thee full of labours.

(Exit.)

SCENE 2 - The king's park.

(Enter the PRINCESS of France, Ladies, and other Attendants.)

LADY

Consider who the king your father sends,
To whom he sends, and what's his embassy:
Yourself, held precious in the world's esteem,
To parley with the sole inheritor
Of all perfections that a man may owe,
Matchless King Lear; the plea of no less weight
Than Aquitaine, a dowry for a queen.

PRINCESS

Here comes Boyet, and mirth is in her face.

(Enter BOYET.)

BOYET

O, I am stabb'd with laughter! Where's her grace?

PRINCESS

Thy news, Boyet? Now, what admittance, lady?

BOYET

The king had notice of your fair approach
Before I came. Marry, thus much I have learnt:
He rather means to lodge you in the field,
Like one that comes here to besiege his court,
Than seek a dispensation for his oath,
To let you enter his unpeopled house.

LADY

Here comes King Lear.

(Enter KING LEAR, GLOUCESTER, COSTARD, and the king's daughters, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants, among them, JAQUENETTA, and KENT, disguised.)

KING LEAR

Fair princess, welcome to the court of Navarre.

PRINCESS

'Fair' I give you back again; and 'welcome' I have not

yet: the roof of this court is too high to be yours; and welcome to the wide fields too base to be mine.

KING LEAR

You shall be welcome, madam, to my court.

PRINCESS

I will be welcome, then: conduct me thither.

KING LEAR

Hear me, dear lady; I have sworn an oath.

PRINCESS

Our Lady help my lord! he'll be forsworn.

KING LEAR

Not for the world, fair madam, by my will.

PRINCESS

Why, will shall break it; will and nothing else.

KING LEAR

Your ladyship is ignorant what it is.

PRINCESS

I hear your grace hath sworn out house-keeping:

'Tis deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord,

And sin to break it.

But pardon me. I am too sudden-bold:

To teach a teacher ill beseemeth me.

(Handing him a letter.)

Vouchsafe to read the purpose of my coming,

And suddenly resolve me in my suit.

KING LEAR

Madam, I will, if suddenly I may.

PRINCESS

You will the sooner, that I were away;

For you'll prove perjured if you make me stay.

(KING LEAR reads over the letter.)

KING LEAR

Madam, your father here doth intimate

The payment of a hundred thousand crowns,

To have his title live in Aquitaine.

I do protest I never heard of it;

And if you prove it, I'll repay it back
Or yield up Aquitaine.

PRINCESS

We arrest your word.
Boyet, you can produce acquittances.

BOYET

To-morrow you shall have a sight of them.

KING LEAR

It shall suffice me: at which interview
All liberal reason I will yield unto.
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 of our state,—
These be the stops that hinder study quite—
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd pore on books. Belovèd Regan,
And you, our no less loving Princess Goneril,
Cordelia last, but not the least in love,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now.
The sons of Gloucester, Edgar and his brother,
Great rivals in our several daughters' love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd. Call them forth.

(An Attendant exits.)

COSTARD

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] Sir, I pray you, a word: what lady
is that same?

GLOUCESTER

The heir of royal Lear, Regan is her name.

COSTARD

Is she wedded or no?

GLOUCESTER

To her will, sir, or so.

(COSTARD starts toward REGAN, but comes back.)

COSTARD

What's her name in the cap?

GLOUCESTER

She is the Princess Goneril.

COSTARD

She is a most sweet lady.

GLOUCESTER

Not unlike, sir, that may be.

(**COSTARD** starts toward **GONERIL**, but comes back.)

COSTARD

Who are the rest?

GLOUCESTER

Peace, sirrah!

KENT

[*Aside to CORDELIA*] Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

CORDELIA

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

KENT

I know you did.

CORDELIA

How needless was it then to ask the question!

KENT

You must not be so quick.

CORDELIA

'Tis 'long of you that spur me with such questions.

KENT

Your wit's too hot, it speeds too fast, 'twill tire.

CORDELIA

Not till it leave the rider in the mire.

(*Withdraws.*)

KENT

[*Aside*] Woman of sovereign parts she is esteem'd;
Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms:
Nothing becomes her ill that she would well.
The only soil of her fair virtue's gloss,

If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil,
Is a sharp wit matched with too blunt a will.

(Withdraws.)

KING LEAR

Tell me, my daughters,—
Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,—
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge.
Goneril, our eldest-born, speak first.

GONERIL

Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;
Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

COSTARD

[Aside] Her eye begets occasion for her wit;
So sweet and voluble is her discourse.

LEAR

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
We make thee lady: to thee and thine issue
Be this perpetual.

CORDELIA

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

LEAR

What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, plight to Edgar? Speak.

REGAN

I am made of that self mettle 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,

Which the most precious square of sense possesses;
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

COSTARD

[Aside] O she hath wit to make an ill shape good,
And shape to win grace though she had no wit.

KING LEAR

To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom;
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril.

CORDELIA

[Aside] Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's
More richer than my tongue.

(COSTARD takes REGAN aside, kisses her hand.)

COSTARD

Lady, I will commend you to mine own heart.

REGAN

Pray you, do my commendations; I would be glad to
see it.

COSTARD

I would you heard it groan.

GONERIL

[Overhearing] Is the fool sick?

COSTARD

Sick at the heart.

GONERIL

Alack, let it blood.

COSTARD

Would that do it good?

REGAN

My physic says 'ay.'

COSTARD

Will you prick't with your eye?

GONERIL

No point, with my knife.

REGAN

Now, God save thy life!

COSTARD

Do you hear, my mad wenches?

GONERIL

No.

COSTARD

What then, do you see?

REGAN

Ay, our way to be gone.

COSTARD

You are too hard for me.

(Withdraws.)

REGAN

Good sir, be not offended.

GLOUCESTER

By my soul, a swain! a most simple clown!

Lord, Lord, how the ladies have both put him down!

(Enter EDGAR.)

EDGAR

Well bandied both; a set of wit well play'd.

REGAN

Welcome, pure wit! thou partest a fair fray.

EDGAR

O, let me kiss that hand!

REGAN

Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

COSTARD

[Aside to JAQUENETTA] The tongues of mocking wenches
are as keen

As is the razor's edge invisible,

Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills

It should none spare that come within their power.

JAQUENETTA

Lord, how wise you are!

COSTARD

Think you so? Your name, fair gentlewoman?

JAQUENETTA

Jaquenetta, by good hap.

COSTARD

Give me your hand: away! the gentles are at their game,
and we will to our recreation.

(Exeunt COSTARD and JAQUENETTA.)

KING LEAR

Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The bastard son of Gloucester, Edmund doth
Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

CORDELIA

Nothing, my lord.

KING LEAR

Nothing!

CORDELIA

Nothing.

KING LEAR

Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

CORDELIA

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

KING LEAR

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

CORDELIA

Good my lord,

You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
How shall my sisters husband, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry

Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure I shall never wed if, like my sisters,
I loved my father all.

KING LEAR

But goes thy heart with this?

CORDELIA

Ay, good my lord.

KING LEAR

So young, and so untender?

CORDELIA

So young, my lord, and true.

KING LEAR

Let it be so; thy truth, then, be thy dower:
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
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.

KENT

Good my liege,—

KING LEAR

Peace, knave!
Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!
So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her!
Call Edmund forth. Regan and Goneril,
With thy two divers dowers digest this 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,
With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name, and all the additions to a king;
The sway, revenue, execution of the realm,

Belovèd ones, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part betwixt you.

(Giving the crown.)

KENT

Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Loved as my father, as my master follow'd,—

KING LEAR

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

KENT

Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's
bound,
When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom:
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.

KING LEAR

Knave, on thy life, no more.

KENT

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

KING LEAR

Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you straight.
This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

KENT

The same,
Your servant Kent, my lord.

KING LEAR

Out of my sight!

KENT

See better, Lear; and let me still remain.

KING LEAR

O, vassal! miscreant!
(Drawing his sword.)

GLOUCESTER

Dear sir, forbear.

KENT

Do:

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

KING LEAR

Take away this villain; shut him up.

GLOUCESTER

Come, you transgressing slave; away!

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,
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.

*(Exeunt **KENT** and **GLOUCESTER**.)*

GONERIL

This Kent is like an envious sneaping frost,
That bites the first-born infants of the spring.

REGAN

The fellow pecks up wit as pigeons pease,
And utters it again when God doth please.

*(Enter **EDMUND**.)*

EDMUND

Here's Edmund, noble lord. What is your will?

KING LEAR

My lord of Gloucester's son, who with your love
Hath rivall'd for our daughter: what, in the least,

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

EDMUND

Most royal majesty.
I crave no more than what your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

KING LEAR

Right noble Edmund, list,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands:
If aught within that little seeming substance,
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

EDMUND

I know no answer.

KING 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?

EDMUND

Pardon me, royal sir;
Election makes not up on such conditions.

KING LEAR

Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made me,
I tell you all her wealth.

PRINCESS

This is most strange,
That she, that even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most 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.

CORDELIA

It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
But even for want of that for which I am richer,

A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
As I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

KING LEAR

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

PRINCESS

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

EDMUND

Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself proposed,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Dowered so bountifully.

KING LEAR

Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

EDMUND

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

CORDELIA

Peace be with Edmund, then!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

KING LEAR

For you, great France,
I would not from your love make such a stray,
To friend you where I hate; therefore beseech you
To avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed
Almost to acknowledge hers.

PRINCESS

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor,

Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon.

CORDELIA

I am thankful for it.

PRINCESS

Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is one of us, of ours, and our fair France:
Not all the Earl of Gloucester's bastard sons
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:
Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

KING 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.
Come, noble Edmund, come.
Dinner, ho, dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? Go
you, and call my fool hither.

*(Enter GLOUCESTER with COSTARD and JAQUENETTA,
in custody.)*

GLOUCESTER

Where is the king's own person?

KING LEAR

Here, Gloucester: what wouldst?

GLOUCESTER

There's villainy abroad: this coxcomb will tell you more.
Let him confess and turn it to a jest.

COSTARD

Sir, the contempts thereof are as touching me. The
matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta. The
manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.

KING LEAR

In what manner?

COSTARD

In manner and form following, sir; all those three: I

was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form, and taken following her into the park; which, put together, is in manner and form following.

GLOUCESTER

There did I see that low-spirited swain, that base minnow of thy mirth,—

COSTARD

With a wench.

GLOUCESTER

With a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on, have brought to thee, to receive the meed of punishment. For Jaquenetta,—so is the weaker vessel called which I apprehended with the aforesaid swain,—I keep her as a vessel of the law's fury; and shall, at the least of thy sweet notice, bring her to trial.

KING LEAR

But, sirrah, what say you to this?

COSTARD

Sir, I confess the wench.

KING LEAR

Did you hear the proclamation?

COSTARD

I do confess much of the hearing it but little of the marking of it.

KING LEAR

It was proclaimed a year's imprisonment, to be taken with a wench.

COSTARD

I was taken with none, sir: I was taken with a damsel.

KING LEAR

Well, it was proclaimed 'damsel.'

COSTARD

This was no damsel, neither, sir; she was a virgin.

KING LEAR

It is so varied, too; for it was proclaimed 'virgin.'

COSTARD

If it were, I deny her virginity: I was taken with a maid.

KING LEAR

Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: you shall fast a week with bran and water.

COSTARD

I had rather pray a month with mutton and porridge.

KING LEAR

And Lord of Gloucester shall be your keeper.

And go we, lords, to put in practise that

Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.

(Exeunt KING LEAR, EDMUND, EDGAR and Attendants.)

COSTARD

I suffer for the truth, sir; for true it is, I was taken with Jaquenetta, and Jaquenetta is a true girl; and therefore welcome the sour cup of prosperity! Affliction may one day smile again; and till then, sit thee down, sorrow!

GLOUCESTER

Sirrah, come on.

(Exeunt GLOUCESTER, COSTARD and JAQUENETTA.)

PRINCESS

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 loath to call

Your faults as they are named. Use well our father.

REGAN

Prescribe not us our duties.

GONERIL

Let your study

Be to content her grace, who hath received you

At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,

And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

CORDELIA

Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides:

Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper!

PRINCESS

Come, my fair Cordelia.

*(Exeunt PRINCESS, CORDELIA, BOYET, and
Attendants.)*

GONERIL

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

REGAN

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

GONERIL

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

REGAN

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

GONERIL

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

REGAN

We shall further think on't.

GONERIL

We must do something, and i' the heat.

(Exeunt.)

End of Act I

ACT II - Baseborn & Forsworn

SCENE 1 - The king's park.

(Enter GLOUCESTER, COSTARD, JAQUENETTA and EDMUND.)

GLOUCESTER

Villain, thou shalt fast for thy offences ere thou be pardoned.

COSTARD

Let me not be pent up, sir: I will fast, being loose.

GLOUCESTER

No, sir; that were fast and loose: thou shalt to prison.

(Enter GONERIL.)

GONERIL

Sir, the king's pleasure is, that you keep Costard safe: and you must suffer him to take no delight nor no penance; but a' must fast three days a week. For this damsel, I must keep her at the park: she is allowed for the day-woman.

JAQUENETTA

Fare you well.

GLOUCESTER

I do betray myself with blushing. Maid!

JAQUENETTA

Man?

GLOUCESTER

I love thee.

GONERIL

Come, Jaquenetta, away!

JAQUENETTA

Fair weather after you!

(Exeunt GONERIL and JAQUENETTA.)

GLOUCESTER

Fool, what sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?

COSTARD

A great sign, sir, that he will look sad.

GLOUCESTER

[To EDMUND] Boy, I do love that country girl that I took in the park with the rational hind Costard.

EDMUND

So I heard you say.

GLOUCESTER

Sirrah Costard, I will enfranchise thee. I give thee thy liberty, set thee from durance; and, in lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this:

(Giving a letter.)

bear this significant to the country maid Jaquenetta: there is remuneration; for the best ward of mine honour is rewarding my dependents. Son, follow.

(Exit.)

EDMUND

[Aside] This maid will not serve your turn, sir.
This maid will serve my turn, sir.

(Exit.)

COSTARD

Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration! why, it is a fairer name than French crown. I will never buy and sell out of this word.

(Enter KENT.)

KENT

O, my good knave Costard! exceedingly well met.
As thou wilt win my favour, good my knave,
Do one thing for me that I shall entreat.
The princess stays her camp here in the park,
And in her train there is a gentle lady;

When tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name,
Cordelia they call her: ask for her;
And with my services to her, deliver
This seal'd-up counsel. There's thy guerdon; go.

(Gives him a shilling, and exits.)

COSTARD

I will do it sir, in print. Gardon! Remuneration!

(Exit.)

SCENE 2 - The French camp.

(Enter KING LEAR, PRINCESS, BOYET and Attendants.)

KING LEAR

Meantime receive such welcome at my hand
As honour without breach of honour may
Make tender of to thy true worthiness:
You may not come, fair princess, in my gates;
But here without you shall be so received
As you shall deem yourself lodged in my heart,
Though so denied fair harbour in my house.
Your own good thoughts excuse me, and farewell:
To-morrow shall we visit you again.

BOYET

God give thee joy of him! the noble lord
Most honourably doth unhold his word.

PRINCESS

Boyet, prepare; I will away tonight.

KING LEAR

Madam, not so; I do beseech you, stay.

PRINCESS

You'll not be perjured, 'tis a hateful thing.
Prepare, I say. I thank you, gracious lord,
For my great suit so easily obtain'd.

(Exeunt all but KING LEAR and OSWALD, a Steward.)

KING LEAR

This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.

OSWALD

Thus pour the stars down plagues for perjury.

KING LEAR

Ha, ha! what sayest thou?

OSWALD

Nay, nothing, Master.

KING LEAR

What a brazen-faced varlet art thou—

(Beating him.)

OSWALD

My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath moved you.

KING LEAR

Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

OSWALD

Help, ho! murder! help!

(Exeunt.)

SCENE 3 - The Earl of Gloucester's castle.

(Enter EDMUND, with a letter.)

EDMUND

Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate: fine word,—legitimate!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

(Enter GLOUCESTER.)

GLOUCESTER

Edmund, how now! what news?

EDMUND

So please your lordship, none.

(Hides the letter.)

GLOUCESTER

Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

EDMUND

I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter from my
brother, that I have not all o'er-read; and for so much as
I have perused, I find it not fit for your o'er-looking.

GLOUCESTER

Give me the letter, sir.

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