

...to us; but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not that the Duke of Albany 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? Glou. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge. I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him that now I am brazd'd to do it. Kent. I cannot conceive you. Glou. 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. I wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper. Glou. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account. 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. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund? Edm. [comes forward] No, my lord. Glou. My Lord of Kent. Remember him hereafter as my honourable friend. Edm. My services to your lordship. Kent. I must love you, and I should know you better. Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving. Glou. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. Sound a sennet. The King is coming. Enter one bearing a coronet; then Lear; then the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall; next, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, with Followers. Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester, Glou. I shall, my liege. Exeunt [Gloucester and Edmund]. Lear. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose. Give me the map there. Know we have divided in three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent To shake all cares and business from our age, Conferring them on younger strengths while we Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall, And you, our no less loving son of Albany, We have this hour a constant will to publish 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, 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. Gon. 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; 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. Cor. [aside] What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and to be silent. Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this, With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd, With pleanorous rivers and wide-skirted meads, We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issue Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter, Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak. R. I love not my father above mine own love, Which I do so dearly dote on. Lear. And you, my third daughter, What say you? Cordelia. I have sworn myself a virgin, I never shall marry, nor will I dote on any man above my father. Lear. And you, my first daughter, What say you? Goneril. I have sworn myself a virgin, I never shall marry, nor will I dote on any man above my father. Lear. And you, my third daughter, What say you? Cordelia. I have sworn myself a virgin, I never shall marry, nor will I dote on any man above my father. Lear. And you, my first daughter, What say you? Goneril. 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