

The Tragedy of King Lear

4.4

Enter Regan and Oswald the steward

REGAN

But are my brother's powers set forth?

OSWALD

Ay, madam.

REGAN

Himself in person there?

OSWALD

Madam, with much ado.

Your sister is the better soldier.

REGAN

Lord Edmond spake not with your lord at home?

OSWALD

No, madam.

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REGAN

What might import my sister's letters to him?

OSWALD

I know not, lady.

REGAN

Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.

It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,

To let him live. Where he arrives he moves

10

All hearts against us. Edmond, I think, is gone,

In pity of his misery, to dispatch

His 'nighted life, moreover to descry

The strength o'th' enemy.

OSWALD

I must needs after, madam, with my letter.

15

REGAN

Our troops set forth tomorrow. Stay with us.

The ways are dangerous.

OSWALD

I may not, madam.

My lady charged my duty in this business.

REGAN

Why should she write to Edmond? Might not you

Transport her purposes by word? Belike±±

20

Some things±±I know not what. I'll love thee much:

Let me unseal the letter.

OSWALD

Madam, I had rather±±

REGAN

I know your lady does not love her husband.

I am sure of that, and at her late being here
She gave strange oeillades and most speaking looks 25
To noble Edmond. I know you are of her bosom.

OSWALD I, madam?

REGAN

I speak in understanding. Y'are, I know't.
Therefore I do advise you take this note.
My lord is dead. Edmond and I have talked, 30
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's. You may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you give him this,
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray desire her call her wisdom to her. 35
So, fare you well.
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

OSWALD

Would I could meet him, madam. I should show
What party I do follow.

REGAN Fare thee well. 40

Exeunt severally