

# The Tragedy of King Lear

## 3.7

*Enter the Duke of Cornwall, Regan, Goneril,  
Edmond the bastard, and Servants*

**CORNWALL** (to Goneril)

Post speedily to my lord your husband.

Show him this letter. The army of France is landed.

(To Servants) Seek out the traitor Gloucester.

*Exeunt some*

**REGAN**

Hang him instantly.

**GONERIL**

Pluck out his eyes.

**CORNWALL** Leave him to my displeasure.

Edmond, keep you our sister company. 5

The revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous  
father are not fit for your beholding. Advise the Duke  
where you are going, to a most festinate preparation;  
we are bound to the like. Our posts shall be swift and  
intelligent betwixt us. (To Goneril) Farewell, dear sister. 10

(To Edmond) Farewell, my lord of Gloucester.

*Enter Oswald the steward*

How now, where's the King?

**OSWALD**

My lord of Gloucester hath conveyed him hence.

Some five- or six-and-thirty of his knights,

Hot questrists after him, met him at gate, 15

Who, with some other of the lord's dependants,

Are gone with him toward Dover, where they boast

To have well-armed friends.

**CORNWALL** Get horses for your mistress.

*Exit Oswald*

**GONERIL** Farewell, sweet lord, and sister. 20

**CORNWALL**

Edmond, farewell.

*Exeunt Goneril and Edmond*

(To Servants) Go seek the traitor Gloucester.

Pinion him like a thief; bring him before us.

*Exeunt other Servants*

Though well we may not pass upon his life  
Without the form of justice, yet our power  
Shall do a curtsy to our wrath, which men  
May blame but not control.

25

*Enter the Duke of Gloucester and Servants*

Who's there±

±the traitor?

**REGAN**

Ingrateful fox, 'tis he.

**CORNWALL** *(to Servants)* Bind fast his corky arms.

**GLOUCESTER**

What means your graces? Good my friends, consider  
You are my guests. Do me no foul play, friends.

**CORNWALL** *(to Servants)*

Bind him, I say.

**REGAN** Hard, hard! O filthy traitor!

30

**GLOUCESTER**

Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

**CORNWALL** *(to Servants)*

To this chair bind him. *(To Gloucester)* Villain, thou  
shalt find±±

*Regan plucks Gloucester's beard*

**GLOUCESTER**

By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done,  
To pluck me by the beard.

**REGAN** So white, and such a traitor?

35

**GLOUCESTER** Naughty lady,

These hairs which thou dost ravish from my chin  
Will quicken and accuse thee. I am your host.  
With robbers' hands my hospitable favours  
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

40

**CORNWALL**

Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?

**REGAN**

Be simple-answered, for we know the truth.

**CORNWALL**

And what confederacy have you with the traitors  
Late footed in the kingdom?

**REGAN**

To whose hands

You have sent the lunatic King. Speak.

45

**GLOUCESTER**

I have a letter guessingly set down,  
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,  
And not from one opposed.

**CORNWALL** Cunning.

**REGAN** And false.

**CORNWALL**

Where hast thou sent the King?

**GLOUCESTER** To Dover.

**REGAN**

Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charged at peril±± 50

**CORNWALL**

Wherefore to Dover?±±Let him answer that.

**GLOUCESTER**

I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course.

**REGAN** Wherefore to Dover?

**GLOUCESTER**

Because I would not see thy cruel nails  
Pluck out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister 55  
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.  
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head  
In hell-black night endured, would have buoyed up  
And quenched the stelleÁd fires.  
Yet, poor old heart, he help the heavens to rain. 60  
If wolves had at thy gate howled that stern time,  
Thou shouldst have said `Good porter, turn the key;  
All cruels I'll subscribe.' But I shall see  
The wingeÁd vengeance overtake such children.

**CORNWALL**

See't shalt thou never.±±Fellows, hold the chair.±± 65  
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

**GLOUCESTER**

He that will think to live till he be old  
Give me some help!±±O cruel! O you gods!  
*[Cornwall pulls out one of Gloucester's eyes and  
stamps on it]*

**REGAN** *(to Cornwall)*

One side will mock another; th'other, too.

**CORNWALL** *(to Gloucester)*

If you see vengeance±±

**SERVANT**

Hold your hand, my lord. 70

I have served you ever since I was a child,  
But better service have I never done you  
Than now to bid you hold.

**REGAN** How now, you dog!

**SERVANT**

If you did wear a beard upon your chin  
I'd shake it on this quarrel. *[To Cornwall]* What do  
you mean? 75

**CORNWALL** My villain!

**SERVANT**

Nay then, come on, and take the chance of anger.  
*They draw and fight*

**REGAN** *(to another Servant)*

Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus!  
*[She takes a sword and runs at him behind]*

**SERVANT** *(to Gloucester)*

O, I am slain. My lord, you have one eye left  
To see some mischief on him.  
*[Regan stabs him again]*

O!

80

*He dies*

**CORNWALL**

Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!  
*He [pulls out] Gloucester's other eye*  
Where is thy lustre now?

**GLOUCESTER**

All dark and comfortless. Where's my son Edmond?  
Edmond, enkindle all the sparks of nature  
To quite this horrid act.

**REGAN** Out, treacherous villain!

85

Thou call'st on him that hates thee. It was he  
That made the overture of thy treasons to us,  
Who is too good to pity thee.

**GLOUCESTER**

O, my follies! Then Edgar was abused.  
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

90

**REGAN** *(to Servants)*

Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell  
His way to Dover.

*Exit one or more with Gloucester*

How is't, my lord? How look you?

**CORNWALL**

I have received a hurt. Follow me, lady.

*(To Servants)* Turn out that eyeless villain. Throw this  
slave

Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace.

95

Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm.

*Exeunt [with the body]*