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This documentary edition has been edited to provide an accurate and transparent transcription of a single copy of the earliest surviving print edition of this play. Further material, including editorial policy and XML files of the play, is available on the EMED website. EMED texts are edited and encoded by Meaghan Brown, Michael Poston, and Elizabeth Williamson, and build on work done by the EEBO-TCP and the Shakespeare His Contemporaries project. This project is funded by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant from the NEH's Division of Preservation and Access.



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In 0001

In 0002

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In 0009

In 0010

In 0011

In 0012

THE
True Chronicle Hi-
story of King LEIR, and his three
*daughters, Gonorill, Ragan,
and Cordella.*

As it hath bene diuers and sundry
times lately acted.

LONDON,
Printed by Simon Stafford for Iohn
Wright, and are to bee sold at his shop at
Christes Church dore, next Newgate-
Market. 1605.

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The true Chronicle Historie of King
Leir and his three daughters.

ACTVS I.

Enter King Leir and Nobles.

THus to our grieffe the obsequies performd
Of our (too late) deceast and dearest Queen,
Whose soule I hope, possesst of heauēly ioyes,
Doth ride in triumph 'mōgst the Cherubins;
Let vs request your graue aduice, my Lords,
For the disposing of our princely daughters,
For whom our care is specially imployd,
As nature bindeth to aduaunce their states,
In royall marriage with some princely mates:
For wanting now their mothers good aduice,
Vnder whose gouernment they haue receyued
A perfit patterne of a vertuous life:
Left as it were a ship without a sterne,
Or silly sheepe without a Pastors care;
Although our selues doe dearely tender them,
Yet are we ignorant of their affayres:
For fathers best do know to gouerne sonnes;
But daughters steps the mothers counsell turnes.
A sonne we want for to succeed our Crowne,
And course of time hath cancelled the date
Of further issue from our withered loynes[.]
One foote already hangeth in the graue,
And age hath made deepe furrowes in my face:
The world of me, I of the world am weary,
And I would fayne resigne these earthly cares,
And thinke vpon the welfare of my soule:
Which by no better meanes may be effected,
Then by resigning vp the Crowne from me,
In equall dowry to my daughters three.
Skalliger. A worthy care, my Liege, which well declares,
The zeale you bare vnto our *quondam* Queene:
And since your Grace hath licens'd me to speake,

The History of King Leir

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I censure thus; Your Maiesty knowing well,
What seuerall Suters your princely daughters haue,
To make them eche a Ioynter more or lesse,
As is their worth, to them that loue professe.

Leir. No more, nor lesse, but euen all alike,
My zeale is fixt, all fashiond in one mould:
Wherefore vnpartiall shall my censure be,
Both old and young shall haue alike for me.

Nobl. My gracious Lord, I hartily do wish,
That God had lent you an heyre indubitate,
Which might haue **set** vpon your royall throne,
When fates should loose the prison of your life,
By whose succession all this doubt might cease;
And as by you, by him we might haue peace.
But after-wishes euer come too late,
And nothing can reuoke the course of fate:
Wherefore, my Liege, my censure deemes it best,
To match them with some of your neighbour Kings,
Bordring within the bounds of Albion,
By whose vnited friendship, this our state
May be protected 'gainst all forrayne hate.

Leir. Herein, my Lords, your wishes sort with mine,
And mine (I hope) do sort with heauenly powers:
For at this instant two neere neyghbouring Kings
Of Cornwall and of Cambria, motion loue
To my two daughters, *Gonorill* and *Ragan*.
My youngest daughter, fayre *Cordella*, voves
No liking to a Monarch, vnlesse loue allowes.
She is sollicitd by diuers Peeres;
But none of them her partiall fancy heares.
Yet, if my policy may her beguyle,
Ile match her to some King within this Ile,
And so establish such a perfit peace,
As fortunes force shall ne're preuayle to cease.

Perillus. Of vs & ours, your gracious care, my Lord,
Deserues an euerlasting memory,
To be inol'd in Chronicles of fame,
By neuer-dying perpetuity:

and his three daughters.

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Yet to become so proudent a Prince,
Lose not the title of a louing father:
Do not force loue, where fancy cannot dwell,
Lest streames being stopt, about the banks do swell.
Leir. I am resolu'd, and euen now my mind
Doth meditate a sudden stratagem,
To try which of my daughters loues me best:
Which till I know, I cannot be in rest.
This graunted, when they ioyntly shall contend,
Eche to exceed the other in their loue:
Then at the vantage will I take *Cordella*,
Euen as she doth protest she loues me best,
Ile say, Then, daughter, graunt me one request,
To shew thou louest me as thy sisters doe,
Accept a husband, whom my selfe will woo.
This sayd, she cannot well deny my sute,
Although (poore soule) her sences will be mute:
Then will I triumph in my policy,
And match her with a King of Brittany.
Skal. Ile to them before, and bewray your secrecy.
Per. Thus fathers think their children to beguile,
And oftentimes themselues do first repent,
When heauenly powers do frustrate their intent.
Enter Gonorill and Ragan.
Gon. I maruell, *Ragan*, how you can indure
To see that proud pert Peat, our youngest sister,
So slightly to account of vs, her elders,
As if we were no better then her selfe!
We cannot haue a quaynt deuce so soone,
Or new made fashion, of our choyce inuention;
But if she like it, she will haue the same,
Or study newer to exceed vs both.
Besides, she is so nice and so demure;
So sober, courteous, modest, and precise,
That all the Court hath worke ynough to do,
To talke how she exceedeth me and you.
Ra. What should I do? would it were in my power,
To find a cure for this contagious ill:

Exeunt.

The History of King Leir

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Some desperate medicine must be soone applyed,
To dimme the glory of her mounting fame;
Els ere't be long, shee'le haue both prick and praise,
And we must be set by for working dayes.
Doe you not see what seuerall choyce of Suters
She daily hath, and of the best degree?
Say, amongst all, she hap to fancy one,
And haue a husband when as we haue none:
Why then, by right, to her we must giue place,
Though it be ne're so much to our disgrace.

Gon. By my virginity, rather then she shall haue
A husband before me,
Ile marry one or other in his shirt:
And yet I haue made halfe a graunt already
Of my good will vnto the King of Cornwall.

Ra. Swear not so deeply (sister) here cōmeth my L. *Skalliger*,
Something his hasty comming doth import. *Enter Skal.*

Skal. Sweet Princesses, I am glad I met you heere so luckily,
Hauing good newes which doth concerne you both,
And craueth speedy expedition.

Ra. For Gods sake tell vs what it is, my Lord,
I am with child vntill you vtter it.

Skal. Madam, to saue your longing, this it is:
Your father in great secrecy to day,
Told me, he meanes to marry you out of hand,
Vnto the noble Prince of Cambria;
You, Madam, to the King of Cornwalls Grace:
Your yonger sister he would fayne bestow
Vpon the rich King of Hibernia:
But that he doubts, she hardly will consent;
For hitherto she ne're could fancy him.
If she do yeeld, why then, betweene you three,
He will deuide his kingdome for your dowries.
But yet there is a further mystery,
Which, so you will conceale, I will disclose.

Gon. What e're thou speakst to vs, kind *Skalliger*,
Thinke that thou speakst it only to thy selfe.

Skal. He earnestly desireth for to know,

Which

and his three daughters.

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Which of you three do beare most loue to him,
And on your loues he so extremely dotes,
As neuer any did, I thinke, before.
He presently doth meane to send for you,
To be resolu'd of this tormenting doubt:
And looke, whose answere pleaseth him the best,
They shall haue most vnto their marriages.

Ra. O that I had some pleasing Mermayds voyce,
For to inchaunt his sencelesse sences with!

Skal. For he supposeth that *Cordella* will
(Striuing to go beyond you in her loue)
Promise to do what euer he desires:
Then will he straight enioyne her for his sake,
The Hibernian King in marriage for to take.
This is the summe of all I haue to say;
Which being done, I humbly take my leaue,
Not doubting but your wisdomes will foresee,
What course will best vnto your good agree.

Gon. Thanks, gentle *Skalliger*, thy kindnes vnderseued,
Shall not be vnrequited, if we liue. *Exit Skalliger.*

Ra. Now haue we fit occasion offred vs,
To be reueng'd vpon her vnperceyu'd.

Gon. Nay, our reuenge we will inflict on her,
Shall be accounted piety in vs:
I will so flatter with my doting father,
As he was ne're so flattred in his life.
Nay, I will say, that if it be his pleasure,
To match me to a begger, I will yeeld:
For why, I know what euer I do say,
He meanes to match me with the Cornwall King.

Ra. Ile say the like: for I am well assured;
What e're I say to please the old mans mind.
Who dotes, as if he were a child agayne;
I shall inioy the noble Cambrian Prince:
Only, to feed his humour, will **[**]ffice**,
To say, I am content with any one
Whom heele appoynt me; this will please him more.
Then e're *Apolloes* musike pleased *Ioue*.

The History of King Leir

wln 0189 *Gon.* I smile to think, in what a wofull plight
wln 0190 *Cordella* will be, when we answere thus:
wln 0191 For she will rather dye, then giue consent
wln 0192 To ioyne in marriage with the Irish King:
wln 0193 So will our father think, she loueth him not,
wln 0194 Because she will not graunt to his desire,
wln 0195 Which we will aggrauate in such bitter termes,
wln 0196 That he will soone conuert his loue to hate:
wln 0197 For he, you know, is alwayes in extremes.

wln 0198 *Rag.* Not all the world could lay a better plot,
wln 0199 I long till it be put in practice.

Exeunt.

Enter Leir and Perillus.

wln 0201 *Leir.* *Perillus*, go seeke my daughters,
wln 0202 Will them immediately come and speak with me.

wln 0203 *Per.* I will, my gracious Lord.

Exit.

wln 0204 *Leir.* Oh, what a combat feeles my panting heart,
wln 0205 'Twixt childrens loue, and care of Common weale!
wln 0206 How deare my daughters are vnto my soule,
wln 0207 None knowes, but he, that knowes my thoughts & secret deeds.
wln 0208 Ah, little do they know the deare regard,
wln 0209 Wherein I hold their future state to come:
wln 0210 When they securely sleepe on beds of downe,
wln 0211 These aged eyes do watch for their behalfe:
wln 0212 While they like wantons sport in youthfull toys,
wln 0213 This throbbing heart is pearst with dire annoyes.
wln 0214 As doth the Sun exceed the smallest Starre,
wln 0215 So much the fathers loue exceeds the childs.
wln 0216 Yet my complaynts are causlesse: for the world
wln 0217 Affords not children more conformable:
wln 0218 And yet, me thinks, my mind presageth still
wln 0219 I know not what; and yet I feare some ill.

Enter Perillus, with the three daughters.

wln 0221 Well, here my daughters come: me: I haue found out
wln 0222 A present meanes to rid me of this doubt.

wln 0223 *Gon.* Our royall Lord and father, in all duty,
wln 0224 We come to know the tenour of your will,
wln 0225 Why you so hastily haue sent for vs?

wln 0226 *Leir* Deare *Gonorill*, kind *Ragan*, sweet *Cordella*,

and his three daughters.

wln 0227 Ye flourishing branches of a Kingly stocke,
wln 0228 Sprung from a tree that once did flourish greene,
wln 0229 Whose blossomes now are nipt with Winters frost,
wln 0230 And pale grym death doth wayt vpon my steps,
wln 0231 And summons me vnto his next Assizes.
wln 0232 Therefore, deare daughters, as ye tender the safety
wln 0233 Of him that was the cause of your first being,
wln 0234 Resolue a doubt which much molests my mind,
wln 0235 Which of you three to me would proue most kind;
wln 0236 Which loues me most, and which at my request
wln 0237 Will soonest yeeld vnto their fathers hest.
wln 0238 *Gon.* I hope, my gracious father makes no doubt
wln 0239 Of any of his daughters loue to him:
wln 0240 Yet for my part, to shew my zeale to you,
wln 0241 Which cannot be in windy words rehearst,
wln 0242 I prize my loue to you at such a rate,
wln 0243 I thinke my life inferiour to my loue.
wln 0244 Should you inioyne me for to tye a milstone
wln 0245 About my neck, and leape into the Sea,
wln 0246 At your commaund I willingly would doe it:
wln 0247 Yea, for to doe you good, I would ascend
wln 0248 The highest Turret in all Brittany,
wln 0249 And from the top leape headlong to the ground:
wln 0250 Nay, more, should you appoynt me for to marry
wln 0251 The meanest vassayle in the spacious world,
wln 0252 Without reply I would accomplish it:
wln 0253 In brieffe, commaund what euer you desire,
wln 0254 And if I fayle, no fauour I require.
wln 0255 *Leir.* O, how thy words reuiue my dying soule!
wln 0256 *Cor.* O, how I doe abhorre this flattery!
wln 0257 *Leir.* But what sayth *Ragan* to her fathers will?
wln 0258 *Rag.* O, that my simple vtterance could suffice,
wln 0259 To tell the true intention of my heart,
wln 0260 Which burnes in zeale of duty to your grace,
wln 0261 And neuer can be quench'd, but by desire
wln 0262 To shew the same in outward forwardnesse.
wln 0263 Oh, that there were some other mayd that durst
wln 0264 But make a challenge of her loue with me;

The History of King Leir

wln 0265 Ide make her soone confesse she neuer loued
wln 0266 Her father halfe so well as I doe you.
wln 0267 I then, my deeds should proue in playner case,
wln 0268 How much my zeale aboundeth to your grace:
wln 0269 But for them all, let this one meane suffice,
wln 0270 To ratify my loue before your eyes:
wln 0271 I haue right noble Suters to my loue,
wln 0272 No worse then Kings, and happely I loue one:
wln 0273 Yet, would you haue me make my choyce anew,
wln 0274 Ide bridle fancy, and be rulde by you.
wln 0275 *Leir.* Did neuer *Philomel* sing so sweet a note.
wln 0276 *Cord.* Did neuer flatterer tell so false a tale.
wln 0277 *Leir.* Speak now, *Cordella*, make my ioyes at full,
wln 0278 And drop downe Nectar from thy hony lips.
wln 0279 *Cor.* I cannot paynt my duty forth in words,
wln 0280 I hope my deeds shall make report for me:
wln 0281 But looke what loue the child doth owe the father,
wln 0282 The same to you I beare, my gracious Lord.
wln 0283 *Gon.* Here is an answere answerlesse indeed:
wln 0284 Were you my daughter, I should scarcely brooke it.
wln 0285 *Rag.* Dost thou not blush, proud Peacock as thou art,
wln 0286 To make our father such a slight reply?
wln 0287 *Leir.* Why how now, Minion, are you growne so proud?
wln 0288 Doth our deare loue make you thus peremptory?
wln 0289 What, is your loue become so small to vs,
wln 0290 As that you scorne to tell vs what it is?
wln 0291 Do you loue vs, as euery child doth loue
wln 0292 Their father? True indeed, as some,
wln 0293 Who by disobedience short their fathers dayes,
wln 0294 And so would you; some are so father-sick,
wln 0295 That they make meanes to rid them from the world;
wln 0296 And so would you: some are indifferent,
wln 0297 Whether their aged parents liue or dye;
wln 0298 And so are you. But, didst thou know, proud gyrl,
wln 0299 What care I had to foster thee to this,
wln 0300 Ah, then thou wouldst say as thy sisters do:
wln 0301 Our life is lesse, then loue we owe to you.
wln 0302 *Cord.* Deare father, do not so mistake my words,

and his three daughters.

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Nor my playne meaning be misconstrued;
My tounge was neuer vsde to flattery.
Gon. You were not best say I flatter: if you do,
My deeds shall shew, I flatter not with you.
I loue my father better then thou canst.
Cor. The prayse were great, spoke from anothers mouth:
But it should seeme your neighbours dwell far off.
Rag. Nay, here is one, that will confirme as much
As she hath sayd, both for my selfe and her.
I say, thou dost not wish my fathers good.
Cord. Deare father. —
Leir. Peace, bastard Impe, no issue of King *Leir*,
I will not heare thee speake one tittle more.
Call not me father, if thou loue thy life,
Nor these thy sisters once presume to name:
Looke for no helpe henceforth from me nor mine;
Shift as thou wilt, and trust vnto thy selfe:
My Kingdome will I equally deuide
'Twixt thy two sisters to their royall dowre,
And will bestow them worthy their deserts:
This done, because thou shalt not haue the hope,
To haue a childs part in the time to come,
I presently will dispossesse my selfe,
And set vp these vpon my princely throne.
Gon. I euer thought that pride would haue a fall.
Ra. Plaine dealing, sister: your beauty is so sheene,
You need no dowry, to make you be a Queene.
Exeunt Leir, Gonorill, Ragan.
Cord. Now whither, poore forsaken, shall I goe,
When mine owne sisters triumph in my woe?
But vnto him which doth protect the iust,
In him will poore *Cordella* put her trust.
These hands shall labour, for to get my spending;
And so ile liue vntill my dayes haue ending.
Per. Oh, how I grieue, to see my Lord thus fond,
To dote so much vpon vayne flattering words.
Ah, if he but with good aduice had weyghed,
The hidden tenure of her humble speech,

The History of King Leir

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Reason to rage should not haue giuen place,
Nor poore *Cordella* suffer such disgrace.

Exit.

*Enter the Gallian King with Mumford, and three
Nobles more.*

King. Disswade me not, my Lords, I am resolu'd,
This next fayre wynd to sayle for Brittany,
In some disguise, to see if flying fame
Be not too prodigall in the wondrous prayse
Of these three Nymphes, the daughters of King *Leir*.
If present view do answere absent prayse,
And eyes allow of what our eares haue heard,
And *Venus* stand auspicious to my vowes,
And Fortune fauour what I take in hand;
I will returne seyz'd of as rich a prize
As *Iason*, when he wanne the golden fleece.

Mum. Heauens graūt you may; the match were ful of honor,
And well beseeming the young Gallian King.
I would your Grace would fauour me so much,
As make me partner of your Pilgrimage.
I long to see the gallant Brittish Dames,
And feed mine eyes vpon their rare perfections:
For till I know the contrary, Ile say,
Our Dames in Fraunce are far more fayre then they.

Kin. Lord *Mumford*, you haue saued me a labour,
In offring that which I did meane to aske:
And I most willingly accept your company.
Yet first I will inioyne you to obserue
Some few conditions which I shall propose.

Mum. So that you do not tye mine eyes for looking
After the amorous glaunces of fayre Dames:
So that you do not tye my toung from speaking,
My lips from kissing when occasion serues,
My hands from congees, and my knees to bow
To gallant Gyrles; which were a taske more hard,
Then flesh and bloud is able to indure:
Commaund what else you please, I rest content.

Kin. To bind thee from a thing thou canst not leaue,
Were but a meane to make thee seeke it more:

And

and his three daughters.

wln 0379 And therefore speake, looke, kisse, salute for me;
wln 0380 In these my selfe am like to second thee.
wln 0381 Now heare thy taske. I charge thee from the time
wln 0382 That first we set sayle for the Brittish shore,
wln 0383 To vse no words of dignity to me,
wln 0384 But in the friendliest maner that thou canst,
wln 0385 Make vse of me as thy companion:
wln 0386 For we will go disguisde in Palmers weeds,
wln 0387 That no man shall mistrust vs what we are.

wln 0388 *Mum.* If that be all, ile fit your turne, I warrant you. I am
wln 0389 some kin to the Blunts, and I think, the bluntest of all my kin-
wln 0390 dred; therefore if I bee too blunt with you, thank your selfe for
wln 0391 praying me to be so.

wln 0392 *King.* Thy pleasant company will make the way seeme short.
wln 0393 It resteth now, that in my absence hence,
wln 0394 I do commit the gouernment to you
wln 0395 My trusty Lords and faythfull Counsellers.
wln 0396 Time cutteth off the rest I haue to say:
wln 0397 The wynd blowes fayre, and I must needs away.

wln 0398 *Nobles.* Heauens send your voyage to as good effect,
wln 0399 As we your land do purpose to protect.

Exeunt.

wln 0400 *Enter the King of Cornwall and his man booted and*
wln 0401 *spurd, a riding wand, and a letter in his hand.*

wln 0402 *Corn.* But how far distant are we from the Court?

wln 0403 *Ser.* Some twenty miles, my Lord, or thereabouts.

wln 0404 *Corn.* It seemeth to me twenty thousand myles:
wln 0405 Yet hope I to be there within this houre.

wln 0406 *Ser.* Then are you like to ride alone for me.
wln 0407 I thinke, my Lord is weary of his life.

*to him-
selfe.*

wln 0408 *Corn.* Sweet *Gonorill*, I long to see thy face,
wln 0409 Which hast so kindly gratified my loue.

wln 0410 *Enter the King of Cambria booted and spurd, and his*
wln 0411 *man with a wand and a letter.*

wln 0412 *Cam.* Get a fresh horse: for by my soule I sweare,
wln 0413 I am past patience, longer to forbear
wln 0414 The wished sight of my beloued mistris,
wln 0415 Deare *Ragan*, stay and comfort of my life.

*He lookes
on the
letter.*

wln 0416 *Ser.* Now what in Gods name doth my Lord intend?

*to him-
selfe.*

He

The History of King Leir

wln 0417
wln 0418
wln 0419
wln 0420
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wln 0454

He thinks he ne're shall come at's iourneyes end.

I would he had old *Dedalus* waxen wings,

That he might flye, so I might stay behind:

For e're we get to Troynouant, I see,

He quite will tyre himselfe, his horse and me.

*Cornwall & Cambria looke one vpon another, and
start to see eche other there.*

Corn. Brother of Cambria, we greet you well,

As one whom here we little did expect.

Cam. Brother of Cornwall, met in happy time:

I thought as much to haue met with the Souldan of Persia,

As to haue met you in this place, my Lord.

No doubt, it is about some great affayres,

That makes you here so slenderly accompanied.

Corn. To say the truth, my Lord, it is no lesse,

And for your part some hasty wind of chance

Hath blowne you hither thus vpon the sudden.

Cam. My Lord, to break off further circumstances,

For at this time I cannot brooke delays:

Tell you your reason, I will tell you mine.

Corn. In fayth content, and therefore to be briefe;

For I am sure my haste's as great as yours:

I am sent for, to come vnto King *Leir*,

Who by these present letters promiseth

His eldest daughter, louely *Gonorill*,

To me in mariage, and for present dowry,

The moiety of halfe his Regiment.

The Ladies loue I long ago possest:

But vntill now I neuer had the fathers.

Cam. You tell me wonders, yet I will relate

Strange newes, and henceforth we must brothers call;

Witnesse these lynes: his honourable age,

Being weary of the troubles of his Crowne,

His princely daughter *Ragan* will bestow

On me in mariage, with halfe his Seigniories,

Whom I would gladly haue accepted of,

With the third part, her complements are such.

Corn. If I haue one halfe, and you haue the other,

Then

and his three daughters.

wln 0455

[·]en betweene vs we must needs haue the whole.

wln 0456

[·]m. The hole! how meane you that? Zlood, I hope,
We shall haue two holes betweene vs.

wln 0457

Corn. Why, the whole Kingdome.

wln 0458

Cam. I, that's very true.

wln 0459

Cor. What then is left for his third daughters dowry,
Louely *Cordella*, whom the world admires?

wln 0460

Cam. Tis very strange, I know not what to thinke,

wln 0461

Vnlesse they meane to make a Nunne of her.

wln 0462

Corn. 'Twere pity such rare beauty should be hid
Within the compasse of a Cloysters wall:

wln 0463

But howsoe're, if *Leirs* words proue true,

wln 0464

It will be good, my Lord, for me and you.

wln 0465

Cam. Then let vs haste, all danger to preuent,

wln 0466

For feare delays doe alter his intent.

wln 0467

Exeunt.

wln 0468

wln 0469

Enter Gonorill and Ragan.

wln 0470

Gon. Sister, when did you see *Cordella* last,
That prety piece, that thinks none good ynough
To speake to her, because (sir-reuerence)
She hath a little beauty extraordinary?

wln 0471

wln 0472

wln 0473

wln 0474

wln 0475

Ra. Since time my father warnd her from his presence,
I neuer saw her, that I can remember.

wln 0476

God giue her ioy of her surpassing beauty;

wln 0477

I thinke, her dowry will be small ynough.

wln 0478

Gon. I haue incenst my father so against her,

wln 0479

As he will neuer be reclaymd agayne.

wln 0480

Rag. I was not much behind to do the like.

wln 0481

Gon. Faith, sister, what moues you to beare her such good

wln 0482

Rag. In truth, I thinke, the same that moueth you; (will?)

wln 0483

Because she doth surpass vs both in beauty.

wln 0484

Gon. Beshrew your fingers, how right you can gesse:

wln 0485

I tell you true, it cuts me to the heart.

wln 0486

Rag. But we will keepe her low enough, I warrant,

wln 0487

And clip her wings for mounting vp too hye.

wln 0488

Gon. Who euer hath her, shall haue a rich mariage of her.

wln 0489

Rag. She were right fit to make a Parsons wife:

wln 0490

For they, men say, do loue faire women well,

wln 0491

The History of King Leir

wln 0492
wln 0493
wln 0494
wln 0495
wln 0496
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wln 0498
wln 0499
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wln 0529

And many times doe marry them with nothing.

Gon. With nothing! marry God forbid: why, are there any

Rag. I meane, no money. (such?)

Gon. I cry you mercy, I mistooke you much:

And she is far too stately for the Church;

Sheele lay her husbands Benefice on her back,

Euen in one gowne, if she may haue her will.

Ra. In faith, poore soule, I pittie her a little.

Would she were lesse fayre, or more fortunate.

Well, I thinke long vntill I see my *Morgan*,

The gallant Prince of Cambria, here arriue.

Gon. And so do I, vntill the Cornwall King

Present himselfe, to consummate my ioyes.

Peace, here commeth my father.

Enter Leir, Perillus and others.

Leir. Cease, good my Lords, and sue not to reuerse

Our censure, which is now irreuocable.

We haue dispatched letters of contract

Vnto the Kings of Cambria and of Cornwall;

Our hand and seale will iustify no lesse:

Then do not so dishonour me, my Lords,

As to make shipwrack of our kingly word.

I am as kind as is the Pellican,

That kils itselfe, to saue her young ones liues:

And yet as ielous as the princely Eagle,

That kils her young ones, if they do but dazell

Vpon the radiant splendor of the Sunne.

Within this two dayes I expect their comming.

But in good time, they are arriu'd already.

This haste of yours, my Lords, doth testify

The feruent loue you beare vnto my daughters:

And think your selues as welcome to King *Leir*,

As euer *Pryams* children were to him.

Corn. My gracious Lord, and father too, I hope,

Pardon, for that I made no greater haste:

But were my horse as swift as was my will,

I long ere this had seene your Maiesty.

Cam. No other scuse of absence can I frame,

*Enter
Kings of
Cornwall and Cam-
bria.*

Then

and his three daughters.

wln 0530
wln 0531
wln 0532
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wln 0565
wln 0566
wln 0567

Then what my brother hath inform'd your Grace:
For our vndererued welcome, we do vowe,
Perpetually to rest at your commaund.

Corn. But you, sweet Loue, illustrious *Gonorill*,
The Regent, and the Soueraigne of my soule,
Is *Cornwall* welcome to your Excellency?

Gon. As welcome, as *Leander* was to *Hero*,
Or braue *Aeneas* to the Carthage Queene:
So and more welcome is your Grace to me.

Cam. O, may my fortune proue no worse then his,
Since heauens do know, my fancy is as much.
Deare *Ragan*, say, if welcome vnto thee,
All welcomes else will little comfort me.

Rag. As gold is welcome to the couetous eye,
As sleepe is welcome to the Traueller,
As is fresh water to sea-beaten men,
Or moystned showres vnto the parched ground,
Or any thing more welcomer then this,
So and more welcome louely *Morgan* is.

Leir. What resteth then, but that we consummate,
The celebration of these nuptiall Rites?
My Kingdome I do equally deuide.
Princes, draw lots, and take your chaunce as falles.

Then they draw lots.

These I resigne as freely vnto you,
As earst by true succession they were mine.
And here I do freely dispossesse my selfe,
And make you two my true adopted heyres:
My selfe will soiorne with my sonne of Cornwall,
And take me to my prayers and my beades.
I know, my daughter *Ragan* will be sorry,
Because I do not spend my dayes with her:
Would I were able to be with both at once;
They are the kindest Gyrles in Christendome.

Per. I haue bin silent all this while, my Lord,
To see if any worthyer then my selfe,
Would once haue spoke in poore *Cordellaes* cause:
But loue or feare tyes silence to their tounge.

C

Oh,

The History of King Leir

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wln 0570
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wln 0605

Oh, heare me speake for her, my gracious Lord,
Whose deeds haue not deseru'd this ruthlesse doome,
As thus to disinherit her of all.

Leir. Vrge this no more, and if thou loue thy life:
I say, she is no daughter, that doth scorne
To tell her father how she loueth him.
Who euer speaketh hereof to mee agayne,
I will esteeme him for my mortall foe.
Come, let vs in, to celebrate with ioy,
The happy Nuptialls of these louely payres.

Exeunt omnes, manet Perillus.

Per. Ah, who so blind, as they that will not see
The neere approach of their owne misery?
Poore Lady, I extremely pittie her:
And whilst I liue, eche drop of my heart blood,
Will I strayne forth, to do her any good.

Exit.

*Enter the Gallian King, and Mumford, disguised
like Pilgrims.*

Mum. My Lord, how do you brook this Brittish ayre?

King. My Lord? I told you of this foolish humour,
And bound you to the contrary, you know.

Mum. Pardon me for once, my Lord; I did forget.

King. My Lord agayne? then let's haue nothing else,
And so be tane for spyes, and then tis well.

Mum. Swounds, I could bite my tounge in two for anger:
For Gods sake name your selfe some proper name.

King. Call me *Tresillus*: Ile call thee *Denapoll*.

Mum. Might I be made the Monarch of the world,
I could not hit vpon these names, I sweare.

King. Then call me *Will*, ile call thee *Iacke*.

Mum. Well, be it so, for I haue wel deseru'd to be cal'd *Iack*.

King. Stand close; for here a Brittish Lady cōmeth:
A fayrer creature ne're mine eyes beheld.

*Enter
Cordella.*

Cord. This is a day of ioy vnto my sisters,
Wherein they both are married vnto Kings;
And I, by byrth, as worthy as themselues,
Am turnd into the world, to seeke my fortune.
How may I blame the fickle Queene of Chaunce,

That

and his three daughters.

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wln 0607
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wln 0641
wln 0642
wln 0643

That maketh me a patterne of her power?
Ah, poore weake mayd, whose imbecility
Is far vnable to indure these brunts.
Oh, father *Leir*, how dost thou wrong thy child,
Who alwayes was obedient to thy will!
But why accuse I fortune and my father?
No, no, it is the pleasure of my God:
And I do willingly imbrace the rod.
King. It is no Goddess; for she doth **complayn[.]**
On fortune, and th'vnkindnesse of her father.
Cord. These costly robes ill fitting my estate,
I will exchange for other meaner habit.
Mum. Now if I had a Kingdome in my hands,
I would exchange it for a milkmaids smock and petycoate,
That she and I might shift our clothes together.
Cord. I will betake me to my threed and Needle,
And earne my liuing with my fingers ends.
Mum. O braue! God willing, thou shalt haue my custome,
By sweet S. *Denis*, here I sadly sweare,
For all the shirts and night-geare that I weare.
Cord. I will professe and vow a maydens life.
Mum. Thē I protest thou shalt not haue my custom.
King. I can forbear no longer for to speak:
For if I do, I think my heart will breake.
Mum. Sblood, *Wil*, I hope you are not in loue with my Sēpster.
King. I am in such a laborinth of loue,
As that I know not which way to get out.
Mum. You'l ne're get out, vnlesse you first get in.
King. I prithy *Iack*, crosse not my passions.
Mum. Prithy *Wil*, to her, and try her patience.
King. Thou fairest creature, whatsoere thou art,
That euer any mortall eyes beheld,
Vouchsafe to me, who haue o'reheard thy woes,
To shew the cause of these thy sad laments.
Cor. Ah Pilgrims, what auailles to shew the cause,
When there's no meanes to find a remedy?
King. To vtter grieffe, doth ease a heart o'recharg'd.
Cor. To touch a sore, doth aggrauate the payne.

The History of King Leir

wln 0644
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wln 0646
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wln 0679
wln 0680
wln 0681

King. The silly mouse, by vertue of her teeth,
Releas'd the princely Lyon from the net.

Cor. Kind Palmer, which so much desir'st to heare
The tragick tale of my vnhappy youth:
Know this in briefe, I am the haplesse daughter
Of *Leir*, sometimes King of Brittany.

King. Why, who debarres his honourable age,
From being still the King of Brittany?

Cor. None, but himselfe hath dispossesst himselfe,
And giuen all his Kingdome to the Kings
Of Cornwall and of Cambria, with my sisters.

King. Hath he giuen nothing to your louely selfe?

Cor. He lou'd me not, & therefore gaue me nothing,
Only because I could not flatter him:
And in this day of tryumph to my sisters,
Doth Fortune tryumph in my ouerthrow.

King. Sweet Lady, say there should come a King,
As good as eyther of your sisters husbands,
To craue your loue, would you accept of him?

Cor. Oh, doe not mocke with those in misery,
Nor do not think, though fortune haue the power,
To spoyle mine honour, and debase my state,
That she hath any interest in my mind:
For if the greatest Monarch on the earth,
Should sue to me in this extremity,
Except my heart could loue, and heart could like,
Better then any that I euer saw,
His great estate no more should moue my mind,
Then mountaynes moue by blast of euery wind.

King. Think not, sweet Nymph, tis holy Palmers guise,
To griued soules fresh torments to deuise:
Therefore in wnesse of my true intent,
Let heauen and earth beare record of my words:
There is a young and lusty Gallian King,
So like to me, as I am to my selfe,
That earnestly doth craue to haue thy loue,
And ioyne with thee in *Hymens* sacred bonds.

Cor. The like to thee did ne're these eyes behold;

Oh

and his three daughters.

wln 0682 Oh liue to adde new torments to my grieffe:
wln 0683 Why didst thou thus intrap me vnawares?
wln 0684 Ah Palmer, my estate doth not befit
wln 0685 A kingly mariage, as the case now stands.
wln 0686 Whilome when as I liu'd in honours height,
wln 0687 A Prince perhaps might postulate my loue:
wln 0688 Now misery, dishonour and disgrace,
wln 0689 Hath light on me, and quite reuerst the case.
wln 0690 Thy King will hold thee wise, if thou surcease
wln 0691 The sute, whereas no dowry will insue.
wln 0692 Then be aduised, Palmer, what to do:
wln 0693 Cease for thy King, seeke for thy selfe to woo.
wln 0694 *King.* Your birth's too high for any, but a King.
wln 0695 *Cor.* My mind is low ynough to loue a Palmer,
wln 0696 Rather then any King vpon the earth.
wln 0697 *King.* O, but you neuer can indure their life,
wln 0698 Which is so straight and full of penury.
wln 0699 *Cor.* O yes, I can, and happy if I might:
wln 0700 Ile hold thy Palmers staffe within my hand,
wln 0701 And thinke it is the Scepter of a Queene.
wln 0702 Sometime ile set thy Bonnet on my head,
wln 0703 And thinke I weare a rich imperiall Crowne.
wln 0704 Sometime ile helpe thee in thy holy prayers,
wln 0705 And thinke I am with thee in Paradise.
wln 0706 Thus ile mock fortune, as she mocketh me,
wln 0707 And neuer will my louely choyce repent:
wln 0708 For hauing thee, I shall haue all content.
wln 0709 *King.* 'Twere sin to hold her longer in suspence,
wln 0710 Since that my soule hath vow'd she shall be mine.
wln 0711 Ah, deare *Cordella*, cordiall to my heart,
wln 0712 I am no Palmer, as I seeme to be,
wln 0713 But hither come in this vnknowne disguise,
wln 0714 To view th'admired beauty of those eyes.
wln 0715 I am the King of Gallia, gentle mayd,
wln 0716 (Although thus slenderly accompanied)
wln 0717 And yet thy vassayle by imperious Loue,
wln 0718 And sworne to serue thee euerlastingly.
wln 0719 *Cor.* What e're you be, of high or low discent,

The History of King Leir

wln 0720
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All's one to me, I do request but this:
That as I am, you will accept of me,
And I will haue you whatsoe're you be:
Yet well I know, you come of royall race,
I see such sparks of honour in your face:

Mum. Haue Palmer's weeds such power to win fayre Ladies?
Fayth, then I hope the next that falles is myne:
Vpon condition I no worse might speed,
I would for euer weare a Palmers weed.
I like an honest and playne dealing wench,
That sweares (without exceptions) I will haue you.
These foppets, that know not whether to loue a man or no, ex-
cept they first go aske their mothers leaue, by this hand, I hate
them ten tymes worse then poyson.

King. What resteth then our happinesse to procure?

Mum. Fayth, go to Church, to make the matter sure.

King. It shall be so, because the world shall say,
King *Leirs* three daughters were wedded in one day:
The celebration of this happy chaunce,
We will deferre, vntill we come to Fraunce.

Mum. I like the wooing, that's not long a doing.
Well, for her sake, I know what I know:
Ile neuer marry whilest I liue,
Except I haue one of these Brittish Ladyes,
My humour is alienated from the mayds of Fraunce.

Exeunt.

Enter Perillus solus.

Per. The King hath dispossesst himselfe of all,
Those to aduaunce, which scarce will giue him thanks:
His youngest daughter he hath turnd away,
And no man knowes what is become of her.
He soiournes now in Cornwall with the eldest,
Who flattred him, vntill she did obtayne
That at his hands, which now she doth possess,
And now she sees hee hath no more to giue,
It grieues her heart to see her father liue.
Oh, whom should man trust in this wicked age,
When children thus against their parents rage?
But he, the myrrour of mild patience,

Puts

and his three daughters.

wln 0758 Puts vp all wrongs, and neuer giues reply:
wln 0759 Yet shames she not in most opprobrious sort,
wln 0760 To call him foole and doted to his face,
wln 0761 And sets her Parasites of purpose oft,
wln 0762 In scoffing wise to offer him disgrace.
wln 0763 Oh yron age! O times! O monstrous, vilde,
wln 0764 When parents are contemned of the child!
wln 0765 His pension she hath halfe restrain'd from him,
wln 0766 And will, e're long, the other halfe, I feare:
wln 0767 For she thinks nothing is bestowde in vayne,
wln 0768 But that which doth her fathers life maintayne.
wln 0769 Trust not alliance; but trust strangers rather,
wln 0770 Since daughters proue disloyall to the father.
wln 0771 Well, I will counsell him the best I can:
wln 0772 Would I were able to redresse his wrong.
wln 0773 Yet what I can, vnto my vtmost power,
wln 0774 He shall be sure of to the latest houre.

Exit.

Enter Gonorill, and Skalliger.

wln 0776 *Gon.* I prithy, *Skalliger*, tell me what thou thinkst:
wln 0777 Could any woman of our dignity
wln 0778 Endure such quips and peremptory taunts,
wln 0779 As I do daily from my doting father?
wln 0780 Doth't not suffice that I him keepe of almes,
wln 0781 Who is not able for to keepe himselfe?
wln 0782 But as if he were our better, he should thinke
wln 0783 To check and snap me vp at euery word.
wln 0784 I cannot make me a new fashioned gowne,
wln 0785 And set it forth with more then common cost;
wln 0786 But his old doting doltish withered wit,
wln 0787 Is sure to giue a sencelesse check for it.
wln 0788 I cannot make a banquet extraordinary,
wln 0789 To grace my selfe, and spread my name abroad,
wln 0790 But he, old foole, is captious by and by,
wln 0791 And sayth, the cost would well suffice for twice.
wln 0792 Iudge then, I pray, what reason ist, that I
wln 0793 Should stand alone charg'd with his vaine expence,
wln 0794 And that my sister *Ragan* should go free,
wln 0795 To whom he gawe as much, as vnto me?

C4

I prithy,

The History of King Leir

wln 0796
wln 0797
wln 0798
wln 0799
wln 0800
wln 0801
wln 0802
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wln 0831
wln 0832
wln 0833

I prithy, *Skalliger*, tell me, if thou know,
By any meanes to rid me of this woe.

Skal. Your many fauours still bestowde on me,
Binde me in duty to aduise your Grace,
How you may soonest remedy this ill.
The large allowance which he hath from you,
Is that which makes him so forget himselfe:
Therefore abbridge it halfe, and you shall see,
That hauing lesse, he will more thankfull be:
For why, abundance maketh vs forget
The fountaynes whence the benefits do spring.

Gon. Well, *Skalliger*, for thy kynd aduice herein,
I will not be vngratefull, if I liue:
I haue restrayned halfe his portion already,
And I will presently restrayne the other,
That hauing no meanes to releue himselfe,
He may go seeke elsewhere for better helpe.

Exit.

Skal. Go, viperous woman, shame to all thy sexe:
The heauens, no doubt, will punish thee for this:
And me a villayne, that to curry fauour,
Haue giuen the daughter counsell 'gainst the father.
But vs the world doth this experience giue,
That he that cannot flatter, cannot liue.

Exit.

Enter King of Cornwall, Leir, Perillus & Nobles.

Corn. Father, what ayleth you to be so sad?
Me thinks, you frollike not as you were wont.

Leir. The neerer we do grow vnto our graues,
The lesse we do delight in worldly ioyes.

Corn. But if a man can frame himselfe to myrth,
It is a meane for to prolong his life.

Leir. Then welcome sorrow, *Leirs* only friend,
Who doth desire his troubled dayes had end.

Corn. Comfort your selfe, father, here comes your daughter,
Who much will grieue, I know, to see you sad.

Enter

Leir. But more doth grieue, I feare, to see me liue.

Gonorill.

Corn. My *Gonorill*, you come in wished time,
To put your father from these pensiuie dumps.
In fayth, I feare that all things go not well.

Gon. What,

img: 13-b
sig: D1r

and his three daughters.

wln 0834 *Gon.* What, do you feare, that I haue angred him?
wln 0835 Hath he complaynd of me vnto my Lord?
wln 0836 Ile prouide him a piece of bread and cheese;
wln 0837 For in a time heele practise nothing else,
wln 0838 Then carry tales from one vnto another.
wln 0839 Tis all his practise for to kindle strife,
wln 0840 'Twixt you, my Lord, and me your louing wife:
wln 0841 But I will take an order, if I can,
wln 0842 To cease th'effect, where first the cause began.

wln 0843 *Corn.* Sweet, be not angry in a partiall cause,
wln 0844 He ne're complaynd of thee in all his life.
wln 0845 Father, you must not weygh a womans words.

wln 0846 *Leir.* Alas, not I: poore soule, she breeds yong bones,
wln 0847 And that is it makes her so tutchy sure.

wln 0848 *Gon.* What, breeds young bones already! you will make
wln 0849 An honest woman of me then, belike.
wln 0850 O vild olde wretch! who euer heard the like,
wln 0851 That seeketh thus his owne child to defame?

wln 0852 *Corn.* I cannot stay to heare this discord sound. *Exit.*

wln 0853 *Gon.* For any one that loues your company,
wln 0854 You may go pack, and seeke some other place,
wln 0855 To sowe the seed of discord and disgrace. *Exit.*

wln 0856 *Leir.* Thus, say or do the best that e're I can,
wln 0857 Tis wrested straight into another sence.
wln 0858 This punishment my heauy sinnes deserue,
wln 0859 And more then this ten thousand thousand times:
wln 0860 Else aged *Leir* them could neuer find
wln 0861 Cruell to him, to whom he hath bin kind.
wln 0862 Why do I ouer-liue my selfe, to see
wln 0863 The course of nature quite reuerst in me?
wln 0864 Ah, gentle Death, if euer any wight
wln 0865 Did wish thy presence with a perfit zeale:
wln 0866 Then come, I pray thee, euen with all my heart,
wln 0867 And end my sorrowes with thy fatall dart. *He weepes.*

wln 0868 *Per.* Ah, do not so disconsolate your selfe,
wln 0869 Nor dew your aged cheeks with wasting teares.

wln 0870 *Leir.* What man art thou that takest any pity
wln 0871 Vpon the worthlesse state of old *Leir*?

D

Per. One,

The History of King Leir

wln 0872
wln 0873
wln 0874
wln 0875
wln 0876
wln 0877
wln 0878
wln 0879
wln 0880
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wln 0907
wln 0908
wln 0909

Per. One, who doth beare as great a share of grieffe,
As if it were my dearest fathers case.

Leir. Ah, good my friend, how ill art thou aduise,
For to consort with miserable men:
Go learne to flatter, where thou mayst in time
Get fauour 'mongst the mighty, and so clyme:
For now I am so poore and full of want.
As that I ne're can recompence thy loue.

Per. What's got by flattery, doth not long indure;
And men in fauour liue not most secure.
My conscience tels me, if I should forsake you,
I were the hatefulst excrement on the earth:
Which well do know, in course of former time,
How good my Lord hath bin to me and mine.

Leir. Did I ere rayse thee higher then the rest
Of all thy ancestors which were before?

Per. I ne're did seeke it; but by your good Grace,
I still inioyed my owne with quietnesse.

Leir. Did I ere giue thee liuing, to increase
The due reuennues which thy father left?

Per. I had ynough, my Lord, and hauing that,
What should you need to giue me any more?

Leir. Oh, did I euer dispossesse my selfe,
And giue thee halfe my Kingdome in good will?

Per. Alas, my Lord, there were no reason, why
You should haue such a thought, to giue it me.

Leir. Nay, if thou talke of reason, then be mute;
For with good reason I can thee confute.
If they, which first by natures sacred law,
Do owe to me the tribute of their liues;
If they to whom I alwayes haue bin kinde,
And bountifull beyond comparison;
If they, for whom I haue vndone my selfe,
And brought my age vnto this extreme want,
Do now reiect, contemne, despise, abhor me,
What reason moueth thee to sorrow for me?

Per. Where reason fayles, let teares confirme my loue,
And speake how much your passions do me moue.

Ah,

and his three daughters.

wln 0910
wln 0911
wln 0912
wln 0913
wln 0914
wln 0915
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wln 0944
wln 0945
wln 0946
wln 0947

Ah, good my Lord, condemne not all for one:
You haue two daughters left, to whom I know
You shall be welcome, if you please to go.

Leir. Oh, how thy words adde sorrow to my soule,
To thinke of my vnkindnesse to *Cordella!*
Whom causelesse I did dispossesse of all,
Vpon th'vnkind suggestions of her sisters:
And for her sake, I thinke this heauy doome
Is falne on me, and not without desert:
Yet vnto *Ragan* was *I* alwayes kinde,
And gaue to her the halfe of all *I* had:
It may be, if *I* should to her repayre,
She would be kinder, and intreat me fayre.

Per. No doubt she would, & practise ere't be long,
By force of Armes for to redresse your wrong.

Leir. Well, since thou doest aduise me for to go,
I am resolu'd to try the worst of wo.

Exeunt.

Enter Ragan solus.

Rag. How may *I* blesse the howre of my natiuity,
Which bodeth vnto me such happy Starres!
How may *I* thank kind fortune, that vouchsafes
To all my actions, such desir'd euent!
I rule the King of Cambria as *I* please:
The States are all obedient to my will;
And looke what ere *I* say, it shall be so;
Not any one, that dareth answere no.
My eldest sister liues in royall state,
And wanteth nothing fitting her degree:
Yet hath she such a cooling card withall,
As that her hony sauoureth much of gall.
My father with her is quarter-master still,
And many times restraynes her of her will:
But if he were with me, and seru'd me so,
Ide send him packing some where else to go.
Ide entertayne him wi[··] such slender cost,
That he should quickly wish to change his host.

Exit.

Enter Cornwall, Gonorill, and attendants.

Corn. Ah, *Gonorill*, what dire vnhappy chaunce

The History of King Leir

wln 0948 Hath sequestred thy father from our presence,
wln 0949 That no report can yet be heard of him?
wln 0950 Some great vnkindnesse hath bin offred him,
wln 0951 Exceeding far the bounds of patience:
wln 0952 Else all the world shall neuer me perswade,
wln 0953 He would forsake vs without notice made.
wln 0954 *Gon.* Alas, my Lord, whom doth it touch so neere,
wln 0955 Or who hath interest in this grieffe, but I,
wln 0956 Whom sorrow had brought to her longest home,
wln 0957 But that I know his qualities so well?
wln 0958 I know, he is but stolne vpon my sister
wln 0959 At vnawares, to see her how she fares,
wln 0960 And spend a little time with her, to note
wln 0961 How all things goe, and how she likes her choyce:
wln 0962 And when occasion serues, heele steale from her,
wln 0963 And vnawares returne to vs agayne.
wln 0964 Therefore, my Lord, be frolick, and resolute
wln 0965 To see my father here agayne e're long.
wln 0966 *Corn.* I hope so too; but yet to be more sure,
wln 0967 Ile send a Poste immediately to know
wln 0968 Whether he be arriued there or no.
wln 0969 *Gon.* But I will intercept the Messenger,
wln 0970 And temper him before he doth depart,
wln 0971 With sweet perswasions, and with sound rewards,
wln 0972 That his report shall ratify my speech,
wln 0973 And make my Lord cease further to inquire.
wln 0974 If he be not gone to my sisters Court,
wln 0975 As sure my mind presageth that he is,
wln 0976 He happely may, by traueiling vnknowne wayes,
wln 0977 Fall sicke, and as a common passenger,
wln 0978 Be dead and buried: would God it were so well;
wln 0979 For then there were no more to do, but this,
wln 0980 He went away, and none knowes where he is,
wln 0981 But say he be in Cambria with the King,
wln 0982 And there exclaime against me, as he will:
wln 0983 I know he is as welcome to my sister,
wln 0984 As water is into a broken ship.
wln 0985 Well, after him Ile send such thunderclaps

Exit.

Of

and his three daughters.

wln 0986
wln 0987
wln 0988
wln 0989
wln 0990
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wln 1023

Of slaunder, scandall, and inuented tales,
That all the blame shall be remou'd from me,
And vnperceiu'd rebound vpon himselfe.
Thus with one nayle another Ile expell,
And make the world iudge, that I vsde him well.

*Enter the Messenger that should go to Cambria,
with a letter in his hand.*

Gon. My honest friend, whither away so fast?

Mes. To Cambria, Madam, with letters frō the king.

Gon. To whom?

Mess. Vnto your father, if he be there.

Gon. Let me see them. *She opens them.*

Mess. Madam, I hope your Grace will stand
Betweene me and my neck-verse, if I be
Calld in question, for opening the Kings letters.

Gon. 'Twas was I that opened them, it was not thou.

Mes. I, but you need not care: and so must I,
A hansome man, be quickly trust vp,
And when a man's hang'd, all the world cannot saue him,

Gon. He that hangs thee, were better hang his father,
Or that but hurts thee in the least degree.
I tell thee, we make great account of thee.

Mes. I am o're-ioy'd, I surfet of sweet words:
Kind Queene, had I a hundred liues, I would
Spend ninety nyne of them for you, for that word.

Gon. I, but thou wouldst keepe one life still,
And that's as many as thou art like to haue.

Mes. That one life is not too deare for my good Queene; this
sword, this buckler, this head, this heart, these hands, armes,
legs, tripes, bowels, and all the members else whatsoever, are at
your dispose; vse me, trust me, commaund me: if I fayle in any
thing, tye me to a dung cart, and make a Scauengers horse of
me, and whip me, so long as I haue any skin on my back.

Gon. In token of further imployment, take that.

Flings him a purse.

Mes. A strong Bond, a firme Obligation, good in law, good
in law: if I keepe not the condition, let my necke be the forfey-
ture of my negligence.

wln 1024

Gon. I like thee well, thou hast a good tounge.

wln 1025

Mes. And as bad a tounge if it be set on it, as any Oysterwife at Billingsgate hath: why, I haue made many of my neighbours forsake their houses with rayling vpon them, and go dwell else where; and so by my meanes houses haue bin good cheape in our parish: My tounge being well whetted with choller, is more sharpe then a Razer of **Palerno**.

wln 1026

wln 1027

wln 1028

wln 1029

wln 1030

Gon. O, thou art a fit man for my purpose.

wln 1031

wln 1032

Mes. Commend me not, sweet Queene, before you try me. As my deserts are, so do think of me.

wln 1033

wln 1034

wln 1035

wln 1036

wln 1037

wln 1038

wln 1039

wln 1040

wln 1041

Gon. Well sayd, then this is thy tryall: Instead of carrying the Kings letters to my father, carry thou these letters to my sister, which contayne matter quite contrary to the other: there

wln 1042

shal she be giuen to vnderstand, that my father hath detracted

wln 1043

her, giuen out slaundrous speaches against her; and that hee

wln 1044

hath most intollerably abused me, set my Lord and me at va-

wln 1045

riance, and made mutinyes amongst the commons.

wln 1046

These things (although it be not so)

wln 1047

Yet thou must affirme them to be true,

wln 1048

With othes and protestations as will serue,

wln 1049

To driue my sister out of loue with him,

wln 1050

And cause my will accomplished to be.

wln 1051

This do, thou winst my fauour for euer,

wln 1052

And makest a hye way of preferment to thee

wln 1053

And all thy friends.

wln 1054

Mess. It sufficeth, conceyt it is already done:

wln 1055

I will so tounge-whip him, that *I* will

wln 1056

Leaue him as bare of credit, as a Poulter

wln 1057

Leaues a Cony, when she pulls off his skin.

wln 1058

Gon. Yet there is a further matter.

wln 1059

Mes. I thirst to heare it.

wln 1060

Gon. If my sister thinketh conuenient, as my letters

importeth, to make him away, hast thou the heart to effect it?

Mess. Few words are best in so small a matter: These are but trifles. By this booke *I* will.

kisse the paper.

Gon. About

and his three daughters.

Gon. About it presently, I long till it be done,

Mes. I fly, I fly.

Exeunt.

Enter Cordella solus.

I haue bin ouer-negligent to day,
In going to the Temple of my God,
To render thanks for all his benefits,
Which he miraculously hath bestowed on me,
In raysing me out of my meane estate,
When as I was deuoyd of worldly friends,
And placing me in such a sweet content,
As far exceeds the reach of my deserts.
My kingly husband, myrroure of his time,
For zeale, for iustice, kindnesse, and for care
To God, his subiects, me, and Common weale,
By his appoyntment was ordaynd for me.
I cannot wish the thing that *I* do want;
I cannot want the thing but *I* may haue,
Saue only this which *I* shall ne're obtayne,
My fathers loue, oh this *I* ne're shall gayne.
I would abstayne from any nutryment,
And pyne my body to the very bones:
Bare foote *I* would on pilgrimage set forth
Vnto the furthest quarters of the earth,
And all my life time would *I* sackcloth weare,
And mourning-wise powre dust vpon my head:
So he but to forgiue me once would please,
That his gray haire might go to heauen in peace.
And yet *I* know not how *I* him offended,
Or wherein iustly *I* haue deserued blame.
Oh sisters! you are much to blame in this,
It was not he, but you that did me wrong.
Yet God forgiue both him, and you and me,
Euen as *I* doe in perfit charity.
I will to Church, and pray vnto my Sauour,
That ere *I* dye, *I* may obtayne his fauour.

Exit.

Enter Leir and Perillus fayntly.

Per. Rest on me, my Lord, and stay your selfe,
The way seemes tedious to your aged lymmes.

D4

Leir. Nay,

The History of King Leir

wln 1099
wln 1100
wln 1101
wln 1102
wln 1103
wln 1104
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wln 1106
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wln 1126
wln 1127
wln 1128
wln 1129
wln 1130
wln 1131
wln 1132
wln 1133
wln 1134
wln 1135
wln 1136

Leir. Nay, rest on me, kind friend, and stay thy selfe,
Thou art as old as I, but more kind.

Per. Ah, good my Lord, it ill befits, that I
Should leane vpon the person of a King.

Leir. But it fits worse, that I should bring thee forth,
That had no cause to come along with me,
Through these vncouth paths, and tirefull wayes,
And neuer ease thy faynting limmes a whit.
Thou hast left all, I, all to come with me,
And I, for all, haue nought to guerdon thee.

Per. Cease, good my Lord, to aggrauate my woes,
With these kind words, which cuts my heart in two,
To think your will should want the power to do.

Leir. Cease, good *Perillus*, for to call me Lord,
And think me but the shaddow of my selfe.

Per. That honourable title will I giue,
Vnto my Lord, so long as I do liue.
Oh, be of comfort; for I see the place
Whereas your daughter keeps her residence.
And loe, in happy time the Cambrian Prince
Is here arriu'd, to gratify our comming.

*Enter the Prince of Cambria, Ragan and Nobles: looke
vpon them, and whisper together.*

Leir. Were I best speak, or sit me downe and dye?
I am asham'd to tell this heauy tale.

Per. Then let me tell it, if you please, my Lord:
Tis shame for them that were the cause thereof.

Cam. What two old men are those that seeme so sad?
Me thinks, I should remember well their lookes.

Rag. No, I mistake not, sure it is my father:
I must dissemble kindnesse now of force.

She runneth to him, and kneeles downe, saying:

Father, I bid you welcome, full of grieffe,
To see your Grace vsde thus vnworthily,
And ill befitting for your reuerend age,
To come on foot a iourney so indurable.
Oh, what disaster chauce hath bin the cause,
To make your cheeks so hollow, spare and leane?

He

and his three daughters.

wln 1137 He cannot speake for weeping: for Gods loue, come,
wln 1138 Let vs refresh him with some needfull things,
wln 1139 And at more leysure we may better know,
wln 1140 Whence springs the ground of this vnlookt for wo.

wln 1141 *Cam.* Come, father, e're we any further talke,
wln 1142 You shall refresh you after this weary walk.

*Exeunt, manet
Ragan.*

wln 1143 *Rag.* Comes he to me with finger in the eye,
wln 1144 To tell a tale against my sister here?
wln 1145 Whom I do know, he greatly hath abusde:
wln 1146 And now like a contentious crafty wretch,
wln 1147 He first begins for to complayne himselfe,
wln 1148 When as himselfe is in the greatest fault.

wln 1149 Ile not be partiall in my sisters cause,
wln 1150 Nor yet beleue his doting vayne reports:
wln 1151 Who for a trifle (safely) I dare say,
wln 1152 Vpon a spleene is stolen thence away:
wln 1153 And here (forsooth) he hopeth to haue harbour,
wln 1154 And to be moan'd and made on like a child:
wln 1155 But ere't be long, his comming he shall curse,
wln 1156 And truely say, he came from bad to worse:
wln 1157 Yet will I make fayre weather, to procure
wln 1158 Conuenient meanes, and then ile strike it sure.

Exit.

wln 1159 *Enter Messenger solus.*

wln 1160 *Mes.* Now happily I am arriued here,
wln 1161 Before the stately Palace of the Cambrian King:
wln 1162 If *Leir* be here safe-seated, and in rest,
wln 1163 To rowse him from it I will do my best.
wln 1164 Now bags of gold, your vertue is (no doubt)
wln 1165 To make me in my message bold and stout.
wln 1166 The King of heauen preserue your Maiesty.
wln 1167 And send your Highnesse euerlasting raigne.

Enter Ragan.

wln 1168 *Ra.* Thanks, good my friend; but what imports thy message?

wln 1169 *Mes.* Kind greetings from the Cornwall Queene:
wln 1170 The residue these letters will declare.

wln 1171 *She opens the letters.*

wln 1172 *Rag.* How fares our royall sister?

wln 1173 *Mes.* I did leaue her at my parting, in good health.

wln 1174 *She reads the letter, frownes and stamps.*

wln 1175 See how her colour comes and goes agayne,
wln 1176 Now red as scarlet, now as pale as ash:
wln 1177 She how she knits her brow, and bytes her lips,
wln 1178 And stamps, and makes a dumbe shew of disdayne,
wln 1179 Mixt with reuenge, and violent extreames.
wln 1180 Here will be more worke and more crownes for me.
wln 1181 *Rag.* Alas, poore soule, and hath he vsde her thus?
wln 1182 And is he now come hither, with intent
wln 1183 To set diuorce betwixt my Lord and me?
wln 1184 Doth he giue out, that he doth heare report,
wln 1185 That I do rule my husband as I list,
wln 1186 And therefore meanes to alter so the case,
wln 1187 That I shall know my Lord to be my head?
wln 1188 Well, it were best for him to take good heed,
wln 1189 Or I will make him hop without a head,
wln 1190 For his presumption, dottard that he is.
wln 1191 In Cornwall he hath made such mutinies,
wln 1192 First, setting of the King against the Queene;
wln 1193 Then stirring vp the Commons 'gainst the King;
wln 1194 That had he there continued any longer,
wln 1195 He had bin call'd in question for his fact.
wln 1196 So vpon that occasion thence he fled,
wln 1197 And comes thus slily stealing vnto vs:
wln 1198 And now already since his comming hither,
wln 1199 My Lord and he are growne in such a league,
wln 1200 That I can haue no conference with his Grace:
wln 1201 I feare, he doth already intimate
wln 1202 Some forged cauillations 'gainst my state:
wln 1203 Tis therefore best to cut him off in time,
wln 1204 Lest slaunderous rumours once abroad disperst,
wln 1205 It is too late for them to be reuerst.
wln 1206 Friend, as the tennour of these letters shewes,
wln 1207 My sister puts great confidence in thee.
wln 1208 *Mes.* She neuer yet committed trust to me,
wln 1209 But that (I hope) she found me alwayes faythfull:
wln 1210 So will I be to any friend of hers,
wln 1211 That hath occasion to imploy my helpe.
wln 1212 *Rag.* Hast thou the heart to act a stratagem,

And

and his three daughters.

wln 1213
wln 1214
wln 1215
wln 1216
wln 1217
wln 1218
wln 1219
wln 1220
wln 1221
wln 1222
wln 1223
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wln 1236
wln 1237
wln 1238
wln 1239
wln 1240
wln 1241
wln 1242
wln 1243
wln 1244
wln 1245
wln 1246
wln 1247
wln 1248
wln 1249
wln 1250

And giue a stabbe or two, if need require?

Mes. I haue a heart compact of Adamant,
Which neuer knew what melting pittie meant.
I weigh no more the murdring of a man,
Then I respect the cracking of a Flea,
When I doe catch her byting on my skin.
If you will haue your husband or your father,
Or both of them sent to another world,
Do but commaund me doo't, it shall be done.

Rag. It is ynough, we make no doubt of thee:
Meet vs to morrow here, at nyne a clock:
Meane while, farewell, and drink that for my sake.

Exit.

Mes. I, this is it will make me do the deed:
Oh, had I euery day such customers,
This were the gainefulst trade in Christendome!
A purse of gold giu'n for a paltry stabbe!
Why, heres a wench that longs to haue a stabbe.
Wel, I could giue it her, and ne're hurt her neither.

Enter the Gallian King, and Cordella.

King. When will these clouds of sorrow once disperse,
And smiling ioy tryumph vpon thy brow?
When will this Scene of sadnesse haue an end,
And pleasant acts insue, to moue delight?
When will my louely Queene cease to lament,
And take some comfort to her grieued thoughts?
If of thy selfe thou daignst to haue no care,
Yet pittie me, whom thy grieffe makes despayre.

Cor. O, grieue not you, my Lord, you haue no cause.
Let not my passions moue your mind a whit:
For I am bound by nature, to lament
For his ill will, that life to me first lent.
If so the stocke be dryed with disdayne,
Withered and sere the branch must needes remaine.

King. But thou art now graft in another stock;
I am the stock, and thou the louely branch:
And from my root continuall sap shall flow,
To make thee flourish with perpetuall spring.
Forget thy father and thy kindred now,

The History of King Leir

wln 1251 Since they forsake thee like inhumane beastes,
wln 1252 Thinke they are dead, since all their kindnesse dies,
wln 1253 And bury them, where black obliuion **lye[.]**.
wln 1254 Think not thou art the daughter of old *Leir*,
wln 1255 Who did vnkindly disinherit thee:
wln 1256 But think thou art the noble Gallian Queene,
wln 1257 And wife to him that dearely loueth thee:
wln 1258 Embrace the ioyes that present with thee dwell,
wln 1259 Let sorrow packe and hide her selfe in hell.
wln 1260 *Cord.* Not that I misse my country or my kinne,
wln 1261 My old acquaintance or my ancient friends,
wln 1262 Doth any whit distemperate my mynd,
wln 1263 Knowing you, which are more deare to me,
wln 1264 Then Country, kin, and all things els can be.
wln 1265 Yet pardon me, my gracious Lord, in this:
wln 1266 For what can stop the course of natures power?
wln 1267 As easy is it for foure-footed beastes,
wln 1268 To stay themselues vpon the liquid ayre,
wln 1269 And mount aloft into the element,
wln 1270 And ouerstrip the feathered Fowles in flight:
wln 1271 As easy is it for the slimy Fish,
wln 1272 To liue and thriue without the helpe of water:
wln 1273 As easy is it for the Blackamoore,
wln 1274 To wash the tawny colour from his skin,
wln 1275 Which all oppose against the course of nature,
wln 1276 As I am able to forget my father.
wln 1277 *King.* Myrrou of vertue, Phœnix of our age!
wln 1278 Too kind a daughter for an vnkind father,
wln 1279 Be of good comfort; for I will dispatch
wln 1280 Ambassadors immediatly for Brittainy,
wln 1281 Vnto the King of Cornwalls Court, whereas
wln 1282 Your father keepeth now his residence,
wln 1283 And in the kindest maner him intreat,
wln 1284 That setting former griuances apart,
wln 1285 He will be pleasde to come and visit vs.
wln 1286 If no intreaty will suffice the turne,
wln 1287 Ile offer him the halfe **o[.]** all my Crowne:
wln 1288 If that moues not, wee le furnish out a Fleet,

And

and his three daughters.

wln 1289
wln 1290
wln 1291
wln 1292
wln 1293
wln 1294
wln 1295
wln 1296
wln 1297
wln 1298
wln 1299
wln 1300
wln 1301
wln 1302
wln 1303
wln 1304
wln 1305
wln 1306
wln 1307
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wln 1311
wln 1312
wln 1313
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wln 1316
wln 1317
wln 1318
wln 1319
wln 1320
wln 1321
wln 1322
wln 1323
wln 1324
wln 1325
wln 1326

And sayle to Cornwall for to visit him;
And there you shall be firemy reconcilde
In perfit loue, as earst you were [**·**]fore.
Cor. Where tounge cannot **suffic**[**·**] thanks afford,
The King of heauen remunerate my Lord.
King. Only be blithe, and frolick (sweet) with me:
This and much more ile do to comfort thee.
Enter Messenger solus.
Mes. It is a world to see now I am flush,
How many friends I purchase euery where!
How many seekes to creepe into my fauour,
And kisse their hands, and bend their knees to me!
No more, here comes the Queene, now shall I know her mind,
And hope for to deriue more crownes from her. *Enter Ragā.*
Rag. My friend, I see thou mind'st thy promise well,
And art before me here, me thinks, to day.
Mes. I am a poore man, and it like your Grace;
But yet I alwayes loue to keepe my word.
Ra. Wel, keepe thy word with me, & thou shalt see,
That of a poore man I will make thee rich.
Mes. I long to heare it, it might haue bin dispatcht,
If you had told me of it yesternight.
Ra. It is a thing of right strange consequence,
And well I cannot vtter it in words.
Mes. It is more strange, that I am not by this
Beside my selfe, with longing for to heare it.
Were it to meet the Deuill in his denne,
And try a bout with him for a scratcht face,
Ide vndertake it, if you would but bid me.
Ra. Ah, good my friend, that I should haue thee do,
Is such a thing, as I do shame to speake;
Yet it must needs be done.
Mes. Ile speak it for thee, Queene: shall I kill thy father?
I know tis that, and if it be so, say. *Rag.* I.
Mes. Why, thats ynough.
Rag. And yet that is not all.
Mes. What else?
Rag. Thou must kill that old man that came with him.

The History of King Leir

wln 1327
wln 1328
wln 1329
wln 1330
wln 1331
wln 1332
wln 1333
wln 1334
wln 1335
wln 1336
wln 1337
wln 1338
wln 1339
wln 1340
wln 1341
wln 1342
wln 1343
wln 1344
wln 1345
wln 1346
wln 1347
wln 1348
wln 1349
wln 1350
wln 1351
wln 1352
wln 1353
wln 1354
wln 1355
wln 1356
wln 1357
wln 1358
wln 1359
wln 1360
wln 1361
wln 1362
wln 1363
wln 1364

Mes. Here are two hands, for eche of them is one.

Rag. And for eche hand here is a recompence

Giue him two purses.

Mes. Oh, that I had ten hands by myracle,
I could teare ten in pieces with my teeth,
So in my mouth yould put a purse of gold.
But in what maner must it be effected?

Rag. To morrow morning ere the breake of day,
I by a wyle will send them to the thicket,
That is about some two myles from the Court,
And promise them to meet them there my selfe,
Because I must haue priuate conference,
About some newes I haue receyu'd from Cornwall.
This is ynough, I know, they will not fayle,
And then be ready for to play thy part:
Which done, thou mayst right easily escape,
And no man once mistrust thee for the fact:
But yet, before thou prosecute the act,
Shew him the letter, which my sister sent,
There let him read his owne inditement first,
And then proceed to execution:
But see thou faynt not; for they will speake fayre.

Mes. Could he speak words as pleasing as the pipe
Of *Mercury*, which charm'd the hundred eyes
Of watchfull *Argos*, and inforc'd him sleepe:
Yet here are words so pleasing to my thoughts,
As quite shall take away the sound of his.

To the purse.

Exit.

Rag. About it then, and when thou hast dispatcht,
Ile find a meanes to send thee after him.

Exit.

Enter Cornwall and Gonorill.

Corn. I wonder that the Messenger doth stay,
Whom we dispatcht for Cambria so long since:
If that his answer do not please vs well,
And he do shew good reason for delay,
Ile teach him how to dally with his King,
And to detayne vs in such long suspence.

Gon. My Lord, I thinke the reason may be this:
My father meanes to come along with him,

And

and his three daughters.

wln 1365
wln 1366
wln 1367
wln 1368
wln 1369
wln 1370
wln 1371
wln 1372
wln 1373
wln 1374
wln 1375
wln 1376
wln 1377
wln 1378
wln 1379
wln 1380
wln 1381
wln 1382
wln 1383
wln 1384
wln 1385
wln 1386
wln 1387
wln 1388
wln 1389
wln 1390
wln 1391
wln 1392
wln 1393
wln 1394
wln 1395
wln 1396
wln 1397
wln 1398
wln 1399
wln 1400
wln 1401
wln 1402

And therefore tis his pleasure he shall stay,
For to attend vpon him on the way.

Corn. It may be so, and therefore till I know
The truth thereof, I will suspend my iudgement.

Enter Seruant.

Ser. And't like your Grace, there is an Ambassador
Arriued from Gallia, and craues admittance to your Maiesty.

Corn. From Gallia? what should his message
Hither import? is not your father happily
Gone thither? well, whatsoere it be,
Bid him come in, he shall haue audience.

Enter Ambassador.

What newes from Gallia? speake Ambassador.

Am. The noble King and Queene of Gallia first salutes,
By me, their honourable father, my Lord *Leir*:
Next, they commend them kindly to your Graces,
As those whose wellfare they intirely wish,
Letters I haue to deliuer to my Lord *Leir*,
And presents too, if I might speake with him.

Gon. If you might speak with him? why, do you thinke,
We are afrayd that you should speake with him?

Am. Pardon me, Madam; for I thinke not so,
But say so only, cause he is not here.

Corn. Indeed, my friend, vpon some vrgent cause,
He is at this time absent from the Court:

But if a day or two you here repose.
Tis very likely you shall haue him here,
Or else haue certayne notice where he is.

Gon. Are not we worthy to receiue your message?

Am. I had in charge to do it to himselfe.

Gon. It may be then 'twill not be done in haste. *to herselfe.*
How doth my sister brooke the ayre of Fraunce?

Am. Exceeding well, and neuer sicke one houre,
Since first she set her foot vpon the shore.

Gon. I am the more sorry.

Am. I hope, not so, Madam.

Gon. Didst thou not say, that she was euer sicke,
Since the first houre that she arriued there?

The History of King Leir

wln 1403

Amb. No, Madam, I sayd quite contrary.

wln 1404

Gon. Then I mistooke thee.

wln 1405

Corn. Then she is merry, if she haue her health.

wln 1406

Am. Oh no, her grieffe exceeds, vntill the time,

wln 1407

That she be reconcil'd vnto her father.

wln 1408

Gon. God continue it.

wln 1409

Am. What, Madam?

wln 1410

Gon. Why, her health.

wln 1411

Am. Amen to that: but God release her grieffe,

wln 1412

And send her father in a better mind,

wln 1413

Then to continue alwayes so vnkind.

wln 1414

Corn. Ile be a mediator in her cause,

wln 1415

And seeke all meanes to expiat his wrath.

wln 1416

Am. Madam, I hope your Grace will do the like.

wln 1417

Gon. Should I be a meane to exasperate his wrath

wln 1418

Against my sister, whom I loue so deare? no, no.

wln 1419

Am. To expiate or mittigate his wrath:

wln 1420

For he hath misconceyued without a cause.

wln 1421

Gon. O, I, what else?

wln 1422

Am. Tis pity it should be so, would it were otherwise.

wln 1423

Gon. It were great pity it should be otherwise.

wln 1424

Am. Then how, Madam?

wln 1425

Gon. Then that they should be reconcilde againe.

wln 1426

Am. It shewes you beare an honourable mind.

wln 1427

Gon. It shewes thy vnderstanding to be blind,

wln 1428

And that thou hadst need of an Interpreter:

wln 1429

Well, *I* will know thy message ere't be long,

wln 1430

And find a meane to crosse it, if *I* can.

wln 1431

Corn. Come in, my friend, and frolick in our Court,

wln 1432

Till certayne notice of my father come.

wln 1433

Enter Leir and Perillus.

wln 1434

Per. My Lord, you are vp to day before your houre,

wln 1435

Tis newes to you to be abroad so rathe.

wln 1436

Leir. Tis newes indeed, *I* am so extreme heauy,

wln 1437

That *I* can scarcely keepe my eye-lids open.

wln 1438

Per. And so am *I*, but *I* impute the cause

wln 1439

To rising sooner then we vse to do.

wln 1440

Leir. Hither my daughter meanes to come disguis'd:

*Speakes to
her selfe.*

Exeunt.

and his three daughters.

wln 1441

Ile sit me downe, and read vntill she come.

wln 1442

Pull out a booke and sit downe.

wln 1443

Per. Sheele not be long, I warrant you, my Lord:

wln 1444

But say, a couple of these they call good fellowes,

wln 1445

Should step out of a hedge, and set vpon vs,

wln 1446

We were in good case for to answere them.

wln 1447

Leir. 'Twere not for vs to stand vpon our hands.

wln 1448

Per. I feare, we scant should stand vpon our legs.

wln 1449

But how should we do to defend our selues?

wln 1450

Leir. Euen pray to God, to blesse vs frō their hands:

wln 1451

For feruent prayer much ill hap withstands.

wln 1452

Per. Ile sit and pray with you for company;

wln 1453

Yet was I ne're so heauy in my life.

wln 1454

They fall both asleepe.

wln 1455

*Enter the Messenger or murtherer with two
daggers in his hands.*

wln 1456

wln 1457

Mess. Were it not a mad iest, if two or three of my professiō
should meet me, and lay me downe in a ditch, and play robbe
thiefe with me, & perforce take my gold away from me, whilst
I act this stratagem, and by this meanes the gray beards should
escape? Fayth, when *I* were at liberty againe, I would make no
more to do, but go to the next tree, and there hang my selfe.

wln 1460

See them and start.

wln 1461

But stay, me thinks, my youthes are here already,
And with pure zeale haue prayed themselues asleepe.
I thinke, they know to what intent they came,
And are provided for another world.

wln 1462

wln 1463

wln 1464

wln 1465

wln 1466

wln 1467

wln 1468

wln 1469

wln 1470

wln 1471

wln 1472

wln 1473

wln 1474

wln 1475

wln 1476

wln 1477

wln 1478

He takes their bookes away.
Now could I stab them brauely, while they sleepe,
And in a maner put them to no payne;
And doing so, I shewed them mighty friendship:
For feare of death is worse then death it selfe.
But that my sweet Queene will'd me for to shew
This letter to them, ere *I* did the deed.
Masse, they begin to stirre: ile stand aside;
So shall I come vpon them vnawares.

They wake and rise.

Leir. I maruell, that my daughter stayer so long.

The History of King Leir

wln 1479

Per. I feare, we did mistake the place, my Lord.

wln 1480

Leir. God graunt we do not miscarry in the place:

wln 1481

I had a short nap, but so full of dread,

wln 1482

As much amazeth me to think thereof.

wln 1483

Per. Feare not, my Lord, dreames are but fantasies,

wln 1484

And slight imaginations of the brayne.

wln 1485

Mes. Perswade him so; but ile make him and you

wln 1486

Confesse, that dreames do often proue too true.

wln 1487

Per. I pray, my Lord, what was the effect of it?

wln 1488

I may go neere to gesse what it pretends.

wln 1489

Mes. Leaue that to me, I will expound the dreame.

wln 1490

Leir. Me thought, my daughters, *Gonorill & Ragan*,

wln 1491

Stood both before me with such grim aspects,

wln 1492

Eche brandishing a Faulchion in their hand,

wln 1493

Ready to lop a lymme off where it fell,

wln 1494

And in their other hands a naked poynyard,

wln 1495

Wherwith they stabd me in a hundred places,

wln 1496

And to their thinking left me there for dead:

wln 1497

But then my youngest daughter, fayre *Cordella*,

wln 1498

Came with a boxe of Balsome in her hand,

wln 1499

And powred it into my bleeding wounds,

wln 1500

By whose good meanes I was recouered well,

wln 1501

In perfit health, as earst I was before:

wln 1502

And with the feare of this I did awake,

wln 1503

And yet for feare my feeble ioynts do quake.

wln 1504

Mes. Ile make you quake for something presently.

wln 1505

Stand, Stand.

They reele.

wln 1506

Leir. We do, my friend, although with much adoe.

wln 1507

Mes. Deliuer, deliuer.

wln 1508

Per. Deliuer vs, good Lord, from such as he.

wln 1509

Mes. You should haue prayed before, while it was time,

wln 1510

And then perhaps, you might haue scapt my hands:

wln 1511

But you, like faithfull watch-men, fell asleepe,

wln 1512

The whilst I came and tooke your Halberds from you.

wln 1513

Shew their Bookes.

wln 1514

And now you want your weapons of defence,

wln 1515

How haue you any hope to be deliuered?

wln 1516

This comes, because you haue no better stay,

But

and his three daughters.

wln 1517

But fall asleepe, when you should watch and pray.

wln 1518

Leir. My friend, thou seemst to be a proper man.

wln 1519

Mes. Sblood, how the old slaue clawes me by the elbow?

wln 1520

He thinks, belike, to scape by scraping thus.

wln 1521

Per. And it may be, are in some need of money.

wln 1522

Mes. That to be false, behold my euidence.

wln 1523

Shewes his purses.

wln 1524

Leir. If that I haue will do thee any good,

wln 1525

I giue it thee, euen with a right good will.

Take it.

wln 1526

Per. Here, take mine too, & wish with all my heart,

wln 1527

To do thee pleasure, it were twice as much.

wln 1528

Take his, and weygh them both in his hands.

wln 1529

Mes. Ile none of them, they are too light for me.

wln 1530

Puts them in his pocket.

wln 1531

Leir. Why then farewell: and if thou haue occasion

wln 1532

In any thing, to vse me to the Queene,

wln 1533

'Tis like ynough that I can pleasure thee.

wln 1534

They proffer to goe.

wln 1535

Mes. Do you heare, do you heare, sir?

wln 1536

If I had occasion to vse you to the Queene,

wln 1537

Would you do one thing for me I should aske?

wln 1538

Leir. I, any thing that lyes within my power.

wln 1539

Here is my hand vpon it, so farewell.

Proffer to goe.

wln 1540

Mes. Heare you sir, heare you? pray, a word with you.

wln 1541

Me thinks, a comely honest ancient man

wln 1542

Should not dissemble with one for a vantage.

wln 1543

I know, when I shall come to try this geare,

wln 1544

You will recant from all that you haue sayd.

wln 1545

Per. Mistrust not him, but try him when thou wilt:

wln 1546

He is her father, therefore may do much.

wln 1547

Mes. I know he is, and therefore meane to try him:

wln 1548

You are his friend too, I must try you both.

wln 1549

Ambo. Prithy do, prithy do.

Proffer to go out.

wln 1550

Mes. Stay gray-beards then, and proue men of your words:

wln 1551

The Queene hath tyed me by a solemne othe,

wln 1552

Here in this place to see you both dispatch:

wln 1553

Now for the safegard of my conscience,

wln 1554

Do me the pleasure for to kill your selues:

The History of King Leir

wln 1555
wln 1556
wln 1557
wln 1558
wln 1559
wln 1560
wln 1561
wln 1562
wln 1563
wln 1564
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wln 1589
wln 1590
wln 1591
wln 1592

So shall you saue me labour for to do it,
And proue your selues true old men of your words.
And here I vow in sight of all the world,
I ne're will trouble you whilst I liue agayne.

Leir. Affright vs not with terrour, good my friend,
Nor strike such feare into our aged hearts.
Play not the Cat, which dallieth with the mouse;
And on a sudden maketh her a pray:
But if thou art markt for the man of death
To me and to my *Damion*, tell me playne,
That we may be prepared for the stroke,
And make our selues fit for the world to come.

Mes. I am the last of any mortall race,
That ere your eyes are likely to behold,
And hither sent of purpose to this place,
To giue a finall period to your dayes,
Which are so wicked, and haue liued so long,
That your owne children seeke to short your life.

Leir. Camst thou from France, of purpose to do this?

Mes. From France? zoones, do I looke like a Frenchman?
Sure I haue not mine owne face on; some body hath chang'd
faces with me, and I know not of it: But I am sure, my apparell
is all English. Sirra, what meanest thou to aske that question?
I could spoyle the fashion o this face for anger. A French face!

Leir. Because my daughter, whom I haue offended,
And at whose hands I haue deseru'd as ill,
As euer any father did of child,
Is Queene of Fraunce, no thanks at all to me,
But vnto God, who my iniustice see.
If it be so, that shee doth seeke reuenge,
As with good reason she may iustly do,
I will most willingly resigne my life,
A sacrifice to mittigate her ire:
I neuer will intreat thee to forgiue,
Because I am vnworthy for to liue.
Therefore speake soone, & I will soone make speed:
Whether *Cordella* will'd thee do this deed?

Mes. As I am a perfit gentleman, thou speakst French to me:

I neuer

and his three daughters.

wln 1593
wln 1594
wln 1595
wln 1596
wln 1597
wln 1598
wln 1599
wln 1600
wln 1601
wln 1602
wln 1603
wln 1604
wln 1605
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wln 1627
wln 1628
wln 1629
wln 1630

I neuer heard *Cordellaes* name before,
Nor neuer was in Fraunce in all my life:
I neuer knew thou hadst a daughter there,
To whom thou didst proue so vnkind a churle:
But thy owne toung declares that thou hast bin
A vyle old wretch, and full of heynous sin.

Leir. Ah no, my friend, thou art deceyued much:
For her except, whom I confesse I wrongd,
Through doting frenzy, and o're-ielous loue.
There liues not any vnder heauens bright eye,
That can conuict me of impiety.
And therefore sure thou dost mistake the marke:
For I am in true peace with all the world.

Mes. You are the fitter for the King of heauen:
And therefore, for to rid thee of suspence,
Know thou, the Queenes of Cambria and Cornwall,
Thy owne two daughters, *Gonorill* and *Ragan*,
Appoynted me to massacre thee here.
Why wouldst thou then perswade me, that thou art
In charity with all the world? but now
When thy owne issue hold thee in such hate,
That they haue hyred me t'abbridge thy fate,
Oh, fy vpon such vyle dissembling breath,
That would deceyue, euen at the poynt of death.

Per. Am I awake, or is it but a dreame?

Mes. Feare nothing, man, thou art but in a dreame,
And thou shalt neuer wake vntill doomes day,
By then, I hope, thou wilt haue slept ynough.

Leir. Yet, gentle friend, graunt one thing ere I die.

Mes. Ile graunt you any thing, except your liues.

Leir. Oh, but assure me by some certayne token,
That my two daughters hyred thee to this deed:
If I were once resolu'd of that, then I
Would wish no longer life, but craue to dye.

Mes. That to be true, in sight of heauen I swear.

Leir. Swear not by heauen, for feare of punishmēt:
The heauens are guiltlesse of such haynous acts.

Mes. I swear by earth, the mother of vs all.

The History of King Leir

wln 1631
wln 1632
wln 1633
wln 1634
wln 1635
wln 1636
wln 1637
wln 1638
wln 1639
wln 1640
wln 1641
wln 1642
wln 1643
wln 1644
wln 1645
wln 1646
wln 1647
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wln 1665
wln 1666
wln 1667
wln 1668

Leir. Swear not by earth; for she abhors to beare
Such bastards, as are murtherers of her sonnes.

Mes. Why then, by hell, and all the deuils I swear.

Leir. Swear not by hell; for that stands gaping wide,
To swallow thee, and if thou do this deed.

Thunder and lightning.

Mes. I would that word were in his belly agayne,
It hath frighted me euen to the very heart:
This old man is some strong Magician:
His words haue turnd my mind from this exployt.
Then neyther heauen, earth, nor hell be witnesse;
But let this paper witnesse for them all.

Shewes Gonorils letter.

Shall I relent, or shall I prosecute?
Shall I resolue, or were I best recant?
I will not crack my credit with two Queenes,
To whom I haue already past my word.
Oh, but my conscience for this act doth tell,
I get heauens hate, earths scorne, and paynes of hell.

They blesse themselues.

Per. Oh iust *Iehoua*, whose almighty power
Doth gouerne all things in this spacious world,
How canst thou suffer such outragious acts
To be committed without iust reuenge?
O viperous generation and accurst,
To seeke his blood, whose blood did make them first!

Leir. Ah, my true friend in all extremity,
Let vs submit vs to the will of God:
Things past all sence, let vs not seeke to know;
It is Gods will, and therefore must be so.
My friend, I am prepared for the stroke:
Strike when thou wilt, and I forgiue thee here,
Euen from the very bottome of my heart.

Mes. But I am not prepared for to strike.

Leir. Farewell, *Perillus*, euen the truest friend,
That euer liued in aduersity:
The latest kindnesse ile request of thee,
Is that thou go vnto my daughter *Cordella*,

And

and his three daughters.

wln 1669
wln 1670
wln 1671
wln 1672
wln 1673
wln 1674
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wln 1703
wln 1704
wln 1705
wln 1706

And carry her her fathers latest blessing:
Withall desire her, that she will forgiue me;
For I haue wrongd her without any cause.
Now, Lord, receyue me, for I come to thee,
And dye, I hope, in perfit charity.
Dispatch, I pray thee, I haue liued too long.

Mes. I, but you are vnwise, to send an errand
By him that neuer meaneth to deliuer it:
Why, he must go along with you to heauen:
It were not good you should go all alone.

Leir. No doubt, he shal, when by the course of nature,
He must surrender vp his due to death:
But that time shall not come, till God permit.

Mes. Nay, presently, to beare you company.
I haue a Pasport for him in my pocket,
Already seald, and he must needs ride Poste.

Shew a bagge of money.

Leir. The letter which I read, imports not so,
It only toucheth me, no word of him.

Mes. I, but the Queene commaunds it must be so,
And I am payd for him, as well as you.

Per. I, who haue borne you company in life,
Most willingly will beare a share in death.
It skilleth not for me, my friend, a whit,
Nor for a hundred such as thou and I.

Mes. Mary, but it doth, sir, by your leaue; your good dayes
are past: though it bee no matter for you, tis a matter for me,
proper men are not so rife.

Per. Oh, but beware, how thou dost lay thy hand
Vpon the high anoynted of the Lord:
O, be aduised ere thou dost begin:
Dispatch me straight, but meddle not with him.

Leir. Friend, thy commission is to deale with me,
And I am he that hath deserued all:
The plot was layd to take away my life:
And here it is, I do intreat thee take it:
Yet for my sake, and as thou art a man,
Spare this my friend, that hither with me came:

The History of King Leir

wln 1707
wln 1708
wln 1709
wln 1710
wln 1711
wln 1712
wln 1713
wln 1714
wln 1715
wln 1716
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wln 1741
wln 1742
wln 1743
wln 1744

I brought him forth, whereas he had not bin,
But for good will to beare me company.
He left his friends, his country and his goods,
And came with me in most extremity.
Oh, if he should miscarry here and dye,
Who is the cause of it, but only *I*?

Mes. Why that am *I*, let that ne're trouble thee.

Leir. O no, tis *I*. O, had *I* now to giue thee
The monarchy of all the spacious world
To saue his life, *I* would bestow it on thee:
But *I* haue nothing but these tears and prayer,
And the submission of a bended knee.
O, if all this to mercy moue they mind,
Spare him, in heauen thou shalt like mercy find.

kneels.

Mes. I am as hard to be moued as another, and yet
me thinks the strength of their perswasions stirres me
a little.

Per. My friend, if feare of the almighty power
Haue power to moue thee, we haue sayd ynough:
But if thy mind be moueable with gold,
We haue not presently to giue it thee:
Yet to thy selfe thou mayst do greater good,
To keepe thy hands still vndefilde from blood:
For do but well consider with thy selfe,
When thou hast finisht this outragious act,
What horrour still will haunt thee for the deed:
Think this agayne, that they which would incense
Thee for to be the Butcher of their father,
When it is done, for feare it should be knowne,
Would make a meanes to rid thee from the world:
Oh, then art thou for euer tyed in chaynes
Of euerlasting torments to indure,
Euen in the hottest hole of grisly hell,
Such paynes, as neuer mortall tounge can tell.

*It thunders. He quakes, and lets fall the Dagger
next to Perillus.*

Leir. O, heuens be thanked, he wil spare my friend,
Now when thou wilt come make an end of me.

He

and his three daughters.

He lets fall the other dagger.

Per. Oh, happy sight! He meanes to saue my Lord.
The King of heauen continue this good mind.

Leir. Why stayst thou to do execution?

Mes. I am as wilfull as you for your life:
I will not do it, now you do intreat me.

Per. Ah, now I see thou hast some sparke of grace.

Mes. Beshrew you for it, you haue put it in me:
The parlosest old men, that ere I heard.

Well, to be flat, ile not meddle with you:

Here I found you, and here ile leaue you:

If any aske you why the case so stands?

Say that your tounge were better then your hands.

Per. Farewell. If euer we together meet,
It shall go hard, but I will thee regret.

Courage, my Lord, the worst is ouerpast;

Let vs giue thanks to God, and hye vs hence.

Leir. Thou art deceyued; for I am past the best,
And know not whither for to go from hence:

Death had bin better welcome vnto me,

Then longer life to adde more misery.

Per. It were not good to returne from whence we
Vnto your daughter *Ragan* back againe. (came,

Now let vs go to France, vnto *Cordella*,

Your youngest daughter, doubtlesse she will succour you.

Leir. Oh, how can I perswade my selfe of that,
Since the other two are quite deuoyd of loue;

To whom I was so kind, as that my gifts,

Might make them loue me, if 'twere nothing else?

Per. No worldly gifts, but grace from God on hye,
Doth nourish vertue and true charity.

Remember well what words *Cordella* spake,

What time you askt her, how she lou'd your Grace.

Se sayd, her loue vnto you was as much,

As ought a child to beare vnto her father.

Leir. But she did find, my loue was not to her,
As should a father beare vnto a child.

Per. That makes not her loue to be any lesse,

Exit.
Mess.

wln 1745

wln 1746

wln 1747

wln 1748

wln 1749

wln 1750

wln 1751

wln 1752

wln 1753

wln 1754

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wln 1756

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wln 1774

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wln 1781

wln 1782

The History of King Leir

wln 1783
wln 1784
wln 1785
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wln 1819
wln 1820

If she do loue you as a child should do:
You haue tryed two, try one more for my sake,
Ile ne're intreat you further tryall make.
Remember well the dreame you had of late,
And thinke what comfort it foretels to vs.

Leir. Come, truest friend, that euer man possest,
I know thou counsailst all things for the best:
If this third daughter play a kinder part,
It comes of God, and not of my desert.

Exeunt.

Enter the Gallian Ambassador solus.

Am. There is of late newes come vnto the Court,
That old Lord *Leir* remaynes in Cambria:
Ile hie me thither presently, to impart
My letters and my message vnto him.
I neuer was lesse welcome to a place
In all my life time, then I haue bin hither,
Especially vnto the stately Queene,
Who would not cast one gracious looke on me,
But still with lowring and suspicious eyes,
Would take exceptions at each word *I* spake,
And fayne she would haue vndermined me,
To know what my Ambassage did import:
But she is like to hop without her hope,
And in this matter for to want her will,
Though (by report) sheele hau't in all things else.

Well, *I* will poste away for Cambria:
Within these few dayes I hope to be there,

Exit.

Enter the King and Queene of Gallia, & Mumford.

King. By this, our father vnderstands our mind,
And our kind greetings sent to him of late;
Therefore my mind presageth ere't be long,
We shall receyue from Brittain happy newes.

Cord. I feare, my sister will dissuade his minde;
For shee to me hath alwayes bin vnkind.

King. Feare not, my loue, since that we know the worst,
The last meanes helps, if that we misse the first:
If hee'le not come to Gallia vnto vs,
Then we will sayle to Brittain vnto him.

Mum. Well,

and his three daughters.

wln 1821
wln 1822
wln 1823
wln 1824
wln 1825
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wln 1858

Mum. Well, if I once see Brittainne agayne,
I haue sworne, ile ne're come home without my wench,
And ile not be forsworne,
Ile rather neuer come home while I liue.

Cor. Are you sure, *Mumford*, she is a mayd still?

Mum. Nay, ile not sweare she is a mayd, but she goes for one:
I'le take her at all aduentures, if I can get her.

Cord. I, thats well put in.

Mum. Well put in? nay, it was ill put in; for had it
Bin as well put in, as ere *I* put in, in my dayes,
I would haue made her follow me to Fraunce.

Cor. Nay, you'd haue bin so kind, as take her with you,
Or else, were *I* as she,
I would haue bin so louing, as ide stay behind you:

Yet I must confesse, you are a very proper man,
And able to make a wench do more then she would do.

Mum. Well, I haue a payre of slops for the nonce,
Will hold all your mocks.

King. Nay, we see you haue a handsome hose.

Cor. I, and of the newest fashion.

Mum. More bobs, more: put them in still,
They'll serue instead of bumbast, yet put not in too many,
lest the seames crack, and they fly out amongst you againe:
you must not think to outface me so easly in my mistris quarrel,
who if I see once agayne, ten teame of horses shall
not draw me away, till I haue full and whole possession.

King. I, but one teame and a cart will serue the turne.

Cor. Not only for him, but also for his wench.

Mum: Well, you are two to one, ile giue you ouer:
And since I see you so pleasantly disposed,
Which indeed is but seldome seene, ile clayme
A promise of you, which you shall not deny me:
For promise is debt, & by this hand you promisid it me.
Therefore you owe it me, and you shall pay it me,
Or ile sue you vpon an action of vnkindnesse.

King. Prithy, Lord *Mumford*, what promise did I make thee?

Mum. Fayth, nothing but this,
That the next fayre weather, which is very now,

The History of King Leir

wln 1859
wln 1860
wln 1861
wln 1862
wln 1863
wln 1864
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wln 1892
wln 1893
wln 1894
wln 1895
wln 1896

You would go in progresse downe to the sea side,
Which is very neere.

King. Fayth, in this motion I will ioyne with thee,
And be a mediator to my Queene.

Prithy, my Loue, let this **m|·|ch** go forward,
My mind foretels, 'twill be a lucky voyage.

Cor. Entreaty needs not, where you may cōmaund,
So you be pleasde, I am right well content:
Yet, as the Sea *I* much desire to see;
So am I most vnwilling to be seene.

King. Weele go disguised, all vnknowne to any.

Cor. Howsoeuer you make one, ile make another.

Mum. and *I* the third: oh, I am ouer-ioyed!
See what loue is, which getteth with a word,
What all the world besides could ne're obtayne!
But what disguises shall we haue, my Lord?

King. Fayth thus: my Queene & I wil be disguise,
Like a playne country couple, and you shall be *Roger*
Our man, and wayt vpon vs: or if you will,
You shall go first, and we will wayt on you.

Mum. 'Twere more then time; this deuice is excellent.
Come let vs about it.

Exeunt.

Enter Cambria and Ragan, with Nobles.

Cam. What strange mischance or vnexpected hap
Hath thus depriu'd vs of our fathers presence?
Can no man tell vs what's become of him,
With whom we did conuerse not two dayes since?
My Lords, let euery where light-horse be sent,
To scoure about through all our Regiment.
Dispatch a Poste immediately to Cornwall,
To see if any newes be of him there;
My selfe will make a strickt inquiry here,
And all about our Cities neere at hand,
Till certayne newes of his abode be brought.

Rag. All sorrow is but counterfet to mine,
Whose lips are almost sealed vp with grieffe:
Mine is the substance, whilst they do but seeme
To weepe the lesse, which teares cannot redeeme.

O,

and his three daughters.

wln 1897 O, ne're was heard so strange a misadventure,
wln 1898 A thing so far beyond the reach of sence,
wln 1899 Since no mans reason in the cause can enter.
wln 1900 What hath remou'd my father thus from hence?
wln 1901 O, *I* do feare some charme or inuocation
wln 1902 Of wicked spirits, or infernall fiends,
wln 1903 Stird by *Cordella*, moues this innouation,
wln 1904 And brings my father timelesse to his end.
wln 1905 But might I know, that the detested Witch
wln 1906 Were certayne cause of this vncertayne ill,
wln 1907 Myselfe to Fraunce would go in some disguise,
wln 1908 And with these nayles scratch out her hatefull eyes:
wln 1909 For since *I* am depriued of my father,
wln 1910 I loath my life, and wish my death the rather.
wln 1911 *Cam.* The heauens are iust, and hate impiety,
wln 1912 And will (no doubt) reueale such haynous crimes:
wln 1913 Censure not any, till you know the right:
wln 1914 Let him be Iudge, that bringeth truth to light.
wln 1915 *Ra.* O, but my grieffe, like to a swelling tyde,
wln 1916 Exceeds the bounds of common patience:
wln 1917 Nor can I moderate my toung so much,
wln 1918 To conceale them, whom I hold in suspect.
wln 1919 *Cam.* This matter shall be sifted: if it be she,
wln 1920 A thousand Fraunces shall not harbour her.
wln 1921 *Enter the Gallian Ambassador.*
wln 1922 *Am.* All happinesse vnto the Cambrian King.
wln 1923 *Cam.* Welcom, my friend, from whence is thy Ambassage?
wln 1924 *Am.* *I* came from Gallia, vnto Cornwall sent,
wln 1925 With letters to your honourable father,
wln 1926 Whom there not finding, as *I* did expect,
wln 1927 I was directed hither to repayre.
wln 1928 *Rag.* Frenchman, what is thy message to my father?
wln 1929 *Am.* My letters, Madam, will import the same,
wln 1930 Which my Commission is for to deliuer.
wln 1931 *Ra.* In his absence you may trust vs with your letters.
wln 1932 *Am.* I must performe my charge in such a maner,
wln 1933 As I haue strict commaundement from the King.
wln 1934 *Ra.* There is good packing twixt your King and you:

The History of King Leir

wln 1935
wln 1936
wln 1937
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wln 1971
wln 1972

You need not hither come to aske for him,
You know where he is better then our selues.

Am. Madam, I hope, not far off.

Ra. Hath the young murdresse, your outragious Queene,
No meanes to colour her detested deeds,
In finishing my guiltlesse fathers dayes,
(Because he gaue her nothing to her dowre)
But by the colour of a fayn'd Ambassage,
To send him letters hither to our Court?
Go carry them to them that sent them hither,
And bid them keepe their scroules vnto themselues[.]
They cannot blind vs with such slight excuse,
To smother vp so monstrous vild abuse.
And were it not, it is 'gainst law of Armes,
To offer violence to a Messenger,
We would inflict such torments on thy selfe,
As should inforce thee to reueale the truth.

Am. Madam, your threats no whit apall my mind,
I know my conscience guiltlesse of this act;
My King and Queene, I dare be sworne, are free
From any thought of such impiety:
And therefore, Madam, you haue done them wrong,
And ill beseeming with a sisters loue,
Who in meere duty tender him as much,
As euer you respected him for dowre.
The King your husband will not say as much.

Cam. I will suspend my iudgement for a time,
Till more apparance giue vs further light:
Yet to be playne, your comming doth inforce
A great suspicion to our doubtfull mind,
And that you do resemble, to be briefe,
Him that first robs, and then cries, Stop the theefe.

Am. Pray God some neere you haue not done the like.

Rag. Hence, saucy mate, reply no more to vs;
For law of Armes shall not protect thy tounge.

Am. Ne're was I offred such discourtesy;
God and my King, *I* trust, ere it be long,
Will find a meane to remedy this wrong,

*She strikes
him.*

*Exit Amb.
Rag. How*

and his three daughters.

wln 1973
wln 1974
wln 1975
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wln 2010

Rag. How shall I liue, to suffer this disgrace,
At euery base and vulgar peasants hands?
It ill befitteth my imperiall state,
To be thus vsde, and no man take my part.

Shee weeps.

Cam. What should I do? infringe the law of Armes,
Were to my euerlasting obloquy:
But I will take reuenge vpon his master,
Which sent him hither, to delude vs thus.

Rag. Nay, if you put vp this, be sure, ere long,
Now that my father thus is made away.
Sheele come & clayme a third part of your Crowne,
As due vnto her by inheritance.

Cam. But *I* will proue her title to be nought
But shame, and the reward of Parricide,
And make her an example to the world,
For after-ages to admire her penance.
This will I do, as I am Cambriaes King,
Or lose my life, to prosecute reuenge.
Come, first let's learne what newes is of our father,
And then proceed, as best occasion fits.

Exeunt.

*Enter Leir, Perillus, and two Marriners, in sea
gownes and sea-caps.*

Per. My honest friends, we are asham'd to shew
The great extremity of our present state,
In that at this time we are brought so low,
That we want money for to pay our passage.
The truth is so, we met with some good fellowes,
A little before we came aboard your ship,
Which stript vs quite of all the coyne we had,
And left vs not a penny in our purses:
Yet wanting mony, we will vse the meane,
To see you satisfied to the vttermost.

Looke on Leir.

1. Mar. Heres a good gown, 'twould become me passing wel,
I should be fine in it.

Looke on Perillus.

2. Mar. Heres a good cloke, I maruel how I should look in it.

Leir. Fayth, had we others to supply their roome,
Though ne're so meane, you willingly should haue them.

1. Mar. Do you heare, sir? you looke like an honest man;

The History of King Leir

wln 2011
wln 2012
wln 2013
wln 2014
wln 2015
wln 2016
wln 2017
wln 2018
wln 2019
wln 2020
wln 2021
wln 2022
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wln 2044
wln 2045
wln 2046
wln 2047
wln 2048

Ile not stand to do you a pleasure: here's a good strōg motly ga-berdine, cost me xiiij. good shillings at Billingsgate, giue me your gowne for it, & your cap for mine, & ile forgiue your passage.

Leir. With al my heart, and xx. thanks. *Leir & he changeth.*

2. Mar. Do you heare, sir? you shal haue a better match thē he, because you are my friend: here is a good sheeps russet sea-gowne, wil bide more stresse, I warrant you, then two of his, yet for you seem to be an honest gentleman, I am content to chāge it for your cloke, and aske you nothing for your passage more.

Pull off Perillus cloke.

Per. My owne I willingly would change with thee,
And think my selfe indebted to thy kindnesse:
But would my friend might keepe his garment still.
My friend, ile giue thee this new dublet, if thou wilt
Restore his gowne vnto him back agayne.

1. Mar. Nay, if I do, would I might ne're eate powderd beefe and mustard more, nor drink Can of good liquor whilst I liue. My friend, you haue small reason to seeke to hinder me of my bargayne: but the best is, a bargayne's a bargayne.

Leir. Kind friend, it is much better as it is; *Leir to Perillus.*
For by this meanes we may escape vnknowne;
Till time and opportunity do fit.

2. Mar. Hark, hark, they are laying their heads together,
Theile repent them of their bargayne anon,
'Twere best for vs to go while we are well.

1. Mar. God be with you, sir, for your passage back agayne,
Ile vse you as vnreasonable as another.

Leir. I know thou wilt; but we hope to bring ready money
With vs, when we come back agayne. *Exeunt Mariners.*
Were euer men in this extremity,
In a strange country, and deuoyd of friends,
And not a penny for to helpe our selues?
Kind friend, what thinkst thou will become of vs?

Per. Be of good cheere, my Lord, I haue a dublet,
Will yeeld vs mony ynough to serue our turnes,
Vntill we come vnto your daughters Court:
And then, I hope, we shall find friends ynough.

Leir. Ah, kind *Perillus*, that is it I feare,

And

and his three daughters.

wln 2049 And makes me faynt, or euer I come there.
wln 2050 Can kindnesse spring out of ingratitude?
wln 2051 Or loue be reapt, where hatred hath bin sowne?
wln 2052 Can Henbane ioyne in league with Methridate?
wln 2053 Or Sugar grow in Wormwoods bitter stalke?
wln 2054 It cannot be, they are too opposite:
wln 2055 And so am I to any kindnesse here.
wln 2056 I haue throwne Wormwood on the sugred youth,
wln 2057 And like to Henbane poysoned the Fount,
wln 2058 Whence flowed the Methridate of a childs goodwil:
wln 2059 I, like an enuious thorne, haue prickt the heart,
wln 2060 And turnd sweet Grapes, to sowre vnrelisht Sloes:
wln 2061 The causelesse ire of my respectlesse brest,
wln 2062 Hath sowrd the sweet milk of dame Natures paps:
wln 2063 My bitter words haue gauld her hony thoughts,
wln 2064 And weeds of rancour chokt the flower of grace.
wln 2065 Then what remainder is of any hope,
wln 2066 But all our fortunes will go quite aslope?
wln 2067 *Per.* Feare not, my Lord, the perfit good indeed,
wln 2068 Can neuer be corrupted by the bad:
wln 2069 A new fresh vessell still retaynes the taste
wln 2070 Of that which first is powr'd into the same:
wln 2071 And therefore, though you name yourselfe the thorn,
wln 2072 The weed, the gall, the henbane & the wormewood;
wln 2073 Yet sheele continue in her former state,
wln 2074 The hony, milke, Grape, Sugar, Methridate.
wln 2075 *Leir.* Thou pleasing Orator vnto me in wo,
wln 2076 Cease to beguile me with thy hopefull speaches:
wln 2077 O ioyne with me, and thinke of nought but crosses,
wln 2078 And then weele one lament anothers losses.
wln 2079 *Per.* Why, say the worst, the worst can be but death,
wln 2080 And death is better then for to despaire:
wln 2081 Then hazzard death, which may conuert to life;
wln 2082 Banish despaire, which brings a thousand deathes.
wln 2083 *Leir.* Orecome with thy strong arguments, *I* yeeld,
wln 2084 To be directed by thee, as thou wilt:
wln 2085 As thou yeeldst comfort to my crazed thoughts,
wln 2086 Would *I* could yeeld the like vnto thy body,
wln 2087 Which is full weake, I know, and ill apayd,

The History of King Leir

wln 2088
wln 2089
wln 2090
wln 2091
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wln 2123
wln 2124
wln 2125
wln 2126

For want of fresh meat and due sustenance.

Per. Alack, my Lord, my heart doth bleed, to think
That you should be in such extremity.

Leir. Come, let vs go, and see what God will send;
When all meanes faile, he is the surest friend.

Exeunt.

*Enter the Gallian King and Queene, and Mumford, with a
basket, disguised like Countrey folke.*

King. This tedious iourney all on foot, sweet Loue,
Cannot be pleasing to your tender ioynts,
Which ne're were vsed to these toylesome walks.

Cord. I neuer in my life tooke more delight
In any iourney, then I do in this:

It did me good, when as we hapt to light
Amongst the merry crue of country folke,
To see what industry and paynes they tooke,
To win them commendations mongst their friends.
Lord, how they labour to bestir themselues,
And in their quirks to go beyond the Moone,
And so take on them with such antike fits,
That one would think they were beside their wits!
Come away, *Roger*, with your basket.

Mum. Soft, Dame, here comes a couple of old youthes,
I must needs make my selfe fat with iesting at them.

Cor. Nay, prithy do not, they do seeme to be
Men much o'regone with grieffe and misery.
Let's stand aside, and harken what they say.

*Enter Leir
& Perillus
very faintly.*

Leir. Ah, my *Perillus*, now I see we both
Shall end our dayes in this vntrustfull soyle.
Oh, I do faint for want of sustenance:
And thou, I know, in little better case.
No gentle tree affords one taste of fruit,
To comfort vs, vntill we meet with men:
No lucky path conducts our lucklesse steps
Vnto a place where any comfort dwels.
Sweet rest betyde vnto our happy soules;
For here I see our bodies must haue end.

Per. Ah, my deare Lord, how doth my heart lament,
To see you brought to this extremity!
O, if you loue me, as you do professe,

Or

and his three daughters.

wln 2127
wln 2128
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wln 2165

Or euer thought well of me in my life, *He strips vp his arme.*
Feed on this flesh, whose veynes are not so dry,
But there is vertue left to comfort you.

O, feed on this, if this will do you good,
Ile smile for ioy, to see you suck my bloud.

Leir. I am no Caniball, that I should delight
To slake my hungry iawes with humane flesh:
I am no deuill, or ten times worse then so,
To suck the bloud of such a peerelesse friend.

O, do not think that I respect my life
So dearely, as I do thy loyall loue.
Ah, Brittain, I shall neuer see thee more,
That hast vnkindly banished thy King:
And yet not thou dost make me to complayne,
But they which were more neere to me then thou.

Cor. What do I heare: this lamentable voyce,
Me thinks, ere now I oftentimes haue heard.

Leir. Ah, *Gonorill*, was halfe my Kingdomes gift
The cause that thou didst seeke to haue my life?

Ah, cruell *Ragan*, did I giue thee all,
And all could not suffice without my bloud?
Ah, poore *Cordella*, did I giue thee nought,
Nor neuer shall be able for to giue?

O, let me warne all ages that insueth,
How they trust flattery, and reiect the trueth.

Well, vnkind Girles, I here forgiue you both,
Yet the iust heauens will hardly do the like;

And only craue forgiuenesse at the end
Of good *Cordella*, and of thee, my friend;

Of God, whose Maiesty I haue offended,
By my transgression many thousand wayes:

Of her, deare heart, whom I for no occasion
Turn'd out of all, through flatterers perswasion:

Of thee, kind friend, who but for me, I know,
Hadst neuer come vnto this place of wo.

Cor. Alack, that euer I should liue to see
My noble father in this misery.

King. Sweet Loue, reueale not what thou art as yet,
Vntill we know the ground of all this ill.

The History of King Leir

wln 2166
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wln 2168
wln 2169
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wln 2204

Cor. O, but some meat, some meat: do you not see,
How neere they are to death for want of food?

Per. Lord, which didst help they seruants at their need,
Or now or neuer send vs helpe with speed.
Oh comfort, comfort! yonder is a banquet,
And men and women, my Lord: be of good cheare;
For I see comfort comming very neere.
O my Lord, a banquet, and men and women!

Leir. O, let kind pity mollify their hearts,
That they may helpe vs in our great extreames.

Per. God saue you, friends; & if this blessed banquet
Affordeth any food or sustenance,
Euen for his sake that saued vs all from death,
Vouchsafe to saue vs from the gripe of famine.

*She bringeth
him to the table*

Cor. Here father, sit and eat, here, sit & drink:
And would it were far better for your sakes.

Perillus takes Leir by the hand to the table.

Per. Ile giue you thanks anon: my friend doth faynt,
And needeth present comfort.

Leir drinks.

Mum. I warrant, he ne're staves to say grace:
O, theres no sauce to a good stomake.

Per. The blessed God of heauen hath thought vpon vs.

Leir. The thanks be his, and these kind courteous folke,
By whose humanity we are preserued.

*They eat hungerly, Leir
drinkes.*

Cor. And may that draught be vnto him, as was
That which old *Eson* dranke, which did renue
His withered age, and made him young againe.

And may that meat be vnto him, as was
That which *Elias* ate, in strength whereof
He walked fourty dayes, and neuer faynted.
Shall I conceale me longer from my father?
Or shall I manifest my selfe to him?

King. Forbeare a while, vntill his strength returne,
Lest being ouer-ioyed with seeing thee,
His poore weake sences should forsake their office,
And so our **c[.]se** of ioy be turnd to sorrow.

Per. What chere, my Lord? how do you feele your selfe?

Leir. Me thinks, I neuer ate such sauory meat:
It is as pleasant as the blessed Manna,

That

and his three daughters.

wln 2205 That raynd from heauen amongst the Israelites:
wln 2206 It hath recall'd my spirits home agayne,
wln 2207 And made me fresh, as earst I was before.
wln 2208 But how shall we congratulate their kindnesse?
wln 2209 *Per.* Infayth, I know not how sufficiently;
wln 2210 But the best meane that I can think on, is this:
wln 2211 Ile offer them my dublet in requitall;
wln 2212 For we haue nothing else to spare.
wln 2213 *Leir.* Nay, stay, *Perillus*, for they shall haue mine.
wln 2214 *Per.* Pardon, my Lord, I swear they shall haue mine.
wln 2215 *Perillus proffers his dublet: they will not take it.*
wln 2216 *Leir.* Ah, who would think such kindnes should remayne
wln 2217 Among such strange and vnaacquainted men:
wln 2218 And that such hate should harbour in the brest
wln 2219 Of those, which haue occasion to be best?
wln 2220 *Cor.* Ah, good old father, tell to me thy grieffe,
wln 2221 Ile sorrow with thee, if not adde reliefe.
wln 2222 *Leir.* Ah, good young daughter, I may call thee so;
wln 2223 For thou art like a daughter I did owe.
wln 2224 *Cor.* Do you not owe her still? what, is she dead?
wln 2225 *Leir.* No, God forbid: but all my interest's gone,
wln 2226 By shewing my selfe too much vnnaturall:
wln 2227 So haue I lost the title of a father,
wln 2228 and may be call'd a stranger to her rather.
wln 2229 *Cor.* Your title's good still; for tis alwayes knowne,
wln 2230 A man may do as him list with his owne.
wln 2231 But haue you but one daughter then in all?
wln 2232 *Leir.* Yes, I haue more by two, then would *I* had.
wln 2233 *Cor.* O, say not so, but rather see the end:
wln 2234 They that are bad, may haue the grace to mend:
wln 2235 But how haue they offended you so much?
wln 2236 *Leir.* If from the first I should relate the cause,
wln 2237 'Twould make a heart of Adamant to weepe;
wln 2238 And thou, poore soule, kind-hearted as thou art,
wln 2239 Dost weepe already, ere *I* do begin.
wln 2240 *Cor.* For Gods loue tell it, and when you haue done,
wln 2241 Ile tell the reason why *I* weepe so soone.
wln 2242 *Leir.* Then know this first, I am a Brittainne borne,
wln 2243 and had three daughters by one louing wife:

The History of King Leir

wln 2244 And though *I* say it, of beauty they were sped;
wln 2245 Especially the youngest of the three,
wln 2246 For her perfections hardly matcht could be:
wln 2247 On these *I* doted with a ielous loue,
wln 2248 And thought to try which of them lou'd me best,
wln 2249 By asking them, which would do most for me?
wln 2250 The first and second flattred me with words,
wln 2251 And vovd they lou'd me better then their liues:
wln 2252 The youngest sayd, she loued me as a child
wln 2253 Might do: her answe I esteem'd most vild,
wln 2254 And presently in an outragious mood,
wln 2255 I turnd her from me to go sinke or swym:
wln 2256 And all I had, euen to the very clothes,
wln 2257 I gaue in dowry with the other two:
wln 2258 And she that best deseru'd the greatest share,
wln 2259 *I* gaue her nothing, but disgrace and care.
wln 2260 Now mark the sequell: When I had done thus,
wln 2261 I soiourned in my eldest daughters house,
wln 2262 Where for a time *I* was intreated well,
wln 2263 And liu'd in state sufficing my content:
wln 2264 But euery day her kindnesse did grow cold,
wln 2265 Which I with patience put vp well ynough,
wln 2266 And seemed not to see the things I saw:
wln 2267 But at the last she grew so far incenst
wln 2268 With moody fury, and with causlesse hate,
wln 2269 That in most vild and contumelious termes,
wln 2270 She bade me pack, and harbour some where else.
wln 2271 Then was I fayne for refuge to repayre
wln 2272 Vnto my other daughter for reliefe,
wln 2273 Who gaue me pleasing and most courteous words;
wln 2274 But in her actions shewed her selfe so sore,
wln 2275 As neuer any daughter did before:
wln 2276 She prayd me in a morning out betime,
wln 2277 To go to a thicket two miles from the Court,
wln 2278 Poynting that there she would come talke with me:
wln 2279 There she had set a shaghayrd murdring wretch,
wln 2280 To massacre my honest friend and me.
wln 2281 Then iudge your selfe, although my tale be briefe,
wln 2282 If euer man had greater cause of grieffe.

King. Nor

and his three daughters.

wln 2283
wln 2284
wln 2285
wln 2286
wln 2287
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wln 2292
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wln 2320
wln 2321

King. Nor neuer like impiety was done,
Since the creation of the world begun.

Leir. And now *I* am constrained to seeke reliefe
Of her, to whom *I* haue bin so vnkind;
Whose censure, if it do award me death,
I must confesse she payes me but my due:
But if she shew a louing daughters part,
It comes of God and her, not my desert.

Cor. No doubt she will, *I* dare be sworne she will.

Leir. How know you that, not knowing what she is?

Cor. My selfe a father haue a great way hence,
Vsde me as ill as euer you did her;
Yet, that his reuerend age I once might see,
Ide creepe along, to meet him on my knee.

Leir. O, no mens children are vnkind but mine.

Cor. Condemne not all, because of others crime:
But looke, deare father, looke, behold and see
Thy louing daughter speaketh vnto thee.

Leir. O, stand thou vp, it is my part to kneele,
And aske forgiuenesse for my former faults.

Cor. O, if you wish I should inioy my breath,
Deare father rise, or I receiue my death.

Leir. Then I will rise, to satisfy your mind,
But kneele againe, til pardon be resignd.

Cor. I pardon you: the word beseemes not me:
But I do say so, for to ease your knee.
You gaue me life, you were the cause that I
Am what I am, who else had neuer bin.

Leir. But you gaue life to me and to my friend,
Whose dayes had else, had an vntimely end.

Cor. You brought me vp, when as I was but young,
And far vnable for to helpe my selfe.

Leir. *I* cast thee forth, when as thou wast but young,
And far vnable for to helpe thy selfe.

Cor. God, world and nature say I do you wrong,
That can indure to see you kneele so long.

King. Let me breake off this louing controuersy,
Which doth reioyce my very soule to see.

Good father, rise, she is your louing daughter,

She kneeles.

he kneeles.

he riseth.

he kneeles.

He riseth

The History of King Leir

wln 2322
wln 2323
wln 2324
wln 2325
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wln 2358
wln 2359
wln 2360

And honours you with as respectiue duty,
As if you were the Monarch of the world.
Cor. But *I* will neuer rise from off my knee, *She kneeles.*
Vntill I haue your blessing, and your pardon
Of all my faults committed any way,
From my first birth vnto this present day.
Leir. The blessing, which the God of *Abraham* gaue
Vnto the trybe of *Iuda*, light on thee,
And multiply thy dayes, that thou mayst see
Thy childrens children prosper after thee.
Thy faults, which are iust none that *I* do know,
God pardon on high, and *I* forgiue below. *she riseth.*
Cor. Now is my heart at quiet, and doth leape
Within my brest, for ioy of this good hap:
And now (deare father) welcome to our Court,
And welcome (kind *Perillus*) vnto me,
Myrrour of vertue and true honesty.
Leir. O, he hath bin the kindest friend to me,
That euer man had in aduersity.
Per. My tounge doth faile, to say what heart doth think,
I am so raiisht with exceeding ioy.
King. All you haue spoke: now let me speak my mind,
And in few words much matter here conclude: *he kneeles.*
If ere my heart do harbour any ioy,
Or true content repose within my brest,
Till I haue rooted out this viperous sect,
And repossesst my father of his Crowne,
Let me be counted for the periurdst man,
That euer spake word since the world began. *rise.*
Mum. Let me pray to, that neuer pray'd before; *Mumford*
If ere I resalute the Brittish earth, *kneeles.*
(As (ere't be long) I do presume I shall)
And do returne from thence without my wench,
Let me be gelded for my recompence. *rise.*
King. Come, let's to armes for to redresse this wrong:
Till *I* am there, me thinks, the time seemes long. *Exeunt.*
Enter Ragan sola.
Rag. I feele a hell of conscience in my brest,
Tormenting me with horroure for my fact,

And

and his three daughters.

wln 2361 And makes me in an agony of doubt,
wln 2362 For feare the world should find my dealing out.
wln 2363 The slaue whom I appoynted for the act,
wln 2364 I ne're set eye vpon the peasant since:
wln 2365 O, could I get him for to make him sure,
wln 2366 My doubts would cease, and I should rest secure.
wln 2367 But if the old men, with perswasieue words,
wln 2368 Haue sau'd their liues, and made him to relent;
wln 2369 Then are they fled vnto the Court of Fraunce,
wln 2370 And like a Trumpet manifest my shame.
wln 2371 A shame on these white-liuerd slaues, say I,
wln 2372 That with fayre words so soone are ouercome.
wln 2373 O God, that I had bin but made a man;
wln 2374 Or that my strength were equall with my will!
wln 2375 These foolish men are nothing but meere pity,
wln 2376 And melt as butter doth against the Sun.
wln 2377 Why should they haue preeminence ouer vs,
wln 2378 Since we are creatures of more braue resolute?
wln 2379 I sweare, I am quite out of charity
wln 2380 With all the heartlesse men in Christendome.
wln 2381 A poxe vpon them, when they are affrayd
wln 2382 To giue a stab, or slit a paltry Wind-pipe,
wln 2383 Which are so easy matters to be done.
wln 2384 Well, had I thought the slaue would serue me so,
wln 2385 My selfe would haue bin executioner:
wln 2386 Tis now vndone, and if that it be knowne,
wln 2387 Ile make as good shift as I can for one.
wln 2388 He that repines at me, how ere it stands,
wln 2389 'Twere best for him to keepe him from my hands.

Exit.

*Sound Drums & Trumpets: Enter the Gallian King,
Leir, Mumford and the army.*

wln 2392 *King.* Thus haue we brought our army to the sea,
wln 2393 Whereas our ships are ready to receyue vs:
wln 2394 The wind stands fayre, and we in foure houres sayle,
wln 2395 May easily arriue on Brittainish shore,
wln 2396 Where vnexpected we may them surprise,
wln 2397 And gayne a glorious victory with ease.
wln 2398 Wherefore, my louing Countreyemen, resolute,
wln 2399 Since truth and iustice fighteth on our sides,

The History of King Leir

wln 2400 That we shall march with conquest where we go.
wln 2401 My selfe will be as forward as the first,
wln 2402 And step by step march with the hardiest wight:
wln 2403 And not the meanest souldier in our Campe
wln 2404 Shall be in danger, but ile second him.
wln 2405 To you, my Lord, we giue the whole commaund
wln 2406 Of all the army, next vnto our selfe,
wln 2407 Not doubting of you, but you will extend
wln 2408 Your wonted valour in this needfull case,
wln 2409 Encouraging the rest to do the like,
wln 2410 By your approued magnanimity.

wln 2411 *Mum.* My Liege, tis needlesse to spur a willing horse,
wln 2412 Thats apt enough to run himselfe to death:
wln 2413 For here I sweare by that sweet Saints bright eye,
wln 2414 Which are the starres, which guide me to good hap,
wln 2415 Eyther to see my old Lord crown'd anew,
wln 2416 Or in his cause to bid the world adieu.

wln 2417 *Leir.* Thanks, good Lord *Mumford*, tis more of your good will,
wln 2418 Then any merit or desert in me.

wln 2419 *Mum.* And now to you, my worthy Countrymen,
wln 2420 Ye valiant race of **Genouestan** Gawles,
wln 2421 Surnamed Red-shanks, for your chyualry,
wln 2422 Because you fight vp to the shanks in bloud;
wln 2423 Shew your selues now to be right Gawles indeed,
wln 2424 And be so bitter on your enemies,
wln 2425 That they may say, you are as bitter as Gall.
wln 2426 Gall them, braue Shot, with your Artillery:
wln 2427 Gall them, braue Halberts, with your sharp point Billes,
wln 2428 Each in their poynted place, not one, but all,
wln 2429 Fight for the credit of your selues and Gawle.

wln 2430 *King.* Then what should more perswasion need to those,
wln 2431 That rather wish to deale, then heare of blowes?
wln 2432 Let's to our ships, and if that God permit,
wln 2433 In foure houres sayle, I hope we shall be there.

wln 2434 *Mum.* And in fiue houres more, I make no doubt,
wln 2435 But we shall bring our wish'd desires about.

Exeunt

wln 2436 *Enter a Captayne of the watch, and two watchmen.*

wln 2437 *Cap.* My honest friends, it is your turne to night,
wln 2438 To watch in this place, neere about the Beacon.

And

and his three daughters.

wln 2439
wln 2440
wln 2441
wln 2442
wln 2443
wln 2444
wln 2445
wln 2446
wln 2447
wln 2448
wln 2449
wln 2450
wln 2451
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wln 2475
wln 2476
wln 2477

And vigilantly haue regard,
If any fleet of ships passe hitherward:
Which it you do, your office is to fire
The beacon presently, and raise the towne. *Exit.*

1. Wat. I, I, I, feare nothing; we know our charge, I warrant:
I haue bin a watchman about this Beacon this xxx. yere, and
yet I ne're see it stir, but stood as quietly as might be.

2. Wat. Fayth neighbour, and you'l follow my vice, instead of
watching the Beacon, wee'l go to goodman *Gen[.]jings*, & watch
a pot of Ale and a rasher of Bacon: and if we do not drink our
selues drunke, then so; I warrant, the Beacon will see vs when
we come out agayne.

1. W. I, but how if some body excuse vs to the Captayne?

2. W. Tis no matter, ile proue by good reason that we watch
the Beacon: asse for example.

1. W. I hope you do not call me asse by craft, neighbour.

2. W. No, no, but for example: Say here stands the pot of ale,
thats the Beacon. *1. W.* I, I, tis a very good Beacon.

2. W. Well, say here stands your nose, thats the fire.

1. W. Indeed I must confesse, tis somewhat red.

2. W. I see come marching in a dish, halfe a score pieces of salt
Bacon. *1. W.* I vnderstand your meaning, thats as much to say,
half a score ships. *2. W.* True, you conster right; presently, like
a faithfull watch man, I fire the Beacon, and call vp the towne.

1. W. I, thats as much as to say, you set your nose to the pot, and
drink vp the drink. *2. W.* You are in the right; come, let's go
fire the Beacon. *Exeunt.*

Enter the King of Gallia with a stil march, Mumford & soldiers.

King. Now march our ensignes on the Brittish earth,

And we are neere approching to the towne:

Then looke about you, valiant Countrymen,

And we shall finish this exployt with ease.

Th'inhabitants of this mistrustfull place,

Are dead asleep, as men that are secure:

Here shall we skirmish but with naked men,

Deuoyd of sence, new waked from a dreame,

That know not what our comming doth pretend,

Till they do feele our meaning on their skinnes:

Therefore assaile: God and our right for vs.

Exeunt.

The History of King Leir

*Alarum, with men and women halfe naked: Enter two
Captaynes without dublets, with swords.*

1. *Cap.* Where are these villaines that were set to watch,
And fire the Beacon, if occasion seru'd,
That thus haue suffred vs to be surprisde,
And neuer giuen notice to the towne?
We are betrayd, and quite deuoyd of hope,
By any meanes to fortify our selues.

2. *Cap.* Tis ten to one the peasants are o'recome with drinke
and sleep, and so neglect their charge.

1. *Cap.* A whirl-wind carry them quick to a whirl-poole,
That there the slaues may drinke their bellies full.

2. *Cap.* This tis, to haue the Beacon so neere the Ale-house.
Enter the watchmen drunke, with each a pot.

1. *Cap.* Out on ye, villaynes, whither run you now?

1. *Wat.* To fire the towne, and call vp the Beacon.

2. *Wat.* No, no, sir, to fire the Beacon. *He drinckes.*

2. *Cap.* What, with a pot of ale, you drunken Rogues?

1. *Cap.* You'l fire the Beacon, when the towne is lost:
Ile teach you how to tend your office better. *draw to stab them.*

Enter Mumford, Captaynes run away.

Mum. Yeeld, yeeld, yeeld. *He kicks downe their pots.*

1. *Wat.* Reelee? no, we do not reele:
You may lacke a pot of Ale ere you dye.

Mum. But in meane space, I answer, you want none.
Wel, theres no dealing with you, y'are tall men, & wel weapōd,
I would there were no worse then you in the towne. *Exit.*

2. *Wat.* A speaks like an honest man, my cholers past already.
Come, neighbour, let's go.

1. *Wat.* Nay, first let's see **and** we can stand. *Exeunt.*

*Alarum, excursions, Mumford after them, and some halfe naked,
Enter the Gallian King, Leir, Mumford, Cordella, Perillus, and soul-
diers, with the chiefe of the towne bound.*

King. Feare not, my friends, you shall receyue no hurt,
If you'l subscribe vnto your lawfull King,
And quite reuoke your fealty from *Cambria*,
And from aspiring *Cornwall* too, whose wiues
Haue practisde treason 'gainst their fathers life.
Wee come in iustice of your wronged King,

And

and his three daughters.

wln 2517
wln 2518
wln 2519
wln 2520
wln 2521
wln 2522
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wln 2524
wln 2525
wln 2526
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wln 2553
wln 2554
wln 2555

And do intend no harme at all to you,
So you submit vnto your lawfull King.
Leir. Kind Countrymen, it grieues me, that perforce,
I am constrained to vse extremities.
Noble. Long haue you here bin lookt for, good my Lord,
And wish'd for by a generall consent:
And had we known your Highnesse had arriued,
We had not made resistance to your Grace:
And now, my gracious Lord, you need not doubt,
But all the Country will yeeld presently,
Which since your absence haue bin greatly tax'd,
For to maintayne their ouerswelling pride.
Weele presently send word to all our friends;
When they haue notice, they will come apace.
Leir. Thanks, louing subiects; and thanks, worthy son,
Thanks, my kind daughter, thanks to you, my Lord,
Who willingly aduentured haue your blood,
(Without desert) to do me so much good.
Mum. O, say not so:
I haue bin much beholding to your Grace:
I must confesse, I haue bin in some skirmishes,
But I was neuer in the like to this:
For where I was wont to meet with armed men,
I was now incountred with naked women,
Cord. We that are feeble, and want vse of Armes,
Will pray to God, to sheeld you from all harmes.
Leir. The while your hands do manage ceaselesse toyle,
Our hearts shall pray, the foes may haue the foyle.
Per. Weele fast and pray, whilst you for vs do fight,
That victory may prosecute the right.
King. Me thinks, your words do amplify (my friends)
And adde fresh vigor to my willing limmes:
But harke, I heare the aduerse Drum approach. *Drum.*
God and our right, Saint *Denis*, and Saint *George*,
Enter Cornwall, Cambria, Gonorill, Ragan, and the army.
Corn. Presumptuous King of Gawles, how darest thou
Presume to enter on our Britttish shore?
And more then that, to take our townes perforce,
And draw our subiects hearts from their true King?

The History of King Leir

wln 2556
wln 2557
wln 2558
wln 2559
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wln 2592
wln 2593
wln 2594

Be **sute** to buy it at as deare a price,
As ere you bought presumption in your liues.
King. Ore-daring *Cornwall*, know, we came in right,
And iust reuengement of the wronged King,
Whose daughters there, fell vipers as they are,
Haue sought to murder and depriue of life:
But God protected him from all their spight,
And we are come in iustice of his right.
Cam. Nor he nor thou haue any interest here,
But what you win and purchase with the sword.
Thy slaunders to our noble vertuous Queenes,
Wee'l in the battell thrust them down thy throte,
Except for feare of our reuenging hands,
Thou flye to sea, as not secure on lands.
Mum. Welshman, ile so ferrit you ere night for that word,
That you shall haue no mind to crake so wel this tweluemonth.
Gon. They lye, that say, we sought our fathers death.
Rag. Tis meerey forged for a colours sake,
To set a glosse on your inuasion.
Me thinks, an old man ready for to dye,
Should be asham'd to broache so foule a lye.
Cord. Fy, shamelesse sister, so deuoyd of grace,
To call our father lyer to his face.
Gon. Peace (Puritan) dissembling hypocrite,
Which art so good, that thou wilt proue stark naught:
Anon, when as I haue you in my fingers,
Ile make you wish your selfe in Purgatory.
Per. Nay, peace thou monster, shame vnto thy sexe:
Thou fiend in likenesse of a humane creature.
Rag. I neuer heard a fouler spoken man.
Leir. Out on thee, viper, scum, filthy parricide,
More odious to my sight then is a Toade.
Knowest thou these letters? *She snatches them & teares them.*
Rag. Think you to outface me with your paltry scrowles?
You come to driue my husband from his right,
Vnder the colour of a forged letter.
Leir. Who euer heard the like impiety?
Per. You are our debtour of more patience:
We were more patient when we stayd for you,

Within

and his three daughters.

wln 2595

Within the thicket two long houres and more.

wln 2596

Rag. What houres? what thicket?

wln 2597

Per. There, where you sent your seruant with your letters,

wln 2598

Seald with your hand, to send vs both to heauen,

wln 2599

Where, as I thinke, you neuer meane to come.

wln 2600

Rag. Alas, you are growne a child agayne with age,

wln 2601

Or else your sences dote for want of sleepe.

wln 2602

Per. Indeed you made vs rise betimes, you know,

wln 2603

Yet had a care we should sleepe where you bade vs stay,

wln 2604

But neuer wake more till the latter day.

wln 2605

Gon. Peace, peace, old fellow, thou art sleepy still.

wln 2606

Mum. Fayth, and if you reason till to morrow,

wln 2607

You get no other answere at their hands.

wln 2608

Tis pittie two such good faces

wln 2609

Should haue so little grace betweene them.

wln 2610

Well, let vs see if their husbands with their hands,

wln 2611

Can do as much, as they do with their tounge.

wln 2612

Cam. I, with their swords they'l make your tounge vnsay

wln 2613

What they haue sayd, or else they'l cut them out.

wln 2614

King. Too't, gallants, too't, let's not stand brawling thus.

wln 2615

Exeunt both armyes.

wln 2616

Sound alarum: excursions. Mumford must chase Cambria

wln 2617

away: then cease. Enter Cornwall.

wln 2618

Corn. The day is lost, our friends do all reuolt,

wln 2619

And ioyne against vs with the aduerse part:

wln 2620

There is no meanes of safety but by flight,

wln 2621

And therefore ile to Cornwall with my Queene.

Exit.

wln 2622

Enter Cambria.

wln 2623

Cam I thinke, there is a deuill in the Campe hath haunted

wln 2624

me to day: he hath so tyred me, that in a maner I can fight no

wln 2625

more.

Enter Mumford.

wln 2626

Zounds, here he comes, Ile take me to my horse.

Exit.

wln 2627

Mumford followes him to the dore, and returnes.

wln 2628

Mum. Farewell (Welshman) giue thee but thy due,

wln 2629

Thou hast a light and nimble payre of legs:

wln 2630

Thou are more in debt to them then to thy hands:

wln 2631

But if I meet thee once agayne to day,

wln 2632

Ile cut them off, and set them to a better heart.

Exit.

Alarums

The History of King Leir

Alarums and excursions, then sound victory. Enter Leir, Perillus, King, Cordella, and Mumford.

King. Thanks be to God, your foes are overcome,
And you againe possessed of your right.

Leir. First to the heauens, next, thanks to you, my sonne,
By whose good meanes I repossesse the same:
Which if it please you to accept your selfe,
With all my heart I will resigne to you:
For it is yours by right, and none of mine.
First, haue you raised, at your owne charge, a power
Of valiant Souldiers; (this comes all from you)
Next haue you ventured your owne persons scathe.
And lastly, (worthy *Gallia* neuer staynd)
My kingly title I by thee haue gaynd.

King. Thank heauens, not me, my zeale to you is such,
Commaund my vtmost, I will neuer grutch.

Cor. He that with all kind loue intreats his Queene,
Will not be to her father vnkind seene.

Leir. Ah, my *Cordella*, now I call to mind,
The modest answere, which I tooke vnkind:
But now I see, I am no whit beguild,
Thou louedst me dearely, and as ought a child.
And thou (*Perillus*) partner once in woe,
Thee to requite, the best I can, Ile doe:
Yet all I can, I, were it ne're so much,
Were not sufficient, thy true loue is such.
Thanks (worthy *Mumford*) to thee last of all,
Not greeted last, 'cause thy desert was small;
No, thou hast Lion-like layd on to day,
Chasing the Cornwall King and Cambria;
Who with my daughters, daughters did I say?
To saue their liues, the fugitiues did play.
Come, sonne and daughter, who did me aduaunce,
Repose with me awhile, and then for Fraunce.

Sound Drummes and Trumpets. Exeunt.

FINIS.

wln 2633
wln 2634
wln 2635
wln 2636
wln 2637
wln 2638
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wln 2658
wln 2659
wln 2660
wln 2661
wln 2662
wln 2663
wln 2664
wln 2665
wln 2666
wln 2667

wln 2668

img: 37-b
sig: [N/A]

Textual Notes

1. **25 (2-b)** : The regularized reading : is supplied for the original [·].
2. **47 (3-a)** : The regularized reading *sat* is amended from the original *set*.
3. **185 (4-b)** : The regularized reading *suffice* is supplied for the original [**]ffice.
4. **455 (8-b)** : The regularized reading *Then* is supplied for the original [·]en.
5. **456 (8-b)** : The regularized reading *Cambria* is supplied for the original [·]m..
6. **614 (10-b)** : The regularized reading *complain* is supplied for the original *complayn*[·].
7. **944 (14-b)** : The regularized reading *with* is supplied for the original *wi*[·].
8. **1030 (16-a)** : The regularized reading *Palermo* is amended from the original *Palerno*.
9. **1253 (19-a)** : The regularized reading *lies* is supplied for the original *lye*[·].
10. **1287 (19-a)** : The regularized reading *of* is supplied for the original *o*[·].
11. **1291 (19-b)** : The regularized reading *before* is supplied for the original [·]fore.
12. **1292 (19-b)** : The regularized reading *sufficient* is supplied for the original *suffic*[··].
13. **1427 (21-a)** : The regularized reading *Goneril* is amended from the original *Con*.
14. **1778 (25-b)** : The regularized reading *She* is amended from the original *Se*.
15. **1863 (27-a)** : The regularized reading *match* is supplied for the original *m*[·]ch.
16. **1945 (28-a)** : The regularized reading . is supplied for the original [·].
17. **2201 (31-a)** : The regularized reading *cause* is supplied for the original *c*[·]se.
18. **2420 (34-a)** : The regularized reading *Genovestan* comes from the original *Genouestan*, though possible variants include *Cenovestan*.
19. **2447 (34-b)** : The regularized reading *Jennings* is supplied for the original *Gen*[·]jings.
20. **2507 (35-a)** : The regularized reading *an* is amended from the original *and*.
21. **2556 (36-a)** : The regularized reading *sure* is amended from the original *sute*.