

**Ministry of Education & Higher Education  
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**Literature for  
the 12<sup>th</sup> grade**

# **King Lear**

**BY**

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# King Lear

## ACT 1

A long time ago, Lear was King of Britain. He had three daughters. The oldest daughter, Goneril, was married to the Duke of Albany. His middle daughter, Regan, was the wife of the Duke of Cornwall. The King of France and the Duke of Burgundy both wanted to marry his youngest daughter, Cordelia.

King Lear was old and tired, and he decided to give the country to his three daughters. They and their husbands would rule instead of him, while he, with one hundred knights to protect him, would stay with each daughter in turn for a month. In order to decide how to share the country between his daughters he asked them to say how much they loved him.

Goneril, the oldest, said that she loved her father very much. She made a long list of things of great value and said that she loved her father more than any of them and as much as life itself. The King was very pleased with her answer, and he gave her and her husband one third of the land. Regan said that she loved her father even more than her sister did. The King was very pleased again, and he gave her and her husband another third of the land.

Cordelia, King Lear's youngest daughter, was his favourite. He was sure that Cordelia would say that she loved him even more than the other two. But Cordelia did not want to compete with her sisters in boasting<sup>(1)</sup> about her love for her father. She knew that they did not love their father as much as they said. When her turn came, she said, 'I love you as

much as a daughter should love her father, no more and no less.' Lear was shocked.<sup>(2)</sup> He told her to think again, and give him a better answer. Cordelia said that it was right for a child to return the love its parent had given it.

King Lear was even more shocked and got very angry. He said that Cordelia was no longer his daughter, and gave her share of the country to Goneril and Regan. It was now the turn of everyone else to be shocked. The King's advisers all thought that he was wrong but the Earl of Kent was the only one who was brave enough to say anything. He reminded the King that Cordelia was his favourite daughter and that she loved him very much. He asked the King to think again, and to act more sensibly. But the King just got even angrier, and he sent Kent away. Lear then asked the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy if they still wanted to marry Cordelia, now that she had nothing apart from the clothes she was wearing. Burgundy said no; but the King of France loved her for telling the truth and did not care about land or money. Cordelia said goodbye to her sisters, asking them to look after their father well, and then she left with the King of France. Her sisters warned each other that Lear's cruel treatment of Cordelia meant that there was something wrong with his mind and that in future he might also turn against them.

Meanwhile, the Earl of Gloucester's illegitimate son Edmund was planning to take his legitimate brother's place. He showed his



father a letter which he said had been written by Edgar. The letter asked him to help Edgar kill their father for a share of everything the old man had. Gloucester believed this. Edmund then told Edgar that their father was very angry with him and advised him to hide from the old man.

After Lear and his hundred knights<sup>(3)</sup> had stayed with Goneril for two weeks, things started to go wrong. Goneril told her servants to be rude and to quarrel<sup>(4)</sup> with Lear's men. Although Lear had sent him away, the Earl of Kent returned. He disguised<sup>(5)</sup> himself as a

poor man, and he became Lear's servant. He hit Goneril's servant Oswald for speaking disrespectfully to Lear, and then Lear's Fool joked that Lear himself had become the Fool because he had given away all his power to his daughters. Goneril was unkind to Lear about the behaviour of his men. And now Lear cursed<sup>(6)</sup> Goneril, wishing that if she had a child, that it would torment<sup>(7)</sup> her.

Lear was even more angry when he found that Goneril had tried to dismiss fifty of his men. He was so upset by Goneril's behaviour that he was afraid he would go mad.

### Glossary

- 1 **boast** say that what you have or do is better than what others have or do
- 2 **shocked** be suddenly and unpleasantly surprised
- 3 **knight** in the past, a soldier from a high social class who fought on a horse
- 4 **quarrel** have a bad argument, fight with words
- 5 **disguise** change clothes, etc, to look like someone else
- 6 **curse** ask the gods to hurt or destroy someone
- 7 **torment** cause terrible pain

### Exercises

#### 1 Read the first part of *King Lear* and choose the best summary.

- 1 The first part of *King Lear* describes how Lear wants to share the country between his three daughters. Goneril and Regan both give powerful but untrue descriptions of their love, but Cordelia is more honest and tells him she loves him as her father, no more and no less. Lear becomes angry and gives the country to Goneril and Regan.
- 2 In the first part of *King Lear*, Goneril and Regan are interested in taking power from their father and ruling the country. They say that the old King is a great leader. Their younger sister wants nothing to do with this plan, and simply tells the old man that she loves him because he is her father.

#### 2 Answer the questions.

- 1 Why does Lear ask how much his daughters love him?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 How is Cordelia's answer different from the answers her sisters give?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What does Lear do as a result of this answer, and why is his action so shocking?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 How does Edmund turn his father against his half-brother Edgar, and why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 By the end of Act 1, what does Lear realise about Goneril?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Act 1

**A- Answer the questions:**

1. Who is Lear? Who are his daughters?  
.....
2. What did Lear decide to do?  
.....
3. What did he ask them?  
.....
4. Why does Lear ask how much his daughters love him?  
.....
5. What did Goneril say in reply to his question?  
.....
6. How did Lear react/ reward her o her answer?  
.....
7. What did Regan say in response? / how much did Regan say she loves her father?  
.....
8. How did Lear feel? What did he give Regan and her husband?  
.....
9. Who was Cordelia?  
.....
10. What did Cordelia say about her love to her father? Why?  
.....
11. How was Cordelia's answer different from the answers her sisters give?  
.....
12. Why was Lear shocked of her answer?  
.....
13. Why/ When did Lear say Cordelia wasn't his daughter?  
.....
14. What did he do with Cordelia's share?  
.....
15. What terrible mistake does Lear make as a result of his daughters' words?
  - a. ....
  - b. ....
16. Who is the only person who advised Lear?  
.....
17. What did the Earl of Kent tell Lear about Cordelia?  
.....
18. What did Edmund show his father?  
.....
19. What did Edmund tell his half brother Edgar? What did he advise him to do?  
.....
20. How does Edmund turn his father against Edgar? And why?  
.....
21. How does Goneril ask her servant to treat Lear's men?  
.....
22. Why did Kent hit Goneril's servant?  
.....
23. By the end of Act 1 What does Lear realize about Goneril?  
.....

.....  
**B- Complete:**

1. When Lear asked Cordelia, he expected.....
2. King Lear decides to share his country because.....
3. Unlike her sisters, Cordelia's answer to her father was.....
4. Lear was shocked of Cordelia's answer because .....
- .....
5. As a result of Cordelia's answer, King Lear decide to.....
6. Because Cordelia didn't want to compete with her sisters in boasting about.....
- .....
7. When Cordelia said she loves him like any daughter Lear.....
- .....
8. Lear gave Cordelia's share to Regan and Goneril as.....
9. After two weeks of staying with Goneril.....
10. Edmund was planning to.....
11. Edmund told Edgar that his father.....
12. Kent disguised himself as.....
13. When Lear found out that Goneril had tried to dismiss fifty of his men  
he .....
14. The fool joked that Lear had become a fool because.....
15. Lear was upset by Goneril's behaviour that he .....
16. Lear cursed Goneril and wished .....

**C- Decide whether the following statements are true<sup>✓</sup> or false<sup>✗</sup>:**

1. Cordelia was the youngest daughter ( )
2. Cordelia says she loves her father more than her sisters do. ( )
3. Regan's answer was honest and realistic. ( )
4. The king of France loved Cordelia for her money. ( )
5. The illegal son of Gloucester is Edmund ( )
6. Kent hits Goneril's messenger Oswald ( )
7. Kent disguised himself as a poor man to stay with Lear as a servant. ( )
8. The Duke of Burgundy agreed to marry Cordelia. ( )
9. Lear was afraid he would go mad because of Goneril's ingratitude. ( )
10. Lear regretted giving away everything to his two daughters because his daughters were weak. ( )

**D- Quotation: Read the following quotation then answer the questions:**

1. " I love you as much as a daughter should love her father no more and no less".
    - A. Who said this? To Whom?  
.....
    - B. In what occasion?  
.....
  2. "It was the right for a child to return the love its parent had given it".
    - A. Who said this? To Whom?  
.....
    - B. When did the speaker say it?  
.....
- .....

# King Lear

## ACT 2

Edmund told his brother Edgar to run away because someone had told their father where he was hiding, and that he would be killed. Edgar believed this and ran. He planned to hide from his father's men by pretending to be a mad, homeless person. Meanwhile, Edmund cut his arm with his sword.<sup>(1)</sup> Then he told his father that Edgar had done this because he, Edmund, had refused<sup>(2)</sup> to help Edgar kill the old man. Gloucester was very angry, but also very sad: 'O madam, my old heart is cracked, it's cracked!' he told Regan. Regan blamed<sup>(3)</sup> Edgar's (apparent) evil<sup>(4)</sup> plan to kill his own father on the terrible influence<sup>(5)</sup> of Lear and his knights.

Lear asked Kent to take a letter to his daughter Regan. The letter told Regan to get ready because he was coming to stay at her house with all his knights. But Goneril also sent a letter to Regan. She complained about their father and warned her sister that his men were noisy and expensive.

The two messengers<sup>(6)</sup> arrived at the same time, and they argued with each other. Kent hit Goneril's messenger Oswald and he fell to the ground. Regan and her husband the Duke of Cornwall ordered their men to make Kent a prisoner, even though it was extremely disrespectful to do this to the King's messenger. When the King arrived, the first thing he saw was his servant Kent as a prisoner. He could not believe that anyone would dare<sup>(7)</sup> to do this to his messenger. He demanded<sup>(8)</sup> to see his

daughter and her husband, but he was told they were too tired to see him. Then he saw that Goneril was already there. She had come to tell her sister not to look after Lear.

Regan later told the King to go home with Goneril. She told him to send away fifty of his men and ask Goneril to forgive him for being angry and thinking too much of himself.

The King reminded Regan that he had given her half of all his land, and asked her to let him stay, with all his men. Regan said that even fifty men were too many. She would accept only twenty-five. So Lear said that he would go back with Goneril. He said that she must love him twice as much as Regan because she would allow him fifty knights instead of twenty-five. Then the sisters said that really he didn't need ten, or five, or even one of his own men.

The King now realised that giving away everything had been a terrible mistake. He had lost all his power, and his two older daughters felt no love or kindness for him. It was night time and a terrible storm was just beginning. Goneril and Regan offered shelter<sup>(9)</sup> to Lear, but not to any of his men. He felt he could not stay with either daughter, so he went out into the storm, alone except for Kent and his old Fool.

The old Earl of Gloucester felt sorry for Lear, but Goneril and Regan only said that if their father was suffering, he himself was the one to blame.



## Glossary

- 1 **sword** a weapon that is held in the hand and is used for cutting and killing
- 2 **refuse** say that you will not do or accept something
- 3 **blame** say or think that someone or something is the cause of a problem, accident or bad situation
- 4 **evil** very bad
- 5 **influence** power to persuade and affect the behaviour of others
- 6 **messenger** someone who carries messages or letters to people
- 7 **dare** be brave or mad enough to do something even though it is very dangerous or may cause trouble
- 8 **demand** say strongly and clearly that you want something
- 9 **shelter** something that protects you from bad weather or other kinds of danger

## Exercises

1 Decide which words you can use to describe (a) Lear and (b) Goneril and Regan.

angry badly advised cruel dishonest  
mistaken sad selfish shocked  
shocking suffering ungrateful wrong

a Lear: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b Goneril and Regan: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Tick (✓) the correct answer.

- 1 Edmund cuts his arm because
  - a he wants his father to feel sorry for him.
  - b he does not want to do any work that day.
  - c he thinks it will make others think he is a great fighter.
  - d he wants his father to believe that Edgar has tried to kill him.
- 2 Lear leaves Goneril and goes to see Regan because
  - a he likes Regan's husband better than Goneril's.
  - b Goneril has run out of food in her castle and cannot feed his men.
  - c he is angry with Goneril.
  - d he is worried that Goneril wants to kill him.

3 Complete the sentences.

- 1 Lear says that Goneril must love him twice as much as Regan because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Regan and her husband order Kent to be made a prisoner because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Lear realises that giving away his kingdom has been a mistake because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 The Earl of Gloucester feels sorry for King Lear because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Act 2

### **A- Answer the questions:**

1. Why did Edmund tell Edgar to run away?

.....  
.....

2. Why did Edgar pretend to be a mad homeless person?

.....  
.....

3. Why did Edmund cut his arm?

.....  
.....

4. Who does Regan blame Edgar's evil plan for Killing his father?

.....  
.....

5. What is Edmund's evil plan?

.....  
.....

6. How does Edmund plan to achieve his goals? What was Edmund's plan?

.....  
.....

7. Why did Lear send a letter to Regan? What did he tell her in that letter?

.....  
.....

8. What did Goneril complain about in her letter to Regan?

.....  
.....

9. Why did Regan order her men to make Kent a prisoner?

.....  
.....

10. Why did Goneril come to Regan?

.....  
.....

11. What did Regan tell ask father to do?

.....  
.....

12. What did Lear remind Regan and Goneril of?

.....  
.....

13. Why did Lear say Goneril loves him twice as much as Regan?

.....  
.....

14. Why did Lear go out in the storm? / why didn't Lear accept his daughters offer of shelter?

.....  
.....

15. Who went out in the storm with Lear?

.....  
.....

16. Why does the Earl of Gloucester feel sorry for king Lear?

.....  
.....

17. What evil plan does Edmund start to carry out in Act 1 and continue to do so in Act 2?

.....  
.....

### **B- Complete:**

1. Edmund told his brother Edgar to run away because.....

2. Edgar decides to hide from his father's men by.....

3. Edmund cut his arm because .....

.....  
4. Edgar planned his Escape by pretending to be.....

5. Goneril had already come to tell her sister.....

6. The two sisters warned each other.....

7. Regan blames Lear and his knights for.....



8. Goneril warned her sister that Lear's men.....
9. Lear says Goneril loves him twice as much as Reagan because.....
10. Lear wanted to see his daughter and her husband to ask about Kent but.....
11. Lear realized he had made a mistake when .....
12. Edmund 's evil plan is to.....in order to .....
13. Lear felt that he could not stay with either daughter so he.....
14. Kent, Lear's messenger is imprisoned because.....
15. Lear rejected the shelter of his two daughters and went out into a.....
16. Goneril and Regan said that if their father was suffering.....
17. Lear refuses to come back to the castle with Gloucester because.....
18. Gloucester feels sorry for King Lear because.....
19. Regan and her husband order Kent to be made a prisoner because.....

**C- Decide whether the following statements are true ✓ or false ×:**

1. Edmund cuts his arm because he wants his father to feel sorry for him. ( )
2. Lear leaves Goneril and goes to see Regan because he is worried that Goneril wants to kill him. ( )
3. Regan and Goneril blame their father for his suffering. ( )
4. Regan agreed to let Lear keep all his men. ( )
5. Lear goes mad because his daughters have treated him so badly. ( )
6. Lear went out in the storm a lone. ( )
7. Lear realized that giving away his kingdom was a wise thing. ( )
8. Both Regan and Goneril think that Lear doesn't need even one of his men. ( )
9. Goneril and Regan offered shelter to Lear and his men. ( )
10. Both Goneril and Regan behaviour shows the ingratitude of children ( )

**D- Quotation: Read the following quotation then answer the questions:**

**" O madam, my old heart is cracked, it's cracked"**

1. Who said this? To whom? .....
2. What does the speaker mean / Why is the speaker's heart cracked?  
.....
3. Whom does the person spoken to blame? / How does the person spoken to respond?  
.....
4. **Cracked** means:            a- happy            b- broken            c- angry

**E- Choose the correct answer:**

1. **Edmund cuts his arm because:**
  - a. He wants his father to believe that Edgar has tried to kill him.
  - b. He wants his father to feel sorry for him.
  - c. He does not want to do any work that day.
  - d. He thinks it will make others think he is great fighter.
2. **Lear leaves Goneril and goes to see Regan because:**
  - a. Goneril has run out of food in her castle and can't feed his men.
  - b. He is worried that Goneril wants to kill him.
  - c. He is angry with Goneril for sending away fifty of his men.
  - d. He likes Regan's husband more than Goneril's.
3. **Edgar hid from his father's men by:**
  - a. Staying in Regan's castle.
  - b. Staying in the castle.
  - c. Living among Lear's knights.
  - d. Pretending to be a mad homeless person.

# King Lear

## ACT 3

Kent found out that the King of France had come to England with an army, and with Cordelia. Kent sent Cordelia a letter to explain what had happened. Then he went looking for Lear. Meanwhile, Lear's sorrow and anger had become too great for him to bear<sup>(1)</sup> and he went mad. He shouted at the storm to do its worst: *'Blow winds and crack your cheeks!'*

Kent persuaded Lear to take shelter in a small, dirty hut.<sup>(2)</sup> For the first time, Lear began to feel sorry for people other than himself as he thought about those who had no homes and only old, thin clothes to wear. Inside the hut they found Edgar, who was disguised as a beggar<sup>(3)</sup> called 'poor Tom'. He was pretending to be mad, and he had no clothes, covering himself just with a blanket.<sup>(4)</sup> Lear was sure that poor Tom had gone mad because he had given everything to his daughters – just like himself.

Meanwhile, Gloucester told Edmund that Albany and Cornwall were quarrelling with each other, and that he had received a letter which told him about the King of France's plan to rescue Lear from his cruel daughters. Gloucester felt upset because Regan and Cornwall had stopped him from helping Lear or even talking about him. He had now decided to take Lear's side against Goneril, Regan and their husbands.

Hearing this, Edmund decided to repeat everything to Cornwall, even though he knew that his father would be in serious trouble.

Gloucester now refused to follow the Duke of Cornwall's orders and, instead, went out looking

for Lear. He found him in the hut and asked him to come back to his castle, but Lear refused to leave 'poor Tom'. Then, in his madness, Lear held a mock trial<sup>(5)</sup> of his evil daughters, with the Fool, 'poor Tom' and Kent as judges<sup>(6)</sup> and stools<sup>(7)</sup> in the place of his daughters.

Later, Gloucester heard Regan and Cornwall as they planned to kill Lear, so he warned Kent to take the King to Dover,<sup>(8)</sup> where he would be safe with Cordelia and the King of France.

Cornwall was very angry when Edmund told him what Gloucester had done. He called Gloucester a traitor,<sup>(9)</sup> and told Edmund that he would punish the old Earl. Edmund decided to leave, so that no-one could blame him for not protecting his father.

Cornwall decided to punish Gloucester by blinding him. He ordered his servants to tie the old man to a chair. Then he blinded one of Gloucester's eyes. Just as he was going to blind the other eye too, one of his servants suddenly attacked<sup>(10)</sup> him: he could not bear the Duke's cruelty any longer. The Duke of Cornwall killed the man, but he himself was also hurt. Despite this, he went on to blind Gloucester's other eye, and then told his suffering victim<sup>(11)</sup> that it was his own son Edmund who had betrayed<sup>(12)</sup> him. Gloucester then realised that Edmund had lied to him from the beginning, and that Edgar was innocent.<sup>(13)</sup>

At that point, Regan ordered the blind old man to be thrown out of his own castle into the storm.



## Glossary

- 1 **bear** accept e.g. pain or a bad situation
- 2 **hut** a small, simple shelter
- 3 **beggar** a very poor person who asks for clothes and food from richer people
- 4 **blanket** large piece of cloth used as a bed covering
- 5 **mock trial** a pretend examination of a person or people to find whether they have done something against the law
- 6 **judge** a person who is in charge of finding out whether someone has done something against the law
- 7 **stool** a chair without a back
- 8 **Dover** a town on the south-east coast of England, the easiest place for the French King and Cordelia to reach when they sailed from France
- 9 **traitor** person who helps an enemy against someone or something he / she should support
- 10 **attack** use violence against a person or place
- 11 **victim** someone who has been hurt or killed by someone or by an accident
- 12 **betray** help an enemy against someone or something you should support, often by giving valuable information
- 13 **innocent** of a person who has not done anything wrong or against the law

## Exercises

1 Complete the paragraph with words from the box.

different hut mad powerful  
rain sorry storm violence

When Lear was out in the terrible (1) \_\_\_\_\_, he felt that the violence of the wind and the (2) \_\_\_\_\_ all around him was like the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ of his own feelings. When he went into the little (4) \_\_\_\_\_, he found 'poor Tom' there. Tom seemed very (5) \_\_\_\_\_ from the rich, (6) \_\_\_\_\_ people the King was normally spent time with. He appeared to be poor, powerless and (7) \_\_\_\_\_, and the King felt very (8) \_\_\_\_\_ for him.

2 Tick (✓) the correct answer.

- 1 Lear goes mad because
  - a he likes the noise and violence of the storm and wants the wind to blow even harder.
  - b his daughters have treated him so badly that his mind cannot bear his feelings of anger and sorrow.
  - c he knows that he has brought disaster on himself by giving everything away.
  - d he feels that the world does not make sense any more and people do not behave as they ought to.
- 2 Gloucester decides to help King Lear because
  - a he feels sorry for him because he is out in the storm with no shelter.
  - b he hears that Albany and Cornwall are quarrelling with each other.
  - c the Duke of Cornwall tells him not to.
  - d he wants the King of France and Cordelia to like him.

3 Complete the sentences.

- 1 Edmund quickly leaves his father's castle after betraying him to Cornwall because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Regan and her husband decide to blind the Earl of Gloucester because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Lear refuses to come back to the castle with Gloucester because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 The Duke of Cornwall's servant suddenly attacks the Duke because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Act 3

### **A- Answer the questions:**

1. What did Kent do when he found out that Cordelia and the king of France come to England?  
a. ....  
b. ....
2. Why was Cordelia and her husband coming to England? / What was the king of France and Cordelia's plan? .....
3. Why do you think Lear went mad?  
.....
4. Where did Kent and Lear take shelter? Who did they find there?  
.....
5. What did Lear feel for the first time when he saw 'Poor Tom'?  
.....
6. What did Lear believe the reason for Tom's madness?  
.....
7. What did Gloucester tell Edmund about Albany and Cornwall?  
.....
8. Why did Gloucester feel upset?  
.....
9. Why does Gloucester take Lear's side against Regan, Goneril and their husbands?  
.....
10. What did Gloucester do when he heard about Regan and Cornwall's' plan to kill Lear?  
.....
11. Why did Gloucester warn Kent to take the king to Dover?  
.....
12. How does Edmund betray his father?  
.....
13. What happened when one of the servant attacked Cornwall?  
.....
14. How does Gloucester show that he is a good man?  
.....
15. Why did Cornwall blind the Earl of Gloucester?  
.....
16. What did Regan order to do with Gloucester after blinding him?  
.....
17. What did the Duke of Cornwall tell Gloucester about his two sons?  
.....
18. How does Edmund show that he is even more evil than we have seen in Acts 1 and 2?  
.....

### **B- Complete:**

1. Lear refuses to go back to the castle with Gloucester because .....
2. Lear goes mad because .....
3. Edmund quickly leaves his father castle after betraying him to Cornwall because.....
4. Regan and her husband decide to blind the Earl of Gloucester because .....
5. The Duke of Cornwall's servant suddenly attacks him because.....
6. When Kent found out that the king of France had come to England with Cordelia, .....

7. Lear's sorrow and anger had become too great for him to bear so he .....
8. Lear was sure that 'Poor Tom' went mad as a result of.....
9. Gloucester decided to take Lear's side because.....
10. Cornwall decides to punish Gloucester by.....

**C- Decide whether the following statements are true or false:**

1. Lear agreed to go back to the castle with Gloucester. ( )
2. Edgar told Lear and Kent who he really is ( )
3. Edgar was pretending to be poor and mad. ( )
4. Lear held a real trial for his two daughters. ( )
5. Cornwall decided to punish Gloucester by cutting his hands ( )
6. Cornwall told Gloucester the truth about his sons. ( )
7. When the servant attacked Cornwall he killed the servant stopped torturing Gloucester. ( )
8. Regan ordered to throw the blind man into the storm. ( )
9. Gloucester decides to jump off the cliff because he cannot bear the pain of his blinding anymore. ( )
10. Albany feels that his wife Goneril is evil because she fallen in love with Edmund. ( )
11. Albany feels that his wife Goneril is evil because she has helped Regan and Cornwall to make Lear mad & to blind Gloucester. ( )
12. King of France come to England to save Cordelia. ( )

**D- Quotation: Read the following quotation then answer the questions:**

**" Blow winds and crack your cheeks''**

**1. When did Lear say this?**

.....

**2. Why did he go out in the storm?**

.....

**3. Why does he say this?**

.....

**E- Choose the correct answer:**

**1. Lear goes mad because:**

- a. His daughters have treated him so badly that his mind cannot bear his feelings of anger and sorrow.
- b. He likes the noise and violence of the storm and wants the wind to blow even harder.
- c. He knows that he has brought disaster on himself by giving everything away.
- d. He feels that the world doesn't make sense anymore and people don't behave as they ought to.

**2. King Lear went out in the storm because:**

- a. He couldn't bear his daughter's cruel treatment.
- b. Edmund injured himself with a sword.
- c. His daughters treated him well.
- d. The Duck of Burgundy refused to marry Cordelia.

**3. Gloucester was punished by Cornwall because he:**

- a. Followed Cornwall's order.
- b. Took Lear's side.
- c. Preferred to stay in the castle.
- d. He was good man.

**4. Gloucester decide to help king Lear because:**

- e. He feels sorry for him because he is out in the storm with no shelter.
- f. He hears that Albany and Cornwall are quarrelling with each other.
- g. The Duck of Cornwall tells him not to stay in the castle.
- h. He wants the king of France and Cordelia to like him.

# King Lear

## ACT 4

Edgar and Gloucester, who was now blind, met out on the windy heath.<sup>(1)</sup> Edgar took care of his father but did not say who he was. He still pretended to be 'poor mad Tom'. Gloucester remembered seeing Tom the night before with Lear. 'He reminded me of my poor son Edgar,' said the old man. 'How I wish I could hold him in my arms again, though I will never be able to see him now! We are like flies<sup>(2)</sup> and the gods are like cruel little boys; they torment and kill us for fun.' While Gloucester was talking like this, Edgar could hardly speak because of his sorrow at seeing his poor father blinded.

15 Gloucester now asked Edgar to take him to Dover. He wanted to throw himself from the high cliffs<sup>(3)</sup> there and end his unhappy life. Edgar agreed, but instead took him to the middle of a field. Gloucester jumped, but of course he only fell to the ground. Edgar lifted him up, pretending to be a friendly stranger.<sup>(4)</sup> He allowed his father to think that he had fallen and survived by a miracle.<sup>(5)</sup>

25 Meanwhile, Goneril had fallen in love with Edmund. She now despised<sup>(6)</sup> her own husband the Duke of Albany as a weak person. On the other hand, Albany had come to hate what Goneril, Regan, Cornwall and Edmund

30 between them had done. He told his wife: 'You are not worth the dust which the rude<sup>(7)</sup> wind blows in your face.'

Then a messenger brought the news that the Duke of Cornwall had died after the servant's attack during the blinding of Gloucester. Goneril was immediately worried by this news. It meant that her sister Regan was now a widow<sup>(8)</sup> and might marry the man she now wanted for herself – Edmund. Albany's mind was on something very different. He now understood that Edmund had betrayed his own father to Cornwall's cruelty, and he was very angry. He decided to punish Edmund for being such a terrible traitor.

45 At this point, the King of France had to return to France, leaving Cordelia near Dover with his army. There, she read Kent's letter telling her about Lear's fall into madness. Lear was now in Dover, but he felt too ashamed<sup>(9)</sup> of the way he had behaved towards Cordelia to see her. Gloucester and Edgar met Lear, covered in wild flowers and out of his mind. Gloucester recognised<sup>(10)</sup> Lear's voice, as the old King explained that the poor and powerless are always the ones who are punished for their crimes,<sup>(11)</sup> while the rich and powerful do the same things but are not punished. Then Lear



recognised Gloucester – the first sign that his madness was beginning to disappear.

60 Meanwhile, Goneril's servant Oswald had been ordered to find Gloucester and kill him. But Edgar, still in disguise, prevented this. They fought and he killed Oswald. Then he found and read a letter that Oswald was  
65 carrying from Goneril to Edmund. In the letter Goneril told Edmund to kill her husband Albany so that he could marry her.

Now Cordelia found Lear. She was very sad

70 to see him mad. Her doctor gave him medicine to make him well again. When he woke up he was confused,<sup>(12)</sup> and did not know where he was. Cordelia knelt<sup>(13)</sup> down in front of him and asked for his blessing.<sup>(14)</sup> As for Lear, he realised that this was Cordelia, and he fully  
75 expected her to be angry with him. After all, she had every reason to be! But Cordelia made him understand that she loved him and forgave him. Both father and daughter were extremely happy to be together again.

### Glossary

- 1 **heath** wild, open, treeless land, without farms
- 2 **fly** small, black flying creature
- 3 **cliff** steep high rock face, usually next to the sea
- 4 **stranger** someone you do not know
- 5 **miracle** an amazing event caused by something greater than the ordinary power of human beings
- 6 **despise** look down on people thinking that they have no value
- 7 **rude** (here, old-fashioned) rough, wild
- 8 **widow** a woman whose husband has died
- 9 **ashamed** feeling embarrassed and bad about something you have done
- 10 **recognise** know someone or something because you have seen, met or heard them before
- 11 **crime** an action that is against the law
- 12 **confused** unable to understand something or think clearly about it
- 13 **kneel (knelt)** go down on your knees
- 14 **blessing** a wish that someone will be well and happy, words that show you think well of them

**Exercises**

**1 Who might have said or thought the following? Explain each situation in turn.**

1 'I can't bear to see my poor father like this. How could anyone have hurt him like this and treated him so cruelly?'

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 'Am I finally going mad or am I just confused? How could I have fallen so far and still be alive?'

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 'I've got to think quickly. How am I going to stop her from getting him now that her husband is dead?'

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4 'What? I don't believe this! It means that that terrible woman is trying to get my brother to kill her husband. This is really, really bad!'

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5 'At last! My father! But has he really gone completely mad? I'll ask my doctor to give him some medicine that may perhaps help him.'

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2 Tick (✓) the correct answer.**

1 Gloucester decides to jump off the cliff because

- a he cannot bear the pain of his blinding any more.
- b he knows he will never be able to see his son Edgar again or hold him in his arms.
- c he is so deeply unhappy at what he has done to Edgar and what he has suffered at the hands of Cornwall.
- d he is afraid of meeting the Duke of Cornwall again.

2 The Duke of Albany feels that his wife Goneril is evil because

- a she has helped Regan and Cornwall to make Lear go mad and to blind Gloucester.
- b she has fallen in love with Edmund.
- c she thinks he is weak.
- d she does not love him any more.

**3 Complete the sentences.**

1 Goneril hears that her sister's husband has died as a result of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Edgar leads his father to the middle of a field and not to the high cliffs as \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 King Lear fully expects Cordelia to be angry with him because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4 Goneril has written a letter to Edmund telling him to kill her husband because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Act 4

### **A- Answer the questions:**

1. Why do you think Edgar didn't reveal his identity to his father?

2. Why did Gloucester decide to jump off the cliff?

3. Why did Gloucester ask Edgar to take him to Dover?

4. What news about Cornwall did the messenger bring?

5. Why did the Duke of Cornwall die?

6. Why was Goneril worried about the news of Cornwall's death?

7. Why didn't Lear go to see Cordelia in Dover?

8. How did Lear explain his own bad luck?

9. What was the first sign that Lear's madness was beginning to disappear?

10. Why did the Duke of Albany think his wife was evil?

11. Why did Goneril write a letter to Edmund? What did Goneril ask Edgar to do in the letter she sent?

12. How does Lear's life change for the better in Act 4?

### **B- Complete:**

1. While Gloucester was talking about 'poor Tom' Edgar could hardly speak because.....

2. After falling in love with Edmund, Goneril now.....

3. The Duke of Albany feels his wife Goneril is evil because.....

4. Albany had come to hate what Goneril made because.....

5. Albany decided to punish Edmund.....

6. Goneril's servant Oswald had been ordered to.....

7. Goneril hears that her sister's husband 'The Duke of Cornwall' died as a result of.....

8. Edgar leads his father to the middle of a field and not to the high cliff as.....

9. King Lear expects Cordelia to be angry with him because.....

10. Goneril had written a letter to Edmund telling him to kill her husband because.....

11. When Goneril learned that The Duke of Cornwall died.....

12. Gloucester decides to jump off the cliff because.....

**C- Decide whether the following statements are true or false:**

1. Edgar revealed his identity to his father/ Edgar told his father who he was. (    )
2. Edgar took his father to the high cliffs. (    )
3. Cordelia tells Lear that she doesn't forgive him. (    )
4. Lear felt ashamed of the way he behaved towards Cordelia. (    )
5. Gloucester decides to jump off the cliff because he cannot bear the pain of blinding any more. (    )
6. Oswald was ordered to find Gloucester and kill him. (    )
7. Edmund was such a traitor that he betrayed his father. (    )

**D- Quotation: Read the following quotation then answer the questions:**

**A- "You are not worth the dust which the rude wind blows in your face."**

**- Why did the Duke of Albany say this to his wife Goneril?**

.....

**B- " He reminded me of my poor son Edgar"**

**- Who said this? When did he say that?**

.....

**C- " How I wish I could hold him in my arms again"**

**1- Who is he talking to? .....**

**2- To whom does " him" refer? .....**

**D- " We are like flies and the gods are like cruel little boys , they torment and kill us for fun "**

**- Who said this? When did he say that?**

.....

**E- Who might have said or thought the following? Explain each situation in turn.**

**1. "I can't bear to see my poor father like this. How could anyone hurt him like this. And treated him so cruelly?"**

.....

**2. "Am I finally going mad or am I just confused? How could I have fallen so far and still be alive?"**

.....

**3. " I've got to think quickly. How am I going to stop her from getting him now that her husband is dead?"**

.....

**4. "What? I don't believe this! It means that that terrible woman is trying to get my brother to kill her husband. This is really, really bad!"**

.....

**5. " At last! My father! But has he really gone completely mad? I'll ask my doctor to give him some medicine that may perhaps help him."**

.....

# King Lear

## ACT 5

When Regan asked Edmund if he was in love with Goneril, he denied<sup>(1)</sup> it. But just then Goneril and Albany arrived, and the sisters were immediately jealous<sup>(2)</sup> of each other. Each  
5 knew that the other wanted to marry Edmund, and each wanted to make sure that she herself would win him. As for Edmund, he could not make up his mind which sister to marry.

Meanwhile, Edgar, who was still disguised,  
10 gave a letter to Albany. It was the one that Goneril had written to Edmund. So with this, Albany knew that his own wife had planned to kill him and marry his killer.

Now it was time for the great battle<sup>(3)</sup>  
15 between the French and English armies. Edgar hid his father for safety under a tree while the battle was being fought. The battle began, and the English army under Edmund won. Unfortunately for Lear and Cordelia, they  
20 were both captured.<sup>(4)</sup>

Lear was not afraid of going to prison if he could just be sure of staying with Cordelia. He tried to make her feel happier by saying: 'Come, let's away to prison: We two will sing like birds  
25 in the cage.'<sup>(5)</sup> But after they had been taken to prison, Edmund gave one of his soldiers a letter with secret orders to kill them.

Albany understood the danger to Lear and Cordelia, and he asked Edmund to let him  
30 look after the two of them. Edmund said he would let Albany have them, but not now. He would give them to him the next day, he said. Albany reminded Edmund that he should not talk like this to him, as the young man was not  
35 his social equal.

Then Goneril and Regan began to quarrel about Edmund - until Regan suddenly became very ill and collapsed. Goneril had poisoned her!

40 At this point, Albany arrested<sup>(6)</sup> Edmund for treason. He decided that Edmund must face trial by combat.<sup>(7)</sup> Edgar was the one who offered to fight Edmund and prove he was a  
45 traitor. He did this still without telling anyone who he really was.

The two brothers fought, and Edgar won. Edmund fell, already close to death, and he now finally admitted<sup>(8)</sup> all his crimes.

50 Then Edgar finally showed who he was, and he went on to explain that their father had just died. It had happened like this. After he had found safety for the old man under a tree, he had told him he was the Earl's son. Then,  
55 while getting ready for the battle, he had asked for his father's blessing. And at that moment, the old man had suffered a huge heart attack and died. But he had at least died happily, in his son's arms.

60 When Goneril realised that her husband knew about Edmund and her, she became desperate, ran away and killed herself with a knife in the heart. After a messenger had returned with this shocking news, Albany  
65 turned to ask the dying Edmund what he had done with Lear and Cordelia. Edmund replied that he had ordered their deaths, but if Edgar ran to the castle he might just be in time to save them.

70 Edgar started to leave for the castle as fast as possible, but he was too late: Cordelia had already been killed. A moment later, Lear arrived, carrying Cordelia's dead body in his arms. This final sorrow was too great for her  
75 father to bear. The old King's heart broke at last, and he died.

In the end, only Kent, Edgar and Albany were left to bury<sup>(9)</sup> the dead. Goneril's husband, the Duke of Albany, became King of England.



## Glossary

- 1 **deny** say that something is not true
- 2 **jealous** angry and upset that someone else has or may get something that you want
- 3 **battle** fight between two armies
- 4 **capture** catch someone or take control of something, especially in war
- 5 **cage** container, usually made of thin pieces of metal, and usually used for keeping birds or small animals
- 6 **arrest** stop someone being free, seize them and hold them
- 7 **trial by combat** an ancient way of providing proof of something through fighting, here for example proving that Edmund really was a traitor if he lost the fight with Edgar
- 8 **admit** agree that something bad is true
- 9 **bury** put something deep in the ground

## Exercises

- 1 *King Lear* is often acted now, and people think it is one of Shakespeare's best plays. But for many years after Shakespeare's death it was unpopular. When it was acted again in public, the end of the play was changed. People found Shakespeare's ending unbearably cruel and sad, so they wrote a new one in which Cordelia is not murdered. Some people were also too shocked by the scene in which the Earl of Gloucester is blinded. They said this was too terrible to be shown in public, and they felt that Shakespeare had made his bad characters too evil to be human. In the twentieth century, however, it became clear to everyone that human beings really can be as cruel and evil as Regan, Goneril, Cornwall and Edmund. Now people see that Shakespeare's ideas about the worst in human nature were true, and no-one uses the happy ending.

What do you think about the ending?

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## 2 Tick (✓) the correct answer.

- 1 Goneril wants Edmund to murder her husband because
  - a she cannot afford to pay someone else to do it.
  - b she hates her husband and doesn't want to be married to him any more.
  - c she wants to become the Countess of Gloucester.
  - d she cannot marry Edmund while her husband is still alive.
- 2 The Duke of Albany arrests Edmund because
  - a he is angry with him for not giving him Lear and Cordelia.
  - b he feels that Edmund has led the English army badly.
  - c he wants to bring Edmund to justice for his treason.
  - d he knows that his wife is in love with Edmund.

## 3 Answer the questions.

- 1 Why does Goneril poison her sister?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 What makes Lear happy to go to prison?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What do you think makes Edmund try to save the lives of Lear and Cordelia at the last minute?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 How many of the main characters in the play die by the end, and how does each one die?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ACT 5

### **A- Answer the questions:**

**1. Why were Goneril and Regan jealous of each other?**

.....

**2. How did Albany know about Goneril's plan to kill him?**

.....

**3. What did Edgar do revenge for his father?**

.....

**4. Why and where did Edgar hide his father?**

.....

**5. Who lead the English army? Who won the battle?**

.....

**6. What happened to Lear and Cordelia after the battle?**

.....

**7. What did Edmund order his soldiers to do with Cordelia and Lear in the letter?**

.....

**8. Why did Albany ask Edmund to let him look after Lear and Cordelia?**

.....

**9. What did the two sisters, Regan and Goneril, quarrel about?**

.....

**10. Why did Regan collapse?**

.....

**11. Why did Goneril poison Regan?**

.....

**12. How did Gloucester die**

.....

**13. What makes Goneril desperate?**

.....

**14. Why did Albany arrest Edmund?**

.....

**15. Who offered to prove Edmund was a traitor and fight him?**

.....

**16. What did Goneril do when she realized her husband knew about Edmund and her?**

.....

**17. Why was Lear not afraid of imprisonment? What makes Lear happy to go to prison?**

.....

**18. What do you think makes Edmund try to save the lives of Lear and Cordelia at the last minute?**

.....

**19. What happy end you suggest for the play?**

.....

**20. How many of the main characters die by the end, and how does each one die?**

.....

.....

.....

**21. How are we given hope of a happy ending towards the end of Act 5?**

.....

**22. How is that hope destroyed at the end?**

.....

**B- Complete:**

1. Albany knew that his wife.....
2. The Duke of Albany feel that his wife is evil as.....
3. Goneril wants Edmund to murder her husband because .....
4. Lear was not afraid of imprisonment as.....
5. Before his father's death Edgar told him *that* .....
6. Edmund must face trial by .....
7. The Duke of Albany arrests Edmund because .....
8. The two brothers fought and .....
9. Edmund told Albany that he had ordered the soldiers to .....
10. Edgar left the castle as fast as possible in order to .....

**C- Decide whether the following statements are true or false:**

1. Edmund confessed that he was in love with Goneril. ( )
2. Edmund could not make his mind which sister to marry. ( )
3. Goneril killed herself by poison. ( )
4. The French army won the battle. ( )
5. Lear was afraid of going to prison. ( )
6. Albany arrested Edmund because he didn't win the battle. ( )
7. Edgar told everyone who he really was before fighting his brother Edmund. ( )
8. Cordelia was not murdered in the play. ( )
9. Edgar told his father who he was before his death ( )
10. The Duke of Albany arrested Edmund because he didn't lead the army well. ( )
11. In the end only Kent, Edgar and Albany were left to bury the dead. ( )
12. Kent became king of England ( )
13. King of France planned to rescue King Lear from his cruel daughters. ( )



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