

King Lear  
ACT 1  
*Scene 1-The King's Palace*

LEAR. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

GLOUCESTER. I shall, my liege.

LEAR. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.  
Give me the map there. Know that we have divided  
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent  
To shake all cares and business from our age;  
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we  
Unburthened crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,  
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,  
We have this hour a constant will to publish  
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife  
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,  
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,  
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,  
And here are to be answered. Tell me, my daughters  
(since now we will divest us both of rule,  
Interest of territory, cares of State),  
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?  
That we our largest bounty may extend  
Where merit most doth challenge it.  
Goneril, our eldest-born, speak first.

GONERIL. Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;  
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;  
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;  
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;  
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;  
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;  
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

CORDELIA (*aside*). What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.

LEAR. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,  
With shadowy forests and with champains riched,  
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,  
We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue  
Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,  
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

REGAN. Sir, I am made of that same metal as my sister,  
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart  
I find she names my very deed of love,  
Only she comes too short: that I profess  
Myself an enemy to all other joys,  
Which the most precious square of sense possesses;  
And find I am alone felicitate