

King Lear Notes

Act I Notes

- Lear asks for confirmation of his daughters' love. Goneril and Regan tell him what he wants to hear and are rewarded, but Cordelia refuses to jump through that hoop.
- After Lear disowns Cordelia, she is also rejected by the Duke of Burgundy, but the King of France takes her as his wife.
- Kent is banished for standing up to Lear on Cordelia's behalf.
- The sub plot of Edmund attempting to discredit his legitimate brother Edgar begins by Edmund fooling his father, Gloucester, into thinking that a conspiracy is afoot.
- Edgar is sent away by Edmund who pretends to be helping him.
- Lear and his knights are causing trouble for Goneril, whom they are staying with first, but Kent comes back in disguise to help Lear.
- Goneril tells Lear that he must dismiss half of his knights or she won't have him.
- Lear curses her viciously and leaves in a huff for the other daughter, Regan.
- Goneril sends her servant to forewarn Regan of Lear's approach to he can mistreated by her in the same way.

Act II notes

- Gloucester, Edgar's father, passes a sentence of death on Edgar, his legitimate son due to Edmund's persuasion.
- Cornwall and Regan arrive at Gloucester's castle to stay with him. They like what Edmund (the bastard) is doing and welcome him to their service.
- Kent and Oswald, the servant of Goneril, fight at Gloucester's castle and Kent ends up in the stocks.
- Edgar disguises himself as a madman beggar to escape his death sentence.
- Lear arrives at Gloucester's castle and finds Kent in stocks. Then he is shut out by both Regan and Goneril out into a storm.

Act III Notes:

- Lear in the storm with the fool, ranting and raving.
- Gloucester having trouble with his guests, Goneril and Regan and their husbands.
- Lear, Kent and the fool enter a hovel to get out of the rain and discover Edgar dressed as a madman named Tom. Lear thinks that the reason 'Tom' is mad is due to Tom's daughters.
- Gloucester arrives from the storm to try and help Lear and brings him to a farmhouse near the castle against the orders of Goneril and Regan.
- Edmund makes up another letter this time implicating his father, Gloucester.
- Gloucester is caught and brought before Goneril and Regan for a severe and bizarre punishment.
- Gloucester is sent away, but knows the truth about the abuses of his illegitimate son, Edmund.

Act IV Notes:

- Gloucester is brought to Edgar, who continues to pretend to be the madman Tom.
- Goneril and Edmund, who is now Duke of Gloucester, show that their affection is more than platonic.
- Albany courageously disagrees with Goneril over the treatment of Gloucester's punishment.
- Informed of Cornwall's death, Goneril begins to envy her sister's widowhood and what implications it may hold for her.
- Kent meets the French army at Dover. Cordelia is there, but the King of France went back home.
- British forces prepare to fight France, lead by Cordelia.
- Edgar allows his father to 'jump' from a cliff.
- Lear in madness and Gloucester in blindness meet; both men's misfortunes come at the hands of their children.
- Lear is taken to the French to be with Cordelia.

Act V Notes:

- Edmund pledges his love for Regan; he wonders which sister he'll keep.
- Edgar persuades Albany to read a letter before the battle is to take place with instructions on what to do after the battle.
- France loses; Cordelia and Lear are taken prisoner.
- Albany and Edmund argue and they challenge each other to a fight unless another may wish to fight Edmund in Albany's place.
- Edgar appears in armour to fight Edmund; Edgar wins.
- Goneril and Regan kill each other by poison and a knife.
- Cordelia is found dead by Edmund's treachery and is brought on stage by Lear.
- Edmund dies.
- Lear dies.
- Edgar and Albany rule at the end.