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King Lear

WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE



NEARLY TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, OLD KING LEAR RULED BRITAIN. HE HAD THREE DAUGHTERS: GONERIL, REGAN, AND CORDELIA.



LEAR HAD ALWAYS BEEN A MAN WHO ACTED WITHOUT THINKING THINGS THROUGH. BECAUSE OF THIS, HE WAS ABOUT TO MAKE ONE OF THE BIGGEST MISTAKES OF HIS LIFE.



ONE DAY IN THE PALACE, THE EARLS OF KENT AND OF GLOUCESTER WERE TALKING.

I THOUGHT THE KING LIKED GONERIL'S HUSBAND, THE DUKE OF ALBANY, BETTER THAN THE DUKE OF CORNWALL WHO'S MARRIED TO REGAN.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT SO.



BUT NOW THAT HE IS GOING TO DIVIDE HIS KINGDOM, HE'LL GIVE AN EQUAL SHARE TO EACH OF THEM.

I SEE!



IS NOT THIS YOUR SON?

YES, THOUGH I WAS ONCE ASHAMED TO ADMIT* IT.

* say that something is so

AT THE SOUND OF TRUMPETS, KING LEAR ENTERED WITH HIS COURT.



THE KING OF FRANCE AND THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY ARE OUTSIDE, GLOUCESTER. BRING THEM IN.

I WILL SIR.



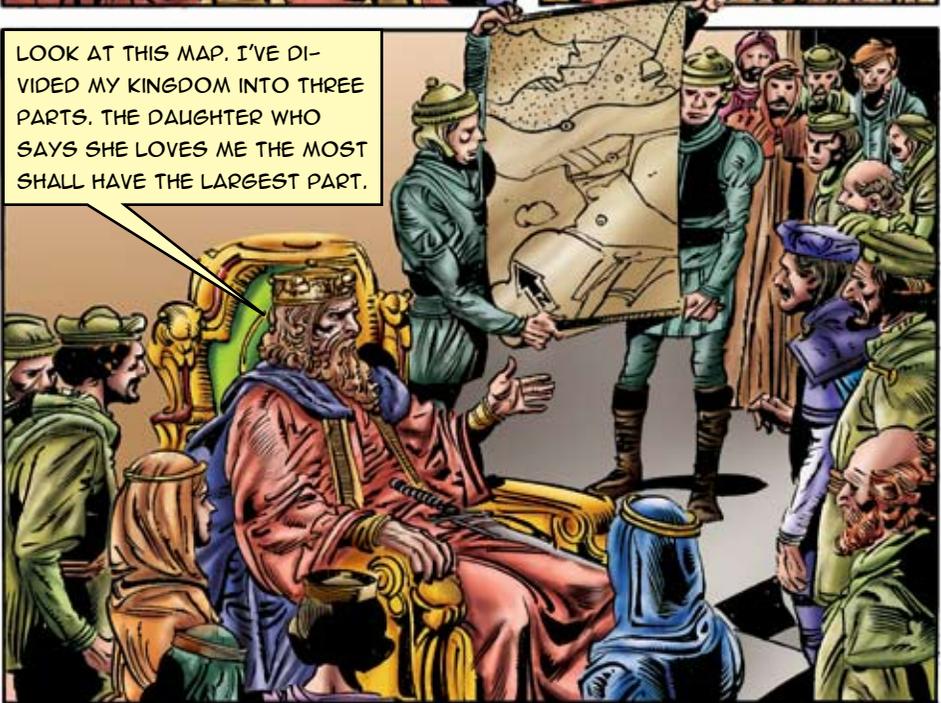
WITHOUT WAITING FOR HIS VISITORS, THE OLD KING MADE HIS ANNOUNCEMENT.*

I AM OLD AND TIRED OF THE TROUBLES OF RULING A KINGDOM.

I WANT TO GIVE UP MY THRONE AND LET MY DAUGHTERS RULE!



LOOK AT THIS MAP. I'VE DIVIDED MY KINGDOM INTO THREE PARTS. THE DAUGHTER WHO SAYS SHE LOVES ME THE MOST SHALL HAVE THE LARGEST PART.



* a statement made before a group of people



GONERIL, YOU ARE THE OLDEST. WHAT DO YOU SAY?

DEAR FATHER, I LOVE YOU MORE THAN WORDS CAN SAY!



MORE THAN MY EYES. . . MORE THAN MY HEALTH. . . MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF!



I LOVE YOU AS MUCH AS ANY CHILD EVER LOVED A FATHER!

BUT CORDELIA, THE KING'S YOUNGEST DAUGHTER, WAS UNHAPPY AT WHAT HER SISTERS SAID.

WHAT DO I DO? I LOVE MY FATHER MORE THAN THEY DO.



BUT I CAN'T SPEAK OF MY LOVE. I CAN'T LIE AND FLATTER* HIM, AS THEY DO.

IF MY FATHER DOESN'T KNOW THAT I LOVE HIM, THEN I CAN'T HELP IT!



* make someone think he is better than he really is



THEN, HE TURNED TO CORDELIA, HIS YOUNGEST AND FAVORITE* DAUGHTER.



* best loved

** sought after in marriage

YOU'RE MY FATHER. YOU'VE RAISED ME AND LOVED ME. I OBEY YOU, LOVE YOU, AND HONOR* YOU.



I DON'T SEE HOW MY SISTERS CAN SAY THEY LOVE ONLY YOU. WHAT ABOUT THEIR HUSBANDS?



WHEN I MARRY, I SHALL GIVE MY HUSBAND HALF MY LOVE AND CARE.



I CANNOT DO WHAT THEY SAY THEY DO.



* respect



* whatever a child receives at his parents' death

** have nothing more to do with