



James Barry's late-eighteenth-century engraving of Lear's confrontation with the bodies of his daughters (Act 5, Scene 3), from *Boydell's Shakespeare*.
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SOURCES

Primary Sources

ANONYMOUS

*From The True Chronicle History of King Leir and
his three daughters (1605)*[†]

[From Scene 1]

Enter King Leir and Nobles

LEIR Thus to our grieffe the obsequies performd
Of our (too late) decest and dearest Queen,

* * *

Let us request your grave advice, my Lords,
For the disposing of our princely daughters,
For whom our care is specially imployd,
As nature bindeth to advance their states,
In royall marriage with some princely mates:
For wanting now their mothers good advice,
Under whose government they have receyved
A perfit patterne of a virtuous life. * * *

[†] From *The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella. As it hath bene divers and sundry times lately acted* (London: Printed by Simon Stafford for John Wright, 1605). According to *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes (Cambridge University Press, 2002), a play called "King Lear" was performed by the combined Queens and Sussex's Men in 1594. Although no specific records about the composition or performance of *King Leir* exist, some scholars have conjectured that the 1594 play was, in fact, the play later printed in 1605 as *King Leir*, and that Shakespeare performed in it as a member of this joint company and was therefore familiar with or had access to its text long before it was finally printed. In any case, Shakespeare closely followed this play in writing his own, although he made several changes, including: omitting Gonorill and Ragan's employment of a murderer to kill Lear (whom Lear and his courtier Perillus frighten away); Lear and Perillus's subsequent escape to France, where they accidentally encounter Cordella and her husband and are there reconciled to them; and, most notably, the defeat by Lear, Cordella, and the King of France of the army led by Gonorill and Ragan, who are allowed to flee without punishment. This and the following sources and other early modern material have been presented in original spelling except in the following cases: *v* in primary position (as in "vntles") has been changed to *v*; *u* in medial position (as in "gouern") has been changed to *v*; *i* in primary position (as in "iustice") has been changed to *j*; and contractions used in manuscripts (as in "S^r" for "Sir", "yo^r" for "your") have been spelled out. A fuller account of some of these sources are presented in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, Vol. VII (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 269–420.

For fathers best do know to governe sonnes;
But daughters steps the mothers counsel turnes.

* * *

One fooote already hangeth in the grave,
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 upon the welfare of my soule:
Which by no better means may be effected,
Then by resigning up the Crowne from me,
In equal dowry to my daughters three.

* * *

PERILLUS Of us & ours, your gracious care, my Lord,
Deserves an everlasting memory,
To be inrol'd in Chronicles of fame,
By never-dying perpetuity:
Yet to become so provident a Prince,
Lose not the title of a loving father:
Do not force love, where fancy cannot dwell,
Lest streames being stoppt, above the banks do swell.

LEIR I am resolv'd, and even now my mind

Doth meditate a sudden stratagem,
To try which of my daughters loves me best:
Which till I know, I cannot be in rest.
This graunted, when they joyntly shall contend,
Eche¹ to exceed the other in their love:

Then at the vantage will I take *Cordella*,
Even as she doth protest she loves me best,
Ile say; Then, daughter, graunt me one request,
To shew thou lovest 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 Brittainy.

[From Scene 2]

* * *

RAGAN Now we have fit occasion offred us,
To be reveng'd upon her [i.e., *Cordella*] unperceyv'd.
GONORILL Nay, our revenge we will inflict on her,
Shall be accounted piety in us:
I will so flatter with my doying father,

1. Each.

As he was ne're so flattered in his life.
Nay, I will say, that if it be his pleasure,
To match me to a begger, I will yield:

80

For why, I know what ever I do say,He means to match me with the Cornwall King.

RAGAN 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 enjoy the noble Cambrian Prince:

90

Only, to feed his humour, will suffice
To say, I am content with any one
Whom heele appoint me: this will please him more,
Then e're *Apolloes* musike pleased Jove.

95

GONORILL I smile to think, in what a wofull plight
Cordella will be, when we answer thus:

For she will rather dye, then give consent
To joyne in marriage with the Irish King:
So will our father think, she loveth him not,
Because she will not graunt his desire,
Which we will aggravate in such bitter termes,
That he will soone convert his love to hate:
For he, you know, is always in extremes.

100

RAGAN Not all the world could lay a better plot,
I long till it be put in practice.

105

[From Scene 3]

* * *

Enter *Leir* and *Perillus* with the three daughters.

* * *

LEIR *** Deare *Gonorill*, kind *Ragan*, sweet *Cordella*,
Ye flourishing branches of a Kingly stocke,
Sprung from a tree that once did flourish greene,
Whose blossomes now are nipt with Winters frost,
And pale grym death doth wayt upon my steps,
And summons me vnto his next Assizes.²
Therefore, deare daughters, as ye tender the safety
Of him that was the cause of your first being,
Resolve a doubt which much molests my mind,
Which of you three to me would prove most kind:
Which loves me most, and which at my request
Will soonest yeeld unto their fathers best.
GONORILL I hope, my gracious father makes no doubt
Of any of his daughters love to him

25

30

35

2. Judgment, i.e., death.

Yet for my part, to shew my zeale to you,
 Which cannot be in windy words rehearst,
 I prize my love to you at such a rate,
 I thinke my life inferiour to my love.
 Should you injoyne me for to tye a milstone
 About my neck, and leape into the Sea,
 At your commaund I willingly would doe it:
 Yea, for to doe you good, I would ascend
 The highest Turret in all Britany,
 And from the top leape headlong to the ground:
 Nay, more, should you appoynt me for to marry
 The meanest vassayle in the spacious world,
 Without reply I would accomplish it:
 In briefe, commaund what ever you desire,
 And if I fayle, no favour I require.
 LEIR O, how thy words revive my dying soule!
 CORDELLA O, how I doe abhorre this flattery!
 LEIR But what sayth *Ragana* to her fathers will?
 RAGAN O, that my simple utterance could suffice,
 To tell the true intention of my heart,
 Which burnes in zeale of duty to your grace,
 And never can be quenched, but by desire
 To shew the same in outward forwardnesse.
 Oh, that there were some other mayd that durst
 But make a challenge of her love with me;
 Ide make her soone confesse she never loved
 Her father halfe so well as I doe you. 65
 I then, my deeds should prove in playner case,
 How much my zeale aboundeth to your grace:
 But for them all, let this one meane suffice,
 To ratify my love before your eyes:
 I have right noble Suters to my love,
 No worse then Kings, and happily I love one:
 Yet, would you have me make my choyce anew,
 Ide bridle fancy, and be rulde by you.
 LEIR Did never *Philomel*^s sing so sweet a note.
 CORDELLA Did neuer flatterer tell so false a tale.
 LEIR Speak now, *Cordella*, make my joyes at fall,
 And drop downe Nectar from thy honlely lips.
 CORDELLA I cannot paynt my duty forth in words,
 I hope my deeds shall make report for me:
 But looke what love the child doth owe the father,
 The same to you I beare, my gracious Lord. 80

3. I.e., the nightingale.

GONORILL Here is an answere answerlesse indeed:
 Were you my daughter, I should scarcely brooke it.
 RAGAN Dost thou not blush, proud Peacock as thou art,
 To make our father such a slight reply?
 LEIR Why how now, Minion, are you growne so proud?
 Dost our deare love make you thus peremptory?
 What, is your love become so small to us,
 As that you scorne to tell us what it is?
 Do you love us, as every child doth love
 Their father? True indeed, as some,
 Who by disobedience short their fathers dayes,
 And so would you; some are so father-sick,
 That they make meanes to rid them from the world;
 And so would you: some are indifferent,
 Whether their aged parents live or dye;
 And so are you. But, didst thou know, proud gyrl,
 What care I had to foster thee to this,
 Ah, then thou wouldst say as thy sisters do:
 Our life is lesse, then love we owe to you.
 CORDELLA Deare father, do not so mistake my words,
 Nor my playne meaning be misconstrued;
 My tounge[le] was never usde to flattery.
 GONORILL You were not best say I flatter: if you do,
 My deeds shall shew, I flatter not with you. 105
 I love my father better then thou canst.
 CORDELLA The prayse were great, spoke from anothers mouth
 But it should seeme your neighbours dwell far off.
 RAGAN 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.
 CORDELLA Deare father—
 LEIR Peace, bastard Imppe, no issue of King *Leir*,
 I will not heare thee speake one tittle more.
 Call not me father, if thou love 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 unto thy selfe:
 My Kingdome will I equally devide
 Twixt thy two sisters to their royall dowre,
 And will bestow them worthy their deserts:
 This done, because thou shalt not have the hope,
 To have a childs part in the time to come,
 I presently will dispossesse my selfe,
 And set up these upon my princely throne.
 GONORILL I ever thought that pride would have a fall. 125

RAGAN Plaine dealing, sister: your beauty is so sheene,⁴
You need no dowry, to make you be a Queene.

[From Scene 24]

[In France] Enter the Gallian King and Queene, and Mumford, with a basket, disguised like Countrey folke. [They stand aside, unobserved] * * * Enter, Leir & Perillus very faintly.

LEIR * * * Ah, Gonorrill, was halfe my Kingdomes gift
The cause that thou dist seeke to have my life?

Ah, cruell Ragan, did I give thee all,

And all could not suffice without my bloud?

Ah, poore Cordella, did I give thee nought,

Nor never shall be able for to give?

O, let me warne all ages that insueth,

How they trust flattery, and reject the truch.

Well, unkind Girles, I here forgive you both,

Yet the just heavens will hardly do the like:

And only crave forgiveness at the end

Of good Cordella, and of thee, my friend;

Of God, whose Maiesty I have offended,

By my transgression many thousand wayes:

Of her, deare heart, whom I for no occasion

Turn'd out of all, through flatterers persionation:

Of thee, kind friend, who but for me, I know,

Hadst never come unto this place of wo.

CORDELLA Alack, that ever I should live to see

My noble father in this misery.

KING Sweet Love, reveale not what thou art as yet,

Until we know the ground of all this ill.

* * *

CORDELLA * * * My selfe a father have a great way hence,
Usde me as ill as ever you did her:

Yet, that his reverend age I once might see,

Ide creepe along, to meet him on my knee.

LEIR O, no mens children are unkind but mine.

CORDELLA Condemne not all, because of others crime:

But looke, deare father, looke behold and see

Thy loving daughter speaketh unto thee. *she kneels.*

LEIR O, stand thou up, it is my part to kneele,

And aske forgiveness for my former faults. *he kneeles.*

CORDELLA O, if you wish I should enjoy my breath,

Deare father rise, or I receive my death. *he riseth.*

4. Sparkling.

LEIR Then I will rise to satisfy your mind,

But kneele againe, til pardon be resign'd. *he kneeles.*

CORDELLA I pardon you: the word besemes not me:

But I do say so, for to ease your knee.

You gave me life, you were the cause that I

Am what I am, who else had never bin.

LEIR But you gave life to me and to my friend,

Whose dayes had else had an untimely end.

CORDELLA You brought me up, when as I was but young,

And far unable for to helpe my selfe.

LEIR I cast thee forth, when as thou wast but young,

And far unable for to helpe thy selfe.

CORDELLA God, world and nature say I do you wrong,

That can indure to see you kneele so long.

PERILLUS Let me breake off this loving controversy,

Which doth rejoyce my very soule to see.

Good father, rise, she is your loving daughter, *He riseth.*

And honours you with as respective duty,

As if you were the Monarch of the world.

CORDELLA But I will never rise from off my knee. *She kneeles.*

Until I have your blessing, and your pardon

Of all my faults committed any way.

From my first birth unto this present day.

LEIR The blessing, which the God of Abraham gave

Unto the trybe of *Juda*, light on thee,

And multiply thy dayes, that thou mayst see

Thy childrens children prosper after thee.

Thy faults, which are just none that I do know,

God pardon on high, and I forgive below. *She riseth.*

[Scene 32]

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 heavens, 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, have you rais'd, at your owne charge, a power

Of valiant Souldiers; (this comes all from you)

Next have you ventured your owne persons scathe,⁵
 And lastly, (worthy *Gallia* neuer staynd)
 My kingly title I by thee have gaynd.

KING: Thank heavens, not me, my zeale to you is such,

Commaund my utmost, I will never grutch.⁶

CORDELLA: He that with all kind love intrcats his Queene,
 Will not be to her father unkind scene.

LEIR: Ah, my *Cordella*, now I call to mind,

The modest answere, which I tooke unkind:

But now I see, I am no whit beguild,

Thou lovedst 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 love 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 save their lives, the fugitives did play.

Come, sonne and daughter, who did me advaunce,

Repose with me awhile, and then for Fraunce.

Sound Drummes and Trumpet. Exeunt.

FINIS

JOHN HIGGINS

From The Mirror for Magistrates (1574)[†]

*Cordilia shewes how by despair when she was in prison she
 slue herselfe. the yeare before Christe, 800.*

[Leire] had three daughters, first and eldest hight *Conerell*:

Next after hir, my sister *Ragan* was begote:

The thirde and last was, I the yongest named *Cordell*,

45

5. Hurt.

6. Complain.

[†] From *The First Part of the Mirror for Magistrates* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1574). Subsequent editions of this poem, including that of 1587, contain revisions, but, as both the 1574 and 1587 editions show particular correspondences to lines in Shakespeare's play (and to his main source, *The Chronicle History of King Leir*), it is unclear if he used only one or both editions.

And of us all, our father *Leire* in age did dote.
 So minding her that lov'd him best to note,
 Because he had no sonne t'enjoye² his lande:
 He thought to give, where favoure most he fand.³

What though I yongest were, yet men me iudge more wise 50

Then either *Gonorell*, or *Ragan* had more age,

And fayer farre: wherefore my sisters did despise

My grace, and giftes, and sought my praise t'wage⁴

But yet though vice gainst vertue die with rage,

It cannot keepe her underneath to drowne,

But still she flitres above, and reapes renowe. 55

Yet nathelesse, my father did me not mislike:

But age so simple is, and easye to subdue:

As childhode weake, thats voide of wit and reason quite:

They thincke thers nought you flater fainde, but all is true: 60

Once olde and twice a childe, tis said with you,

Which I affirme by prooffe, that was definde:

In age my father had a childishe minde.

He thought to wed us unto nobles three, or Peres:⁵

And unto them and theirs, devide and part the lande: 65

For both my sisters first he sent as first their yeares

Require their mindes, and love, and favour t'understand.

(Quod he) all doubtes of duty to aband.⁶

I must assaye and eke⁷ your frendships prove:

Now tell me eche how much you do me love. 70

Which when they answered, they lovde him wel and more

Then they themselves did love, or any worldly wight:⁸

He praised them and said he would againe therefore,

The loving kindnes they deserve in fine requite:⁹

So found my sisters favour in his sight,

By flately fayre they won their fathers hart:

Which after turned him and mee to smart. 75

2. To enjoy.

3. Put to the test.

4. To assuage.

5. Peers of the realm.

6. Abandon; *Quod*: said.

7. Also; *assaye*: test.

8. Person.

9. Regretful.

1. Hurt.

But not content with this he minded me to prove,
For why he wouled was to love me wonders well.

How much dost thou (quoth he) *Cordille* thy father love?
I will (said I) at once my love declare and tell:

I love'd you ever as my father well,

No otherwise, if more to know you crave:

We love you chiefly for the goodes you have.

Thus much I said, the more their flattery to detect,

But he me answered therunto again with Ire,

Because thou dost thy fathers aged yeares neglect,

That lovde the more of late then thy desertes require,

Thou never shalt, to any part aspire

Of this my realme, emong thy sisters twayne,²

But ever shalt undoted ay³ remayne.

* * *

[*Leire* marries *Gonerrell* to the King of Albany and Ragan to the Prince of Camber and Cornwall. Ostracized and dowless, *Cordilla* makes a happy marriage with the King of France]

But while that I these joyes enjoyd, at home in *France*
My father *Leire* in *Britayne* waxed aged olde,

My sisters yet them selves the more aloft t'advance,

Thought well they might, be by his leave, or sans so bolde,

To take the realme & rule it as they wold.

They rose as rebels voyde of reason quite,

And they deprive him of his crowne and right.

Then they agreed, it should be into partes equall

Devided: and my father threscore knights & squires

Should always have, attending on him still at cal.

But in six monthes so much encreasid hateful Ires,

That *Gonerrell* denyde all his desires,

So halfe his garde she and her husband refte:⁴

And scarce allowde the other halfe they lefte.

Elke⁵ as in *Scotlande* thus he lay lamenting fates,

When as his daughter so, sought all his utter spoyle:

The meaner upstarte gentiles,⁶ thought themselves his mates

And better eke, see here an aged prince his foyle.

Then was he faine for succoure his, to toyle,

With all his knightes, to *Cornwall* there to lye:

In greatest nede, his *Raganes* love to trye.

And when he came to *Cornwall*, *Ragan* then with ioye,

Received him and eke hir husbande did the lyke:

There he abode a yeare and livde without any,⁷

But then they tooke, all his renue from him quite

Save only ten, and shewde him dayly spite,

Which he bewailde complayning durst not strive,

Though in disdayne they laste allowde but fyve.

On this he deende him selfe was far that tyme ymwyse,

When from his daughter *Gonerrell* to *Ragan* bee

Departed erst⁸ yet eache did him poore king despise,

Wherfore to *Scotlande* once againe with hir to bee

And bidde⁹ he went: but beastly cruell shee,

Bereavde him of his servauntes all save one,

Bad¹⁰ him content him self with that or none.

Elke at what time he aske of eache to have his garde,

To garde his grace where so he walkte or wente:

They calde him doing foole and all his hestes² debarde,

Demaunded if with life he could not be contente.

Then he to late his rigour did repente,

Gainst me and sayde, *Cordilla* now adieu:

I finde the wordes thou toldste me to to true.

And to be short, to *France* he came alone to mee,

And tolde me how my sisters him our father usde

Then I besought my king with teares upon my knee,

That he would aide my father thus by them misusde

Who nought at all my humble heste³ refusde:

But sent to every coste of *France* for ayde,

Wherwith my father home might be conveyde.

* * *

This had: I partid with my father from my fere,⁴

We came to *Britayne* with our royall campe to fight:

7. Annoyance.

8. Right away.

9. Abide.

1. Bide.

2. Requests.

3. Request.

4. Husband.

2. Two; *among*; among.

3. Always; *undoted*; unloved.

4. Took away.

5. Also.

6. Gentlemen.

And manly fought so long our enemies vanquish were
 By martiall feates, and force by subjectes sword and might.
 The Britische kinges were fayne^s to yelde our right,
 And so my father well this realme did guide,
 Three yeares in peace and after that he dide.^s

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RAPHAEL HOLINSHED

From Chronicles (1586)[†]

From The Fifth Chapter

Leir the sonne of Balud was admitted ruler over the Brittaines, in the yeare of the world 3105, at what time Joas reigned in Juda. This Leir was a prince of right noble demeanor, governing his land and subjects in great wealth. He made the towne of Caerhir now called Leicester, which standeth upon the river of Sore. It is written that he had by his wife three daughters without other issue, whose names were Gonorilla, Regan, and Cordellia, which daughters he greatly loved, but specially Cordellia the youngest farre above the two elder. When this Leir therefore was come to great yeres, & began to waxe unweldie through age, he thought to understand the affections of his daughters towards him, and preferre hir whome he best loved, to the succession over the kingdom. Wherupon he first asked Gonorilla the eldest, how well she loved him: who calling hir gods to record, professed that she loved him more than hir owne life, which by right and reason should be most deere unto hir. With which answer the father being well pleased, turned to the second, and demanded of hir how well she loved him: who answered (confirming hir saienss with great othes) that she loved him more than toong could expresse, and farre above all other creatures of the world!

Then called he his youngest daughter Cordellia before him, and asked of hir what account she made of him, unto whome she made this answer as followeth: 'Knowing the great love and fatherlie zeale

that you have alwaies borne towards me (for the which I maie not answer you otherwise than I thinke, and as my conscience leadeh me) I protest unto you, that I have loved you ever, and will continuallye (while I live) love you as my naturall father. And if you would more understand of the love that I beare you, ascertainne your selfe, that so much as you have, so much you are worth, and so much I love you, and no more'. The father being nothing content with this answer, married his two eldest daughters, the one unto Henninus the duke of Cornewall, and the other unto Maglanus the duke of Albania, betwixt whome he willed and ordeined that his land should be divided after his death, and the one halfe thereof immediate should be assigned to them in hand: but for the third daughter Cordellia he reserved nothing.

Nevertheless it fortuneth that one of the princess of Gallia (which now is called France) whose name was Aganippus, hearing of the beautie, womanhood, and good conditions of the said Cordellia, desired to have hir in marriage, and sent over to hir father requiring that he might have hir to wife: to whome answer was made, that he might have his daughter, but as for anie dower he could have none, for all was promised and assured to hir other sisters alreadye. Aganippus notwithstanding this answer of deniall to receive anie thing by way of dower with Cordellia, tooke hir to wife, onlie moved thereto (I saie) for respect of hir person and amiable vertues. This Aganippus was one of the twelve kings that ruled Gallia in those dates, as in the British historie it is recorded. But to proceed.

After that Leir was fallen into age, the two dukes that had married his two eldest daughters, thinking it long yer the government of the land did come to their hands, arose against him in armour, and wrest from him the governance of the land, upon conditions to be continued for terme of life: by the which he was put to his portion, that is, to live after a rate assigned to him for the maintenance of his estate, which in processe of time was diminished as well by Maglanus as by Henninus. But the greatest grieve that Leir tooke, was to see the unkindnesse of his daughters, which seemed to thinke that all was too much which their father had, the same being never so little: in so much that going from the one to the other, he was brought to that miserie, that scarslie they would allow him one servant to wait upon him.

In the end, such was the unkindnesse, or (as I maie saie) the un-naturahesse which he found in his two daughters, notwithstanding their faire and pleasant words uttered in time past, that being constrained of necessitie, he fled the land, & sailed into Gallia, there to seeke some comfort of his youngest daughter Cordellia, whom before time he hated. The ladie Cordellia hearing that he was arrived in poore estate, she first sent to him privilie a certeine summe of

5. Glad.

6. Cordia concludes her story by describing her five-year reign after Leir's death, her overthrow by her nephews, and her suicide by stabbing in prison.

[†] From *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (London, 1586), vol. 1, book 2, pp. 12–13 (signature B1r). Shakespeare made frequent use of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, the first volume of which was published in 1577, in writing his English history plays and tragedies. Although the *Chronicles* were expanded between 1577 and 1586, Holinshed's history of Leir, which closely follows Geoffrey's history, remained largely unchanged in the later text (the second edition is presented here).

monie to apparell himselfe withall, and to reteine a certeine number of seruants that might attend upon him in honorable wise, as appertained to the estate which he had borne: and then so accompanied, she appointed him to come to the court, which he did, and was so ioyfullie, honorable, and loynglie received, both by his sonne in law Aganippus, and also by his daughter Cordella, that his hart was greaitle comforted: for he was no lesse honored, than if he had bene king of the whole countrie himselfe.

Now when he had informed his sonne in law and his daughter in what sort he had bene used by his other daughters, Aganippus caused a mightie armie to be put in a readnesse, and likewise a great navie of ships to be rigged, to passe over into Britaine with Leir his father in law, to see him againe restored to his kingdome. It was accorded, that Cordella should also go with him to take possession of the land, the which he promised to leave unto hir, as the rightfull inheritor after his decease, notwithstanding any former grant made to hir sisters or to their husbands in ante manner of wise.

Hereupon, when this armie and navie of ships were readie, Leir and his daughter Cordella with hir husband tooke the sea, and arriving in Britaine, fought with their enemies, and discomfited them in battel, in the which Maglanus and Heminus were slaine: and then was Leir restored to his kingdome, which he ruled after this by the space of two yeeres, and then died, fortie yeeres after he first began to reigne. His bodie was buried at Leicester in a vau[[l]t vnder the channell of the river of Sore beneath the towne.

The sixt Chapter

* * * Cordella the yongest daughter of Leir was admitted [Queen] and supreme governess of Britaine, in the yeere of the world 3155, before the bylding of Rome 54, Uzia then reigning in Judea, and Jeroboam ouer Israell.

EDMUND SPENSER

From The Faerie Queene (1590)[†]

27

Next him king *Leyr* in happie peace long raind,¹
 But had no issue male him to succeed,
 But three faire daughters, which were well upraind,²
 In all that seemed fit for kingly seed:
 Mongst whom his realme he equally decreed
 To have diuided: Tho when feeble age
 Night to his utmost date he saw proceed,
 He cald his daughters; and with speeches sage
 Inquyrd, which of them most did love her parentage.

28

The eldest *Gonorill* gan³ to protest,
 That she much more then her owne life him lov'd:
 And *Regan* greater love to him profest,
 Then all the world, when ever it were proov'd;
 But *Cordell* said she lov'd him, as behoov'd:
 Whose simple answer, wanting colours faire
 To paint it forth, him to displeasance moov'd,
 That in his crowne he counted her no haire,
 But twixt the other twaine⁴ his kingdome whole did shaire.

29

So wedded th' one to *Maglan* king of Scots,
 And th' other to the king of *Cambria*,
 And twixt them shayrd his realme by equall lots:
 But without dowre⁵ the wise *Cordelia*
 Was sent to *Aganip* of *Celtica*.
 Their aged Syre, thus eased of his crowne,
 A private life led in *Albania*,
 With *Gonorill*, long had in great renoune,
 That nought him griev'd to bene from rule deposed downe.

[†] From *The Faerie Queene* (London: William Ponsonbie, 1590), book II, canto X, stanzas 27–33, pp. 332–34. According to Spenser's version, Cordell hangs herself after her imprisonment by her nephews, probably inspiring Shakespeare to portray her as being executed by hangings; in previous versions she stabs or 'slays' herself.

1. Reigned.

2. Brought up.

3. Began.

4. Two.

5. Dowry.

30

But true it is, that when the oyle⁶ is spent,
The light goes out, and weeke is throwne away;
So when he had resign'd his regiment,
His daughter gan despise his drouping day,
And wearie waxe⁷ of his continuall stay,
Tho to his daughter *Regan* he repayrd,
Who him at first well vsed every way;
But when of his departure she despayrd,
Her bountie she abated, and his cheare empayrd.⁸

31

The wretched man gan then avise⁹ too late,
That love is not, where most it is protest,
Too truly tryde in his extremest state;
At last resolv'd likewise to prove the rest,
He to *Cordelia* him selfe address,
Who with entire affection him receav'd,
As for her Syre and king her seemed best;
And after all an army strong she leav'd,
To war on those, which him had of his realme bereav'd.

32

So to his crowne she him restor'd againe,
In which he dyde, made ripe for death by eld,¹
And after wild, it should to her remaine:
Who peaceably the same long time did weld:²
And all mens harts in dew obedience held:
Till that her sisters children, woxen³ strong
Through proud ambition, against her rebeld,
And overcome kept in prison long,
Till wearie of that wretched life, her selfe she hong⁴.

33

Then gan the blouddie brethren both to raine:
But fierce *Cunliah* gan shortly to envie
His brother *Morgan*, prickt with proud disdaine,

6. Oil.
7. Grew.
8. Impaired.
9. Learn.
1. Old age.
2. Wield.
3. Grew.
4. Hunged.

To have a pere in part of soverainite,
And kindling coles of cruell enmitie,
Raisd warre, and him in battell overthrew:
Whence as he to those woodie hills did flie,
Which hight of him *Glamorgan*, there him slew:
Then did he raigne alone, when he none equall knew.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

From The Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia (1590)†

[The two princes Pyrocles and Musidorus encounter] an aged man, and a young, scarcely come to the age of a man, both poorly arrayed, extremely weather-beaten; the olde man blinde, the young man leading him: and yet through all those miseries, in both these seemed to appeare a kind of noblenesse, not suitable to that affliction. But the first words they heard, were these of the old man. Well *Leonatus* (said he) since I cannot perswade thee to lead me to that which should end my grieffe, & thy trouble, let me now entreat thee to leave me: feare not, my miserie cannot be greater then it is, & nothing doth become me but miserie: feare not the danger of my blind steps, I cannot fall worse then I am. . . . Deare father (answered he) doo not take away from me the onely remnant of my happiness: while I have power to doo your service, I am not wholly miserable. . . . These dolefull speeches, and some others to like purpose (well shewing they had not bene borne to the fortune they were in,) moved the Princes to goe out unto them, and aske the younger what they were? . . .

[Leonatus replied] This old man (whom I leade) was lately rightfull Prince of this countrie of *Paphlagonia*, by the hard-harted ungratfulness of a somme of his, deprived, not onely of his kingdom (whereof no forraine¹ forces were ever able to spoyle him) but of his sight, the riches which Nature graunts to the poorest creatures. Whereby, and by other his unnaturall dealings, he hath bin driven to such grieffe, as even now he would have had me to have led him to the toppes of this rocke, thence to cast himselfe headlong to death: and so would haue made me (who received my life of him) to be the worker of his destruction. But noble Gentlemen (said he) if either of you have a father, and feele what duetifull affection is engraffed² in a sonnes hart, let me intreate you to convey this af-

† From *The Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia* (London: William Ponsonbie, 1590), book 2, chap. 10, pp. 143–44, 146–47.

1. Foreign.
2. I.e., engraved.

flicted Prince to some place of rest and securitie. Amongst your worthe actes it shall be none of the least, that a King, of such might and fame, and so unjustly oppressed, is in any sort by you relieved.

But before they could make him answere, his father began to speake, 'Ah my sonne (said he) how evill an Historian are you, that leave out the chiefe knotte of all the discourse, my wickednes, my wickednes. And if thou doest it to spare my ears, (the onely sense nowe left me proper for knowledge) assure thy selfe thou dost mistake me. And I take witnessse of that Sunne which you see (with that he cast up his blinde eyes, as if he would hunt for light,) and wish my selfe in worse case then I do wish my selfe, which is as evill as may be, if I speake untruely; that nothing is so welcome to my thoughts, as the publishing of my shame. Therefore know you Gentlemen (to whom from my harte I wish that it may not prove ominous foretolden of misfortune to haue mettre with such a miser as I am) that whatsoever my sonne (ô God, that truth binds me to reproch him with the name of my sonne) hath said, is true. But besides those trutthes, this also is true, that having had in lawful marriage, of a mother fitte to beare royall children, this sonne (such one as partly you see, and better shall knowe by my shorte declaration) and so enjoyed the expectations in the world of him, till he was grown to justifie their expectations (so as I needed envie no father for the chiefe comfort of mortallite, to leave an other onselfe after me) I was caried by a bastarde sonne of mine (if at least I be bounde to beleve the words of that base woman my concubine, his mother) first to mislike, then to hate, lastly to destroy, to doo my best to destroy, this sonne (I thinke you thinke) undeserving destruction. What waies he used to bring me to it, if I should tell you, I should tediously trouble you with as much poysonous hypocortisie, desperate fraude, smoothe malice, hidden ambition, and smiling envie as in any living person could be harbored'.

* * * The blind King (having in the chief citie of his Realme, set the crowne upon his sonne *Leonatus* head) with many teares (both of joy and sorrow) setting forth to the whole people, his owne fault and his sonnes vertue, after he had kist him, and forst his sonne to accept honour of him (as of his newe-become subject) even in a moment died, as it should seeme: his hart broken with unkindnes and affliction, stretched so farre beyond his limits with this excesse of comfort, as it was able no longer to keep safe his roial spirits. But the new King (having no lesse lovingly performed all duties to him dead, then alive) pursued on the siege of his unnatural brother, as much for the revenge of his father, as for the establishing of his owne quiet. In which siege truly I cannot but acknowledge the prowessse of those two brothers, then whom the Princes never

found in all their travell two men of greater habilitie to performe, nor of habler³ skill for conduct.

But *Plexirtus* finding, that if nothing els, famin would at last bring him to destruction, thought better by humblenes to creepe, where by pride he could not march. * * * That though no man had lesse goddnes in his soule then he, no man could better find the places whence arguments might grow of goodness to another: though no man felt lesse pitie, no man could tel better how to stir pitie: no man more impudent to deny, where proofes were not manifest; no man more ready to confesse with a repenting manner of aggravating his owne evil, where denial would but make the fault fouler. Now he tooke this way, that having gotten a pasport for one (that pretended he would put *Plexirtus* alive into his hands) to speak with the King his brother, he him selfe (though much against the minds of the valiant brothers, who rather wished to die in brave defence) with a rope about his necke, barefooted, came to offer himselfe to the discretion of *Leonatus*. Where what submission he used, how cunningly in making greater the faulte he made the faultnesse the lesse, how artificially he could set out the torments of his owne conscience, with the burdensome comber⁴ he had found of his ambitious desires, how finely seeming to desire nothing but death, as ashamed to live, he begged life in the refusing it, I am not cunning enough to be able to expresse; but so fell out of it, that though at first sight *Leonatus* saw him with no other eie, then as the murderer of his father; and anger already began to paint revenge in many colours, ere long he had not only gotten pitie, but pardon, and if not an excuse of the fault past, yet an opinion of a future amendment: while the poore villaines (chiefe ministers of his wickednes, now betrayed by the author thereof,) were delivered to many cruell sorts of death; he so handling it, that it rather seemed, he had rather come into the defence of an unremediablenischiefe already committed, then that they had done it at first by his consent.

In such sorts the Princes left these reconciled brothers.

3. Abler.

4. Trouble.

JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND
(LATER JAMES I OF BRITAIN)

From The True Law of Free Monarchies (1598)[†]

By the law of Nature the King becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges¹ at his Coronation. And as the Father of his fatherly duty is bounde to care for the nourishing, education, and vertuous government of his children: even so is the King bounde to care for all his subjects. * * * As the kindly father ought to foresee all inconveniencs & dangers that may aryse towards his children, and though with the hazard of his owne person presse to prevente the same: So ought the King towards his people. As the Fathers wrath and correction uppone any of his children, that offendeth, ought to be a fatherly chastizement seasoned with pittie, as long as there is any hope of amendment in them: So ought the King towards any of his lieges that offendes in that measure.

* * * Consider I pray you, what duty his children owe to him, and whether, upon any pretext whatsoever, it will not be thought monstrous and unnaturall to his sonnes to rise up against him, to controll him at their appetite, and when they thinke good to slay him, or to cut him off, and adopt to themselves any other [way] they please in his room. Or can any pretence of wickednes or rigour on his parte be a just excuse for his children to put hand into him? And although we see by the course of nature that love ever useth to descend more then to ascendi: in case it were true, that the father hated and wronged the children never so much, will any man endured with the leaste sponke² of reason think it lawful for them to meete him with the like?

JAMES I

From Basilikon Doron (1603)[†]

If God send you succession [i.e., children], be carefull for their vertuous education: love them as ye ought, but let them knowe as much of it, as the gentleness of their nature will deserve; containing them ever in a reverent love and feare of you. And in case it please God to provide you to all these three kingdomes, make your eldest sonne Issac,¹ leaving him all your kingdomes; and provide the rest with private possessions. Otherwaies by deviding your kingdomes, ye shall leave the seede of division & discorde among your posterite: as befell to this Ile, by the division & assignement thereof, to the three sonnes of Brutus, Loqrine, Albanact, and Camber.

* * * Embrace true Magnanimitie, not in being vindictive, which the corrupted judgements of the worlde thinkes to be true Magnanimitie; but by the contrary, in thinking your offender not worthe of your wrath, emptying² over your owne passion, and triumphing in the commanding of your selfe to forgive. * * * Where ye finde a notable injury, spare not to give course to the torrents of your wrath. *The wrath of a King, is like the roaring of a Lyon.*

* * * 'Tis a true old saying, That a King is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the people gazing lie doe beholde.

[†] From *The True Law of Free Monarchies: or the Reciprokal[all] dutie betwixt a free King and his naturall subjects* (Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, 1598), signatures B4^v, B5^v, D4^v. This treatise, first published in 1598 when James was king of Scotland, was reprinted in 1603 to celebrate his accession to the English throne; it was widely read and analyzed by those anxious about James's political strategy as king of England.

1. Subjects.

2. Amount; *enahed*: endowed.

[†] From *Basilikon Doron [The King's Gift]: or His Majesties Instructions to his dearest sonne, Henry the Prince* (Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, 1603), books 2-3, signatures H1^v, H2, H8^v, 14^v.

1. Son of the biblical figure Abraham and sole inheritor of his property (to the disadvantage of Ishmael, Abraham's illegitimate son).

2. Reigning.

SAMUEL HARSNETT

*From A Declaration of
Egregious Popish Impostures (1603)*†

Chapter 10

THE STRANGE NAMES OF THEIR DEVILS

[There were] 5. Captaines, or Commaunders above the rest: Captaine *Pippin*, *Marrwoods* devil, Captaine *Philpot*, *Trayfords* devil, Captaine *Maho*, *Saras* devil, Captaine *Modu*, *Marynes* devil, and Captaine *Soforce*, Anne Smiths devil. * * *

Captaine *Philpot*, *Trayfords* devil was a Centurion, (as himselfe tells you) and had an hundred under his charge. Mary he was (as seemes) but a white-livered devil, for he was so hastie to be gone out of *Trayford*, for feare of the Exorcist, that hee would scarce give him leave, beeing a bed, to put on his breeches. The names of their punie spirits cast out of *Trayford* were these, *Hilco*, *Smolkein*, *Hillio*, *Hiachito*, and *Lastie haffe-cap*. * * *

Praretto, *Fiberdigibet*, *Hoheridance*, *Tacobatto* were foure devils of the round, or Morrice, whom *Sara* in her fits, tuned together, in measure and sweet cadence. And least you should conceive, that the devils had no musicke in hell, especially that they would goe a maying without theyr musicke, the Fidler comes in with his Taber, & Pipe, and a whole Morice after him, with motly visards for theyr better grace. These foure had forty assistants under them, as themselves doe confesse.

WILLIAM CAMDEN

*From Remaines of a Greater Worke,
Concerning Britaine (1606)*‡

Ira King of West-Saxons, had three daughters, of whom upon a time he demanded whether they did love him, and so would do during their lives, above all others; the two elder sware deeply they

would; the yongest, but the wisest, told her father without flattery: *That she did love, honour, and reverence him, and so would whilst she lived, as much as nature and daughterly duty at the uttermost could expect. Yet she did thinke that one day it would come to passe, that she should affect another more fervently, meaning her husband, when she were married. Who being made one flesh with her, as God by commendement had told, and nature had taught hir, she was to cleave fast to, forsaking father and mother, kiffe and kinne.* (Anonymous) One referreth this to the daughters of King Leir.

† From *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (London: James Roberts, 1603), chap. 10, p. 49.

‡ From *Remaines of a Greater Worke, Concerning Britaine* (London: Printed by G. E. for Simon Waterson, 1605), pp. 182–83.