

**KING LEAR Audition Side #1 – Lear, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, Burgundy, France**

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  
Unburden'd 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 answer'd. 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 nature doth with merit challenge.—Goneril,  
Our eldest born, speak first.

GONERIL.

Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter;  
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;  
Beyond what can be valu'd, rich or rare;  
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;  
As much as child e'er lov'd, 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 speak? Love, and be silent.

LEAR.

What says our second daughter,  
Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall? Speak.

REGAN.

Sir, I am made of the self mettle 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  
In your dear highness' love.

CORDELIA.

[Aside.] Then poor Cordelia,  
And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's  
More ponderous than my tongue.

LEAR.

Now, our joy,  
Although the last and least; to whose young love  
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy  
Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to draw  
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

CORDELIA.

Nothing, my lord.

LEAR.

Nothing?

CORDELIA.

Nothing.

LEAR.

Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

CORDELIA.

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave  
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty  
According to my bond; no more nor less.

LEAR.

How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a little,  
Lest you may mar your fortunes.

CORDELIA.

Good my lord,  
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I  
Return those duties back as are right fit,  
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.  
Why have my sisters husbands if they say  
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,  
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry  
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:  
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,  
To love my father all.

LEAR.

But goes thy heart with this?

CORDELIA.

Ay, my good lord.

LEAR.

So young, and so untender?

CORDELIA.

So young, my lord, and true.

LEAR.

Let it be so, thy truth then be thy dower:  
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,  
The mysteries of Hecate and the night;  
By all the operation of the orbs,  
From whom we do exist and cease to be;  
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
Propinquity and property of blood,  
And as a stranger to my heart and me  
Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,  
Or he that makes his generation messes  
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom

Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,  
As thou my sometime daughter.

CORDELIA.

Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

LEAR.

My Lord of Burgundy,  
We first address toward you, who with this king  
Hath rivall'd for our daughter: what in the least  
Will you require in present dower with her,  
Or cease your quest of love?

BURGUNDY.

Most royal majesty,  
I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,  
Nor will you tender less.

LEAR.

Right noble Burgundy,  
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;  
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands:  
If aught within that little-seeming substance,  
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,  
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,  
She's there, and she is yours.

BURGUNDY.

I know no answer.

FRANCE.

My lord of Burgundy,  
What say you to the lady? Love's not love  
When it is mingled with regards that stands  
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?  
She is herself a dowry.

BURGUNDY.

Royal King,  
Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,

And here I take Cordelia by the hand,  
Duchess of Burgundy.

LEAR.

Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

BURGUNDY.

I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father  
That you must lose a husband.

CORDELIA.

Peace be with Burgundy!  
Since that respects of fortunes are his love,  
I shall not be his wife.

FRANCE.

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;  
Most choice forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!  
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:  
Be it lawful, I take up what's cast away.  
Gods, gods! 'Tis strange that from their cold'st neglect  
My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.  
Thy dowerless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,  
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.

LEAR.

Thou hast her, France: let her be thine; for we  
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see  
That face of hers again. Therefore be gone  
Without our grace, our love, our benison.