

King Lear abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 4

Father to Daughter

Situation: The sisters Goneril and Regan team up to tell their father first, that he needs few, if any, followers, and second, that they need to end the discussion. The daughters infuriate the king by telling him how many followers he may have in their homes.

REGAN: Why not, my lord? If then they chanced to slack you, we could control them. If you will come to me, I entreat you to bring but five-and-twenty.

LEAR: What, must I come to you with five-and-twenty? Regan, said you so?

REGAN: And speak 't again, my lord.

LEAR TO GONERIL: I'll go with thee. Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty, and thou art twice her love.

GONERIL: Hear me, my lord. What need you five-and-twenty, ten or five.

REGAN: What need one?

Lear to Regan and Goneril, No. 2

Don't reason with me about need. Even
The basest beggars own something more than
They need. If man has no more than nature
Needs, his life's as cheap as a beast's. There's no
Need for what you wear, if being warm were
The need for your gorgeous clothes, which you know
Scarcely keeps thee warm. You see me, you gods,
An old man, full of grief as age, at odds
With these two daughters. If it be you who
Stirs these daughters' hearts against their father,
Fool me not; teach me that this I come to
Tamely bear. Touch me noble anger.
I'll go mad before I'll weep. A fool seeks
Women's weapons; not to stain my man's cheeks!