

King Lear Characters

Writer: William Shakespeare | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Major Characters:

- **King Lear:** The aging king of Britain. His tragic flaws lead to his downfall. He misjudges his daughters, dividing his kingdom based on flattery.
- **Cordelia:** Lear's youngest and most loyal daughter. Disowned by Lear for refusing to flatter him, she remains devoted to him until the end.
- **Goneril:** Lear's eldest daughter. She is power-hungry and ruthless. She flatters Lear to gain his favor and then betrays him.
- **Regan:** Lear's middle daughter. Like Goneril, she flatters Lear for power and later turns against him. She stands for cruelty, especially in the blinding of Gloucester.
- **Edmund:** The illegitimate son of Gloucester. He is a manipulative schemer who seeks to overthrow his legitimate brother, Edgar, and gain power.
- **Edgar:** Gloucester's legitimate son. He is initially naive but becomes resourceful. He disguises himself as a beggar (Poor Tom) to survive Edmund's schemes.
- **Earl of Gloucester:** A nobleman loyal to Lear. He is betrayed by his illegitimate son, Edmund. He undergoes a parallel tragic arc, including being blinded.
- **Earl of Kent:** A loyal nobleman. Being banished by Lear for defending Cordelia, he disguises himself as a servant (Caius) to continue serving the king.
- **The Fool:** Lear's jester, who speaks the truth in riddles and remains by Lear's side.
- **Duke of Albany:** Goneril's husband. He starts as a passive figure but later stands against his wife's cruelty and allies with the forces of good.
- **Duke of Cornwall:** Regan's violent and ruthless husband. He plays a central role in blinding Gloucester.

Minor Characters:

- **Oswald:** Goneril's steward. He is loyal to Goneril and is disliked by the other characters for his blind obedience to her.

- **Curan:** A gentleman in Gloucester's household. He is a relatively minor figure in the play.
- **King of France:** He is Cordelia's suitor. He marries her despite her lack of dowry and later brings an army to help her father.
- **Duke of Burgundy:** Another suitor of Cordelia. He withdraws his proposal when Lear disowns her.
- **First Servant:** A servant of Cornwall. He tries to stop him from blinding Gloucester, but he is killed for his efforts.
- **Other Servants:** Various servants in the households of Lear, Goneril, Regan, and Gloucester. They sometimes intervene in key scenes.
- **Knights:** Lear's loyal followers. These figures accompany Lear after he divides his kingdom. They are dismissed by Goneril and Regan.