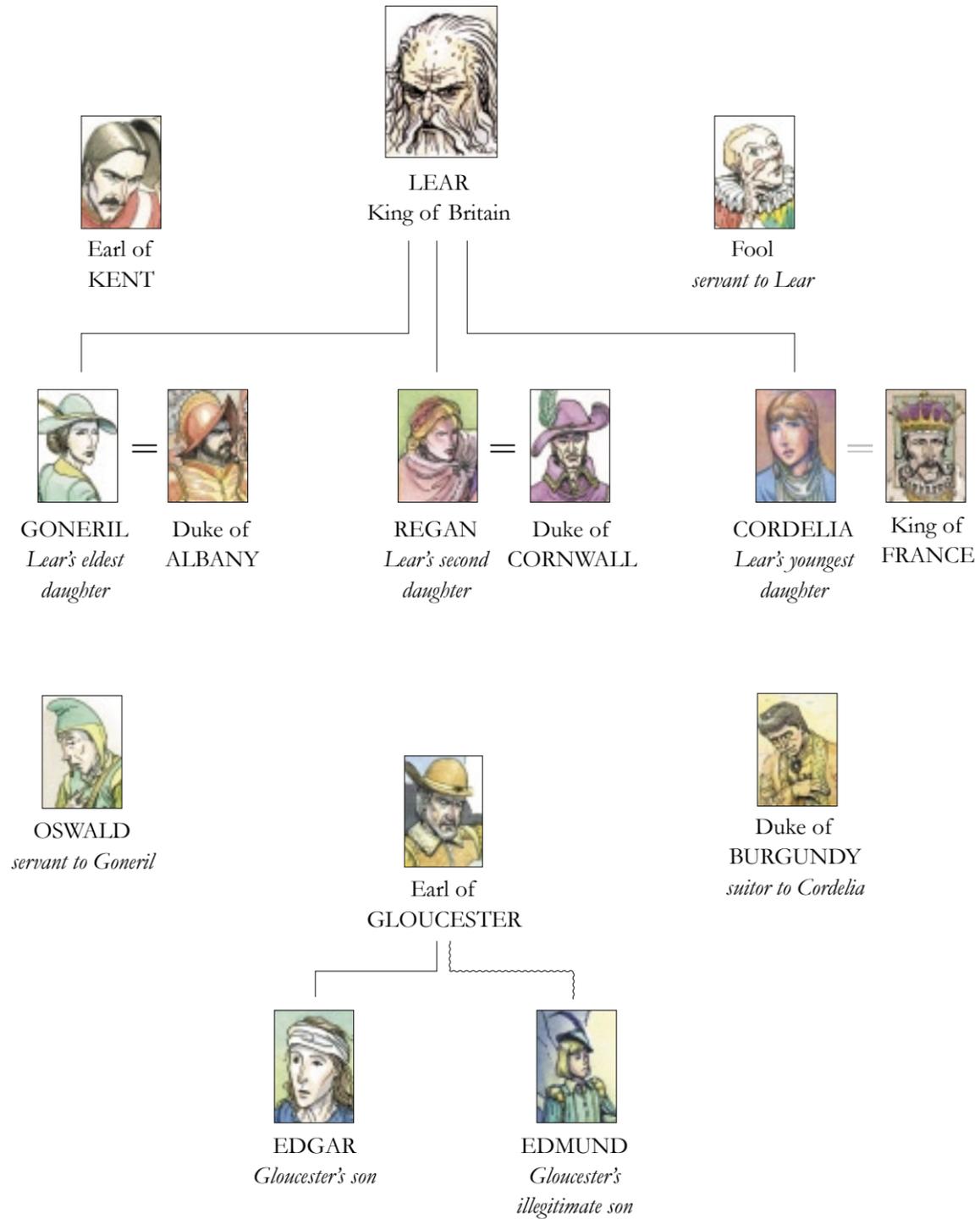


DRAMATIS PERSONAE



I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account. Though this knave came something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

No, my lord. My lord of Kent. Remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

My services to your lordship.

Summon the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

I shall, my liege.

Meantime we shall express our darker purpose. 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 Unburdened crawl toward death.

Which of you shall we say doth love us most, That we our largest bounty may extend Where merit doth most challenge it? Goneril, Our eldest-born, speak first.

Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter, Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty, Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare; No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour; As much as child e'er loved, or father found; A love that makes breath poor and speech unable. Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

What shall Cordelia do? Love and be silent.



Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shady forests and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual. What says our second
daughter, Our dearest Regan, wife to
Cornwall? Speak.

Sir, I
am made
of the self-
same metal that
my sister is, 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, and
find I am alone felicitate in your
dear highness' love.

To thee and thine
hereditary ever remain
this ample third of our
fair kingdom; no less in
space, validity, and pleasure
than that conferred on Goneril.

Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so, since
I am sure my love's
more richer than my
tongue.



But now, our joy, although the last, not least in
our dear love, what can you say to win a third more
opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Nothing,
my lord.

How! Nothing can come
of nothing; speak again.

Unhappy that I
am, I cannot heave
my heart into my
mouth. I love your
majesty according
to my bond; nor
more nor less.

Go to, go to, mend
your speech a little,
lest it may mar
your fortunes.

Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved 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? Happily, 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.

But, goes this
with thy heart?

So young and
so untender?

Ay, good my lord.

So young, my
lord, and true.



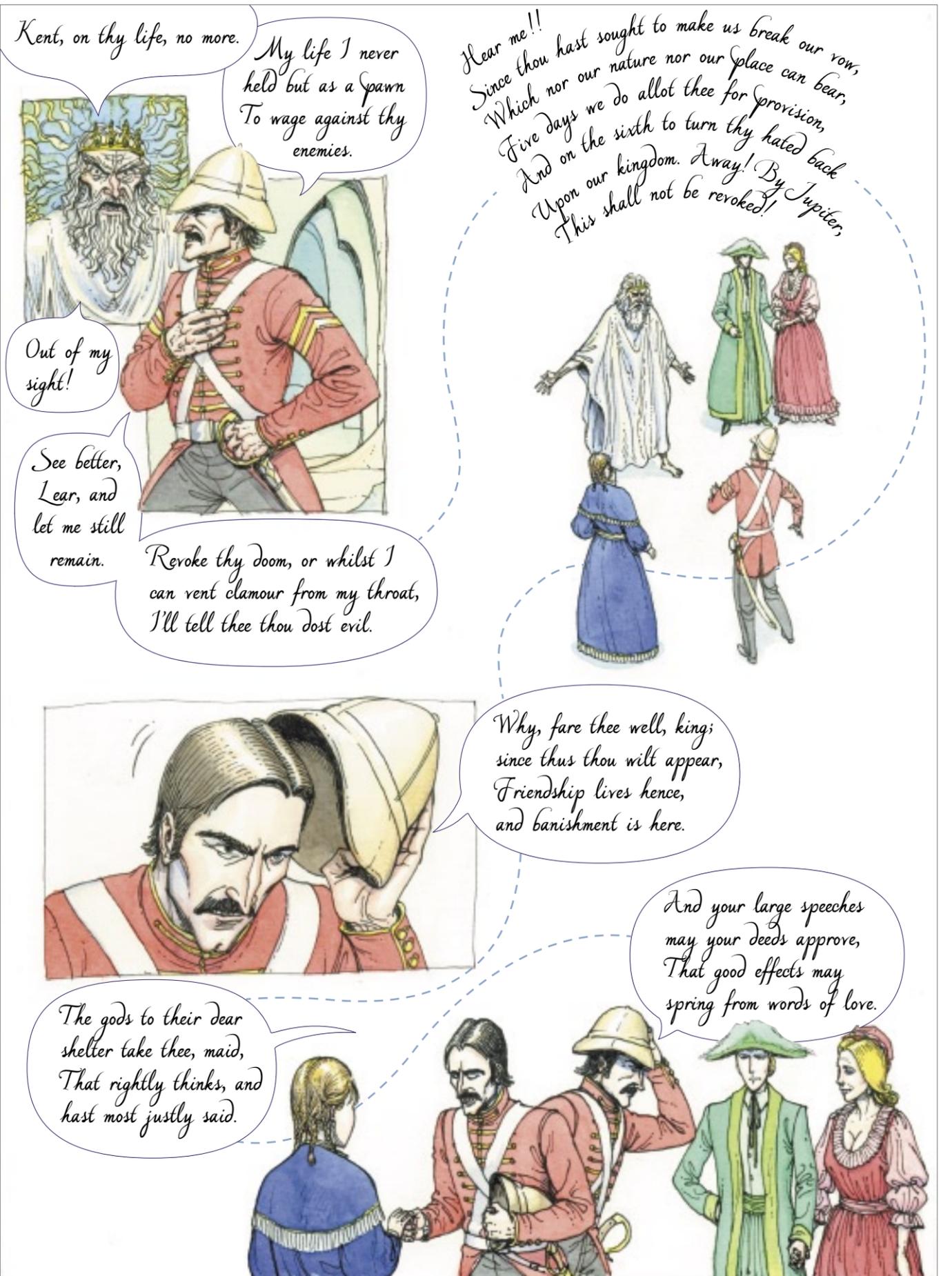
Let it be so. Thy truth then be thy dower;
 For by the sacred radiance of the sun,
 The mysteries of Hecate and the night,
 By all the operation of the orbs
 From whom we do exist and cease to be,
 Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
 Propinquity and property of blood,
 And as a stranger to my heart and me
 Hold thee from this forever.

Good my liege—!

Peace, Kent!
 Come not between the
 dragon and his wrath.
 I loved her most, and
 thought to set my rest
 On her kind nursery.

Be Kent unmannerly when
 Lear is mad. What wilt thou
 do, old man? Think'st thou that
 duty shall have dread to speak
 when power to flattery bows?
 To plainness honour's bound
 when majesty stoops to folly.

Call France!
 Call Burgundy!



Kent, on thy life, no more.

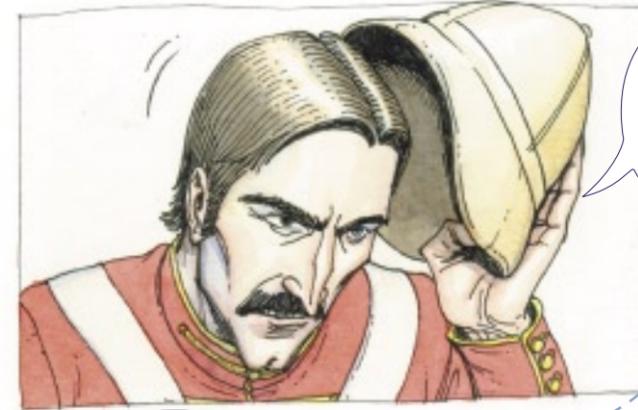
My life I never
 held but as a pawn
 To wage against thy
 enemies.

Hear me!!
 Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
 Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
 Five days we do allot thee for provision,
 And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
 Upon our kingdom. Away! By Jupiter,
 This shall not be revoked!

Out of my
 sight!

See better,
 Lear, and
 let me still
 remain.

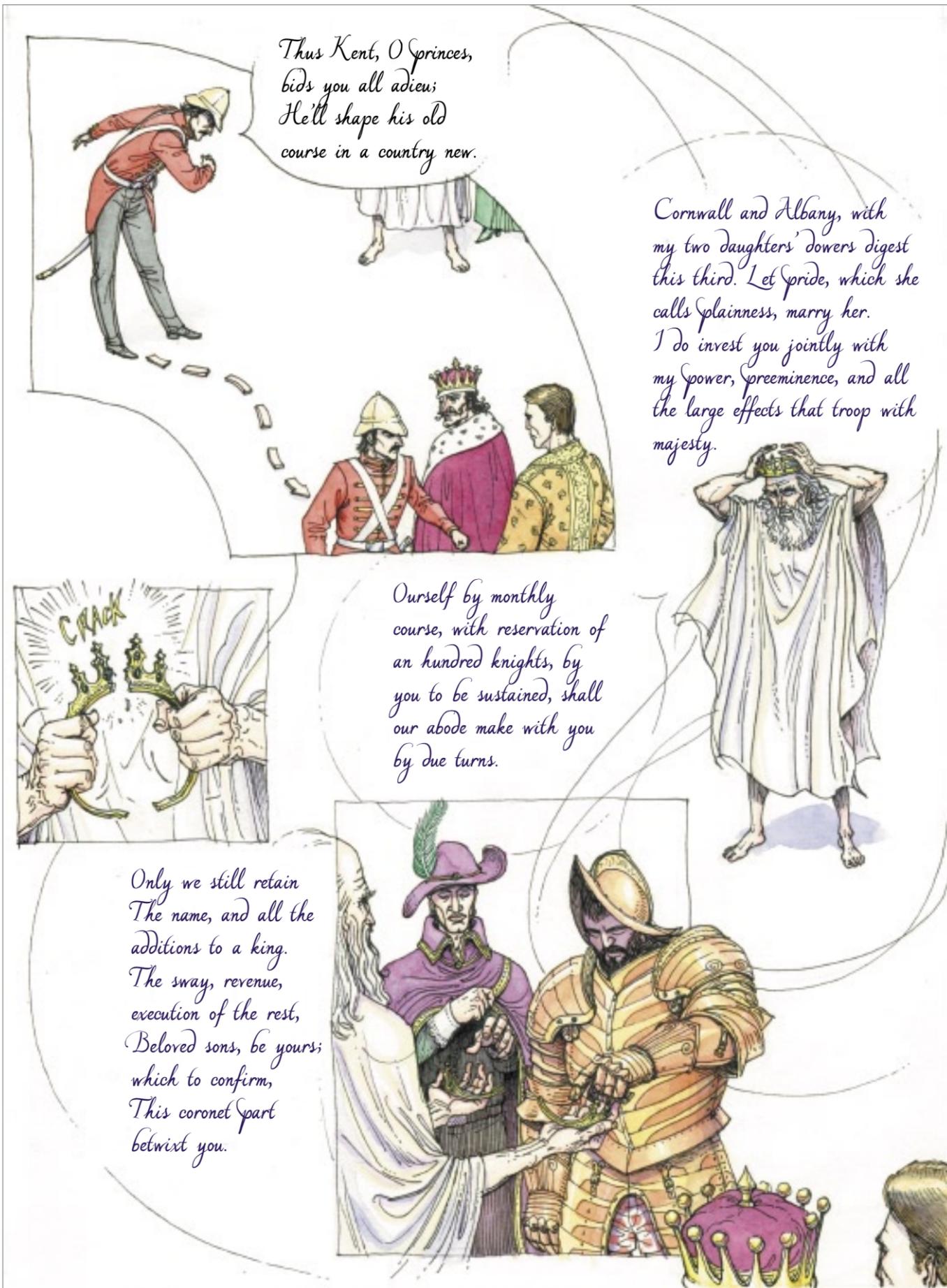
Revoke thy doom, or whilst I
 can vent clamour from my throat,
 I'll tell thee thou dost evil.



Why, fare thee well, king;
 since thus thou wilt appear,
 Friendship lives hence,
 and banishment is here.

The gods to their dear
 shelter take thee, maid,
 That rightly thinks, and
 hast most justly said.

And your large speeches
 may your deeds approve,
 That good effects may
 spring from words of love.

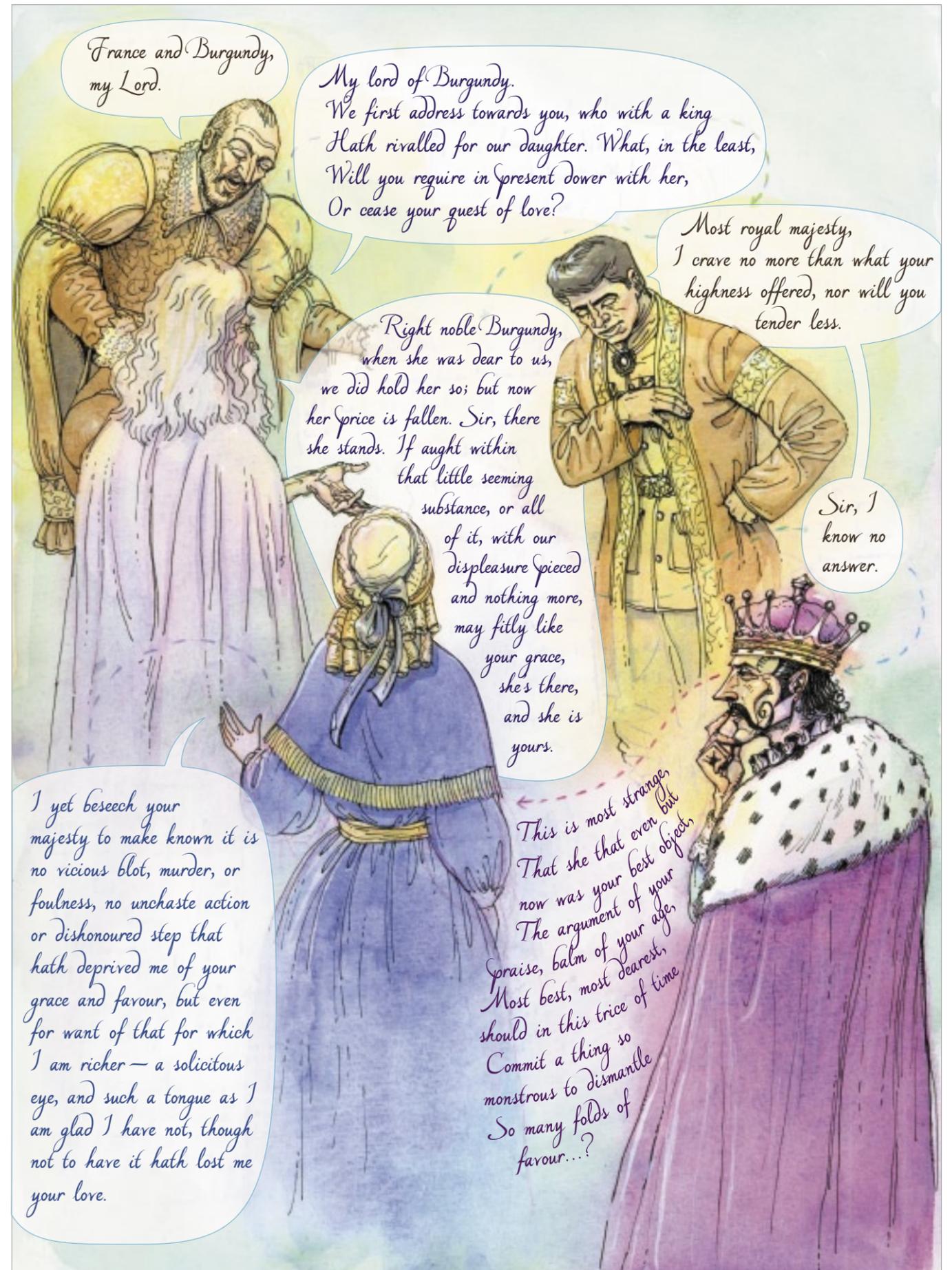


Thus Kent, O princes,
bids you all adieu;
He'll shape his old
course in a country new.

Cornwall and Albany, with
my two daughters' dowers digest
this third. Let pride, which she
calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with
my power, preeminence, and all
the large effects that troop with
majesty.

Ourself by monthly
course, with reservation of
an hundred knights, by
you to be sustained, shall
our abode make with you
by due turns.

Only we still retain
The name, and all the
additions to a king.
The sway, revenue,
execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours;
which to confirm,
This coronet part
betwixt you.



France and Burgundy,
my Lord.

My lord of Burgundy.
We first address towards you, who with a king
Hath rivalled for our daughter. What, in the least,
Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than what your
highness offered, nor will you
tender less.

Right noble Burgundy,
when she was dear to us,
we did hold her so; but now
her price is fallen. Sir, there
she stands. If aught within
that little seeming
substance, or all
of it, with our
displeasure pieced
and nothing more,
may fitly like
your grace,
she's there,
and she is
yours.

Sir, I
know no
answer.

I yet beseech your
majesty to make known it is
no vicious blot, murder, or
foulness, no unchaste action
or dishonoured step that
hath deprived me of your
grace and favour, but even
for want of that for which
I am richer — a solicitous
eye, and such a tongue as I
am glad I have not, though
not to have it hath lost me
your love.

This is most stranger
That she that even but
now was your best object,
The argument of your
praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most dearest,
should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so
monstrous to dismantle
So many folds of
favour...?



Is it no more but this?
My lord of Burgundy,
what say you to the lady?

Royal Lear, give but
that portion which —

Nothing; I have sworn.



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

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

Fairest Cordelia,
that art most rich being poor,
Most choice forsaken,
and most loved despised!
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 inflamed respect.



Thy dowerless daughter,
king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours,
and our fair France.



Thou hast her, France.
Let her be thine, for we
have no such daughter,
nor shall ever see that
face of hers again.



Wherefore should I stand in the plague of custom, and permit the curiosity of nations to deprive me, for that I am some twelve or fourteen months lag of a brother? Well then, legitimate Edgar, I must have your land. If this letter speed and my invention thrive, Edmund the base shall to the legitimate. Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Kent banished thus, and France in choler parted... Edmund, how now! what news?

So please your lordship, none.

What paper were you reading?

Nothing, my lord.

No? What needs, then, that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket? The quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see. Come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.



I beseech you, sir, pardon me. It is a letter from my brother that I have not all o'er-read; for so much as I have perused, I find it not fit for your liking.

Give me the letter, sir.

Hum, conspiracy! "Slept till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue" — my son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this, a heart and brain to breed it in? You know the character to be your brother's?

It is his hand, my lord, but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

Find out this villain, Edmund. It shall lose thee nothing. Do it carefully.

These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. Though the wisdom of nature can reason thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide; in cities mutinies, in countries discord, in palaces treason, and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father.

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars, as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion. Tut! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardy.

