

Keeping up with the King Lear Family Cast List

1 Male, 3 Female, and 2 M/F

KING LEAR (M) The patriarch of the family. It was his idea to do a reality show. That idea boomeranged pretty badly.

REGAN (F) Lear's daughter. Of course, we couldn't avoid all of the Ronald Reagan references. We're only human.

GONERIL (F) Lear's daughter. No references to an STD. This is a family show.

CORDELIA (F) Lear's daughter—the good one. There's not usually one of those in a reality show, but we had to follow the original plot somewhat.

FOOL (M/F) Provides the comic relief. We hope.

GUARD (M/F) Brings good tidings to the banished King. And then he doesn't.

Sample Pages

(Lights up on GONERIL and REGAN fighting over a hand-mirror as they are applying their make-up. GONERIL manages to wrestle the mirror from REGAN.)

REGAN: Do you know why daddy is calling this ridiculous meeting? I was supposed to go out with Hamlet tonight.

GONERIL: I thought you were dating that older guy?

REGAN: Macbeth? Turns out he wasn't my type. *(Both freeze as REGAN steps forward.)* Actually, he was married. And his wife is a sociopath. *(Beat.)* And she's really good with a dagger. *(Beat.)* Bad combination. *(REGAN steps back; both unfreeze.)* I'm dating Hamlet now.

GONERIL: How is that working out?

REGAN: Well, he does a lot of monologuing. And the guy just can't make a decision. It was a huge mistake taking him to Baskin-Robbins. "Rocky Road or not Rocky Road. That is the question." We were there for hours. *(Beat.)* Are you still seeing Shylock?

GONERIL: Shylock is old news.

REGAN: But he is filthy rich.

GONERIL: And tighter than an Italian tenor's trousers. *(Beat.)* I'm seeing Romeo.

REGAN: Romeo? Really? He's quite a bit younger than you. Cougar much?

GONERIL: He's very mature for his age. *(Both freeze; GONERIL steps forward.)* Actually, he's about as mature as a fruit fly. I tell him I want a non-exclusive relationship, and he's all, "Out of her favor, where I am in love," and "Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs." One, he needs to take a chill pill. Two, what does that stuff even mean? And three, who's this Juliet chick I've been hearing about? Is she really in middle school? *(GONERIL steps back; both unfreeze. CORDELIA enters.)* But I've been thinking of breaking it off.

CORDELIA: Who are you breaking up with this time?

GONERIL: Romeo.

CORDELIA: Why?

GONERIL: He's not independently wealthy. I mean, he's still living with his parents.

CORDELIA: *(Beat.)* So are we.

GONERIL: Hello? Reality show. We serve a higher purpose by living at home.

CORDELIA: Cash?

GONERIL: Fame! It's why people watch.

CORDELIA: So . . . we're famous for being famous?

GONERIL/REGAN: Yes.

FOOL: *(Enters.)* Princesses, I announce your father, the most royal and magnificent King Lear!

CORDELIA: Laying it on a bit thick, aren't you, Fool?

FOOL: What can I say? I'm his publicist. *(ALL freeze while FOOL steps forward.)* Actually, I'm his handler. The guy puts his foot in his mouth more often than a politician with a twitter account. *(FOOL steps back; ALL unfreeze. LEAR enters.)*

LEAR: Good morning, my daughters.

REGAN/GONERIL/CORDELIA: Good morning, Daddy.

LEAR: You're probably wondering why I called this emergency family meeting.

REGAN: *(ALL freeze. REGAN steps forward.)* Of course we're not wondering. He calls a family meeting at the drop of a hat. A meeting about not using crossbows to decide who does the dishes, a meeting about sharing the torture chamber equally, a meeting about putting the cap back on the toothpaste. Who does he think we are? The Brady Bunch? *(REGAN steps back, and ALL unfreeze.)* Yes, Daddy. I wait with baited breath.

FOOL: You shouldn't eat so much sushi. *(ALL stare at FOOL who laughs overly.)* Get it? Baited breath? Raw fish? *(ALL freeze while FOOL steps forward.)* My talents are wasted here. *(FOOL steps back, and ALL unfreeze.)*

LEAR: Well, my daughters, I thought I'd take an early retirement.

FOOL: *(Shocked.)* You what?

LEAR: I have decided to divide the kingdom among the three of you based on a compliment contest. Whichever of you best expresses your love for me will get most of the kingdom. Brilliant, isn't it? *(ALL freeze while LEAR steps forward.)* I went to a school that stressed self-esteem. I got an award for coming to class most of the time, a ribbon for turning in over half of my homework, and a trophy for not pooping my pants. *(LEAR steps back, and all unfreeze.)*

FOOL: Your majesty, a compliment contest is hardly the best system for succession to the crown.

LEAR: Nonsense! Brown-nosing nepotism has been a time-honored tradition ever since Lord Bush and Lady Clinton. Now, Goneril, tell me how much you love me.

GONERIL: I love you despite the awful name you saddled me with.

FOOL: But Goneril rhymes with monorail. *(ALL look at FOOL.)* I know. I've got a one track mind. *(Laughs overly. ALL stare at him. He stops suddenly.)*

GONERIL: And I love you more than my clothing line, Goneril's Secret.

FOOL: I think a name change would really increase sales.

GONERIL: (*Stares at FOOL then continues.*) And I love you more than my perfume, Goneril No. 5.

FOOL: I think . . . No, even I'm not commenting on that one.

LEAR: Well spoken, Goneril. You get one third of the kingdom. Regan, you're up.

REGAN: (*In best Reagan imitation.*) Well, I love you more than jelly beans.

FOOL: How sweet!

REGAN: And I love you more than tax breaks.

FOOL: How rich!

REGAN: And I love you more than supply-side economics.

FOOL: Now that's a Laffer. (*ALL stare at FOOL.*) Laffer is an economist for supply-side economics. (*ALL freeze, and FOOL steps forward.*) Can you believe this family? They don't know world famous economists. (*Looks into the audience.*) I see that you don't either. (*Throws up hands.*) My talents are wasted here. (*FOOL steps back, and all unfreeze.*)

LEAR: Well spoken, Regan. You get one third of the kingdom. Cordelia, it's your turn to kiss up.

CORDELIA: Nope.

LEAR: What do you mean "Nope"?

CORDELIA: I'm your daughter, not your sycophant.

LEAR: (*To FOOL.*) What's a sycophant?

FOOL: (*Shrugs.*) A deranged elephant?

CORDELIA: I am not going to make an ass of myself like my sisters!

LEAR: So you are neither a donkey nor an elephant?

FOOL: She has always been an independent sort.

LEAR: (*Losing patience.*) Cordelia, get going with the compliments. I don't have all day.

CORDELIA: You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I return those duties back as are right fit.

FOOL: (*Beat.*) That was underwhelming.

LEAR: Really? That's the best you've got?

FOOL: You get better from the pretzels at the pub. (*ALL stare.*) They're complimentary.

LEAR: Cordelia, I have always liked you best. In fact, I was planning on living with you after I retire. But that is no longer the case.

CORDELIA: Oh. Darn. (*ALL freeze while CORDELIA steps forward.*) I mean, Daddy's life is a reality show. Who wants to live with a camera 24/7? I'm still getting hate mail about the gerbil and catapult incident. I thought those plastic globes were more durable. (*CORDELIA steps back, and ALL unfreeze.*)

LEAR: Now, I'm going to live with your sisters and make you marry the King of France.

FOOL: You'll be living in France, Princess.

CORDELIA: (*A bit panicky.*) France? Let's not be hasty, Daddy Dearest. I can think of lots of compliments now.

LEAR: Too late. Your ship awaits to take you to your new husband. See if snails and frog legs are easier to swallow than your sisters' compliments. (*CORDELIA exits in a dramatic fashion.*)