



The Tragedy of King Lear

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616)

Read by:	Multiple readers	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	3 hours 28 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1124
Language:	English	UPC:	0683422134456
Style:	Dramatic	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Plays, Tragedy		

The Tragedy of King Lear depicts the descent of the title character into madness after retiring from power and disposing of his kingdom. Father to three daughters, he promises the larger share to the one who loves him most. Two of his daughters, Goneril and Regan, flatter him with superficial affection and respect and are awarded accordingly. Cordelia, his favorite, tells him there is nothing to which her love can be compared, that there are no words to express it. Lear misunderstands and, infuriated, disinherits her, the first of numerous blunders which lead to tragic endings. Lear travels to Goneril's realm to reside with a retinue of 100 knights where they are treated shabbily. When Goneril diminishes his retinue, Lear leaves in a huff for Regan's, where he is similarly treat-

ed, whereupon Lear succumbs to his rage and rushes out to rant on the heath in a storm. In the meantime, Edmund, illegitimate son of the Earl of Gloucester, plots to dispose first of his older brother and conspires with first Regan, then Goneril, to eliminate all claimants to the throne in one way or another. No one survives.

Based on the legend of Leir of Britain, a mythological Celtic king from pre-Roman times, the play is considered one of Shakespeare's finest works. Scholars believe Lear was first written in 1603 and first performed in 1606. The role of Lear is one of the most challenging and has been played by the many of the world's most accomplished actors. Playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote, "No man will ever write a better tragedy than Lear".

William Shakespeare (April 26, 1564 – April 23, 1616) was an English playwright and poet widely considered as the world's greatest dramatist and the greatest writer in the English language. He produced 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two narrative poems and other verse, most between the years 1589 and 1613. His earlier works consist mostly of comedies and histories, considered as some of the best work ever done in these genres. He turned to tragedies from about 1600 until about 1608, producing *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth* in this phase, considered the finest works in English. His last phase brought us the tragicomedies and romances such as *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. All but two of his plays were collected in the First Folio in 1623.

Little is known of his personal life apart from his marriage to Anne Hathaway at age 18, his three children, and his work as an actor and part owner of the King's Men theatre company in addition to his writing. The paucity of information has led to speculation about his appearance, beliefs, sexuality, and even the authenticity of his works. He retired to Stratford in 1613 and died three years later.