

Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak.

<sup>F</sup>Alarums. Fight.<sup>F</sup> [Edmund falls.]

ALBANY [to Edgar]

Save him, save him!

GONERIL

This is <sup>Q</sup>mere<sup>Q</sup> practice, Gloucester.

By the law of war thou wast not bound to answer 150

An unknown opposite. Thou art not vanquished,

But cozened and beguiled.

ALBANY

Shut your mouth, dame,

Or with this paper shall I stop it.

[to Edmund]

<sup>F</sup>Hold, sir,<sup>F</sup>

Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil.

heart, where the *treasons* will lodge for ever)

148.1 \*Fight F has 'Fights', the 's' perhaps being a compositor's error (compare 4.6.161 and n.); not in Q. This bare direction does not mean that the fight is perfunctory; there is a stage tradition of making it a strenuous and extended encounter between two strong adversaries, Edgar winning with difficulty.

149 \*Save . . . him! most probably a cry to Edgar to keep Edmund alive so that he may be questioned. Possibly Albany could be calling on soldiers to save a threatened Edgar, which would give point to Goneril's 'This is practice'. This interpretation could be reinforced if the emendation by Oxf of the speech prefix 'Alb' (F) to 'Alp' were accepted, but I think it unnecessary. practice trickery

151 opposite antagonist

152 cozened and beguiled cheated and deceived

152-8 \*Shut . . . know The changes made in F in these lines (see textual notes) are dramatically significant: in Q Albany addresses Goneril only, and

148 SD Fight.] Hanmer; Fights. F Edmund falls] Capell (Hanmer) 149 SP ALBANY] Q, F (Alb.); ALL Oxf (Blayney) SD] this edn (Hunter) 150 war] F; armes Q wast] F; art Q 152 Shut] F; Stop Q 153 stop] F; stople Q SD] Capell 154 name] F; thing Q

she replies to his question, 'Knowst thou this paper?' The words, *Hold, sir*, in 153, added in F, are linked by the comma to the next line, and are addressed to Edmund, who perhaps tries to grab the letter Edgar took from Oswald and gave to Albany (see 4.6.257-65 and 5.1.41). Thus in F Albany, observed by Goneril, shows the letter to Edmund, who answers Albany's question at 158. In Q Goneril exits at 158, 'Ask me not what I know', in F she leaves at 157, after 'Who can arraign me for't?' In F she leaves on a note of defiance; Q is more ambiguous, and she could be thought to leave the stage 'defeated and shamefaced' (McLeod, 188). Urkowitz, 113, sees here a 'pattern of delay' developing in Albany's responses in F, a hesitancy, or weakness of character, and stresses his 'negative qualities' (126) in opposition to those, e.g. Leo Kirschbaum in *SS*, 13 (1960), 20-9, who treat Albany as simply great and good.

153 Hold, sir, Stop, sir! The words have been variously interpreted, as addressed either to Edgar or to Edmund, and as meaning 'take,

[to Goneril] <sup>Q</sup>Nay<sup>Q</sup>, no tearing, lady; I perceive you know it. 155

GONERIL

Say if I do, the laws are mine, not thine.

Who can arraign me for't?

Exit.

ALBANY

Most monstrous! <sup>F</sup>O!<sup>F</sup>

[to Edmund] Knowst thou this paper?

EDMUND

Ask me not what I know.

ALBANY [to an officer, who follows Goneril]

Go after her; she's desperate, govern her.

EDMUND

What you have charged me with, that have I done, 160

And more, much more; the time will bring it out.

'Tis past and so am I. [to Edgar] But what art thou

That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,

I do forgive thee.

EDGAR

Let's exchange charity:

receive' (Cam'), 'Just a moment!' (Kittredge) or 'Wait' (Cam'). Hunter follows Capell in supposing Albany is addressing Edgar here, and in effect says 'Don't kill Edmund', but in F the comma after 'sir' suggests that these words and the next line are spoken to Edmund; see 152-8 and n.

155 no tearing Goneril tries to destroy the letter, as Albany shows it to Edmund.

156-7 the . . . for't? Goneril claims that as Queen she cannot be indicted, because she is above the laws.

158 \*Knowst . . . paper? / EDMUND In Q Goneril replies to Albany's question, though she has already shown she knows the letter at 155; F makes much better sense.

Ask . . . know Compare Iago's 'Demand me nothing', *Oth* 5.2.303;

unlike Iago, Edmund has a change of heart as he faces death.

159 govern restrain or take care of. In Q Albany's command follows directly on Goneril's exit; in F he speaks to Edmund first. The slight delay hardly justifies the perception by Urkowitz, 113, of an emerging 'pattern of delay' in Albany.

163 fortune on victory over (implying also an element of luck)

163-4 If . . . thee At the point of death, Edmund relapses from the revolutionary ideas of his soliloquy in 1.2 'into traditional conceptions of nobility and breeding' (Hunter).

164 Let's exchange charity There is little charity in Edgar's next lines; but the alternation in him of moral sternness in relation to his father's sin and compassion for him as a suffering man

155 SD] Oxf 157 can] F; shal Q SD Exit] as F; opp. 158 Q (Exit Gonoril.) 158 SD] Hunter SP EDMUND] F (Bast.); Gon. Q 159 SD] Capell subst. 162 SD] Hudson 163 thou'rt] F; thou best' Q