

# King lear analysis essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

How far is King Lear a tragedy without any redeeming features? 'King Lear' is a well known tragic play due to the flaws present in the King, the two evil daughters whom crave power, the torturous acts and number of deaths provided at the end of the play. However, in many viewers eyes, 'King Lear' offers redemption greatly due to its tragic plot and sub-plot, its not entirely a play where redemption isn't present. The main plot we follow in 'King Lear' is Lear himself facing the traumatising acts throughout the play due to his evil daughters; Regan and Goneril and his fatal flaw; hubris.

A tragic element in 'King Lear' is when Lear, himself, lets his hubris get the better of him. 'Here I disclaim all paternal care' showing Lear disowning his 'perfect' daughter; Cordellia and this is tragic because Lear has been fooled by the lies his evil daughters led him to believe and in a result of this, he pushed away his only 'perfect' daughter; Cordellia. On the other hand, Lear is often seen as a character with redeeming features which adds to the tragic element of the plot. (quote- saves Cordelia from hanging).

All in all, if Lear didn't have a sense of redemption at the end of the play, the play wouldn't withstand its tragic elements. Another element we behold of Lear himself is the perception of him being a 'tragic hero' by reason of his fatal flaws; hubris, value of appearances and inability to accept reality. His fall from grace; losing his power and daughter and in result of this, going mad. Also, the plot created around him and lastly, the actions he accomplished. Lear is incapable of understanding the appearance of situations and realities which is massively tragic.

Lear throughout, craves to be treated like a King yet he wants no responsibilities for his kingdom. Instead, he splits his kingdom and has his daughters rule over their given region. (quote- Lear offering regions)

Likewise, he tests his daughters to see which of them are willing to make the grandest testament of love for him. (quote - Cordellia has no words)

Although he truly knows Cordelia loves him the most, he disowns her for her lack of an outlandish and public display of love (quote- disowning).

In both instances, he allows his love of appearances to get in the way of reality. Overall revealing to the viewer Lear's fatal flaw and the tragedy in his actions which his flaw caused. Many people argue Lear is a character with redeeming features causing a major journey of redemption in the viewer's eyes. Lear towards the end of the play begins fighting against his daughters; Goneril and Regan, representing an element of power and strength regaining in Lear (quote - Lear on Cordellia's side) emphasizing a resolution of his tragic actions which is also an element in tragedies.

Further on, Cordellia's death arrives after Lear's failed attempt to save her (quote - Cordellia's death) we begin to feel pity for Lear which is not only a tragic element but we see Lear die resulting in a redeeming finish to the play (quote - Lear's death) Even though the main plot is often seen as a journey of redemption, the sub plot; Edgar and Edmund's scenario, can be viewed as part of the tragedy in 'King Lear' but it offers no redemption at the end of the play. Edmund himself is characterized as an illegitimate son which is tragic because the reader feels a pity for him. (quote - Edmund illegitimate). Society around that time, viewed people who were illegitimate as outcasts, almost alien like, therefore weren't accepted into society. Due to this, Edmund

began craving power and wanted ownership so constructed a plan against his own brother Edgar, making Edmund your typical tragic villain. (quote - Edmund wanting power). The plan Edmund constructs against his own father; Gloucester and his own brother; Edgar, is tragic as Gloucester believes and trusts his evil son; Edmund and disowns his other son; Edgar. (quote - Gloucester disowning Edgar).

This is very tragic, especially to a viewer's eyes as we know the truth that Gloucester is blinded to see. Many people argue Edmund doesn't offer any redemption at the end of the play. After all the devious acts Edmund carried out such as getting Gloucester's eyes gouged out (quote - eyes taken out) and setting up Cordelia and Lear to be hanged (quote - hanging). Even though Edmund planned this, towards the end of the play when he was dying, he confessed to the plan and told them to stop it (quote - Edmund confess hanging). However, in many viewers' eyes, this doesn't redeem Edmund as we don't feel any sorrow when he dies.

Also, in the main and sub plot, we have the two evil daughters; Goneril and Regan who Edmund joins forces with. Goneril and Regan play a massive part to the tragedy as they are the main product of the tragic events Lear faces in the main plot. (quote - getting rid of his knights). Regan and Goneril planned to take away Lear's knights to make him powerless and they succeed and Lear becomes powerless, weak and mad (quote - Lear mad, flowers) As a viewer we see this is a part of tragedy within the play as we begin to see Lear's fall from grace.

However, the two evil sisters never redeem themselves after all the villainous acts they carried out. Regan dies due to Goneril poisoning her, yet another villainous act. (quote - regan poisoned). Therefore Regan never got a chance to redeem herself. However, in society those days, when Goneril killed herself, it was seen as a redeeming feature as she sacrificed herself and committed a sin because she felt 'bad' for all the evil she did. But, in a modern audience, we don't see Goneril's suicide as a redeeming feature. (quote - goneril's death). Most of all, the two devilish daughters create the tragedy in this play, as they gain power and influence other characters such as Edmund to follow them. Also, they do not redeem themselves, making the play a tragic play without redeeming features. Lastly, the main plot and sub plot are linked in many ways. Such as Lear and Gloucester as the father who is tricked and loses the good, resulting in a fall from grace.

The two evil sisters; Regan and Goneril matching Edmund, the villains who cause the tragedy and finally, Cordellia pairing with Edgar, the two pure and good characters. This is why the main plot and sub plot link so well together causing the play to be more tragic. However, many people view the main plot with redeeming features due to Lear's attempt to save Cordellia and the sub plot without redeeming features due to Edmund's cruel plans and his teaming with Regan and Goneril. The play can be seen a tragic play with or without redemption depending on how you view it.