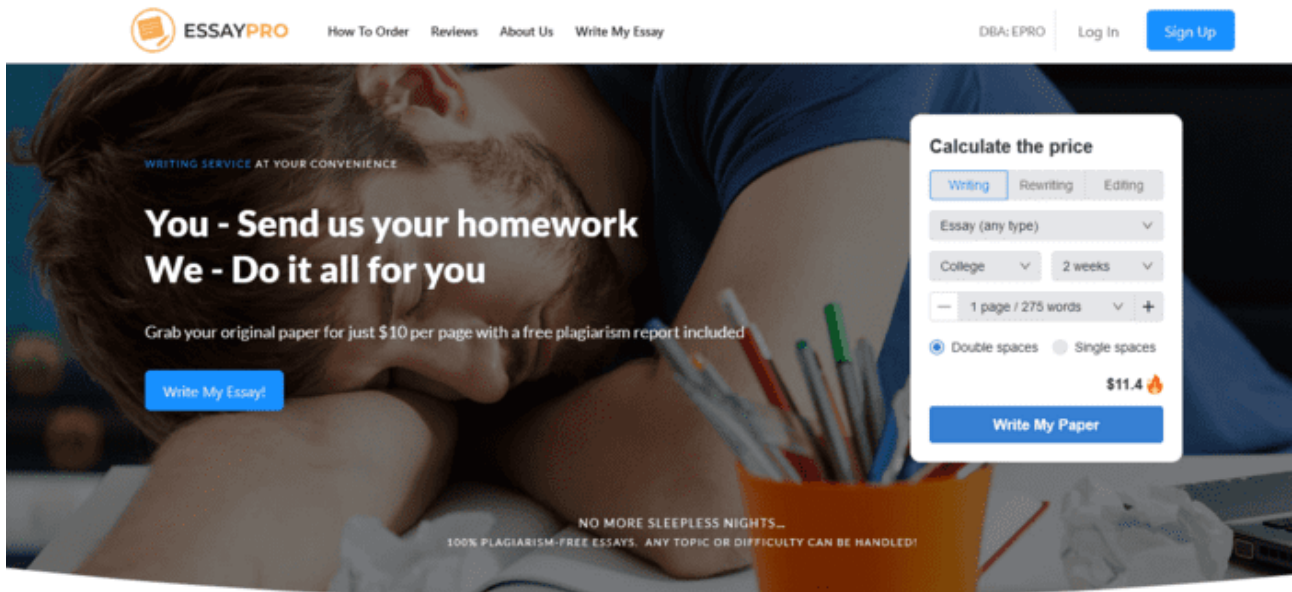


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## The Parallel Plots of Shakespeare's King Lear

Many works of literature contain parallel plots in which similar actions taken by various characters precipitate identical results. Upon careful examination, it is evident that "such plots exist in Shakespeare's play King Lear with the deaths of King Lear, Cordelia, Edmund, and Goneril, among others" (Curry 17). The betrayal of a commitment to an authority figure is the cause behind each of the above characters' death. Likewise, the consistent loyalty of Kent, the Fool, and Edgar is rewarded when they outlive their traitorous peers.

King Lear, who as a divine-right king derives his power from God, betrays God's will when he transfers his kingdom to his daughters, Reagan and Goneril. When Lear states that his purpose in doing so is "To [shake](#) all cares and business from our age, / Conferring them on younger strengths while we / Unburdened crawl toward death." (Shakespeare 2) he declares his intention to delegate his power so that he is no longer bothered with great responsibilities. In this self-serving act, Lear is unfaithful to God, whose wish it was for Lear to rule for a lifetime. Later, God's wrath is apparent in Act III Scene II when Lear speaks to a tempest, a [manifestation](#) of God's anger at the [strife](#) within the kingdom, and

tells it to "Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! Spout rain! / Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters" (Shakespeare 60). Evidently, upon seeing the tempest, Lear is aware that he made a mistake and betrayed God's trust. In speaking to the tempest, he asks for God to correct the situation by causing Reagan and Goneril to fall from power. As a result of his unfaithfulness to God, Lear dies of a broken heart in the end of ...

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...the conclusion of the play.

As is by now apparent, there are a multitude of parallel plots within Shakespeare's play King Lear. In each plot, a character's breach of loyalty condemned the character to certain death in the final scene of the play. Several of the characters who exhibited treachery and later died were King Lear, Cordelia, Edmund, and Goneril. Accordingly, Kent, the Fool, Edgar, and Albany all survived the play because they did not cast aside their loyalties.

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