**Title:** King Lear: Power, Madness, and Truth in 15 Minutes

**Cast:** 5 Actors (ages 12–14)

**Doubling Roles:**

* **Actor 1:** King Lear / Narrator
* **Actor 2:** Cordelia / Fool
* **Actor 3:** Goneril / Albany
* **Actor 4:** Regan / Kent
* **Actor 5:** Edmund / Gloucester

**Setting:** A stormy kingdom. Use simple crowns or cloaks, a staff, and lighting to show Lear’s descent. A bench can serve as throne, cell, or field.

**[Prologue – Narrator center stage with a crown.]**

**NARRATOR (A1):**  
An old king divides his throne by word—  
But trusts the false and doubts the heard.  
Three daughters’ love is put to test,  
And Lear shall learn which loves him best.

*(Lights shift. Daughters kneel before Lear.)*

**Scene 1: The Division of the Kingdom**

**LEAR (A1):**  
Tell me, daughters, how much do you love me?

**GONERIL (A3):**  
More than words, more than life!

**REGAN (A4):**  
More than eyes, breath, or space itself!

**CORDELIA (A2):**  
I love you truly—no more, no less.

**LEAR:**  
Ungrateful child! You are banished!

**KENT (A4):**  
Sire, she speaks with honesty.

**LEAR:**  
You too are banished!

**NARRATOR:**  
And so Lear gives power to false praise—and begins his fall.

**Scene 2: Betrayal and Storm**

**GONERIL:**  
He grows old and foolish. Strip his guard.

**REGAN:**  
Let him rage outside with the wind.

**FOOL (A2):**  
Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

**LEAR:**  
Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! I am a man more sinned against than sinning!

**NARRATOR:**  
Madness grips Lear as storm rages around him.

**Scene 3: Deceit and Redemption**

**EDMUND (A5):** *(aside)*  
I’ll betray my father Gloucester—and rise in rank.

**GLOUCESTER (A5):**  
They gouge my eyes… yet still I see more clearly now.

**KENT:**  
Come, King. Cordelia waits.

**CORDELIA:**  
Father, you shall rest. I forgive you all.

**LEAR:**  
You are a soul in my arms again.

**Scene 4: Tragic End**

**NARRATOR:**  
But war arrives. Cordelia is lost.

**LEAR:** *(carrying her)*  
Howl! Howl! She’s gone forever!  
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and thou no breath at all?

**KENT:**  
He dies of grief. The king, the father, the man… broken.

**[Epilogue – Narrator center stage.]**

**NARRATOR (A1):**  
From pride to pain, from crown to dust,  
Let us be wise in whom we trust.  
Love is quiet, truth is clear—  
And folly costs what we hold dear.

**[Lights fade. Curtain.]**