

The History of King Lear

Sc.8

Storm. Enter the Duke of Kent disguised, and First Gentleman, at several doors

KENT

What's here, beside foul weather?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

One minded like the weather,

Most unquietly.

KENT

I know you. Where's the King?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Contending with the fretful element;

Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea

Or swell the curleÁd waters 'bove the main,

5

That things might change or cease; tears his white
hair,

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,

Catch in their fury and make nothing of;

Strives in his little world of man to outstorm

The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.

10

This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,

The lion and the belly-pincheÁd wolf

Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,

And bids what will take all.

KENT

But who is with him?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

None but the fool, who labours to outjest

15

His heart-struck injuries.

KENT

Sir, I do know you,

And dare upon the warrant of my art

Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,

Although as yet the face of it be covered

With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;

20

But true it is. From France there comes a power

Into this scattered kingdom, who already,

Wise in our negligence, have secret feet

In some of our best ports, and are at point

To show their open banner. Now to you:

25

If on my credit you dare build so far

To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
Some that will thank you, making just report
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
The King hath cause to plain.
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding,
And from some knowledge and assurance offer
This office to you.

30

FIRST GENTLEMAN I will talk farther with you.

KENT No, do not. 35

For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia±±
As fear not but you shall±±show her this ring
And she will tell you who your fellow is, 40
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
I will go seek the King.

FIRST GENTLEMAN Give me your hand.
Have you no more to say?

KENT Few words, but to effect
More than all yet: that when we have found the King±±
In which endeavour I'll this way, you that±± 45
He that first lights on him holla the other.

Exeunt severally