

3.2

LEAR

You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts, 5
Singe my white head; and thou all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o'th' world,
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once
That makes ingrateful man.

LEAR

FOOL He that has a house to put 's head in has a good head-piece. 25

The codpiece that will house
Before the head has any,
The head and he shall louse,
So beggars marry many. 30
The man that makes his toe

What he his heart should make
Shall of a corn cry woe,
And turn his sleep to wake±±
for there was never yet fair woman but she made 35
mouths in a glass.

Enter the Earl of Kent disguised

LEAR

No, I will be the pattern of all patience.
I will say nothing.

KENT Who's there?

FOOL Marry, here's grace and a codpiece±±that's a wise 40
man and a fool.

KENT (to Lear)

Alas, sir, are you here? Things that love night
Love not such nights as these. The wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark
And make them keep their caves. Since I was man 45
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain I never
Remember to have heard. Man's nature cannot carry
Th'affliction nor the fear.

LEAR

Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads, 50
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch
That hast within thee undivulgeÁd crimes
Unwhipped of justice; hide thee, thou bloody hand,
Thou perjured and thou simular of virtue
That art incestuous; caitiff, to pieces shake, 55
That under covert and convenient seeming
Has practised on man's life; close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
More sinned against than sinning.

KENT

Alack, bare-headed?

60

Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel.
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest.
Repose you there while I to this hard house±±
More harder than the stones whereof 'tis raised,
Which even but now, demanding after you, 65

Denied me to come in±±return and force
Their scanted courtesy.

LEAR My wits begin to turn.
(*To Fool*) Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy? Art
cold?
I am cold myself.±±Where is this straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange, 70
And can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.±±
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

FOOL [*Sings*]
He that has and a little tiny wit,
With heigh-ho, the wind and the rain, 75
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
Though the rain it raineth every day.

LEAR True, boy. (*To Kent*) Come, bring us to this hovel.
Exeunt Lear and Kent

FOOL This is a brave night to cool a courtesan. I'll speak
a prophecy ere I go: 80
When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors,
No heretics burned, but wenches' suitors,
Then shall the realm of Albion 85
Come to great confusion.
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues,
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs; 90
When usurers tell their gold i'th' field,
And bawds and whores do churches build,
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
That going shall be used with feet.
This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his 95
time.

Exit