

The History of King Lear

Sc.13

Enter the Duke of Gloucester and King Lear, the Earl of Kent disguised, Lear's Fool, and Edgar as a Bedlam beggar

GLOUCESTER Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can. I will not be long from you.

KENT All the power of his wits have given way to impatience; the gods discern your kindness! 5
[Exit Gloucester]

EDGAR Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent; beware the foul fiend.

FOOL *(to Lear)* Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman. 10

LEAR
A king, a king! To have a thousand
With red burning spits come hissing in upon them!

EDGAR The foul fiend bites my back.

FOOL *(to Lear)* He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath. 15

LEAR
It shall be done. I will arraign them straight.
[To Edgar] Come, sit thou here, most learneÁd justicer.
[To Fool] Thou sapient sir, sit here.±±No, you she-foxes±±

EDGAR Look where he stands and glares. Want'st thou eyes at troll-madam? 20
[Sings]

Come o'er the burn, Bessy, to me.

FOOL *[sings]*

Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak

Why she dares not come over to thee.

EDGAR The foul fiend haunts Poor Tom in the voice of a 25
nightingale. Hoppedance cries in Tom's belly for two
white herring. Croak not, black angel: I have no food

for thee.

KENT *(to Lear)*

How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed.

Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions? 30

LEAR

I'll see their trial first. Bring in the evidence.

[To Edgar] Thou robeſt a man of justice, take thy place;

[To Fool] And thou, his yokefellow of equity,

Bench by his side. *[To Kent]* You are o'th'

commission,

Sit you, too. 35

EDGAR Let us deal justly.

[Sings]

Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?

Thy sheep be in the corn,

And for one blast of thy minikin mouth

Thy sheep shall take no harm. 40

Purr, the cat is grey.

LEAR Arraign her first. 'Tis Gonoril. I here take my oath
before this honourable assembly she kicked the poor
King her father.

FOOL Come hither, mistress. Is your name Gonoril? 45

LEAR She cannot deny it.

FOOL Cry you mercy, I took you for a join-stool.

LEAR

And here's another, whose warped looks proclaim

What store her heart is made on. Stop her there.

Arms, arms, sword, fire, corruption in the place! 50

False justicer, why hast thou let her scape?

EDGAR Bless thy five wits.

KENT *(to Lear)*

O pity! Sir, where is the patience now

That you so oft have boasted to retain?

EDGAR *(aside)*

My tears begin to take his part so much 55

They'll mar my counterfeiting.

LEAR The little dogs and all,

Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart±±see, they bark at me.

EDGAR Tom will throw his head at them.±±Avaunt, you
curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white, 60
Tooth that poisons if it bite,
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach or him,
Bobtail tyke or trundle-tail,
Tom will make them weep and wail; 65
For with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.
Loudla, doodla! Come, march to wakes and fairs
And market towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

LEAR Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds 70
about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that
makes this hardness? *(To Edgar)* You, sir, I entertain
you for one of my hundred, only I do not like the
fashion of your garments. You'll say they are Persian
attire; but let them be changed. 75

KENT

Now, good my lord, lie here a while.

LEAR Make no noise, make no noise. Draw the curtains.
So, so, so. We'll go to supper i'th' morning. So, so, so.
He sleeps. Enter the Duke of Gloucester

GLOUCESTER *(to Kent)*

Come hither, friend. Where is the King my master?

KENT

Here, sir, but trouble him not; his wits are gone. 80

GLOUCESTER

Good friend, I prithee take him in thy arms.
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him.
There is a litter ready. Lay him in't
And drive towards Dover, friend, where thou shalt
meet

Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master. 85
If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,
With thine and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assure loss. Take up, take up,
And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

KENT *(to Lear)* OppresseÁd nature sleeps. 90
This rest might yet have balmed thy broken sinews
Which, if convenience will not allow,

Thou must not stay behind.

GLOUCESTER Come, come away.

Exeunt all but Edgar

EDGAR

When we our betters see bearing our woes, 95

We scarcely think our miseries our foes.

Who alone suffers, suffers most i'th' mind,

Leaving free things and happy shows behind.

But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip

When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship. 100

How light and portable my pain seems now,

When that which makes me bend, makes the King
bow.

He childed as I fathered. Tom, away.

Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray

When false opinion, whose wrong thoughts defile thee, 105

In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.

What will hap more tonight, safe scape the King!

Lurk, lurk.

Exit