

King Lear abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 6

Introspection

Situation: All but Edgar, disguised as “Poor Tom,” leave the hovel that had been the men’s shelter during the storm. As King Lear is led out on a stretcher, Edgar reflects on the moment, offering us some of his thoughts.

GLOUCESTER TO KENT: Where is the king my master?

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

GLOUCESTER: Good friend, I Prithce, 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 toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet both welcome and protection.

KENT: Oppressed nature sleeps.

KENT TO THE FOOL: Come, help to bear thou master. Thou must not stay behind.

All but Edgar exit, carrying Lear.

Edgar to himself, No. 2

When we see those better than we suffer
From woes, we see woes we bear as lesser
Foes. Those who suffer grief alone mostly
Suffer in the mind, leaving happy shows
And life’s free joys behind. But we do see
Suffring grief doth o’erskip, relieving woes
When it hath mates, bearing sweet fellowship.
How light my pain, seeing grief that doth grip
The king, suffering from his children as
I from my father. I must listen to
The high-placed noises, forsaking what has
Been this disguise, throwing off wrongs that do
Defile me. I’ll end this charade and bring
Reconciliation. Safe ‘scape, my king.