

King Lear abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 4

Insight

Situation: King Lear and his Fool come across Kent who is locked up in the stocks, having been placed there by Cornwall. Kent had gotten into a fight with Oswald, Goneril's steward. The two of them had fought over political issues when discussing the king.

FOOL: Thou hadst been set i' th' stocks for that question, thou'dst well deserved it.

KENT: Why, Fool?

Fool to Kent, No. 2

If thou taught by ants thou'd learn to expend
Little labor when little hope. Depend
On their eyes, men do, when following their
Noses, but blind men, and they can smell him
That stinks. When a great wheel begins to wear
Down hill, let go it, lest thou break a limb
As it goes. When a wise man gives better
Counsel, you may offer mine, but mine were
For knaves, me being a fool. That loyalless
Knave who serves for his own gain will pack when
It starts to rain; will in the wilderness
Leave thee. But the fool will stay, letting then
The wise man flee. He who chooses to flee
Becomes a fool; this fool no knave you see.

KENT: Where learned you this, Fool?

FOOL: Not i' th' stocks, fool.