

Act. 1 Scene 4
Enter Kent in disguise.

KENT

If but as well I other accents borrow
That can my speech diffuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I razed my likeness. Now, banished Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand 5
condemned,
So may it come thy master, whom thou lov'st,
Shall find thee full of labors.

Horns within. Enter Lear, Knights, and Attendants.

LEAR Let me not stay a jot for dinner. Go get it ready.

How now, what art thou? 10

KENT A man, sir.

LEAR What dost thou profess? What wouldst thou with us?

KENT I do profess to be no less than I seem, to serve
him truly that will put me in trust, to love him that 15
is honest, to converse with him that is wise and says
little, to fear judgment, to fight when I cannot
choose, and to eat no fish. (*Not a Catholic?*)

LEAR What art thou?

KENT A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the
King. 20

LEAR If thou be'st as poor for a subject as he's for a
king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

KENT Service.

LEAR Who wouldst thou serve? 25

KENT You.

LEAR Dost thou know me, fellow?

KENT No, sir, but you have that in your countenance
which I would fain call master.

LEAR What's that? 30

KENT Authority.

LEAR What services canst do?

KENT I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a
curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message
bluntly. That which ordinary men are fit for I 35
am qualified in, and the best of me is diligence.

LEAR How old art thou?

KENT Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing,
nor so old to dote on her for anything. I have years
on my back forty-eight. 40

LEAR Follow me. Thou shalt serve me—if I like thee
no worse after dinner. I will not part from thee
yet.—Dinner, ho, dinner!—Where's my knave, my
Fool? Go you and call my Fool hither.

An Attendant exits.