

King Lear abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 2

Father to Son

Situation: Devious Edmund has succeeded in making his naïve father, the earl of Gloucester, suspicious of the motives of Gloucester's older son Edgar's motives. Gloucester tells us he thinks these strange events may be a result of eclipses of the sun and moon.

GLOUCESTER: O villain, villain! Where is he?

EDMUND: I do not well know, my lord. I dare pawn down my life for him that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your Honor, and to no other pretense of danger.

GLOUCESTER: Think you so?

EDMUND: If your Honor judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this.

GLOUCESTER: To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him! Edmund, seek him out and insinuate yourself into his confidence, I pray you.

EDMUND: I will seek him, sir, presently, convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Gloucester to Edmund

**These late eclipses in the sun and moon
Portend no good. Events that follow soon
After these eclipses affect us all,
Though wisdom of mind tells us otherwise.
Love cools, brothers divide, friendship doth fall
Off. In cities and countries discord lies;
Treason resides in palaces. We see
The loving bond 'twixt families cracked. Here we
Son against father and now with the king,
Father against child, as he misbehaves.
With the best of our time past, we now bring
Disorders that follow us to our graves.
And the noble, true-hearted Kent to range
Banished! His offense, honesty! 'Tis strange.**

He exits.

EDMUND: This is the excellent foolishness of the world, that when we are sick in fortune we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars, as if we were villains on necessity.