

Julius Caesar abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 1

Introspection

Situation: Early in the morning, well before dawn, in his garden, Brutus struggles with his thoughts, trying to decide whether to or whether not to join the conspirators and support Cassius' cause.

BRUTUS: Get me a taper in my study, Lucius.

He exits.

BRUTUS: It must be by his death. And for my part I know no personal cause to spurn at him, but for the general.

Brutus to himself

How being crowned will change his nature fair
Is the question. We here must walk with care,
Snakes being hatched on sunny days. Crown him
And we give him the viper's sting; the line
Between power and sympathy's drawn dim;
The mind must o'erreach the heart. History's sign
Is proof that he who climbs the utmost rung
Looks above with his back to those who sung
Cheering praises. He may do what's been done;
Lest he may, act. Since the present quarrel has
Weaknesses, say with the crown he would run
From these to those extremes. Think of him as
A serpent's egg, which, as his kind, hatched, well
Could grow harmful. So kill him in the shell.

Lucius enters.

LUCIUS: Searching the window for a flint, I found this paper, thus sealed up.

BRUTUS: Is not tomorrow, boy, the ides of March? Look in the calendar, and bring me word.

Lucius exits. Brutus opens the letter. The letter reads: Brutus, thou sleep'st. Awake. Speak, strike, redress.

BRUTUS: My ancestors did from the streets of Rome the Tarquin drive when he was called a king. O Rome, I make thee promise, if the redress will follow, thou receivest thy full petition at the hand of Brutus.