

King Lear abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 3

Disclosure

Situation: Edmund falls seriously wounded when he and a still disguised Edgar duel. Competing for Edmund's attention, Goneril and Regan both express concern for Edmund's well being.

EDMUND: Th' hast spoken right. 'Tis true. The wheel is come full circle; I am here.

ALBANY TO EDGAR: I must embrace thee. Let sorrow split my heart if ever I did hate thee or thy father!

EDGAR: Worthy prince, I know 't.

ALBANY: Where have you hid yourself?

Edgar to Albany

**I shifted to madman's rags to escape
The bloody proclamation, which did sate
My immediate need. In this habit
Met I my father with his now eyeless
Sockets and became his guide, using wit
To beg for him, saving him from useless
Despair. To bear each hour the pain of death
Rather than at once is this life's sweet breath.
I let him know of me some half hour past,
When I was armed to fight, and there did seek
His blessing. From the first day through the last
I told him of our pilgrimage. Too weak
To support the passion, his flawed heart be
Torn between joy and grief burst smilingly.**

EDMUND: This speech of yours hath moved me. But speak you on.

ALBANY: If there be more, more woeful, hold it in, for I am almost ready to dissolve hearing of this.

EDGAR: Whilst I was lamenting Gloucester's death, came there a man who told the most piteous tale of Lear and him that ever ear received, and the strings of life began to crack.

ALBANY: But who was this?

EDGAR: Kent, sir, the banished Kent, who in disguise followed his enemy king and did him service.