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Sommario/riassunto	<P>Many critics hold that Shakespeare's <I>King Lear</I> is primarily a drama of meaningful suffering and redemption within a just universe ruled by providential higher powers. William Elton's <I>King Lear and the Gods</I> challenges the validity of this widespread optimistic view. Testing the prevailing view against the play's acknowledged sources, and analyzing the functions of the double plot, the characters, and the

play's implicit ironies, Elton concludes that this standard interpretation constitutes a serious misreading of the tragedy.</P>
