

CYMBELINE*A line-by-line translation***Act 1, Scene 1****Shakespeare***Enter two Gentlemen***FIRST GENTLEMAN**

You do not meet a man but frowns: our bloods
No more obey the heavens than our courtiers
Still seem as does the king.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

But what's the matter?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

5 His daughter, and the heir of's kingdom, whom
He purposed to his wife's sole son—a widow
That late he married—hath referr'd herself
Unto a poor but worthy gentleman: she's wedded;
Her husband banish'd; she imprison'd: all
10 Is outward sorrow; though I think the king
Be touch'd at very heart.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

None but the king?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

He that hath lost her too; so is the queen,
That most desired the match; but not a courtier,
15 Although they wear their faces to the bent
Of the king's look's, hath a heart that is not
Glad at the thing they scowl at.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

And why so?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

He that hath miss'd the princess is a thing
20 Too bad for bad report: and he that hath her—
I mean, that married her, alack, good man!
And therefore banish'd—is a creature such
As, to seek through the regions of the earth
For one his like, there would be something failing
25 In him that should compare. I do not think
So fair an outward and such stuff within
Endows a man but he.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

You speak him far.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

I do extend him, sir, within himself,
Crush him together rather than unfold
His measure duly.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

What's his name and birth?

Shakescleare Translation*Two gentlemen enter.***FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Every man you meet these days is frowning. Our bodies are
in agreement with the planetary influences  just as the
courtiers's moods seem to reflect the king's.

 In Shakespeare's period, people
believed that actions and emotions
were affected by the movements of
the planets.
SECOND GENTLEMAN

What's wrong?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

The king wanted his daughter, the only heir to his kingdom,
to marry his wife's only son. By his wife, I mean a widow he
recently married. But the daughter decided to marry a poor
but honest man instead. She's married, her husband is
banished, she's imprisoned: everything seems terrible. I
think the king is overwhelmed with sadness.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Only the king?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

So is the man who was supposed to marry her. So is the
queen, who really wanted the marriage to happen. But all
the courtiers, although they frown like the king, are secretly
happy about the thing they frown at.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Why?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

The man who lost the princess is so bad it's impossible to
describe him accurately. And the man who has her—I mean
the man who married her, oh, poor good man!—and is
banished because of this, is a man so good that even if you
searched through the whole world for his equal, anyone
you found to compare with him would still be a little less
good. I don't think any man is as attractive inside and out
as he is.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

You speak highly of him.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

I cannot speak highly of him enough. What I say is too low
and his virtue cannot be accurately measured .

 The terms "crush" and "unfold" in
the original text pick up on a fabric
metaphor. Fabric can either be
crushed together or unfolded and
measured accurately.
SECOND GENTLEMAN

What's his name and family?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

I cannot delve him to the root: his father
Was call'd Sicilius, who did join his honour
35 Against the Romans with Cassibelan,
But had his titles by Tenantius whom
He served with glory and admired success,
So gain'd the sur-addition Leonatus;
And had, besides this gentleman in question,
40 Two other sons, who in the wars o' the time
Died with their swords in hand; for which
their father,
Then old and fond of issue, took such sorrow
That he quit being, and his gentle lady,
45 Big of this gentleman our theme, deceased
As he was born. The king he takes the babe
To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,
Breedes him and makes him of his bed-chamber,
Puts to him all the learnings that his time
50 Could make him the receiver of; which he took,
As we do air, fast as 'twas minister'd,
And in's spring became a harvest, lived in court--
Which rare it is to do--most praised, most loved,
A sample to the youngest, to the more mature
55 A glass that feated them, and to the graver
A child that guided dotards; to his mistress,
For whom he now is banish'd, her own price
Proclaims how she esteem'd him and his virtue;
By her election may be truly read
60 What kind of man he is.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I honour him
Even out of your report. But, pray you, tell me,
Is she sole child to the king?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

His only child.
65 He had two sons: if this be worth your hearing,
Mark it: the eldest of them at three years old,
I' the swathing-clothes the other, from their nursery
Were stol'n, and to this hour no guess in knowledge
Which way they went.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

70 How long is this ago?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Some twenty years.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

That a king's children should be so convey'd,
So slackly guarded, and the search so slow,
That could not trace them!

FIRST GENTLEMAN

75 Howsoe'er 'tis strange,
Or that the negligence may well be laugh'd at,
Yet is it true, sir.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I do well believe you.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

We must forbear: here comes the gentleman,
80 The queen, and princess.

Exeunt

Enter the QUEEN, POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and IMOGEN

FIRST GENTLEMAN

I don't know his whole family tree. His father was called Sicilius. Sicilius fought against the Romans with Cassibelan, but was granted nobility under Tenantius. He served Tenantius so gloriously and was so well-known for his achievements that he was given the additional name "Leonatus".³ He had two other sons, in addition to this man we are talking about, who died fighting in the wars taking place at the time. Their father, who was old and fond of his children, was so sad that he died. His sensitive wife, pregnant with this man who is the theme of our conversation, died as he was born. The king took the baby under his protection, called him Posthumus.⁴ Leonatus, raised him, and made him one of his closest attendants. He gave him as much of an education as Posthumus could find time for. Posthumus took to this education as naturally as people take to air, that is, he took it in as quickly as it was given to him. He fulfilled his potential when he grew up, and lived in court—a rare thing to do—greatly praised and greatly loved. He was an example to the youngest, to the full-grown a model for their own behavior, and seemed to serious⁵ observers like a child leading old people. As for his wife, who is the reason he is now banished, her own excellence⁶ shows how much she valued him and his virtue. By the fact that she chose him you can clearly understand what kind of man he is.

³ Leonatus means "born of a lion" in Latin.

⁴ "Posthumus" refers, as in the word "posthumous", to something taking place after someone's death. In this case, the birth of the child after his father's death makes him posthumous, or "Posthumus".

⁵ "Grave" (used in the original text) usually means "serious", but here it may be a playful way of referring to older people, who tend to be more serious and are closer to the "grave".

⁶ The term "price," used in the original text, might also mean the price that she paid for loving Posthumus.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I respect him just from hearing you describe him. But tell me, is she the king's only child?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Yes, his only child. He had two sons. Pay attention, if this is something you want to hear about. When the older one was three and the other one was still in his swaddling clothes⁷, they were stolen from their nursery, and to this day no one has any idea where they went.

⁷ Swaddling clothes were cloths wrapped around babies so that they could not move their arms and legs. The reference to swaddling clothes suggests that the youngest child was probably in his first year.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

How long ago was this?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

About twenty years.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

How could it be that a king's children were taken in this way? And that they were so badly guarded? And that the search for them was so slow and found no trace of them?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

However strange it is and however much you could laugh at the incompetence, it's true, sir.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I believe you.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

We have to stop talking: here come this man, the queen, and the princess.

They exit.

The QUEEN, POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and IMOGEN enter.

QUEEN

No, be assured you shall not find me, daughter,
After the slander of most stepmothers,
Evil-eyed unto you: you're my prisoner, but
85 Your gaoler shall deliver you the keys
That lock up your restraint. For you, Posthumus,
So soon as I can win the offended king,
I will be known your advocate: marry, yet
The fire of rage is in him, and 'twere good
90 You lean'd unto his sentence with what patience
Your wisdom may inform you.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Please your highness,
I will from hence to-day.

QUEEN

You know the peril.
95 I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying
The pangs of barr'd affections, though the king
Hath charged you should not speak together.

Exit

IMOGEN

O
Dissembling courtesy! How fine this tyrant
100 Can tickle where she wounds! My dearest husband,
I something fear my father's wrath; but nothing—
Always reserved my holy duty—what
His rage can do on me: you must be gone;
And I shall here abide the hourly shot
105 Of angry eyes, not comforted to live,
But that there is this jewel in the world
That I may see again.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

My queen! my mistress!
O lady, weep no more, lest I give cause
110 To be suspected of more tenderness
Than doth become a man. I will remain
The loyal'st husband that did e'er plight troth:
My residence in Rome at one Philario's,
Who to my father was a friend, to me
115 Known but by letter: thither write, my queen,
And with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send,
Though ink be made of gall.

Re-enter QUEEN

QUEEN

Be brief, I pray you:
If the king come, I shall incur I know not
120 How much of his displeasure.

Aside

Yet I'll move him
To walk this way: I never do him wrong,
But he does buy my injuries, to be friends;
125 Pays dear for my offenses.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Should we be taking leave
As long a term as yet we have to live,
The loathness to depart would grow. Adieu!

QUEEN

My daughter, you can be sure I will not scheme against you
despite the lies they tell about most stepmothers. You're
my prisoner, but although I am your jailer I will give you the
keys that keep you locked in here. As for you, Posthumus,
as soon as I can calm the upset king, I will speak in your
defense. He is still burning with anger, and it would be best
for you to go along with his sentence of banishment as
patiently as you can manage.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Yes your highness, I will leave today.

QUEEN

You know the risk. I'll take a walk around the garden, since I
pity how sad you are to be separated from the person you
love, even though the king commanded that you should not
be allowed to speak to each other.

She exits.

IMOGEN

What lying kindness! She's a bully who wounds you then
tickles the wound. My dear husband, I am sometimes afraid
of my father's anger, but not at all—except that it is my god-
given duty not to make him angry—what he could do to me
because of it. You must go, and I will be here suffering from
the glares shot at me by angry eyes. I can't bear to stay
alive, except that I have this hope, as though it is a precious
jewel I own, that I might see you again.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

My queen! My wife! Don't cry any more, or I'll show more
weakness than is proper for a man. I will keep being the
most loyal husband who ever married anyone. I am staying
in Rome at a man called Philario's house. He was a friend of
my father's, but I have only communicated with him by
writing. Send your letters there, my queen, and I'll drink the
words you send me with my eyes, even though ink is made
of that bitter material, gall.⁸

⁸ In Shakespeare's time, ink was sometimes made from a mixture of iron salts and vegetable-based acids known as "iron gall ink" or just "gall" for short, as Shakespeare uses it here.

The QUEEN re-enters.

QUEEN

Keep this short, please. If the king comes, I don't know how
angry at me he will be.

She speaks to herself.⁹

⁹ "Aside" in the original text indicates that the speaker is speaking to him or herself, loud enough for the audience to hear but the other characters onstage cannot.

I'll convince the king to walk this way. Not only do I do him
wrong, but I make him reward me for it: he doesn't know
I'm the person who causes the problems he pays me to
solve. He's bribing the wrongs I do to him as though they're
people and he wants to make them his friends.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Even if we kept saying goodbye for the rest of our lives, it
would keep getting harder to leave. Goodbye!

IMOGEN

Nay, stay a little:
 130 Were you but riding forth to air yourself,
 Such parting were too petty. Look here, love;
 This diamond was my mother's: take it, heart;
 But keep it till you woo another wife,
 When Imogen is dead.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

135 How, how! another?
 You gentle gods, give me but this I have,
 And sear up my embracements from a next
 With bonds of death!

Putting on the ring

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

140 Remain, remain thou here
 While sense can keep it on. And, sweetest, fairest,
 As I my poor self did exchange for you,
 To your so infinite loss, so in our trifles
 I still win of you: for my sake wear this;
 It is a manacle of love; I'll place it
 145 Upon this fairest prisoner.

Putting a bracelet upon her arm

IMOGEN

O the gods!
 When shall we see again?

Enter CYMBELINE and Lords

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Alack, the king!

CYMBELINE

150 Thou basest thing, avoid! hence, from my sight!
 If after this command thou fraught the court
 With thy unworthiness, thou diest: away!
 Thou'rt poison to my blood.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

The gods protect you!
 155 And bless the good remainders of the court! I am gone.

Exit

IMOGEN

There cannot be a pinch in death
 More sharp than this is.

CYMBELINE

160 O disloyal thing,
 That shouldst repair my youth, thou heap'st
 A year's age on me.

IMOGEN

I beseech you, sir,
 Harm not yourself with your vexation
 I am senseless of your wrath; a touch more rare
 165 Subdues all pangs, all fears.

CYMBELINE

Past grace? Obedience?

IMOGEN

Past hope, and in despair; that way, past grace.

IMOGEN

No, stay a little longer. Even if you were just going on a ride to get some air, that would not be enough of a goodbye. Look, my love, this diamond ring was my mother's. Take it, sweetheart. Keep it only until you ask another woman to marry you, when I, Imogen, am dead.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

What? Another woman? Kind gods, just give me this one I have, and if I try to kiss another one then stop me by burning me to death!

He puts on the ring.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

[To the ring] Stay, stay there

[To Imogen] while I am alive enough to keep it on. And, sweetest, most beautiful woman, just as I exchanged myself for you, which was such a bad bargain for you, I'm still getting a better deal in this exchange of presents. Wear this for my sake. It is a handcuff of love ¹⁰. I'll put it on this most beautiful of prisoners.

¹⁰ This could mean either a handcuff made of love or a handcuff to hold love.

He puts a bracelet on her arm.

IMOGEN

Oh gods! When will we see each other again?

CYMBELINE and some lords enter.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Oh no, the king!

CYMBELINE

You lowest of things, go away! Go, out of my sight! If after being commanded to do this you still weigh the court down with your undeserving presence, you will die. Go away! You are like poison in my blood.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

May the gods protect you! And bless those who stay in the court! I am gone.

POSTHUMUS exits.

IMOGEN

Death can't hurt worse than this.

CYMBELINE

You disloyal thing, you should make me feel young again but you make me feel a year older.

IMOGEN

Please, sir, don't hurt yourself with your anger. I can't feel it. An even worse pain overcomes all hurts, all fears.

CYMBELINE

So you are past showing me grace? Past obedience?

IMOGEN

I am past hope, and in despair. In that way I am past grace ¹¹

¹¹ Cymbeline means that she is past "grace" in the sense that she does not show "grace" or "politeness" to her father. Imogen puns on the word by saying she has fallen into the sin of

despair, which puts her out of the "grace" of God, or in other words that she is damned.

CYMBELINE

That mightst have had the sole son of my queen!

IMOGEN

O blest, that I might not! I chose an eagle,
170 And did avoid a puttock.

CYMBELINE

Thou took'st a beggar; wouldst have made my throne
A seat for baseness.

IMOGEN

No; I rather added
A lustre to it.

CYMBELINE

175 O thou vile one!

IMOGEN

Sir,
It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus:
You bred him as my playfellow, and he is
A man worth any woman, overbuys me
180 Almost the sum he pays.

CYMBELINE

What, art thou mad?

IMOGEN

Almost, sir: heaven restore me! Would I were
A neat-herd's daughter, and my Leonatus
Our neighbour shepherd's son!

CYMBELINE

185 Thou foolish thing!

Re-enter QUEEN

CYMBELINE

They were again together: you have done
Not after our command. Away with her,
And pen her up.

190

QUEEN

Beseech your patience. Peace,
Dear lady daughter, peace! Sweet sovereign,
Leave us to ourselves; and make yourself some comfort
Out of your best advice.

CYMBELINE

195 Nay, let her languish
A drop of blood a day; and, being aged,
Die of this folly!

Exeunt CYMBELINE and Lords

QUEEN

Fie! you must give way.

Enter PISANIO

QUEEN

200 Here is your servant. How now, sir! What news?

PISANIO

My lord your son drew on my master.

CYMBELINE

You could have married my wife, the queen's, only son!

IMOGEN

I'm lucky I didn't! I chose an eagle and avoided a vulture

[12] Technically, the word "puttock" in the original text referred to one of these three bird species: a kite, buzzard, or marsh harrier.

CYMBELINE

You married a beggar. You wanted to make my throne a resting-place for lowness.

IMOGEN

No, I made it shine more brightly.

CYMBELINE

You disgusting person!

IMOGEN

Sir, it's your fault I fell in love with Posthumus. You brought him up to be my playmate, and he is a man who would deserve any woman. He is worth almost twice as much as me.

CYMBELINE

Are you crazy?

IMOGEN

Nearly, sir. May the gods make me sane again! I wish I were a cattle-herder's daughter and that my Leonatus were the son of another cattle-herder who lived nearby!

CYMBELINE

You foolish thing!

The QUEEN re-enters.

CYMBELINE

They were together again. You didn't obey my order. Take her away and lock her up.

QUEEN

Please forgive me. Calm down, dear daughter, calm down!
Dear king, leave us alone, and comfort yourself as best you can.

CYMBELINE

No, let her suffer as though she sheds a drop of blood every day and finally, when she is old, let her die of this foolishness!

CYMBELINE and the lords exit.

QUEEN

Come on! You have to give up.

PISANIO enters.

QUEEN

Here is your servant. Hey, sir, what's the news?

PISANIO

Your son drew his sword against my master Posthumus.

QUEEN

Ha!
No harm, I trust, is done?

PISANIO

205 There might have been,
But that my master rather play'd than fought
And had no help of anger: they were parted
By gentlemen at hand.

QUEEN

I am very glad on't.

IMOGEN

210 Your son's my father's friend; he takes his part.
To draw upon an exile! O brave sir!
I would they were in Afric both together;
Myself by with a needle, that I might prick
The goer-back. Why came you from your master?

PISANIO

215 On his command: he would not suffer me
To bring him to the haven; left these notes
Of what commands I should be subject to,
When 't pleased you to employ me.

QUEEN

This hath been
220 Your faithful servant: I dare lay mine honour
He will remain so.

PISANIO

I humbly thank your highness.

QUEEN

Pray, walk awhile.

IMOGEN

About some half-hour hence,
225 I pray you, speak with me: you shall at least
Go see my lord aboard: for this time leave me.

Exeunt

QUEEN

What! I hope no one was hurt?

PISANIO

They could have been except that my master didn't fight back, just played around without feeling any anger. Some gentlemen who were nearby separated them.

QUEEN

I am very glad to hear that.

IMOGEN

Your son is my father's friend. He defends him. Drawing his sword against an exile! What a brave man! 13 I wish they were both in Africa together, and that I were near them with a needle, to poke whichever one retreated from the fight. Why did you leave your master?

13 This is sarcastic.

PISANIO

On his orders. He wouldn't let me accompany him to the port. He left these notes about what my duties should be, if you want to employ me.

QUEEN

He has been a faithful servant to you. I bet my honor he will remain faithful.

PISANIO

Thank you, your highness.

QUEEN

Please, walk with me awhile.

IMOGEN

Talk to me in about half an hour. You will at least watch my husband get on his ship. Leave me alone for now.

They exit.

Act 1, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter CLOTH and two Lords

FIRST LORD

Sir, I would advise you to shift a shirt; the violence of action hath made you reek as a sacrifice: where air comes out, air comes in: there's none abroad so wholesome as that you vent.

CLOTH

5 If my shirt were bloody, then to shift it. Have I hurt him?

SECOND LORD

[*Aside*] No, 'faith; not so much as his patience.

Shakescleare Translation

CLOTH and two Lords enter.

FIRST LORD

Sir, I recommend that you change your shirt. Your violent exercise 1 made you stink like burned meat offered to the gods. Any place air goes out, air also goes in. There's no air anywhere as healthy as the air you give off. 2

1 Coten's attempt to fight Posthumus was referenced in the previous scene.

2 This is meant to be obsequious flattery. The Lord is claiming that the bad smelling air that Cloten is giving off is surely more healthy than the fresh air outside. bad air was thought to spread disease.

CLOTH

I would change my shirt if it had blood on it. Have I hurt him?

SECOND LORD

[*To himself*] No, not even his feelings.

FIRST LORD

Hurt him! his body's a passable carcass, if he be not hurt: it is a thoroughfare for steel, if it be not hurt.

10

SECOND LORD

[Aside] His steel was in debt; it went o' the backside the town.

CLOTHENE

The villain would not stand me.

SECOND LORD

[Aside] No; but he fled forward still, toward your face.

15

FIRST LORD

Stand you! You have land enough of your own: but he added to your having; gave you some ground.

SECOND LORD

[Aside] As many inches as you have oceans. Puppies!

CLOTHENE

I would they had not come between us.

SECOND LORD

[Aside] So would I, till you had measured how long a fool you were upon the ground.

CLOTHENE

And that she should love this fellow and refuse me!

SECOND LORD

[Aside] If it be a sin to make a true election, she is damned.

FIRST LORD

Sir, as I told you always, her beauty and her brain go not together: she's a good sign, but I have seen small reflection of her wit.

SECOND LORD

[Aside] She shines not upon fools, lest the reflection should hurt her.

CLOTHENE

Come, I'll to my chamber. Would there had been some hurt done!

SECOND LORD

[Aside] I wish not so; unless it had been the fall of an ass, which is no great hurt.

CLOTHENE

You'll go with us?

FIRST LORD

[35] I'll attend your lordship.

FIRST LORD

Hurt him! If he's not hurt, he's a dead body. It's like he's a highway for swords, he's been stabbed so many times.

SECOND LORD

[To himself] Clothen's sword owed someone money and sneaked around the back part of town instead of passing through it.

. 3 If Posthumus is a highway for swords, Clothen's sword doesn't take that highway. In other words, Clothen didn't hit Posthumus.

CLOTHENE

That criminal wouldn't stand and fight me.

SECOND LORD

[To himself] No, he kept running away by going forward, towards your face.

FIRST LORD

What, stand and fight you? You have plenty of your own land, but he added to what you have: he gave you some ground.

SECOND LORD

[To himself] He gave you as many inches as you have oceans. What a silly young person!

. 4 This phrase is, again, sarcastic, since Clothen does not own oceans.

. 5 "Puppies" means silly young people who arrogantly try to do more than they can. The second lord means that Clothen is one of these young people.

CLOTHENE

I wish they hadn't separated us.

SECOND LORD

[To himself] So do I, until you fell and measured how long an idiot you were against the ground.

CLOTHENE

How could she love this man and refuse to marry me?

SECOND LORD

[To himself] If it's a sin to make a good choice then she's damned.

FIRST LORD

Sir, as I've always told you, her beauty and her brain don't match. She looks good, but I've never seen her looks reflected in her thinking.

SECOND LORD

[To himself] She doesn't shine on idiots, because their reflection would hurt her.

. 6 Because "reflection" means "thought" as well as "image created by light striking a surface", and the thoughts of idiots would hurt her because they are idiots and not good at thinking.

CLOTHENE

Well, I'll go to my room. I wish someone had gotten hurt!

SECOND LORD

[To himself] I don't, unless a donkey was knocked down, which wouldn't be so bad.

. 7 Clothen, because an "ass" means not only a donkey but a foolish person.

CLOTHENE

You'll go with me?

FIRST LORD

I'll visit you later, my lord.

CLOTEN

Nay, come, let's go together.

SECOND LORD

Well, my lord.

Exeunt

CLOTEN

No, come on, let's all go together.

SECOND LORD

All right, my lord.

They exit.

Act 1, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter IMOGEN and PISANIO

IMOGEN

I would thou grew'st unto the shores o' the haven,
And question'dst every sail: if he should write
And not have it, 'twere a paper lost,
As offer'd mercy is. What was the last
That he spake to thee?

5

PISANIO

It was his queen, his queen!

IMOGEN

Then waved his handkerchief?

PISANIO

And kiss'd it, madam.

IMOGEN

Senseless Linen! happier therein than I!
10 And that was all?

10

PISANIO

No, madam; for so long
As he could make me with this eye or ear
Distinguish him from others, he did keep
The deck, with glove, or hat, or handkerchief,
15 Still waving, as the fits and stirs of 's mind
Could best express how slow his soul sail'd on,
How swift his ship.

15

IMOGEN

Thou shouldst have made him
As little as a crow, or less, ere left
20 To after-eye him.

20

PISANIO

Madam, so I did.

IMOGEN

I would have broke mine eye-strings; crack'd them, but
To look upon him, till the diminution
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle,
25 Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from
The smallness of a gnat to air, and then
Have turn'd mine eye and wept. But, good Pisanio,
When shall we hear from him?

25

PISANIO

Be assured, madam,
30 With his next vantage.

IMOGEN

I did not take my leave of him, but had
Most pretty things to say: ere I could tell him
How I would think on him at certain hours

Shakesclare Translation

IMOGEN and PISANIO enter.

IMOGEN

I wish you had stayed longer on shore  and asked every sail of every boat for information about Posthumus. If he wrote to me and I didn't get the letter it would be as bad to lose that paper as to miss an offer of mercy from someone who defeated you. What was the last thing he said to you?

 The phrase "grew'st unto the shores" in the original text suggests growing roots. Imogen wishes that Pisanio would have planted himself on the shore to watch Posthumus departing ship for even longer.

PISANIO

It was "my queen, my queen!"

IMOGEN

Then he waved his handkerchief?

PISANIO

And kissed it, ma'am.

IMOGEN

That unfeeling piece of cloth was luckier than I am! And that was all?

PISANIO

No, ma'am. For as long as I could tell him apart from the others by sight or sound, he stayed on deck waving his glove, hat, or handkerchief. He kept waving, as though expressing his restless mind through this action could show how slowly his soul sailed on, and how quickly his ship did.

IMOGEN

You should have kept watching him until he seemed as small as a crow, or smaller.

PISANIO

I did, ma'am.

IMOGEN

I would have broken my eyes, let them crack, just to keep looking at him until he was so far away that he was as small as the point of one of my needles. No, I would have looked at him until he had melted from the size of a mosquito into air, and then I would have looked away and cried. Good Pisanio, when will we hear from him?

PISANIO

Definitely as soon as he lands somewhere, ma'am.

IMOGEN

I didn't say goodbye to him, even though I had planned to say the prettiest things. My father came in before I could tell Posthumus I would think specific thoughts about him at

Such thoughts and such, or I could make him swear
 35 The shes of Italy should not betray
 Mine interest and his honour, or have charged him,
 At the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,
 To encounter me with orisons, for then
 I am in heaven for him; or ere I could
 40 Give him that parting kiss which I had set
 Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father
 And like the tyrannous breathing of the north
 Shakes all our buds from growing.

Enter a Lady

LADY
 The queen, madam,
 45 Desires your highness' company.

IMOGEN
 Those things I bid you do, get them dispatch'd.
 I will attend the queen.

PISANIO
 Madam, I shall.

Exeunt

specific times. And before I could make him promise not to cheat on me with Italian women, which would be bad for me and for his honor. And before I could tell him to pray for me at six in the morning, at noon, and at midnight, which would be like being in heaven with him. And before I could give him that goodbye kiss which I had planned to give him between two charming words. My father interrupted us like the cruel north wind that kills flowers before they can grow.

A LADY enters.

LADY
 The queen would like to see you, your highness.

IMOGEN
[To PISANIO] Do the things I told you to do.
[To the LADY] I will go see the queen.

PISANIO
 I will, ma'am.

They exit.

Act 1, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter PHILARIO, IACHIMO, a Frenchman, a Dutchman, and a Spaniard

IACHIMO
 Believe it, sir, I have seen him in Britain: he was
 then of a crescent note, expected to prove so worthy
 as since he hath been allowed the name of; but I
 could then have looked on him without the help of
 5 admiration, though the catalogue of his endowments
 had been tabled by his side and I to peruse him by
 items.

PHILARIO
 You speak of him when he was less furnished than now
 he is with that which makes him both without and
 10 within.

FRENCHMAN
 I have seen him in France: we had very many there
 could behold the sun with as firm eyes as he.

IACHIMO
 This matter of marrying his king's daughter, wherein
 he must be weighed rather by her value than his own,
 15 words him, I doubt not, a great deal from the matter.

FRENCHMAN
 And then his banishment.

IACHIMO
 Ay, and the approbation of those that weep this
 lamentable divorce under her colours are wonderfully
 20 to extend him; be it but to fortify her judgment,
 which else an easy battery might lay flat, for
 taking a beggar without less quality. But how comes
 it he is to sojourn with you? How creeps
 acquaintance?

Shakescleare Translation

PHILARIO, IACHIMO, a FRENCHMAN, a DUTCHMAN, and a SPANIARD enter.

IACHIMO
 Believe me, sir, I have seen him  in Britain. He was still
 growing up, and people expected him to become just as
 virtuous as they say he eventually became. But I wasn't
 impressed by him, and wouldn't have been even if there
 had been a list of all his good qualities near him and I had
 to read each item on the list and consider it independently.

 Philario and lachimo are discussing Posthumus's virtues.

PHILARIO
 But you're talking about what he was like when he didn't
 yet have all the qualities, inner and outer, that he does now.

FRENCHMAN
 I have seen him in France. He couldn't look straight at the sun any more easily than other people could. 

 This means Posthumus was only human, and had the abilities of any human. He was nothing special.

IACHIMO
 This business of him marrying his king's daughter makes
 him seem better than he is, because she's worth far more
 than he is and people have to judge him by her worth.

FRENCHMAN
 And now he's exiled.

IACHIMO
 Yes, and the people who cry about this separation because
 they're loyal to her say amazing things about him. This is
 just to make her seem wiser because otherwise you could
 easily criticize her for marrying a worthless beggar. Why is
 he coming to stay with you? How do you know each other?

PHILARIO

His father and I were soldiers together; to whom I
have been often bound for no less than my life.
25 Here comes the Briton: let him be so entertained
amongst you as suits, with gentlemen of your
knowing, to a stranger of his quality.

Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

PHILARIO

I beseech you all, be better known to this
gentleman; whom I commend to you as a noble friend
30 of mine: how worthy he is I will leave to appear
hereafter, rather than stroy him in his own hearing.

FRENCHMAN

Sir, we have known together in Orleans.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Since when I have been debtor to you for courtesies,
35 which I will be ever to pay and yet pay still.

FRENCHMAN

Sir, you o'er-rate my poor kindness: I was glad I
did atone my countryman and you; it had been pity
you should have been put together with so mortal a
purpose as then each bore, upon importance of so
40 slight and trivial a nature.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

By your pardon, sir, I was then a young traveller;
rather shunned to go even with what I heard than in
my every action to be guided by others' experiences:
but upon my mended judgment--if I offend not to say
45 it is mended--my quarrel was not altogether slight.

FRENCHMAN

'Faith, yes, to be put to the arbitrement of swords,
and by such two that would by all likelihood have
confounded one the other, or have fallen both.

IACHIMO

Can we, with manners, ask what was the difference?

FRENCHMAN

50 Safely, I think: 'twas a contention in public,
which may, without contradiction, suffer the report.
It was much like an argument that fell out last
night, where each of us fell in praise of our
country mistresses; this gentleman at that time
55 vouching--and upon warrant of bloody
affirmation--his to be more fair, virtuous, wise,
chaste, constant-qualified and less attemptable
than any the rarest of our ladies in France.

IACHIMO

That lady is not now living, or this gentleman's
60 opinion by this worn out.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

She holds her virtue still and I my mind.

IACHIMO

You must not so far prefer her 'fore ours of Italy.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Being so far provoked as I was in France, I would
abate her nothing, though I profess myself her
65 adorer, not her friend.

PHILARIO

His father and I were soldiers together, and he often saved
my life. Here comes the British man. Treat him as well as
men of your class should treat such a noble stranger.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS enters.

PHILARIO

Please, get to know this man. You should because he's a
noble friend of mine. Instead of bragging about how great
he is in front of him, I'll let it become clear later.

FRENCHMAN

Sir, we met in Orleans.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

And since we met you've done me many favors and I owe
you a lot for that. I'll always owe you and will never be able
to repay the full amount.

FRENCHMAN

Sir, you're making too much of what was simple kindness. I
was glad to make peace between you and my countryman.
It would have been a pity if you had attacked each other in
such a deadly way, which is what you wanted to do, over
such an unimportant matter.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

You see, sir, I was not an experienced traveler then. I was
stubborn and did the opposite of what people told me I
should do based on their own experiences. But even though
I am wiser now, if I do say so myself, I don't think the
argument was over an unimportant matter.

FRENCHMAN

It was extreme to try to settle it by fighting with swords,
especially since you would probably have hurt or killed
each other.

IACHIMO

Would it be rude for us to ask what the argument was
about?

FRENCHMAN

No, it's fine. It was a public argument and so no one would
think it was wrong to tell you about it. It was a lot like an
argument we had last night when we all raved about our
girlfriends at home. This man, Posthumus, was saying that
his girlfriend was more beautiful, a better person, wiser,
less sexual, better in every way, and less easy  than than
even the best women in France, and he threatened to fight
anyone who disagreed.

 The phrase "attemptable" in the
original text implies sexual
availability. The Frenchman is
describing how Posthumus praised
his girlfriend for being faithful to him and
not easily tempted into affairs with
other men.

IACHIMO

I'm sure that either that woman is dead or this man has
changed his mind about her.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

She still has all her virtues and I still have the same opinion
about her.

IACHIMO

But you wouldn't say she was that much better than our
women here in Italy.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

If I got as worked up as I did in France, I would not take
away any of the things I said about her. I would add that I
am her admirer, not her equal.

IACHIMO

As fair and as good--a kind of hand-in-hand
comparison--had been something too fair and too good
for any lady in Britain. If she went before others
I have seen, as that diamond of yours outlustres
many I have beheld. I could not but believe she
excell'd many: but I have not seen the most
precious diamond that is, nor you the lady.

70

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I praised her as I rated her: so do I my stone.

IACHIMO

What do you esteem it at?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

75 More than the world enjoys.

IACHIMO

Either your unparagoned mistress is dead, or she's
outprized by a trifle.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

You are mistaken: the one may be sold, or given, if
there were wealth enough for the purchase, or merit
80 for the gift: the other is not a thing for sale,
and only the gift of the gods.

80

IACHIMO

Which the gods have given you?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Which, by their graces, I will keep.

IACHIMO

You may wear her in title yours: but, you know,
strange fowl light upon neighbouring ponds. Your
ring may be stolen too: so your brace of unprizable
estimations; the one is but frail and the other
casual; a cunning thief, or a that way accomplished
courtier, would hazard the winning both of first and
90 last.

90

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Your Italy contains none so accomplished a courtier
to convince the honour of my mistress, if, in the
holding or loss of that, you term her frail. I do
nothing doubt you have store of thieves;
95 notwithstanding, I fear not my ring.

95

PHILARIO

Let us leave here, gentlemen.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Sir, with all my heart. This worthy signior, I
thank him, makes no stranger of me; we are familiar at
first.

100

IACHIMO

With five times so much conversation, I should get
ground of your fair mistress, make her go back, even
to the yielding, had I admittance and opportunity to
friend.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

No, no.

IACHIMO

Even if you put her hand in hand with our women here by
saying she was as beautiful and as good as they are, you
would still be describing her as too beautiful and too good
to be a British woman. Maybe this would be true if she were
better than others I have seen, just as that diamond of
yours is brighter than many I have seen. Then I would have
to believe that she was better than many women. But I have
not seen the most precious diamond that exists, and you
have not seen the most precious woman who exists.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I described her as I saw her then, and I would do the same
thing with my diamond.

IACHIMO

How much do you think it's worth?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

More than is contained in the world.

IACHIMO

Either your unequaled lover is dead or she's worth less than
a trinket.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

You're wrong. One of them can be sold or given away, or it
could if anyone had enough money to buy it, but the other
is not a thing that's for sale, and can only be given away by
the gods.

IACHIMO

Which the gods have given to you?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Which, if they let me, I will keep.

IACHIMO

You are entitled ⁴ to her now and can wear her. But, you
know, unfamiliar birds land on familiar ponds. Your ring
could be stolen, and so could your string of high opinions of
her. One is weak and the other is temporary. A clever thief,
or a courtier good at that sort of thing, would take the bet
that they could win both things.

⁴ This is a pun on "title," which means both a name or phrase (such as "your highness") used to refer to someone of high status and a document that shows ownership over something. Posthumus has gained a title by marrying the princess, and Iachimo is saying he also now owns her like he owns the diamond, and can wear her. There is also a pun on "wear", which can mean engaging in sexual activity.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Your Italy doesn't hold a courtier talented enough to
convince my wife to sleep with him, if you mean by saying
she's "weak" that being loyal makes her weak or that she's
easily convinced to be disloyal. I don't doubt that there are
plenty of thieves here, but I'm not worried I'll lose my ring.

PHILARIO

Let's leave, gentlemen.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Gladly, sir. This good man doesn't treat me like a stranger.
We're being very informal, and I thank him for that.

IACHIMO

With only five times the amount of conversation we've had,
I would defeat your wife and make her retreat and finally
yield to me, if I could just get into her presence and was
given the opportunity. ⁵

⁵ Literally, if opportunity or chance was his friend.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

No, no.

IACHIMO

105 I dare thereupon pawn the moiety of my estate to your ring; which, in my opinion, o'ervalues it something: but I make my wager rather against your confidence than her reputation: and, to bar your offence herein too, I durst attempt it against any lady in the world.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

You are a great deal abused in too bold a persuasion; and I doubt not you sustain what you're worthy of by your attempt.

IACHIMO

What's that?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

115 A repulse: though your attempt, as you call it, deserve more; a punishment too.

PHILARIO

Gentlemen, enough of this: it came in too suddenly; let it die as it was born, and, I pray you, be better acquainted.

IACHIMO

120 Would I had put my estate and my neighbour's on the approbation of what I have spoke!

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

What lady would you choose to assail?

IACHIMO

Yours; whom in constancy you think stands so safe. I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring, 125 that, command me to the court where your lady is, with no more advantage than the opportunity of a second conference, and I will bring from thence that honour of hers which you imagine so reserved.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I will wage against your gold, gold to it: my ring 130 I hold dear as my finger; 'tis part of it.

IACHIMO

You are afraid, and therein the wiser. If you buy ladies' flesh at a million a dram, you cannot preserve it from tainting: but I see you have some religion in you, that you fear.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

135 This is but a custom in your tongue; you bear a graver purpose, I hope.

IACHIMO

I am the master of my speeches, and would undergo what's spoken, I swear.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Will you? I shall but lend my diamond till your return: let there be covenants drawn between's: my 140 mistress exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your unworthy thinking: I dare you to this match: here's my ring.

PHILARIO

I will have it no lay.

IACHIMO

145 By the gods, it is one. If I bring you no sufficient testimony that I have enjoyed the dearest bodily part of your mistress, my ten thousand ducats

IACHIMO

I'm willing to bet half of my property against your ring, which in my opinion is more than the ring is worth. It's your confidence, not her reputation, that makes me think I'll win. Don't be offended: I would try this with any woman in the world.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

You're wrong to be so sure of yourself. I don't doubt that if you try to do this you'll get what you have coming to you.

IACHIMO

What's that?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

A refusal. Though your "try," as you call it, deserves more: a punishment.

PHILARIO

Gentlemen, that's enough. This started too quickly. Let it end just as quickly, and please, make friends with each other.

IACHIMO

I wish I had bet both my property and my neighbor's to prove what I said!

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

What woman would you choose to harass?

IACHIMO

Your wife, who you're so sure is loyal. If you send me with a letter of recommendation to the court where your wife is, with just one opportunity to talk to her a second time, then I bet you ten thousand ducats ⁶ against your ring that I will take her honor, which you think is so safe, and bring it back with me.

⁶ A valuable coin.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I'll bet you gold against your gold instead. My ring is as important to me as my finger. It's part of it.

IACHIMO

You're afraid, and that's wise of you. Even if you buy women's bodies at a million ducats per ounce ⁷, you can't keep them from going bad. I see you're afraid of your wife as though she's your god.

⁷ That is, even women of the highest quality are easily corrupted. Or, maybe, even the highest quality women can be bought.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

That's just the way you talk. I hope you're actually more serious and don't really mean this.

IACHIMO

I'm in control of what I say, and I promise I'm willing to go through with what I've said.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Will you? I'll just lend you my ring until you come back. Let's draw up a contract. My wife is so much better than your worthless mind can understand. I dare you to try this. Here's my ring.

PHILARIO

I won't let this bet happen.

IACHIMO

By the gods, it's a bet. If I don't bring you good enough evidence that I've taken advantage of your wife's most pleasant body part, my ten thousand ducats will be yours.

are yours; so is your diamond too: if I come off,
and leave her in such honour as you have trust in,
she your jewel, this your jewel, and my gold are
yours: provided I have your commendation for my more
free entertainment.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I embrace these conditions; let us have articles
betwixt us. Only, thus far you shall answer: if
155 you make your voyage upon her and give me directly
to understand you have prevailed, I am no further
your enemy; she is not worth our debate: if she
remain unseduced, you not making it appear
otherwise, for your ill opinion and the assault you
160 have made to her chastity you shall answer me with
your sword.

IACHIMO

Your hand; a covenant: we will have these things set
down by lawful counsel, and straight away for
165 Britain, lest the bargain should catch cold and
starve: I will fetch my gold and have our two
wagers recorded.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Agreed.

Exeunt POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and IACHIMO

FRENCHMAN

Will this hold, think you?

PHILARIO

170 Signior Iachimo will not from it.
Pray, let us follow 'em.

Exeunt

Your diamond will be yours too. If I come back and she's still
as honorable as you believe her to be now, she (your jewel),
this ring (your jewel), and my gold will all be yours. If, that
is, you send a letter telling her to spend time with me.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I accept these conditions. Let's draw up an agreement. I
would only add that this should be your penalty: if you try
to seduce her and tell me clearly that you succeeded, I will
not be your enemy any more. She will not be worth arguing
about. If you can't tell me she was seduced, I will challenge
you to a sword-fight for your bad opinion of her and your
attack on her loyalty.

IACHIMO

Let's shake on it. It's a deal. We'll have a lawyer write these
things down, and I'll head to Britain immediately before the
deal dies of a cold.⁸ I'll get my gold and have our bets
written down.

⁸ This probably means, before either of them gets cold feet and cancels the bet.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I agree.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and IACHIMO exit.

FRENCHMAN

Do you think they'll go through with this?

PHILARIO

Iachimo won't let it go. Come on, let's follow them.

They exit.

Act 1, Scene 5

Shakespeare

Enter QUEEN, Ladies, and CORNELIUS

QUEEN

Whiles yet the dew's on ground, gather those flowers;
Make haste: who has the note of them?

FIRST LADY

I, madam.

QUEEN

Dispatch.

5

Exeunt Ladies

QUEEN

Now, master doctor, have you brought those drugs?

CORNELIUS

Pleaseth your highness, ay: here they are, madam:

Presenting a small box

CORNELIUS

10 But I beseech your grace, without offence,--
My conscience bids me ask-- wherefore you have
Commanded of me those most poisonous compounds,

Shakescleare Translation

The QUEEN, her ladies, and CORNELIUS enter.

QUEEN

Pick those flowers while there's still dew on the ground.
Hurry up. Who has the list of them?

FIRST LADY

I do, ma'am.

QUEEN

Do it.

The ladies exit.

QUEEN

Now, doctor, have you brought those drugs?

CORNELIUS

Yes, your highness. Here they are, ma'am.

He shows her a small box.

CORNELIUS

Please, don't be offended, but my conscience makes me
ask this: why have you asked me to make these really

Which are the movers of a languishing death;
But though slow, deadly?

QUEEN

I wonder, doctor,
Thou ask'st me such a question. Have I not been
Thy pupil long? Hast thou not learn'd me how
To make perfumes? distil? preserve? yea, so
That our great king himself doth woo me oft
For my confections? Having thus far proceeded,--
Unless thou think'st me devilish--is't not meet
That I did amplify my judgment in
Other conclusions? I will try the forces
Of these thy compounds on such creatures as
We count not worth the hanging, but none human,
To try the vigour of them and apply
Allayments to their act, and by them gather
Their several virtues and effects.

CORNELIUS

Your highness
Shall from this practise but make hard your heart:
Besides, the seeing these effects will be
Both noisome and infectious.

QUEEN

O, content thee.

Enter PISANIO

Aside

QUEEN

Here comes a flattering rascal; upon him
Will I first work: he's for his master,
An enemy to my son. How now, Pisanio!
Doctor, your service for this time is ended;
Take your own way.

CORNELIUS

[*Aside*] I do suspect you, madam;
But you shall do no harm.

QUEEN

[*To PISANIO*] Hark thee, a word.

CORNELIUS

[*Aside*] I do not like her. She doth think she has
Strange lingering poisons: I do know her spirit,
And will not trust one of her malice with
A drug of such damn'd nature. Those she has
Will stupefy and dull the sense awhile;
Which first, perchance, she'll prove on
cats and dogs,
Then afterward up higher: but there is
No danger in what show of death it makes,
More than the locking-up the spirits a time,
To be more fresh, reviving. She is fool'd
With a most false effect; and I the truer,
So to be false with her.

QUEEN

No further service, doctor,
Until I send for thee.

CORNELIUS

I humbly take my leave.

Exit

poisonous mixtures, which cause a slow, painful,
death—slow, but deadly?

QUEEN

I'm surprised, doctor, that you're asking me such a
question. Haven't I been your student for a long time?
Haven't you taught me how to make perfumes, alcohol, and
preserves? Am I not so good at it that our great king himself
often begs me to give him some of the things I make? Since
I've come this far in my studies, unless you think I'm evil,
isn't it right for me to learn different skills? I'm going to test
the effects of these mixtures on animals that we don't even
consider important enough to hang, but none of them will
be human. I'll test how strong the potions are and then try
their antidotes, to understand the different effects these
potions have.

CORNELIUS

Your highness, this test will just make you hard-hearted.
And seeing the effects of the poison will be both disgusting
and dangerous.

QUEEN

Don't worry.

PISANIO enters.

She speaks to herself.

Here comes a sweet-talking good-for-nothing. I'll start with
him. He's on his master's side, which makes him my son's
enemy.

[*To Pisanio*] Hey, Pisanio!

[*To Cornelius*] Doctor, I don't need anything else from you.
Go away.

CORNELIUS

[*To himself*] I'm suspicious of you, ma'am. But you won't
hurt anyone.

QUEEN

[*To PISANIO*] Listen, I have something to tell you.

CORNELIUS

[*To himself*] I don't like her. She thinks she has slow,
unusual poisons. I know what she's really like, and wouldn't
trust someone that evil with a drug of that kind. The ones
she has will send you to sleep and dull your senses for a
while. Maybe she'll try them on cats and dogs first, then on
animals higher up the chain of being. But although it makes
you seem dead, it's not dangerous. It just shuts your mind
down for a bit and you wake up energized. She'll be fooled
by this fake effect, and I'm being true to myself by giving
her a fake.

QUEEN

I won't need anything more from you, doctor, until I send
for you.

CORNELIUS

Good bye.

He exits.

QUEEN

60 Weeps she still, say'st thou? Dost thou think in time
She will not quench and let instructions enter
Where folly now possesses? Do thou work:
When thou shalt bring me word she loves my son,
I'll tell thee on the instant thou art then
65 As great as is thy master, greater, for
His fortunes all lie speechless and his name
Is at last gasp: return he cannot, nor
Continue where he is: to shift his being
Is to exchange one misery with another,
70 And every day that comes comes to decay
A day's work in him. What shalt thou expect,
To be depender on a thing that leans,
Who cannot be new built, nor has no friends,
So much as but to prop him?

The QUEEN drops the box: PISANIO takes it up

QUEEN

75 Thou takest up
Thou know'st not what; but take it for thy labour:
It is a thing I made, which hath the king
Five times redeem'd from death: I do not know
What is more cordial. Nay, I prethee, take it;
80 It is an earnest of a further good
That I mean to thee. Tell thy mistress how
The case stands with her; do't as from thyself.
Think what a chance thou changest on, but think
Thou hast thy mistress still, to boot, my son,
85 Who shall take notice of thee: I'll move the king
To any shape of thy preferment such
As thou'l desire; and then myself, I chiefly,
That set thee on to this desert, am bound
To load thy merit richly. Call my women:
90 Think on my words.

Exit PISANIO

QUEEN

A sly and constant knave,
Not to be shaked; the agent for his master
And the remembrancer of her to hold
The hand-fast to her lord. I have given him that
95 Which, if he take, shall quite unpeople her
Of liegers for her sweet, and which she after,
Except she bend her humour, shall be assured
To taste of too.

Re-enter PISANIO and Ladies

QUEEN

So, so: well done, well done:
100 The violets, cowslips, and the primroses,
Bear to my closet. Fare thee well, Pisano;
Think on my words.

Exeunt QUEEN and Ladies

PISANIO

And shall do:
But when to my good lord I prove untrue,
105 I'll choke myself: there's all I'll do for you.

Exit

QUEEN

You say she's still crying? Don't you think that, in time, she'll give in and let good advice enter her brain which is now full of silliness? Help with this. When you bring me word she's in love with my son, I'll tell you at once you're as good as your master, because his luck is so sick it can't talk and his reputation is almost dead. He can't come back or stay where he is. For him, moving means exchanging one unpleasant situation for another. And at the end of every day he hasn't achieved anything except grow older. What good is it to lean on something that's fragile and can't be built up to be stronger, and has no one to hold it up? That's what it's like to depend on Posthumus.

The QUEEN drops the box. PISANIO picks it up.

QUEEN

You don't know what you're picking up. But take it in exchange for your work. It's something I made, which saved the king from death five different times. I don't know of anything that's better for your health. [He tries to give it back] No, please, take it. It's a preview of the other good deeds I will do for you. Tell your employer what her situation is. Do it as though you're just saying what you think. Consider what good luck this is for you. You still have an employer even though you're betraying your employer. I mean, you have my son, who will show his appreciation of you. I'll get the king to give you any kind of promotion you want. And I especially, since I'm telling you about these rewards available to you, will need to pay you everything you deserve. Call my women, and think about what I've said.

PISANIO exits.

He's a sneaky and loyal good-for-nothing, and I can't get him to go away. He's his master's spy and he's reminding Imogen to stay loyal to her husband. But I have given him something which, if he takes it, will kill him and so get rid of the last of her sweet-heart's minions. After that, if she doesn't change her mind, she'll definitely be sorry.

PISANIO and some ladies re-enter.

QUEEN

Great. Well done, well done. Take the violets, the cowslips, and the primroses to my room. Good-bye, Pisano. Think about my words.

The QUEEN and the ladies exit.

PISANIO

I will. But if I ever betray my good master, I'll choke myself. That's the only thing I'll do for you.

He exits.

Act 1, Scene 6

Shakespeare

Shakes**cleare** Translation

*Enter IMOGEN***IMOGEN**

A father cruel, and a step-dame false;
 A foolish suitor to a wedded lady,
 That hath her husband banish'd;—O, that husband!
 My supreme crown of grief! and those repeated
 5 Vexations of it! Had I been thief-stol'n,
 As my two brothers, happy! but most miserable
 Is the desire that's glorious: blest be those,
 How mean soe'er, that have their honest wills,
 Which seasons comfort. Who may this be? Fie!

*Enter PISANIO and IACHIMO***PISANIO**

10 Madam, a noble gentleman of Rome,
 Comes from my lord with letters.

IACHIMO

Change you, madam?
 The worthy Leonatus is in safety
 And greets your highness dearly.

15

*Presents a letter***IMOGEN**

Thanks, good sir:
 You're kindly welcome.

IACHIMO

[Aside] All of her that is out of door most rich!
 If she be furnish'd with a mind so rare,
 20 She is alone the Arabian bird, and I
 Have lost the wager. Boldness be my friend!
 Arm me, audacity, from head to foot!
 Or, like the Parthian, I shall flying fight;
 Rather directly fly.

IMOGEN

25 [Reads] 'He is one of the noblest note, to whose
 kindnesses I am most infinitely tied. Reflect upon
 him accordingly, as you value your trust--
 LEONATUS.'
 So far I read aloud:
 30 But even the very middle of my heart
 Is warm'd by the rest, and takes it thankfully.
 You are as welcome, worthy sir, as I
 Have words to bid you, and shall find it so
 In all that I can do.

IACHIMO

35 Thanks, fairest lady.
 What, are men mad? Hath nature given them eyes
 To see this vaulted arch, and the rich crop
 Of sea and land, which can distinguish 'twixt
 The fiery orbs above and the twinn'd stones
 40 Upon the number'd beach? and can we not
 Partition make with spectacles so precious
 'Twixt fair and foul?

IMOGEN

What makes your admiration?

IACHIMO

45 It cannot be i' the eye, for apes and monkeys
 'Twixt two such shes would chatter this way and
 Contemn with mows the other; nor i' the judgment,
 For idiots in this case of favour would
 Be wisely definite; nor i' the appetite;
 Sluttish to such neat excellence opposed
 50 Should make desire vomit emptiness,
 Not so allure to feed.

*IMOGEN enters.***IMOGEN**

I have a cruel father, a lying stepmother, a silly suitor who
 wants to marry a married woman whose husband is
 banished—Oh, what a husband! He's the biggest reason for
 me to be sad! And those other annoying people make that
 sadness worse! If I'd been stolen like my two brothers, I
 would have been happy! Noble people who want
 something and don't get it are the most unhappy. People
 are lucky who can do what they want, however poor they
 are, which makes a good situation even better. Who is this?
 Go away!

*PISANIO and IACHIMO enter.***PISANIO**

Ma'am, a noble man from Rome has brought letters from
 my master.

IACHIMO

Did you just turn pale, ma'am? The good Leonatus is safe
 and greets you with love.

*He gives her a letter.***IMOGEN**

Thank you, sir. You're very welcome here.

IACHIMO

[To herself] She's very beautiful on the outside! If her mind
 is as outstanding as her looks, she's as much better than
 other women as the phoenix is better than other birds, and
 I have lost my bet. I should be bold! Boldness, make me
 strong from head to foot! Or I'll have to shoot at her while
 running away, like the Parthians do. It would be better to
 run away at once.

IMOGEN

[Reading the letter] "He's one of the men with the best
 reputations, and I owe him a lot for his kindness. So treat
 him well, if you want to be trusted.—Leonatus." I'll only
 read this part aloud. The rest of it warms my whole body,
 even the deepest part of my heart. I am grateful for it. You
 are as welcome as it's possible to be, and you'll see it's true
 from what I do for you.

IACHIMO

Thanks, most beautiful lady. Are men crazy? Has nature
 given them eyes to see the sky and the rich crops that come
 from the sea and the land, to tell apart the fiery stars above
 from the equal number of grains of sands on the crowded
 beach? And can we not use these amazing instruments to
 tell the difference between good and bad?

IMOGEN

Why are you staring?

IACHIMO

It can't be his eyes that are bad, because even monkeys
 looking at two women like this would pick one by making
 noises at her and make faces at the other one. It can't be his
 common sense, because idiots would definitely know the
 right answer when deciding which was better. Or desire,
 because messiness contrasted with such neat superiority
 would make anyone throw up rather than desire the messy
 one.

IMOGEN

What is the matter, trow?

IACHIMO

The cloyed will,
That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub
Both fill'd and running, ravening first the lamb
Longs after for the garbage.

IMOGEN

What, dear sir,
Thus raps you? Are you well?

IACHIMO

Thanks, madam; well.

60

To PISANIO

Beseech you, sir, desire
My man's abode where I did leave him: he
Is strange and peevish.

PISANIO

65 I was going, sir,
To give him welcome.

Exit

IMOGEN

Continues well my lord? His health, beseech you?

IACHIMO

Well, madam.

IMOGEN

70 Is he disposed to mirth? I hope he is.

IACHIMO

Exceeding pleasant; none a stranger there
So merry and so gamesome: he is call'd
The Briton reveller.

IMOGEN

When he was here,
75 He did incline to sadness, and oft-times
Not knowing why.

IACHIMO

I never saw him sad.
There is a Frenchman his companion, one
An eminent monsieur, that, it seems, much loves
80 A Gallian girl at home; he furnaces
The thick sighs from him, whiles the jolly Briton--
Your lord, I mean--laughs from's free lungs, cries 'O,
Can my sides hold, to think that man, who knows
By history, report, or his own proof,
85 What woman is, yea, what she cannot choose
But must be, will his free hours languish for
Assured bondage?"

IMOGEN

Will my lord say so?

IACHIMO

Ay, madam, with his eyes in flood with laughter:
90 It is a recreation to be by
And hear him mock the Frenchman. But, heavens know,
Some men are much to blame.

IMOGEN

Not he, I hope.

IMOGEN

Come on, what's the matter?

IACHIMO

He's stuffed himself, he's satisfied his desire but is not
satisfied, he's a tub that's filled but still emptying out, he's
devoured the lamb and now is hungry for garbage.

IMOGEN

What's wrong with you, sir? Are you well?

IACHIMO

Thanks, ma'am. Well...

To PISANIO

Please, sir, go find my servant where I left him. He's strange
and grumpy.

PISANIO

I was just going, sir, to welcome him.

He exits.

IMOGEN

How is my husband's health? Is he well?

IACHIMO

Well, ma'am.

IMOGEN

Is he happy? I hope he is.

IACHIMO

He's very good company. There's no other stranger there so
happy and eager to play games. He's called the British
partier.

IMOGEN

When he was here, he used to be sad a lot, and often didn't
know why.

IACHIMO

I never saw him be sad. He has a companion, a Frenchman,
a well-known man, who is in love with a French girl back
home. He's always sighing like a furnace for her, while the
cheerful Briton--your husband, I mean--laughs deeply, and
cries out: "Oh, I think I'll split my sides laughing, just
thinking that any man who knows by history, other people's
stories, or his own experience, what women are like,
no--what they can't help being like, would spend his free
time pining for a woman who would make him her slave!"

IMOGEN

My husband says that?

IACHIMO

Yes, ma'am, crying with laughter. It's such fun to be near
him and hear him make fun of the Frenchman. Heaven
knows, some men do terrible things.

IMOGEN

Not him, I hope.

IACHIMO

Not he: but yet heaven's bounty towards him might
 95 Be used more thankfully. In himself, 'tis much;
 In you, which I account his beyond all talents,
 Whilst I am bound to wonder, I am bound
 To pity too.

IMOGEN

What do you pity, sir?

IACHIMO

100 Two creatures heartily.

IMOGEN

Am I one, sir?
 You look on me: what wreck discern you in me
 Deserves your pity?

IACHIMO

Lamentable! What,
 105 To hide me from the radiant sun and solace
 I' the dungeon by a snuff?

IMOGEN

I pray you, sir,
 Deliver with more openness your answers
 To my demands. Why do you pity me?

IACHIMO

110 That others do--
 I was about to say--enjoy your-- But
 It is an office of the gods to venge it,
 Not mine to speak on 't.

IMOGEN

You do seem to know
 115 Something of me, or what concerns me: pray you,--
 Since doubting things go ill often hurts more
 Than to be sure they do; for certainties
 Either are past remedies, or, timely knowing,
 The remedy then born--discover to me
 120 What both you spur and stop.

IACHIMO

Had I this cheek
 To bathe my lips upon; this hand, whose touch,
 Whose every touch, would force the feeler's soul
 To the oath of loyalty; this object, which
 125 Takes prisoner the wild motion of mine eye,
 Fixing it only here; should I, damn'd then,
 Slaver with lips as common as the stairs
 That mount the Capitol; join gripes with hands
 Made hard with hourly falsehood--falsehood, as
 130 With labour; then by-peeping in an eye
 Base and unlustrous as the smoky light
 That's fed with stinking tallow; it were fit
 That all the plagues of hell should at one time
 Encounter such revolt.

IMOGEN

135 My lord, I fear,
 Has forgot Britain.

IACHIMO

And himself. Not I,
 Inclined to this intelligence, pronounce
 The beggary of his change; but 'tis your graces
 140 That from my mutest conscience to my tongue
 Charms this report out.

IMOGEN

Let me hear no more.

IACHIMO

Not him. But the gifts the gods gave him could be used
 better. It's terrible for him. But seeing you , who belong to
 him more than all the coins he owns, I have to feel
 amazement and pity.

IMOGEN

What do you pity, sir?

IACHIMO

Two people, with all my heart.

IMOGEN

Am I one of them, sir? You're looking at me. What disaster
 do you see in me that deserves your pity?

IACHIMO

Horrible! How could he hide from the bright sun and find
 comfort in a dungeon with a candle?

IMOGEN

Please, sir, answer my questions more clearly. Why do you
 pity me?

IACHIMO

Because other people—I was about to say—enjoy your—but
 it's the gods' job to revenge this, not mine to talk about it.

IMOGEN

You seem to know something about me or that has to do
 with me. Please—since worrying that things have gone
 wrong is often worse than knowing that they have, and it's
 either too late to change something you know has
 happened or, knowing about it in time, you can find a way
 to fix it—tell me what you want to say and why you've
 stopped yourself from saying it.

IACHIMO

If I had this cheek to kiss (this hand whose touch, whose
 every touch, would force the person who felt it to swear an
 oath of loyalty) and you to look at, who capture my eye's
 wild movement, fixing it here on you—if I, damned at once
 for it, slurped on lips as common to all as the stairs that go
 up to the Capitol building, if I gripped hands made hard by
 telling lies every hour (as though telling lies were the same
 thing as manual labor), if I peeped into an eye as lowly and
 dull as the light given off by a cheap smoky candle, it would
 be right for all the plagues of hell to come punish me for
 this rebellion.

IMOGEN

I'm afraid that my husband has forgotten Britain.

IACHIMO

And himself. It's not me who's claiming that the exchange
 he's made is so bad it leaves him a beggar. It's all your good
 qualities that draw out this report of his activities from my
 conscience, which would prefer to remain silent, and make
 me say this out loud.

IMOGEN

Don't say any more.

IACHIMO

O dearest soul! your cause doth strike my heart
With pity, that doth make me sick. A lady
145 So fair, and fasten'd to an empery,
Would make the great'st king double,-- to be partner'd
With tomboys hired with that self-exhibition
Which your own coffers yield! with diseased ventures
That play with all infirmities for gold
150 Which rotteness can lend nature! such boil'd stuff
As well might poison poison! Be revenged;
Or she that bore you was no queen, and you
Recoil from your great stock.

IMOGEN

Revenged!
155 How should I be revenged? If this be true,--
As I have such a heart that both mine ears
Must not in haste abuse--if it be true,
How should I be revenged?

IACHIMO

Should he make me
160 Live, like Diana's priest, betwixt cold sheets,
Whiles he is vaulting variable ramps,
In your despite, upon your purse? Revenge it.
I dedicate myself to your sweet pleasure,
More noble than that runagate to your bed,
165 And will continue fast to your affection,
Still close as sure.

IMOGEN

What, ho, Pisanio!

IACHIMO

Let me my service tender on your lips.

IMOGEN

Away! I do condemn mine ears that have
170 So long attended thee. If thou wert honourable,
Thou wouldest have told this tale for virtue, not
For such an end thou seek'st,--as base as strange.
Thou wrong'st a gentleman, who is as far
From thy report as thou from honour, and
175 Solicit'st here a lady that disdains
Thee and the devil alike. What ho, Pisanio!
The king my father shall be made acquainted
Of thy assault: if he shall think it fit,
A saucy stranger in his court to mart
180 As in a Romish stew and to expound
His beastly mind to us, he hath a court
He little cares for and a daughter who
He not respects at all. What, ho, Pisanio!

IACHIMO

O happy Leonatus! I may say
185 The credit that thy lady hath of thee
Deserves thy trust, and thy most perfect goodness
Her assured credit. Blessed live you long!
A lady to the worthiest sir that ever
Country call'd his! and you his mistress, only
190 For the most worthiest fit! Give me your pardon.
I have spoke this, to know if your affiance
Were deeply rooted; and shall make your lord,
That which he is, new o'er: and he is one
The truest manner'd; such a holy witch
195 That he enchantments societies into him;
Half all men's hearts are his.

IMOGEN

You make amends.

IACHIMO

He sits 'mongst men like a descended god:
He hath a kind of honour sets him off,

IACHIMO

Oh poor thing! Your situation strikes so much pity into my heart that it makes me sick. A woman so beautiful, and who comes with a kingdom, would double the value of even the greatest king. But you're shared with whores¹ paid with your own money! Add to that his terrible unnatural plans to gamble with all kinds of disgusting people for gold ²! These spotted people could poison poison! You should get your revenge. Or your mother was no queen, and you're letting down your noble family.

¹ "Tomboy," the word used in the original text, is another word for whore.

² The meaning of this line is not clear, but the general point seems to be that Posthumus is wasting Imogen's money trying to win more from unsavory people.

IMOGEN

Revenge! How would I take my revenge? If this is true - but I am so in love that I should not be willing to believe rumors I hear - if it's true, how would I get my revenge?

IACHIMO

You should think, "Is it right for him to make me live, like a nun of the goddess Diana's, lying between cold sheets?" while he's leaping over differently-sized hurdles ³, injuring you and your bank account? Take your revenge. I'm available for your pleasure. I'll treat you more nobly than that runaway from your bed, and I will continue to love you, secretly and surely.

³ This is sexual innuendo: he's sleeping with different women.

IMOGEN

Pisanio!

IACHIMO

Let me prove my willingness to serve you by kissing you.

IMOGEN

Go away! I'm angry at my ears for listening to you for so long. If you were honorable you would have told this story for a virtuous reason, not for the kind of goal you're after—that's as low as it is strange. You're acting wrongly towards a gentleman, who is as far from doing what you describe as you are from being honorable. You're trying to sleep with a woman who rejects you like she does the devil. Pisanio! My father the king will be told about your assault on me. If he thinks it's right for a rude stranger to bargain like he's in a Roman brothel and to speak his horrible mind to me, he doesn't care about his court and doesn't respect his daughter at all. Pisanio!

IACHIMO

Oh lucky Leonatus! I can say the belief your wife has in you deserves your trust in her, and your perfect goodness deserves her strong belief. May you remain this blessed for a long time! You're the wife of the most virtuous man who ever lived in a country! And you're a wife who only deserves the most virtuous man! Forgive me. I spoke this to know if you really loved him, and this news will be so welcome to your husband that it will be as though he is made new. He is one of the best-mannered people. He's so holy that it's like he's a witch who enchantments people into spending time with him. Half of all men's hearts belong to him.

IMOGEN

You're making up for your behavior.

IACHIMO

He's like a god on earth compared to other men. He has a kind of honor that sets him apart, which seems like

More than a mortal seeming. Be not angry,
Most mighty princess, that I have adventured
To try your taking a false report; which hath
Honour'd with confirmation your great judgment
In the election of a sir so rare,
205 Which you know cannot err: the love I bear him
Made me to fan you thus, but the gods made you,
Unlike all others, chaffless. Pray, your pardon.

IMOGEN

All's well, sir: take my power i' the court
for yours.

IACHIMO

210 My humble thanks. I had almost forgot
To entreat your grace but in a small request,
And yet of moment to, for it concerns
Your lord; myself and other noble friends,
Are partners in the business.

IMOGEN

215 Pray, what is't?

IACHIMO

Some dozen Romans of us and your lord--
The best feather of our wing--have mingled sums
To buy a present for the emperor
Which I, the factor for the rest, have done
220 In France: 'tis plate of rare device, and jewels
Of rich and exquisite form; their values great;
And I am something curious, being strange,
To have them in safe stowage: may it please you
To take them in protection?

IMOGEN

225 Willingly;
And pawn mine honour for their safety: since
My lord hath interest in them, I will keep them
In my bedchamber.

IACHIMO

They are in a trunk,
230 Attended by my men: I will make bold
To send them to you, only for this night;
I must aboard to-morrow.

IMOGEN

O, no, no.

IACHIMO

Yes, I beseech; or I shall short my word
235 By lengthening my return. From Gallia
I cross'd the seas on purpose and on promise
To see your grace.

IMOGEN

I thank you for your pains:
But not away to-morrow!

IACHIMO

240 O, I must, madam:
Therefore I shall beseech you, if you please
To greet your lord with writing, do't to-night:
I have outstood my time; which is material
To the tender of our present.

IMOGEN

245 I will write.
Send your trunk to me; it shall safe be kept,
And truly yielded you. You're very welcome.

something more godlike than mortal. Don't be angry, powerful princess, that I tried to tell you a lie. The fact that you could tell I was lying just confirms your good judgement, which was already apparent in your choice of such an excellent husband. You know your judgement is never wrong. I was blowing on you as though to separate wheat from chaff, but unlike everyone else, the gods made you without any chaff. Please forgive me.

IMOGEN

It's all right, sir. You'll be given all the power I have in the court.

IACHIMO

Thank you. I had almost forgotten to ask you for one small thing, but it's important, because it's about your husband. It also concerns me and some other noble friends.

IMOGEN

What is it?

IACHIMO

About twelve of us Romans and your lord—the best among us—put money together to buy a present for the emperor. I was the agent for the others and bought it in France. It's silver carved with rare designs and well-shaped precious stones. They're worth a lot. I'm a little nervous about being able to store them safely, since I'm a stranger here. Could you keep them?

IMOGEN

Gladly. And I bet my honor they'll be safe. Since my husband has a stake in them, I'll keep them in my bedroom.

IACHIMO

They're in a trunk, which my men have. I will send them to you, just for tonight. I have to sail back tomorrow.

IMOGEN

Oh, no, no.

IACHIMO

Yes, please. Or I'll break my promise by coming back later than I said. I crossed the sea from France ^A on purpose just to see you, because I promised I would.

^A Iago uses the word "Gallia", which refers to the Roman province roughly equivalent to today's France. The British characters tend to refer to this place as "France" and the Italians as "Gallia".

IMOGEN

Thank you for taking the trouble. But don't leave tomorrow!

IACHIMO

I have to, ma'am. Please, if you would like to write to your husband, do it tonight. I have been here too long, and we need to give our present as soon as possible.

IMOGEN

I will write to him. Send your trunk to me. It will be kept safe and honestly given back to you. You're very welcome.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 2, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter CLOTEM and two Lords

CLOTEM

Was there ever man had such luck! when I kissed the jack, upon an up-cast to be hit away! I had a hundred pound on't; and then a whoreson jackanapes must take me up for swearing; as if I borrowed mine oaths of him and might not spend them at my pleasure.

FIRST LORD

What got he by that? You have broke his pate with your bowl.

SECOND LORD

[Aside] If his wit had been like him that broke it, it would have run all out.

CLOTEM

10 When a gentleman is disposed to swear, it is not for any standers-by to curtail his oaths, ha?

SECOND LORD

No my lord;

Aside

nor crop the ears of them.

15

CLOTEM

Whoreson dog! I give him satisfaction? Would he had been one of my rank!

SECOND LORD

[Aside] To have smelt like a fool.

CLOTEM

I am not vexed more at any thing in the earth: a pox on't! I had rather not be so noble as I am; they dare not fight with me, because of the queen my mother: every Jack-slave hath his bellyful of fighting, and I must go up and down like a cock that nobody can match.

SECOND LORD

25 *[Aside]* You are cock and capon too; and you crow, cock, with your comb on.

CLOTEM

Sayest thou?

Shakescleare Translation

CLOTEM and two lords enter.

CLOTEM

Was any man ever this unlucky? I even had the jack and kissed it, but then I suddenly lost! I bet a hundred pounds on the card game. And then a rude son of a prostitute criticized me for swearing. As if I borrowed my swear words from him and couldn't spend them however I wanted.

FIRST LORD

But what did he get for that? You cracked his head with your bowl.

SECOND LORD

[To himself] If his brains had been like the man who cracked them open, they would all have run away.

CLOTEM

When a man feels like swearing, it's not right for a bystander to cut short his oaths, right?

SECOND LORD

No.

He speaks to himself.

Or cut off the oaths' ears.

1 The phrase "crop the ears," used in the original text, picks up on the previous use of the word "curtail"; which means to cut something short both literally and metaphorically.

CLOTEM

That dog, son of a prostitute! How dare he ask me to fight him? I wish he were in the same class as me so I could!

SECOND LORD

[To himself] He would have been a stinky fool too then.

2 The second lord plays on the word "rank", which refers to social class but also to a bad smell. If the man Cloten was arguing with were of the same "rank" as Cloten, he would smell as bad as Cloten.

CLOTEM

This annoys me more than anything on earth, darn it! I wish I weren't as noble as I am. They don't dare to fight me, because of my mother the queen. Any lower-class person can fight as much as he wants, and I have to walk around like a rooster that no other rooster can beat in a fight.

SECOND LORD

[To himself] You're a rooster and a capon. 3 And you're crowing like a foolish rooster.

3 Literally, a "capon" is a chicken castrated to make it less aggressive and improve the quality of the meat. The second lord means that Cloten is cowardly and unmanly.

CLOTEM

What did you say?

SECOND LORD

It is not fit your lordship should undertake every companion that you give offence to.

CLOTHENE

30 No, I know that: but it is fit I should commit offence to my inferiors.

SECOND LORD

Ay, it is fit for your lordship only.

CLOTHENE

Why, so I say.

FIRST LORD

Did you hear of a stranger that's come to court to-night?

35

CLOTHENE

A stranger, and I not know on't!

SECOND LORD

[Aside] He's a strange fellow himself, and knows it not.

FIRST LORD

There's an Italian come; and, 'tis thought, one of 40 Leonatus' friends.

40

CLOTHENE

Leonatus! a banished rascal; and he's another, whatsoever he be. Who told you of this stranger?

FIRST LORD

One of your lordship's pages.

CLOTHENE

Is it fit I went to look upon him? is there no 45 derogation in't?

45

SECOND LORD

You cannot derogate, my lord.

CLOTHENE

Not easily, I think.

SECOND LORD

[Aside] You are a fool granted; therefore your issues, being foolish, do not derogate.

50

CLOTHENE

Come, I'll go see this Italian: what I have lost to-day at bowls I'll win to-night of him. Come, go.

SECOND LORD

I'll attend your lordship.

Exeunt CLOTHENE and First Lord

SECOND LORD

That such a crafty devil as is his mother
Should yield the world this ass! a woman that
55 Bears all down with her brain; and this her son
Cannot take two from twenty, for his heart,
And leave eighteen. Alas, poor princess,
Thou divine Imogen, what thou endurest,
Betwixt a father by thy step-dame govern'd,
A mother hourly coining plots, a woorer
More hateful than the foul expulsion is

SECOND LORD

It's not right for you to fight every single one of your companions who offends you.

CLOTHENE

No, I know that. But it's right for me to be offensive to my social inferiors.

SECOND LORD

Yes, you're the only one who does that.

CLOTHENE

That's what I'm saying.

FIRST LORD

Did you hear about a stranger who's come to court tonight?

CLOTHENE

What? A stranger, and I don't know about him!

SECOND LORD

[To himself] He's a strange man himself, and doesn't know it.

FIRST LORD

An Italian man has come. It's thought that he's one of Leonatus's friends.

CLOTHENE

Leonatus! A banished good-for-nothing. This man's the same thing, whoever he is. Who told you about him?

FIRST LORD

One of your servants.

CLOTHENE

Would it be proper for me to go look at him? Would it lower people's opinions of me?

SECOND LORD

You couldn't possibly lower people's opinions of you, my lord.

CLOTHENE

Not easily, I think.

SECOND LORD

[To himself] Everyone already knows you're a fool. So, since anything you do will be foolish, it won't lower people's opinions any further.

CLOTHENE

All right, I'll go see this Italian man. I'll win back from him tonight the same amount of money I lost betting on lawn bowling today. Come on, let's go.

SECOND LORD

I'll meet you there.

CLOTHENE and the FIRST LORD exit.

SECOND LORD

How strange that a clever devil like his mother gave birth to such a fool! She's a woman who crushes everyone with her brain, and her son can't subtract two from twenty and get eighteen no matter how hard he tries. Poor princess, holy Imogen, you're suffering so much! You have a father ruled by your stepmother, a stepmother making up new plots every hour, a suitor who's worse than the horrible banishment of your dear husband, I mean who's worse than the separation he wants to cause between you and your

65 Of thy dear husband, than that horrid act
Of the divorce he'd make! The heavens hold firm
The walls of thy dear honour, keep unshaken
That temple, thy fair mind, that thou mayst stand,
To enjoy thy banish'd lord and this great land!

Exit

husband! May the gods keep your honor firm and keep you
sane so that you can stay strong until you get your banished
husband back and inherit this great country!

He exits.

Act 2, Scene 2

Shakespeare

A trunk is carried in. IMOGEN in bed, reading; a Lady attending

IMOGEN

Who's there? my woman Helen?

LADY

Please you, madam

IMOGEN

What hour is it?

LADY

Almost midnight, madam.

IMOGEN

5 I have read three hours then: mine eyes are weak:
Fold down the leaf where I have left: to bed:
Take not away the taper, leave it burning;
And if thou canst awake by four o' the clock,
I prithee, call me. Sleep hath seized me wholly

*Exit Lady***IMOGEN**

10 To your protection I command me, gods.
From fairies and the tempters of the night
Guard me, beseech ye.

Sleeps. IACHIMO comes from the trunk

IACHIMO

The crickets sing, and man's o'er-labour'd sense
Repairs itself by rest. Our Tarquin thus
15 Did softly press the rushes, ere he waken'd
The chastity he wounded. Cytherea,
How bravely thou becomest thy bed, fresh lily,
And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!
But kiss; one kiss! Rubies unparagon'd,
20 How dearly they do! 'Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus: the flame o' the taper
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids,
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied
Under these windows, white and azure laced
25 With blue of heaven's own tinct. But my design,
To note the chamber: I will write all down:
Such and such pictures; there the window; such
The adornment of her bed; the arras; figures,
Why, such and such; and the contents o' the story.
30 Ah, but some natural notes about her body,
Above ten thousand meaner moveables
Would testify, to enrich mine inventory.
O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her!
And be her sense but as a monument,
35 Thus in a chapel lying! Come off, come off:

Taking off her bracelet

Shakescleare Translation

A trunk is carried into IMOGEN's bedroom. She is reading in bed. One of her ladies is nearby.

IMOGEN

Who's there? Is it my attendant Helen?

LADY

Yes, ma'am.

IMOGEN

What time is it?

LADY

Almost midnight, ma'am.

IMOGEN

I have read for three hours, then. My eyes are tired. Fold down the page I stopped at. I'll go to bed. Don't take the candle. Leave it lit. And if you can wake up by four o'clock, please wake me. I'm so tired I'll fall asleep immediately.

The LADY exits.

IMOGEN

Gods, I give myself up to your protection. Save me from fairies and night-time demons, please.

She falls asleep. IACHIMO comes out of the trunk.

IACHIMO

[To himself] The crickets are singing, and people's tired-out senses are being healed by sleep. [1] Tarquin tiptoed over the floors this way, before he woke up his victim and raped her. Aphrodite [2], you fresh lily, you look so beautiful on your bed and you're whiter than the sheets! I wish I could touch you! And only kiss you—one kiss! Your lips are like the most beautiful rubies and kiss so delightfully! It's her breath that makes the room smell so good. The flame of the candle leans towards her and wants to look under her eyelids to see the lights closed up inside the windows of her eyes, which are white and the same blue as the sky. But my plan is to take notes about the room. I will write everything down. *[He starts taking notes]* There paintings, there a window, her bed is decorated in this way and has a canopy with these things embroidered on it, and what story is being told. Oh, but to make my list better I should add some notes about natural marks on her body. That would be more convincing than describing ten thousand less important objects. Deathlike sleep, keep her lying there! May she feel as little as a carved statue lying in a church!

[To her bracelet] Come off, come off.

[1] "Tarquin" is the son of the last king of ancient Rome. He raped a woman named Lucrece. This encounter was the subject of a famous poem written by Shakespeare.

[2] "Cytherea," the name used in the original text, is another name for Aphrodite or Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. Iachimo is comparing Imogen to the goddess.

He takes off her bracelet.

As slippery as the Gordian knot was hard!
 'Tis mine; and this will witness outwardly,
 As strongly as the conscience does within,
 To the madding of her lord. On her left breast
 40 A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
 I' the bottom of a cowslip: here's a voucher,
 Stronger than ever law could make: this secret
 Will force him think I have pick'd the lock and ta'en
 The treasure of her honour. No more. To what end?
 45 Why should I write this down, that's riveted,
 Screw'd to my memory? She hath been reading late
 The tale of Tereus; here the leaf's turn'd down
 Where Philomel gave up. I have enough:
 To the trunk again, and shut the spring of it.
 50 Swift, swift, you dragons of the night, that dawning
 May bare the raven's eye! I lodge in fear;
 Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here.

Clock strikes

One, two, three: time, time!

Goes into the trunk. The scene closes

That was as easy as the Gordian knot 3 was hard! This is mine. Seeing this, added to his own thoughts, will make her husband crazy. On her left breast there's a mole with five spots that look like the red marks on the petals of a cowslip. This is proof stronger than you could ever find in a court of law. My knowing this secret will make him think that I've picked her lock and stolen her honor. I don't need any more. What use would it be? Why would I write this down, when it's nailed into my memory? She was just reading the story of Tereus 4. The page is dog-eared where Philomel was raped. I have enough proof. I'll get back to the trunk, and shut the lid. Pass quickly, quickly, night, so that it's dawn soon and the birds wake up! I'm scared lying here. Although she's an angel from heaven, this is hell.

3 A knot famously difficult to untie, which Alexander the Great simply cut with a sword.

4 Another classical rapist. He raped Philomel and cut out her tongue. She got her revenge on him and was turned into a bird by the gods.

The clock strikes.

One, two, three, strikes. It's time!

He goes into the trunk. The scene ends.

Act 2, Scene 3

Shakespeare

An ante-chamber adjoining Imogen's apartments. Enter CLOTEN and Lords.

FIRST LORD

Your lordship is the most patient man in loss, the most coldest that ever turned up ace.

CLOTEN

It would make any man cold to lose.

FIRST LORD

But not every man patient after the noble temper of your lordship. You are most hot and furious when you win.

CLOTEN

Winning will put any man into courage. If I could get this foolish Imogen, I should have gold enough. It's almost morning, is't not?

FIRST LORD

10 Day, my lord.

CLOTEN

I would this music would come: I am advised to give her music o' mornings; they say it will penetrate.

Enter Musicians

CLOTEN

Come on; tune: if you can penetrate her with your fingering, so; we'll try with tongue too: if none will do, let her remain; but I'll never give o'er. First, a very excellent good-conceited thing; after, a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words to it: and then let her consider.

SONG

MUSICIANS

20

Shakescleare Translation

A room next to Imogen's rooms. CLOTEN and some lords enter.

FIRST LORD

You're the best loser, you keep your cool like no one else.

CLOTEN

Losing would make any man feel cold.

FIRST LORD

But it wouldn't make any man as patient as you are. You are so energetic and angry when you win.

CLOTEN

Winning makes any man brave. If I could get silly Imogen to marry me, I would have enough gold. It's almost morning, isn't it?

FIRST LORD

It's already day, my lord.

CLOTEN

I wish this music would arrive. I was advised to give her music in the mornings. They say that'll work. 1

1 He uses the word "penetrate", which has a sexual meaning.

MUSICIANS enter.

CLOTEN

Come on, play. If you can change her mind by just playing your instruments, great. We'll try singing too 2. If none of it works, she can stay in there. But I'll never give up. First, something really excellent and with fancy effects in it. Then, a wonderful sweet tune, with beautiful rich words in it. And then let her think about it.

The MUSICIANS sing.

MUSICIANS

2 This is his literal meaning, but the sexual innuendo in the original is obvious.

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus' gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With every thing that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise:
Arise, arise.

25

CLOTEN

So, get you gone. If this penetrate, I will
consider your music the better: if it do not, it is
a vice in her ears, which horse-hairs and
calves'-guts, nor the voice of unpaved eunuch to
boot, can never amend.

30

*Exeunt Musicians***SECOND LORD**

Here comes the king.

CLOTEN

I am glad I was up so late; for that's the reason I
was up so early: he cannot choose but take this
service I have done fathery.

35

*Enter CYMBELINE and QUEEN***CLOTEN**

Good morrow to your majesty and to my gracious mother.

CYMBELINE

Attend you here the door of our stern daughter?
Will she not forth?

CLOTEN

I have assailed her with music, but she vouchsafes no
notice.

CYMBELINE

The exile of her minion is too new;
She hath not yet forgot him: some more time
Must wear the print of his remembrance out,
And then she's yours.

45

QUEEN

You are most bound to the king,
Who lets go by no vantages that may
50 Prefer you to his daughter. Frame yourself
To orderly soliciting, and be friended
With aptness of the season; make denials
Increase your services; so seem as if
You were inspired to do those duties which
55 You tender to her; that you in all obey her,
Save when command to your dismission tends,
And therein you are senseless.

55

CLOTEN

Senseless! not so.

*Enter a Messenger***MESSENGER**

60 So like you, sir, ambassadors from Rome;
The one is Caius Lucius.

CYMBELINE

A worthy fellow,
Albeit he comes on angry purpose now;
But that's no fault of his: we must receive him
65 According to the honour of his sender;

Listen, Listen! The birds are singing at the gates of the sky
And the sun-god wakes up
To give his horses water
Cupped in flowers
And marigolds begin
To open their golden eyes.
Wake up, my sweet lady,
Along with everything pretty:
Wake up, wake up.

CLOTEN

All right, go away. If this works, I'll think your music is even
better than I think it is now. If it doesn't, there's something
wrong with her ears, and instruments made out of horse
hairs and calf guts and the voices of castrated men³ can't
change that.

³ Eunuchs were castrated so their voices wouldn't break when they grew up. "Unpaved" means literally "without stones".

*The musicians exit.***SECOND LORD**

Here comes the king.

CLOTEN

I'm glad I stayed up so late, because now by staying up all
night I'm up early. He'll be thankful for this good deed I
have done and will treat me in a fatherly way.

*CYMBELINE and the QUEEN enter.***CLOTEN**

Good morning, your majesty and my mother.

CYMBELINE

Are you waiting here at the door for my unrelenting
daughter? Is she refusing to come out?

CLOTEN

I attacked her with music, but she hasn't responded.

CYMBELINE

Her minion's exile is too recent. She hasn't forgotten him
yet. Some more time will erase her memory of him, and
then she'll be yours.

QUEEN

You owe the king a lot for not letting go of any opportunity
to try to get his daughter to like you. You should do this
right and wait for the proper time. When she says no, try
harder to please her. Act as if you felt inspired by love to do
the things you do for her and that you obey her completely,
except when she orders you to go away. In that case, you
play dumb.

CLOTEN

Dumb! I'm not.

*A MESSENGER enters.***MESSENGER**

Sir, ambassadors came from Rome. One is Caius Lucius.

CYMBELINE

He's a good man, even though he comes with an angry
message now. But that's not his fault. I must treat him as
well as the man who sent him deserves, and I have to pay
attention to him because he has acted well towards me in

And towards himself, his goodness forespent on us,
We must extend our notice. Our dear son,
When you have given good morning to your mistress,
Attend the queen and us; we shall have need
70 To employ you towards this Roman. Come, our queen.

Exeunt all but CLOTEM

CLOTEM

If she be up, I'll speak with her; if not,
Let her lie still and dream.

Knocks

By your leave, ho!
75 I Know her women are about her: what
If I do line one of their hands? 'Tis gold
Which buys admittance; oft it doth; yea, and makes
Diana's rangers false themselves, yield up
Their deer to the stand o' the stealer; and 'tis gold
80 Which makes the true man kill'd and saves the thief;
Nay, sometime hangs both thief and true man: what
Can it not do and undo? I will make
One of her women lawyer to me, for
I yet not understand the case myself.

Knocks

85 By your leave.

Enter a Lady

LADY

Who's there that knocks?

CLOTEM

A gentleman.

LADY

No more?

CLOTEM

90 Yes, and a gentlewoman's son.

LADY

That's more
Than some, whose tailors are as dear as yours,
Can justly boast of. What's your lordship's pleasure?

CLOTEM

Your lady's person: is she ready?

LADY

95 Ay,
To keep her chamber.

CLOTEM

There is gold for you;
Sell me your good report.

LADY

How! my good name? or to report of you
100 What I shall think is good?--The princess!

Enter IMOGEN

CLOTEM

Good morrow, fairest: sister, your sweet hand.

Exit Lady

the past. Dear son, when you have said hello to your girlfriend, come find the queen and me. We will need your help with this Roman. Come, my queen.

All but CLOTEM exit.

CLOTEM

If she's up, I'll speak to her. If not, she can keep lying down and dreaming.

He knocks.

Hello! [To himself] I know her attendants are with her. What if I bribe one of them? Gold often buys you a way in, and makes even the goddess Diana's attendants deceive her and give up the deer they were tracking to a thief. It's gold that leads to an honest man being killed and saves a thief. Sometimes it leads to both thief and honest man being hanged. What can't it do and undo? I'll make one of her women my lawyer 4, because I don't completely understand the case myself.

4 Cloten means he will pay off one of Imogen's ladies-in-waiting to advocate for him.

He knocks.

Hello!

A LADY enters.

LADY

Who's knocking out there?

CLOTEM

A gentleman.

LADY

That's all?

CLOTEM

Yes, and I'm also a lady's son.

LADY

That's more than some people can say who go to the same expensive tailors you do. What do you want?

CLOTEM

Your mistress. Is she ready?

LADY

Yes, to stay in her room.

CLOTEM

Here's gold for you. I'll pay you to say good things about me.

LADY

What? Are you asking me to sell my reputation? Or describe you accurately? Here's the princess!

IMOGEN enters.

CLOTEM

Good morning, beautiful one. Sister, give me your sweet hand.

The LADY exits.

IMOGEN

Good morrow, sir. You lay out too much pains
 105 For purchasing but trouble; the thanks I give
 Is telling you that I am poor of thanks
 And scarce can spare them.

CLOTEM

Still, I swear I love you.

IMOGEN

If you but said so, 'twere as deep with me:
 110 If you swear still, your recompense is still
 That I regard it not.

CLOTEM

This is no answer.

IMOGEN

But that you shall not say I yield being silent,
 I would not speak. I pray you, spare me: 'faith,
 115 I shall unfold equal courtesy
 To your best kindness: one of your great knowing
 Should learn, being taught, forbearance.

CLOTEM

To leave you in your madness, 'twere my sin:
 I will not.

IMOGEN

120 Fools are not mad folks.

CLOTEM

Do you call me fool?

IMOGEN

As I am mad, I do:
 If you'll be patient, I'll no more be mad;
 That cures us both. I am much sorry, sir,
 125 You put me to forget a lady's manners,
 By being so verbal: and learn now, for all,
 That I, which know my heart, do here pronounce,
 By the very truth of it, I care not for you,
 And am so near the lack of charity--
 130 To accuse myself--I hate you; which I had rather
 You felt than make't my boast.

CLOTEM

You sin against
 Obedience, which you owe your father. For
 The contract you pretend with that base wretch,
 135 One bred of alms and foster'd with cold dishes,
 With scraps o' the court, it is no contract, none:
 And though it be allow'd in meaner parties--
 Yet who than he more mean?--to knit their souls,
 On whom there is no more dependency
 140 But brats and beggary, in self-figured knot;
 Yet you are curb'd from that enlargement by
 The consequence o' the crown, and must not soil
 The precious note of it with a base slave.
 A hilding for a livery, a squire's cloth,
 145 A pantler, not so eminent.

IMOGEN

Profane fellow
 Wert thou the son of Jupiter and no more
 But what thou art besides, thou wert too base
 To be his groom: thou wert dignified enough,
 150 Even to the point of envy, if 'twere made
 Comparative for your virtues, to be styled
 The under-hangman of his kingdom, and hated
 For being preferred so well.

IMOGEN

Good morning, sir. You're putting in too much effort for no reward. All I can say to thank you is that I don't have much thanks left and can hardly spare any.

CLOTEM

Still, I promise I love you.

IMOGEN

If you just said you did, it would mean the same to me. If you keep promising, my answer will always be that I don't care.

CLOTEM

That's no answer.

IMOGEN

I wouldn't speak, except that if I didn't say anything, you would say my silence meant consent. Please, leave me alone. I will only pay back your kindness with rudeness. Someone of your huge intelligence should learn to give up.

CLOTEM

It would be wrong to let you be this crazy. I won't.

IMOGEN

Fools are not crazy.

CLOTEM

Are you calling me a fool?

IMOGEN

I'm crazy, so I did. If you agree to be patient, I won't be mad any more. So we're both cured. I am really sorry, sir, that you made me forget the good manners that a lady should have by talking so much. So let me announce here and now, forever, that I know my own heart and I don't care for you. I'll even accuse myself of lacking charity by saying that I hate you. I wish you could understand that without my having to say it.

CLOTEM

You're sinning by disobeying your father. The marriage you pretend to be in with that lowlife was paid for by handouts and leftovers and scraps from the court, and it isn't legally binding. Lower-class people—but who's lower than him?—are allowed to marry for love because the only consequence for them will be brats and poverty, but you can't have that freedom because you'll inherit the crown. You can't make it dirty by marrying a lower-class slave. He's a worthless man who should be a servant or a squire or a bread-carver, not raised to such a high class.

IMOGEN

You rude man, even if you were the son of Jupiter and no better than you are now, you would be too lowly to be his servant. You would be honored enough, and people would envy you, given your qualities, if you were made his kingdom's hangman's assistant, and you would be hated for being promoted so high.

CLOTEN

The south-fog rot him!

IMOGEN

155 He never can meet more mischance than come
To be but named of thee. His meanest garment,
That ever hath but clipp'd his body, is dearer
In my respect than all the hairs above thee,
Were they all made such men. How now, Pisanio!

Enter PISANIO

CLOTEN

160 'His garment!' Now the devil--

IMOGEN

To Dorothy my woman hie thee presently--

CLOTEN

'His garment!'

IMOGEN

I am sprited with a fool.
Frighted, and anger'd worse: go bid my woman
165 Search for a jewel that too casually
Hath left mine arm: it was thy master's: 'shrew me,
If I would lose it for a revenue
Of any king's in Europe. I do think
I saw't this morning: confident I am
170 Last night 'twas on mine arm; I kiss'd it:
I hope it be not gone to tell my lord
That I kiss aught but he.

PISANIO

'Twill not be lost.

IMOGEN

I hope so: go and search.

175

Exit PISANIO

CLOTEN

You have abused me:
'His meanest garment!'

IMOGEN

Ay, I said so, sir:
If you will make't an action, call witness to't.

CLOTEN

180 I will inform your father.

IMOGEN

Your mother too:
She's my good lady, and will conceive, I hope,
But the worst of me. So, I leave you, sir,
To the worst of discontent.

Exit

CLOTEN

185 I'll be revenged:
'His meanest garment!' Well.

Exit

CLOTEN

May he rot in the fog of the south of Europe!

IMOGEN

The worst thing that could happen to him is for you to just say his name. I care more about any piece of clothing he ever wore than as many men like you as you have hairs on your head. Pisanio!

PISANIO enters.

CLOTEN

"Any piece of clothing!" The devil—

IMOGEN

[To Pisanio] Go to Dorothy, my attendant—

CLOTEN

"Any piece of clothing!"

IMOGEN

A foolish man is haunting me. I'm afraid, but more angry than afraid. Go ask my attendant to search for a bracelet that's missing from my arm. It was my husband's. I swear I wouldn't lose it for the wealth of any king in Europe. I think I saw it this morning. I'm sure it was on my arm last night. I kissed it. I hope it hasn't gone to tell my husband that I kiss anything other than him.

PISANIO

It won't be lost.

IMOGEN

I hope so. Go look for it.

PISANIO exits.

CLOTEN

You were rude to me. "Any piece of clothing he ever wore!"

IMOGEN

Yes, sir, I said that. If you want to sue me, find a witness.

CLOTEN

I'll tell your father.

IMOGEN

Tell your mother too. She's in charge of me, and I hope she'll just think worse of me for this. I'll leave you to your anger, sir.

She exits.

CLOTEN

I'll get my revenge. "Any piece of clothing!" Fine.

He exits.

Act 2, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter POSTHUMUS and PHILARIO

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Fear it not, sir: I would I were so sure
To win the king as I am bold her honour
Will remain hers.

PHILARIO

What means do you make to him?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

5 Not any, but abide the change of time,
Quake in the present winter's state and wish
That warmer days would come: in these sear'd hopes,
I barely gratify your love; they failing,
I must die much your debtor.

PHILARIO

10 Your very goodness and your company
O'erpays all I can do. By this, your king
Hath heard of great Augustus: Caius Lucius
Will do's commission throughly: and I think
He'll grant the tribute, send the arrearages,
15 Or look upon our Romans, whose remembrance
Is yet fresh in their grief.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I do believe,
Statist though I am none, nor like to be,
That this will prove a war; and you shall hear
20 The legions now in Gallia sooner landed
In our not-fearing Britain than have tidings
Of any penny tribute paid. Our countrymen
Are men more order'd than when Julius Caesar
Smiled at their lack of skill, but found
25 their courage
Worthy his frowning at: their discipline,
Now mingled with their courages, will make known
To their approvers they are people such
That mend upon the world.

Enter IACHIMO

PHILARIO

30 See! Iachimo!

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

The swiftest harts have posted you by land;
And winds of all the comers kiss'd your sails,
To make your vessel nimble.

PHILARIO

Welcome, sir.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

35 I hope the briefness of your answer made
The speediness of your return.

IACHIMO

Your lady
Is one of the fairest that I have look'd upon.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

And therewithal the best; or let her beauty
40 Look through a casement to allure false hearts
And be false with them.

Shakescleare Translation

POSTHUMUS and PHILARIO enter.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Don't worry, sir. I wish I were as sure that the king would
come around to my side as I am that she won't do anything
dishonorable.

PHILARIO

What are you doing to try to contact the king?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Nothing, except wait for time to pass, like when you shiver
with cold in winter and wish that warmer days would come.
That change of season, by which I mean the king changing
his mind, is the only hope I have to repay your kindness. If it
fails, I'll die without having repaid you fully.

PHILARIO

Your goodness and your company are worth more than
anything I can do for you. By this time, your king will have
heard from great Augustus. Caius Lucius will do his job well.
And I think the king will pay the emperor his tribute and
send what he owes. Or else, he'll soon see the Romans
again, and the country is still grieving over what happened
last time the Romans invaded.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I think, although I'm not a politician and probably never will
be, that this will cause a war. It's far more likely that the
Roman legions that are now in France will be sent to invade
my fearless country of Britain than that any tribute will be
paid. Our countrymen are more organized now than when
Julius Caesar was amused at how incompetent they were
but found that their courage was not so amusing. They now
combine discipline with that courage, and anyone who
attacks them will see that they have improved.

IACHIMO enters.

PHILARIO

Look! Iachimo!

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

The fastest deer carried you over land and all the winds
filled your sails to make your ship go quickly.

PHILARIO

Welcome, sir.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I hope you came back so quickly because the answer you
got from my wife was so short.

IACHIMO

Your wife is one of the most beautiful women I've seen.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

And also the best, or her beauty would be like a woman
staring out of a window to trap disloyal hearts and betray
them.

IACHIMO

Here are letters for you.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Their tenor good, I trust.

IACHIMO

'Tis very like.

PHILARIO

45 Was Caius Lucius in the Britain court
When you were there?

IACHIMO

He was expected then,
But not approach'd.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

All is well yet.
50 Sparkles this stone as it was wont? or is't not
Too dull for your good wearing?

IACHIMO

If I had lost it,
I should have lost the worth of it in gold.
I'll make a journey twice as far, to enjoy
55 A second night of such sweet shortness which
Was mine in Britain, for the ring is won.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

The stone's too hard to come by.

IACHIMO

Not a whit,
Your lady being so easy.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

60 Make not, sir,
Your loss your sport: I hope you know that we
Must not continue friends.

IACHIMO

Good sir, we must,
If you keep covenant. Had I not brought
65 The knowledge of your mistress home, I grant
We were to question further: but I now
Profess myself the winner of her honour,
Together with your ring; and not the wronger
Of her or you, having proceeded but
70 By both your wills.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

If you can make't apparent
That you have tasted her in bed, my hand
And ring is yours; if not, the foul opinion
You had of her pure honour gains or loses
75 Your sword or mine, or masterless leaves both
To who shall find them.

IACHIMO

Sir, my circumstances,
Being so near the truth as I will make them,
Must first induce you to believe: whose strength
80 I will confirm with oath; which, I doubt not,
You'll give me leave to spare, when you shall find
You need it not.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Proceed.

IACHIMO

Here are letters for you.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I hope they contain good news.

IACHIMO

Probably.

PHILARIO

Was Caius Lucius at the British court when you were there?

IACHIMO

They were expecting him, but he wasn't there yet.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Then everything's still fine. So is this jewel as bright as it
used to be? Or has it grown too dull to wear?

IACHIMO

If I had lost it, I would only have lost its worth in gold. I
would travel twice as far to enjoy another night as
pleasantly short as the one I had in Britain. Because I won
the ring.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

No, it would be too hard to win this jewel.

IACHIMO

Not at all, since your wife is so easy.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Don't make up for your loss by messing with me. I hope you
know that we're not going to be friends after this.

IACHIMO

Sir, we have to, if you keep your promise. If I hadn't slept
with your wife before coming home, the deal was that we'd
fight. But now I've said I won her and your ring. I haven't
done wrong by you or her, since you both went through
with this willingly.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

If you can prove that you slept with her, my friendship and
my ring are yours. If not, we'll fight over the fact that you
had such a bad opinion of her reputation until one or the
other or both of us is dead and our swords are left lying on
the ground for whoever finds them.

IACHIMO

Sir, what I can tell you will make you believe I'm telling the
truth. I will confirm my story by swearing that what I say is
true. But I don't think you'll make me do that, because I'll
have already convinced you.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Go on.

IACHIMO

First, her bedchamber,--
 Where, I confess, I slept not, but profess
 Had that was well worth watching—it was hang'd
 With tapestry of silk and silver; the story
 Proud Cleopatra, when she met her Roman,
 And Cydnus swell'd above the banks, or for
 The press of boats or pride: a piece of work
 So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive
 In workmanship and value; which I wonder'd
 Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,
 Since the true life on't was—

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

This is true;
 And this you might have heard of here, by me,
 Or by some other.

IACHIMO

More particulars
 Must justify my knowledge.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

So they must,
 Or do your honour injury.

IACHIMO

The chimney
 Is south the chamber, and the chimney-piece
 Chaste Dian bathing: never saw I figures
 So likely to report themselves: the cutter
 Was as another nature, dumb; outwent her,
 Motion and breath left out.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

This is a thing
 Which you might from relation likewise reap,
 Being, as it is, much spoke of.

IACHIMO

The roof o' the chamber
 With golden cherubins is fretted: her andirons--
 I had forgot them--were two winking Cupids
 Of silver, each on one foot standing, nicely
 Depending on their brands.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

This is her honour!
 Let it be granted you have seen all this--and praise
 Be given to your remembrance-- the description
 Of what is in her chamber nothing saves
 The wager you have laid.

IACHIMO

Then, if you can,

Showing the bracelet

Be pale: I beg but leave to air this jewel; see!
 And now 'tis up again: it must be married
 To that your diamond; I'll keep them.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Jove!
 Once more let me behold it: is it that
 Which I left with her?

IACHIMO

Sir—I thank her--that:
 She stripp'd it from her arm; I see her yet;
 Her pretty action did outsell her gift,
 And yet enrich'd it too: she gave it me, and said

IACHIMO

First, her room. I admit I didn't sleep there, since I had such good reason to stay awake. The room was covered in tapestries made of silk and silver. They told the story of proud Cleopatra meeting her Roman lover, when the river Cydnus flooded either because of the weight of so many boats on it or because it was proud to carry them. That was such a beautiful piece of work, so expensive looking, that it was hard to tell which was worth more, the expert design or its valuable materials. I was amazed it was so unusually and beautifully made, since it looked so lifelike—

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

This is true. But you could have heard that from me, right here, or from someone else.

IACHIMO

I must tell you more details to prove this to you.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

You must, or you will be dishonored.

IACHIMO

The chimney is in the south of the room, and it's carved with the virgin goddess Diana washing herself. I never saw carvings that looked so alive. The person who carved them was like a second creator of the world but without the ability to make things speak. He made her more beautiful than she is in real life, but without the ability to move or breathe.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

That's also something you could have heard about, since it's talked about a lot.

IACHIMO

The roof of the room is decorated with golden angels. The irons in her fireplace—I almost forgot them—were two sparkling silver statues of Cupid, each of them showing him standing on one foot and seeming to lean on the burning wood in the fire.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

These details aren't worth as much as her honor! Even if you did see all these things—and you have a great memory, by the way—describing the stuff in her room does not win the bet you made.

IACHIMO

Well then, assuming you can...

He shows him the bracelet.

...then turn pale in shock. Please give me permission to take out this jewel. See! Now I've put it away again. It'll get married to your diamond. I'll keep them both.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

By Jove! Let me see that again. Is that the one I left with her?

IACHIMO

Sir, it is, and I'm thankful to her for giving it to me. She took it off her arm. It's as though I can still see her doing it. Her beautiful movement was worth more than the present, but

She prized it once.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

May be she pluck'd it off
135 To send it me.

IACHIMO

She writes so to you, doth she?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

O, no, no, no! 'tis true. Here, take this too;

Gives the ring

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

It is a basilisk unto mine eye,
140 Kills me to look on't. Let there be no honour
Where there is beauty; truth, where semblance; love,
Where there's another man: the vows of women
Of no more bondage be, to where they are made,
Than they are to their virtues; which is nothing.
145 O, above measure false!

PHILARIO

Have patience, sir,
And take your ring again; 'tis not yet won:
It may be probable she lost it; or
Who knows if one of her women, being corrupted,
150 Hath stol'n it from her?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Very true;
And so, I hope, he came by't. Back my ring:
Render to me some corporal sign about her,
More evident than this; for this was stolen.

IACHIMO

155 By Jupiter, I had it from her arm.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Hark you, he swears; by Jupiter he swears.
'Tis true:--nay, keep the ring--'tis true: I am sure
She would not lose it: her attendants are
All sworn and honourable:--they induced to steal it!
160 And by a stranger!--No, he hath enjoyed her:
The cognizance of her incontinency
Is this: she hath bought the name of whore
thus dearly.
There, take thy hire; and all the fiends of hell
165 Divide themselves between you!

PHILARIO

Sir, be patient:
This is not strong enough to be believed
Of one persuaded well of-

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Never talk on't;
170 She hath been colted by him.

IACHIMO

If you seek
For further satisfying, under her breast--
Worthy the pressing--lies a mole, right proud
Of that most delicate lodging: by my life,
175 I kiss'd it; and it gave me present hunger
To feed again, though full. You do remember
This stain upon her?

it also made it more valuable. She gave it to me and said it used to be important to her.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Maybe she took it off to send it to me.

IACHIMO

Does she write that in her letter to you?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Oh, no, no, no! It's true. Here, take this too.

He gives IACHIMO the ring.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Looking at that ring is like looking a basilisk in the eye:
looking at it kills me. Beauty and honor should never go
together, or truth and outward appearances, or love where
there's another man. The promises of women shouldn't be
trusted any more women can be trusted to act virtuously,
which is not at all. Oh, she was so horribly unfaithful!

PHILARIO

Wait, sir, and take your ring back. He hasn't won it yet. She
probably lost it, or maybe one of her women was convinced
to steal it from her.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

That's very true. I hope that's how he got it. Give me back
my ring. Tell me some mark on her body that's better proof
than this, because this was stolen.

IACHIMO

I swear by Jupiter, I got it straight from her own arm.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Listen, he swears. He swears by Jupiter. It's true--no, keep
the ring. It's true. I'm sure she wouldn't lose it. Her
attendants are all loyal and honorable. They couldn't be
convinced to steal it by a stranger! No, he's slept with her.
This is a sign she went out of control. All she got in return
was the name "whore." There, take your pay. May all the
devils in hell divide their punishments between you and
her!

PHILARIO

Sir, wait. This isn't good enough evidence for anyone who
has faith in—

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Never talk about it. They slept together.

IACHIMO

If you want more evidence, under her breast (which is worth
squeezing) there's a mole, which seems proud to live there.
I swear, I kissed it. And it made me desire her again, even
though I was satisfied. You do remember this mark like a
stain on her, don't you?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Ay, and it doth confirm
Another stain, as big as hell can hold,
Were there no more but it.

180

IACHIMO

Will you hear more?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Spare your arithmetic: never count the turns;
Once, and a million!

IACHIMO

I'll be sworn--

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

No swearing.
If you will swear you have not done't, you lie;
And I will kill thee, if thou dost deny
Thou'st made me cuckold.

185

IACHIMO

I'll deny nothing.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

O, that I had her here, to tear her limb-meal!
I will go there and do't, i' the court, before
Her father. I'll do something—

*Exit***PHILARIO**

Quite besides
The government of patience! You have won:
Let's follow him, and pervert the present wrath
He hath against himself.

195

IACHIMO

With all my heart.

*Exeunt***Act 2, Scene 5****Shakespeare**

Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Is there no way for men to be but women
Must be half-workers? We are all bastards;
And that most venerable man which I
Did call my father, was I know not where
5 When I was stamp'd; some coiner with his tools
Made me a counterfeit: yet my mother seem'd
The Dian of that time so doth my wife
The nonpareil of this. O, vengeance, vengeance!
Me of my lawful pleasure she restrain'd
10 And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with
A prudency so rosy the sweet view on't
Might well have warm'd old Saturn; that I thought her
As chaste as unsunn'd snow. O, all the devils!
This yellow Iachimo, in an hour,--wast not?--
15 Or less,--at first?--perchance he spoke not, but,
Like a full-acorn'd boar, a German one,
Cried 'O!' and mounted; found no opposition
But what he look'd for should oppose and she
Should from encounter guard. Could I find out
20 The woman's part in me! For there's no motion

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Yes, and it confirms that she's stained in a different way. Her sins would fill Hell up completely, even if there were no other sins in there.

IACHIMO

Do you want to hear more?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

That's enough math. Don't count the things you did,
whether there were one or a million!

IACHIMO

I promise—

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

No promising. If you promise you didn't do it, you're lying.
And I'll kill you if you deny you slept with my wife.

IACHIMO

I won't deny anything.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I wish I had her here, so I could tear her apart! I'll go there
and do it, in the court, in front of her father. I'll do
something—

*He exits.***PHILARIO**

I can't stand this any more! You won. Let's follow him, and
talk him out of doing anything terrible to himself.

IACHIMO

Absolutely.

*They exit.***Shakescleare Translation**

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS enters.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Is there no way for men to be born except for women to do
half the work? We're all illegitimate. That respected man I
called my father wasn't in the room when I was conceived. I
was a fake made by some forger. But my mother appeared
like a virgin goddess then, and my wife appears equally
astounding now. Oh, revenge, revenge! She held off my
sexual desires and often asked me to show restraint. She
asked this with such sweet prudence that even a god would
have found her attractive. I thought she was as pure as
unmelted snow. Oh, by all the devils! Unhealthy-looking
Iachimo—in an hour, wasn't it? Or less, the first time they
laid eyes on each other! Maybe he didn't speak, but like a
wild boar cried out and mounted her. He didn't find any
resistance except exactly the kind he wanted, not the kind
she should have used to stop him. I wish I could find the
part of me made out of a woman! If it's lying, that's the part
that's made from a woman. If it's buttering people up, it's
hers. If it's deceiving people, it's hers. If it's filled with lust
and disgusting thoughts, it's hers, definitely hers. If it wants
revenge, it's hers. If it's filled with ambition, jealousy,

That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
It is the woman's part: be it lying, note it,
The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;
Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges, hers;
25 Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,
Nice longing, slanders, mutability,
All faults that may be named, nay, that hell knows,
Why, hers, in part or all; but rather, all;
For even to vice
30 They are not constant but are changing still
One vice, but of a minute old, for one
Not half so old as that. I'll write against them,
Detest them, curse them: yet 'tis greater skill
In a true hate, to pray they have their will:
35 The very devils cannot plague them better.

Exit

changing clothes, disrespect, ridiculous cravings, slander, changes of mind, and all sins that don't have names, no—all the sins there are in hell, then it's partly or all hers. Or actually, all. Women aren't even faithful to evil, because they're always changing from one sin to the next within thirty seconds. I'll write about them, hate them, curse them. But it's a better revenge to pray that they get what they want. Not even the devils themselves could be worse to them than they are to themselves.

He exits.

Act 3, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter in state, CYMBELINE, QUEEN, CLOTEN, and Lords at one door, and at another, CAIUS LUCIUS and Attendants

CYMBELINE

Now say, what would Augustus Caesar with us?

CAIUS LUCIUS

When Julius Caesar, whose remembrance yet
Lives in men's eyes and will to ears and tongues
Be theme and hearing ever, was in this Britain
5 And conquer'd it, Cassibelan, thine uncle,--
Famous in Caesar's praises, no whit less
Than in his feats deserving it--for him
And his succession granted Rome a tribute,
Yearly three thousand pounds, which by thee lately
10 Is left untender'd.

QUEEN

And, to kill the marvel,
Shall be so ever.

CLOTEN

There be many Caesars,
Ere such another Julius. Britain is
15 A world by itself; and we will nothing pay
For wearing our own noses.

QUEEN

That opportunity
Which then they had to take from 's, to resume
We have again. Remember, sir, my liege,
20 The kings your ancestors, together with
The natural bravery of your isle, which stands
As Neptune's park, ribbed and paled with
With rocks unscalable and roaring waters,
With sands that will not bear your enemies' boats,
25 But suck them up to the topmast. A kind of conquest
Caesar made here; but made not here his brag
Of 'Came' and 'saw' and 'overcame': 'with shame--
That first that ever touch'd him--he was carried
From off our coast, twice beaten; and his shipping--
30 Poor ignorant baubles!-- upon our terrible seas,
Like egg-shells moved upon their surges, crack'd
As easily 'gainst our rocks: for joy whereof
The famed Cassibelan, who was once at point--
O giglot fortune! to master Caesar's sword,
35 Made Lud's town with rejoicing fires bright

Shakescleare Translation

CYMBELINE, the QUEEN, CLOTEN, and some Lords enter at one door. CAIUS LUCIUS and his attendants enter at another.

CYMBELINE

Tell us, what does August Caesar want from us?

CAIUS LUCIUS

When Julius Caesar, who's still remembered and who will be talked about forever, got to this country of Britain and conquered it, your uncle Cassibelan, who is as famous because Caesar praised him as for anything he did to deserve that praise, granted a tribute to Rome that would be paid by him and his successors, of three thousand pounds a year. You haven't paid it lately.

QUEEN

That's not so surprising—you'll get used to that, because we're never going to pay it again.

CLOTEN

There'll have to be a lot of rulers before another one as good as Julius Caesar appears. Britain is its own world, and we won't pay anyone anything for the right to wear our own noses.

QUEEN

The Romans had to take our freedom by force, and now we have a chance to get it back. Remember, husband, that your ancestors were kings and your island is naturally well fortified. It's like a park belonging to Neptune, the god of the sea, guarded by unclimbable rocks and roaring water and quicksand that will sink any boat up to its highest mast. Caesar sort of conquered us, but he wasn't talking about us when he bragged that he "came," "saw," and "conquered." He felt shame for the first time when he was defeated and had to sail away—twice. His ships, like little toys, were as fragile as eggshells on our terrible seas and cracked against our rocks. Famous Cassibelan, who almost defeated Caesar, and would have except that luck betrayed him, burned bright victory fires in the town of Lud  and encouraged the Britons to be proud of being brave.

 *Lud's Town is the name that Cymbeline's people use for what is now London. It is Cymbeline's capital city.*

And Britons strut with courage.

CLOTEM

Come, there's no more tribute to be paid: our kingdom is stronger than it was at that time; and, as I said, there is no moe such Caesars: other of them may have crook'd noses, but to owe such straight arms, none.

CYMBELINE

Son, let your mother end.

CLOTEM

We have yet many among us can gripe as hard as Cassibelan: I do not say I am one; but I have a hand. Why tribute? why should we pay tribute? If Caesar can hide the sun from us with a blanket, or put the moon in his pocket, we will pay him tribute for light; else, sir, no more tribute, pray you now.

CYMBELINE

You must know,
Till the injurious Romans did extort
This tribute from us, we were free:
Caesar's ambition,
Which swell'd so much that it did almost stretch
The sides o' the world, against all colour here
Did put the yoke upon 's; which to shake off
Becomes a warlike people, whom we reckon
Ourselves to be.

LORDS

We do.

CYMBELINE

Say, then, to Caesar,
Our ancestor was that Mulmutius which
Ordain'd our laws, whose use the sword of Caesar
Hath too much mangled; whose repair and franchise
Shall, by the power we hold, be our good deed,
Though Rome be therefore angry: Mulmutius made our
laws,
Who was the first of Britain which did put
His brows within a golden crown and call'd
Himself a king.

CAIUS LUCIUS

I am sorry, Cymbeline,
That I am to pronounce Augustus Caesar--
Caesar, that hath more kings his servants than
Thyself domestic officers--thine enemy:
Receive it from me, then: war and confusion
In Caesar's name pronounce I 'gainst thee: look
For fury not to be resisted. Thus defied,
I thank thee for myself.

CYMBELINE

Thou art welcome, Caius.
Thy Caesar knighted me; my youth I spent
Much under him; of him I gather'd honour;
Which he to seek of me again, perforce,
Behoves me keep at utterance. I am perfect
That the Pannonians and Dalmatians for
Their liberties are now in arms; a precedent
Which not to read would show the Britons cold:
So Caesar shall not find them.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Let proof speak.

CLOTEM

Come on, no more tribute needs to be paid. Our kingdom is stronger now than it was then, and, as I said, there are no more kings like Caesar. Some might have crooked noses like him, but their arms aren't as powerful.

CYMBELINE

Son, let your mother end this conversation.

CLOTEM

There are lots of us who can complain as loudly as Cassibelan. I'm not saying I'm one of them, but I do have a hand I can use to fight. Why tribute? Why should we pay tribute? If Caesar could hide the sun from us with a blanket, or put the moon in hist pocket, we would pay him tribute for light, but otherwise, sir, no tribute, please.

CYMBELINE

You should know, we were free until the cruel Romans forced us to pay this tribute. Caesar was so ambitious that the whole world almost seemed too small for him, and he made us work for him even though that was against our natures. A warlike people should try to shake off oppression, and we think that's the kind of people we are.

LORDS

We do.

CYMBELINE

So tell Caesar that our ancestor Mulmutius made laws for us, and we were forced violently by Caesar to change them. We'll do our best to do the right thing and go back to the old laws, even if it makes Rome angry. Mulmutius, who made those laws, was the first man in Britain to put on a crown and call himself king.

CAIUS LUCIUS

I'm sorry, Cymbeline, to have to call Augustus Caesar—who has more kings as servants than you have hired help—your enemy. But I have to tell you: in Caesar's name I declare war against you. You won't be able to resist our power. So, although I have to declare you an enemy, I thank you for how well you've treated me.

CYMBELINE

You're welcome, Caius. Your emperor knighted me. I spent a long time at his court when I was young, and I was honored by him. But now I have to say that he's trying to dishonor me. I know very well that the Pannonians and Dalmatians [2] are now fighting for their freedom. Not to follow their example would make us seem like we didn't care about our freedom. But we'll show Caesar that we do.

[2] "Pannonians" and "Dalmatians" are inhabitants of Hungary and a region called Dalmatia near the Adriatic sea.

CAIUS LUCIUS

We'll see.

CLOTEM

His majesty bids you welcome. Make pastime with us a day or two, or longer: if you seek us afterwards in other terms, you shall find us in our salt-water girdle: if you beat us out of it, it is yours; if you fall in the adventure, our crows shall fare the better for you; and there's an end.

CAIUS LUCIUS

So, sir.

CYMBELINE

I know your master's pleasure and he mine:
All the remain is 'Welcome!'

Exeunt

CLOTEM

The king welcomes you here. Stay and enjoy yourself with us for a day or two, or longer. If you come back for a different purpose, you'll find us buckled here in our salt-water belt ³. If you can beat us out of it, it's yours. If you fail, you'll give our crows something to eat. That's all.

³ The phrase "salt-water girdle" in the original text refers to the sea surrounding the British Isles.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Fine, sir.

CYMBELINE

I know what your king wants and he knows what I want. All that's left to say is, "Welcome!"

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter PISANIO, with a letter

PISANIO

How? of adultery? Wherfore write you not
What monster's her accuser? Leonatus,
O master! what a strange infection
Is fall'n into thy ear! What false Italian,
5 As poisonous-tongued as handed, hath prevail'd
On thy too ready hearing? Disloyal! No:
She's punish'd for her truth, and undergoes,
More goddess-like than wife-like, such assaults
As would take in some virtue. O my master!
10 Thy mind to her is now as low as were
Thy fortunes. How! that I should murder her?
Upon the love and truth and vows which I
Have made to thy command? I, her? her blood?
If it be so to do good service, never
15 Let me be counted serviceable. How look I,
That I should seem to lack humanity
so much as this fact comes to?

Reading

'Do't: the letter
that I have sent her, by her own command
20 Shall give thee opportunity.' O damn'd paper!
Black as the ink that's on thee! Senseless bauble,
Art thou a feodary for this act, and look'st
So virgin-like without? Lo, here she comes.
I am ignorant in what I am commanded.

Enter IMOGEN

IMOGEN

How now, Pisano!

PISANIO

Madam, here is a letter from my lord.

IMOGEN

Who? thy lord? that is my lord, Leonatus!
O, learn'd indeed were that astronomer
That knew the stars as I his characters;
30 He'd lay the future open. You good gods,
Let what is here contain'd relish of love,
Of my lord's health, of his content, yet not
That we two are asunder; let that grieve him:
Some griefs are med'cinal; that is one of them,

Shakescleare Translation

PISANIO enters, holding a letter.

PISANIO

What? Accused of adultery? Why don't you mention which monster accused her? Oh, Leonatus! Master! What a strange idea got into your head! What lying Italian, with as much poison in his words as he has hidden in his pocket, took advantage of your gullibility? Disloyal! No, she's not. She's being punished for being loyal to you, and is standing up to their attempts to change her mind with the strength of a goddess, not of a normal wife. Oh my master! Your opinion of her is as low as your funds were when you married her. What? He's ordering me to murder her, if I want to be true to my affection for him and to the promises I made to obey him? Me, murder her? Shed her blood? If that's called being a good servant, I never want to be one. What do I look like? Like someone who is so inhuman he could do something like this?

He reads the letter.

"Do it. The letter I sent her will make her give you the opportunity to." Oh, damned paper! As black-hearted as the ink on you is black! You unconscious object, how can you be part of this plot, while looking so innocent ¹ on the outside? She's coming. I'll act like I don't know what I've been ordered to do.

¹ He calls the paper

IMOGEN enters.

IMOGEN

Hello, Pisano!

PISANIO

Ma'am, here's a letter from my lord.

IMOGEN

Who? Your lord? That's my lord, Leonatus! An astronomer who knew the stars as well as I know his handwriting would be very wise! He could tell the future. Good gods, make what's written in here be about love and about my husband being in good health and happy, but not happy that we're apart. Let that make him sad. Some sadnesses can be cured, and that is one of them. Absence makes love stronger. I hope he's happy about everything except this

For it doth physic love: of his content,
All but in that! Good wax, thy leave. Blest be
You bees that make these locks of counsel! Lovers
And men in dangerous bonds pray not alike:
Though forfeiters you cast in prison, yet
40 You clasp young Cupid's tables. Good news, gods!

Reads

'Justice, and your father's wrath, should he take me
in his dominion, could not be so cruel to me, as
you, O the dearest of creatures, would even renew me
with your eyes. Take notice that I am in Cambria,
45 at Milford-Haven: what your own love will out of
this advise you, follow. So he wishes you all
happiness, that remains loyal to his vow, and your,
increasing in love,
LEONATUS POSTHUMUS.'
50 O, for a horse with wings! Hear'st thou, Pisanio?
He is at Milford-Haven: read, and tell me
How far 'tis thither. If one of mean affairs
May plod it in a week, why may not I
Glide thither in a day? Then, true Pisanio,--
55 Who long'st, like me, to see thy lord; who long'st,--
let me bate,--but not like me--yet long'st,
But in a fainter kind:--O, not like me;
For mine's beyond beyond-- say, and speak thick;
Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing,
60 To the smothering of the sense--how far it is
To this same blessed Milford: and by the way
Tell me how Wales could be so happy as
To inherit such a haven: but first of all,
How we may steal from hence, and for the gap
65 That we shall make in time, from our hence-going
And our return, to excuse: but first, how get hence:
Why should excuse be born or e'er begot?
We'll talk of that hereafter. Prithee, speak,
How many score of miles may we well ride
70 'Twixt hour and hour?

PISANIO

One score 'twixt sun and sun,
Madam, 's enough for you:

Aside

and too much too.

75
IMOGEN
Why, one that rode to's execution, man,
Could never go so slow: I have heard of
riding wagers,
Where horses have been nimbler than the sands
80 That run i' the clock's behalf. But this is foolery:
Go bid my woman feign a sickness; say
She'll home to her father: and provide me presently
A riding-suit, no costlier than would fit
A franklin's housewife.

PISANIO

85 Madam, you're best consider.

IMOGEN

I see before me, man: nor here, nor here,
Nor what ensues, but have a fog in them,
That I cannot look through. Away, I prithee;
Do as I bid thee: there's no more to say,
90 Accessible is none but Milford way.

Exeunt

absence! Wax seal, let me open you. Bless you, you bees
who make these seals that keep secrets! Lovers and men in
jail don't make this same prayer. Although wax seals throw
people in jail, they also keep the writings of Cupid, the god
of love, secret. Please let this be good news, gods!

She reads the letter.

"The justice system and your father's anger, if he captured
me in his country, could not be so cruel to me, as seeing
you, dearest of creatures, would not make me feel better.
You should know I'm in Cambria, at Milford-Haven. You
should do what your love for me tells you to do about this.
Wishing you all happiness, still loyal to his wedding vow,
always more in love with you, Leonatus Posthumus." Oh, I
wish I had a horse with wings! Did you hear, Pisanio? He's at
Milford-Haven. Look it up and tell me how far away that is. If
someone on ordinary business can plod there in a week,
why couldn't I glide there in a day? Then, honest Pisanio,
since I know you're eager too to see your master,
eager—but wait, not as much as I am, still eager, but less
so—oh, not as eager as me, because my eagerness is
beyond beyondness. Tell me, and speak quickly. Anyone
giving information to someone in love should speak so fast
they can't hear. How far is it to this blessed Milford? And by
the way, tell me how Wales could be so lucky to have such a
town in it. But first, tell me how we can sneak away from
here and how to explain the time we'll spend going there
and coming back. But first, how to get away from here. Why
start thinking of an excuse before you've done anything you
need to excuse? We'll talk about that later. Please, tell me,
how many tens of miles can we ride per hour?

PISANIO

Twenty miles between sunrise and sunset, ma'am, is
enough for you.

He speaks to himself.

Or too much.

IMOGEN

Someone riding to his own execution could never go that
slowly. I have heard of riding bets, when horses ran more
quickly than the sand falling through an hourglass. But this
is nonsense. Go tell my attendant to pretend she's sick. Say
she's going home to her father. And then bring me a riding
costume no more expensive than something a middle-class
housewife would wear.

PISANIO

Ma'am, you should think this through.

IMOGEN

I can see in front of me. What's there, or there, or what will
happen in the future, I can't see. Go on, please. Do as I told
you. There's nothing more to say, and no road to take
except the one to Milford.

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter, from the cave, BELARIUS; GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS following

BELARIUS

A goodly day not to keep house, with such
Whose roof's as low as ours! Stoop, boys; this gate
Instructs you how to adore the heavens and bows you
To a morning's holy office: the gates of monarchs
5 Are arch'd so high that giants may jet through
And keep their impious turbans on, without
Good morrow to the sun. Hail, thou fair heaven!
We house i' the rock, yet use thee not so hardly
As prouder livers do.

GUIDERIUS

10 Hail, heaven!

ARVIRAGUS

Hail, heaven!

BELARIUS

Now for our mountain sport: up to yond hill;
Your legs are young; I'll tread these flats. Consider,
When you above perceive me like a crow,
15 That it is place which lessens and sets off;
And you may then revolve what tales I have told you
Of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war:
This service is not service, so being done,
But being so allow'd: to apprehend thus,
20 Draws us a profit from all things we see;
And often, to our comfort, shall we find
The sharded beetle in a safer hold
Than is the full-wing'd eagle. O, this life
Is nobler than attending for a cheque,
25 Richer than doing nothing for a bauble,
Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk:
Such gain the cap of him that makes 'em fine,
Yet keeps his book uncross'd: no life to ours.

GUIDERIUS

Out of your proof you speak: we, poor unledged,
30 Have never wing'd from view o' the nest, nor know not
What air's from home. Happily this life is best,
If quiet life be best; sweeter to you
That have a sharper known; well corresponding
With your stiff age: but unto us it is
35 A cell of ignorance; travelling a-bed;
A prison for a debtor, that not dares
To stride a limit.

ARVIRAGUS

What should we speak of
When we are old as you? when we shall hear
40 The rain and wind beat dark December, how,
In this our pinching cave, shall we discourse
The freezing hours away? We have seen nothing;
We are beastly, subtle as the fox for prey,
Like warlike as the wolf for what we eat;
45 Our valour is to chase what flies; our cage
We make a quire, as doth the prison'd bird,
And sing our bondage freely.

BELARIUS

How you speak!
Did you but know the city's usurries
50 And felt them knowingly; the art o' the court
As hard to leave as keep; whose top to climb
Is certain falling, or so slippery that

Shakescleare Translation

BELARIUS enters from a cave. GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS follow him.

BELARIUS

This is a beautiful day to get outside, especially given how low our roof is! Stoop, boys. This doorway teaches you how to pray by making you bow in the morning. The doorways of kings have such high arches that giants can rush through them and keep their unholy turbans  on, without saying good morning to the sun by bowing and taking off their hats. Hello, beautiful sky! We live in a rock, but we treat you better than people proud of their fancy houses do.

 Giants were often described as followers of Islam in chivalric romances and so were often depicted wearing turbans.

GUIDERIUS

Hello, sky!

ARVIRAGUS

Hello, sky!

BELARIUS

Now, time for our mountain exercises. Go up to that hill. You have young legs. I'll stay on this plane. Think, when I seem as small as a crow from up there, that it's just context that makes you seem more or less important. And then think about the stories I told you about courts, about princes, about war. Nothing you do has meaning in itself, but in how people perceive it. Thinking this way makes us learn from everything we see. We'll often be comforted by seeing a dung beetle in a safer situation than an eagle. This life is more noble than working for pay, more enjoyable than doing nothing in return for a tiny reward, and brings you more self respect than wearing silk you can't pay for. People like that are bowed to by the people who make their expensive clothes, but can't pay them for their services. That's no life at all compared to ours.

GUIDERIUS

We only know what you tell us. We're like poor chicks who have never flown out of sight of the nest and don't know what the air is like farther away from home. Maybe this life is the best one, if a quiet life is the best kind. It seems easier to you because you've experienced a harder kind of life. It's right for your old age. But to us it's a place that keeps us ignorant, like we're traveling without leaving our beds, like we're in jail for debt and don't dare to break out.

ARVIRAGUS

What will we talk about when we're as old as you are? When we hear the rain and wind in dark December? Will we spend hours talking in our cold, narrow cave? We have seen nothing. We are like animals, as clever as a fox looking for prey, as brave as a wolf in killing what we need to eat. We use our bravery to chase things that run away. We make our cage into a choir, like captive birds, singing freely about being slaves.

BELARIUS

What are you saying? If you just knew about and had experienced the city's corruption, the craft of being in court, a craft that is as hard to give up as it is to keep doing... Advancing in court will certainly lead to disaster, or if it doesn't, the fear of a downfall is as bad as a downfall. Or

The fear's as bad as falling; the toil o' the war,
A pain that only seems to seek out danger
55 I' the name of fame and honour; which dies i'
the search,
And hath as oft a slanderous epitaph
As record of fair act; nay, many times,
Doth ill deserve by doing well; what's worse,
60 Must court'sy at the censure:-- O boys, this story
The world may read in me: my body's mark'd
With Roman swords, and my report was once
First with the best of note: Cymbeline loved me,
And when a soldier was the theme, my name
65 Was not far off: then was I as a tree
Whose boughs did bend with fruit: but in one night,
A storm or robbery, call it what you will,
Shook down my mellow hangings, nay, my leaves,
And left me bare to weather.

GUIDERIUS

70 Uncertain favour!

BELARIUS

My fault being nothing--as I have told you oft--
But that two villains, whose false oaths prevail'd
Before my perfect honour, swore to Cymbeline
I was confederate with the Romans: so
75 Follow'd my banishment, and this twenty years
This rock and these demesnes have been my world;
Where I have lived at honest freedom, paid
More pious debts to heaven than in all
The fore-end of my time. But up to the mountains!
80 This is not hunters' language: he that strikes
The venison first shall be the lord o' the feast;
To him the other two shall minister;
And we will fear no poison, which attends
In place of greater state. I'll meet you in the
85 valleys.

Exeunt GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS

How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature!
These boys know little they are sons to the king;
Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.
They think they are mine; and though train'd
90 up thus meanly
I' the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit
The roofs of palaces, and nature prompts them
In simple and low things to prince it much
Beyond the trick of others. This Polydore,
95 The heir of Cymbeline and Britain, who
The king his father call'd Guiderius,-- Jove!
When on my three-foot stool I sit and tell
The warlike feats I have done, his spirits fly out
Into my story: say 'Thus, mine enemy fell,
100 And thus I set my foot on 's neck;' even then
The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats,
Strains his young nerves and puts himself in posture
That acts my words. The younger brother, Cadwal,
Once Arviragus, in as like a figure,
105 Strikes life into my speech and shows much more
His own conceiving.-- Hark, the game is roused!
O Cymbeline! heaven and my conscience knows
Thou didst unjustly banish me: whereon,
At three and two years old, I stole these babes;
110 Thinking to bar thee of succession, as
Thou reft'st me of my lands. Euriphile,
Thou wast their nurse; they took thee for
their mother,
And every day do honour to her grave:
115 Myself, Belarius, that am Morgan call'd,
They take for natural father. The game is up.

Exit

the hard work of war—work that only leads to finding danger in the name of fame and honor, which are lost while you're looking for them. And you're just as likely to have lies written on your tombstone as a true report of your brave deeds. No, often you get slandered for acting well. And you'll have to just bow and accept a scolding. Oh boys, I'm living proof of this story. My body is scarred by Roman swords, and I was once known as one of the best men. Cymbeline loved me, and whenever people were talking about soldiers, they would mention me. I was like a tree whose branches were full of fruit. But one night a storm or robbery, whatever you want to call it, shook down all my ripe fruit, no, more, even my leaves, and left me naked in bad weather.

GUIDERIUS

Luck is so unpredictable!

BELARIUS

I was not at fault—as I have often told you—but two evil men, whose lying promises were trusted more than my honorable reputation, swore that I was collaborating with the Romans. So I was banished, and for twenty years this rock and this land have been my whole world. I have lived here in honest freedom, and have prayed more than in all the rest of my life before. But get up to the mountains! We're not talking like hunters. Whoever hits a deer first will be named the lord of the feast and the other two will serve him. We won't be afraid of being poisoned, unlike those in nobler places. I'll meet you in the valley.

GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS exit.

It's so hard to hide people's natures! These boys have no idea they're the sons of the king, and Cymbeline has no idea they're alive. They think they're my sons, and even though I've raised them humbly in this cave that makes them bow, their ambitions reach high enough to hit the roofs of palaces. Even when they're doing simple and low things they seem much more like princes than anyone else. Polydore, Cymbeline's and Britain's heir, was called Guiderius by his father. By Jove! When I sit on my stool and tell them about the deeds I did at war, he puts himself entirely into the story. When I say, "My enemy fell in this way, and I put my foot on his neck in this way," his noble blood flows into his face and he sweats and acts my words out. His younger brother, Cadwal, once called Arviragus, also acts out my stories but adds his own twist to them. Listen, they've found a deer! Oh Cymbeline! The gods and my conscience know you were wrong to banish me. So, when they were three and two years old, I stole these babies. I thought I would take your heirs from you, the way you took my lands. Euriphile, you were their nurse. They thought you were their mother, and visit her grave every day. They think I, Belarius, now called Morgan, am their birth father. The hunt has started.

 "The game is up" means that an animal has been found and is being chased by a hunter. It probably did not have its modern meaning of the lie being over, but it is possible that the hunted animal is a metaphor for Belarius, who is tired of keeping up the lies he has lived with for so long.

He exits.

Act 3, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter PISANIO and IMOGEN

IMOGEN

Thou told'st me, when we came from horse, the place
Was near at hand: ne'er long'd my mother so
To see me first, as I have now. Pisaniol! man!
Where is Posthumus? What is in thy mind,
5 That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that sigh
From the inward of thee? One, but painted thus,
Would be interpreted a thing perplex'd
Beyond self-explication: put thyself
Into a havior of less fear, ere wildness
10 Vanquish my staider senses. What's the matter?
Why tender'st thou that paper to me, with
A look untruster? If't be summer news,
Smile to't before; if winterly, thou need'st
But keep that countenance still. My husband's hand!
15 That drug-damn'd Italy hath out-craftied him,
And he's at some hard point. Speak, man: thy tongue
May take off some extremity, which to read
Would be even mortal to me.

PISANIO

Please you, read;
20 And you shall find me, wretched man, a thing
The most disdain'd of fortune.

IMOGEN

[Reads] 'Thy mistress, Pisanio, hath played the strumpet in my bed; the testimonies whereof lie bleeding in me. I speak not out of weak surmises, but from proof as strong as my grief and as certain as I expect my revenge. That part thou, Pisanio, must act for me, if thy faith be not tainted with the breach of hers. Let thine own hands take away her life: I shall give thee opportunity at
25 Milford-Haven. She hath my letter for the purpose where, if thou fear to strike and to make me certain it is done, thou art the pandar to her dishonour and equally to me disloyal.'

PISANIO

What shall I need to draw my sword? the paper
35 Hath cut her throat already. No, 'tis slander,
Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath
Rides on the posting winds and doth belie
All corners of the world: kings, queens and states,
40 Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters. What cheer, madam?

IMOGEN

False to his bed! What is it to be false?
To lie in watch there and to think on him?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? if sleep
45 charge nature,
To break it with a fearful dream of him
And cry myself awake? that's false to's bed, is it?

PISANIO

Alas, good lady!

IMOGEN

I false! Thy conscience witness: Iachimo,
50 Thou didst accuse him of incontinency;
Thou then look'dst like a villain; now methinks
Thy favour's good enough. Some jay of Italy
Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him:

Shakescleare Translation

PISANIO and IMOGEN enter.

IMOGEN

You told me, when we got off the horses, that we were almost there. My mother never wanted to see me as much before I was born as I want to see my husband now. Pisaniol! My man! Where is Posthumus? What is it you're thinking that makes you stare like that? Why are you sighing? A painting of someone making that face would be described as someone helplessly confused. Look less afraid, or I'll get scared. What's the matter? Why are you handing me that paper with such a mean look? If it's good news, smile. If it's bad, just keep looking the way you do now. My husband's handwriting! Poisonous Italy has done something bad to him, and he's in trouble. Speak! You might be able to tell me bad news in a kind way that would make it seem less bad, even if reading it would kill me.

PISANIO

Please, read this. You'll find out I'm the most unlucky man in the world.

IMOGEN

[Reading the letter] "Your mistress, Pisanio, was unfaithful to me. I have proof of this that is very painful to me. I'm not saying this based on weak guesswork, but based on proof as strong as my grief and as certain as my revenge. You'll have to get that revenge for me, Pisanio, unless you're also betraying me along with her. Kill her with your own hands. I will give you an opportunity at Milford-Haven. She has my letter setting this up. If you are too afraid to attack her and tell me it's been done, you're a pimp for her and as disloyal to me as she is."

PISANIO

I don't even need to draw my sword. This letter has already cut her throat. No, slander did, which has an edge sharper than a sword, a tongue more poisonous than all the snakes in the Nile, and a voice that rides on the winds and spreads lies to all the corners of the world. Slander reaches kings, queens, all royals, unmarried women, wives, and even gets into graves to lie about the dead. How are you feeling, ma'am?

IMOGEN

Unfaithful to him? What does it mean to be unfaithful? To lie awake in bed and think about him? To weep for an hour? If I fall asleep, to have a nightmare about him and wake up crying? Is that being unfaithful to him?

PISANIO

Poor lady!

IMOGEN

Me, unfaithful! You should be ashamed. Iachimo, you accused him of being unfaithful. You seemed like a bad man to me then, but now you seem fine. Some loose woman in Italy, who had no mother except her makeup, lied to him. I'm out of date now, like clothes that are out of fashion.

Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;
 55 And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,
 I must be ripp'd:--to pieces with me!-- O,
 Men's vows are women's traitors! All good seeming,
 By thy revolt, O husband, shall be thought
 Put on for villany; not born where't grows,
 60 But worn a bait for ladies.

PISANIO

Good madam, hear me.

IMOGEN

True honest men being heard, like false Aeneas,
 Were in his time thought false, and Sinon's weeping
 Did scandal many a holy tear, took pity
 65 From most true wretchedness: so thou, Posthumus,
 Wilt lay the leaven on all proper men;
 Goodly and gallant shall be false and perjured
 From thy great fall. Come, fellow, be thou honest:
 Do thou thy master's bidding: when thou see'st him,
 70 A little witness my obedience: look!
 I draw the sword myself: take it, and hit
 The innocent mansion of my love, my heart;
 Fear not; 'tis empty of all things but grief;
 Thy master is not there, who was indeed
 75 The riches of it: do his bidding; strike
 Thou mayst be valiant in a better cause;
 But now thou seem'st a coward.

PISANIO

Hence, vile instrument!
 Thou shalt not damn my hand.

IMOGEN

80 Why, I must die;
 And if I do not by thy hand, thou art
 No servant of thy master's. Against self-slaughter
 There is a prohibition so divine
 That cravens my weak hand. Come, here's my heart.
 85 Something's afore't. Soft, soft! we'll no defence;
 Obedient as the scabbard. What is here?
 The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus,
 All turn'd to heresy? Away, away,
 Corrupters of my faith! you shall no more
 90 Be stomachers to my heart. Thus may poor fools
 Believe false teachers: though those that
 are betray'd
 Do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor
 Stands in worse case of woe.
 95 And thou, Posthumus, thou that didst set up
 My disobedience 'gainst the king my father
 And make me put into contempt the suits
 Of princely fellows, shalt hereafter find
 It is no act of common passage, but
 100 A strain of rareness: and I grieve myself
 To think, when thou shalt be disengaged by her
 That now thou tirest on, how thy memory
 Will then be pang'd by me. Prithee, dispatch:
 The lamb entreats the butcher: where's thy knife?
 105 Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding,
 When I desire it too.

PISANIO

O gracious lady,
 Since I received command to do this business
 I have not slept one wink.

IMOGEN

110 Do't, and to bed then.

PISANIO

I'll wake mine eye-balls blind first.

Because I'm too expensive a piece of clothing to use to pad
 walls, I have to be ripped to pieces! Oh, men's promises
 betray women! Now, because of your betrayal, husband, all
 men who seem good will be assumed to be lying for some
 criminal purpose, their good qualities not natural to them
 but just bait to catch women.

PISANIO

Ma'am, listen to me.

IMOGEN

After Aeneas betrayed his lover, honest men were assumed
 to be lying. [Sinon's fake crying](#) slandered many people's
 real tears, and made people not feel pity for actual sadness.
 You, Posthumus, will infect all honest men with your
 wickedness. Good, gallant men will be seen as lying and
 unfaithful after your terrible failure. Come on, Pisanio, be a
 good servant and do what your master told you to. When
 you see him, tell him a little about how obedient I was.
 Look! I'm taking out the sword myself. Take it, and hit the
 innocent house of of my love, my heart. Don't be afraid. It's
 empty of anything but sadness. Your master is not there,
 and he was the only treasure in it. Do as he says. Stab me.
 You might be brave when you're asked to do something
 better than this, but now you seem like a coward.

 Aeneas betrayed his lover, Dido, by leaving her to found Rome. Sinon betrayed the Trojans by convincing them to let the Trojan horse in.

PISANIO

[Throwing the sword away] Go away, terrible object! You
 won't damn my hand.

IMOGEN

I have to die. If you don't do it, you can't be called your
 master's servant. It's such a terrible sin to kill yourself that
 I'm too afraid to do it. Come on, here's my heart. There's
 something in front of it. No, wait! There should be nothing
 protecting it. I'm as willing to have a sword put in me as a
 scabbard is. What's in here? The holy writings of Leonatus,
 which have turned out to be unholy? Go away, go away,
 you're tempting me to sin! I won't wear  you over my
 heart anymore! Foolish people believe liars so easily.
 Although the people who are betrayed pay the
 consequences of the betrayal, the betrayer is in an even
 worse situation. You, Posthumus, you made me disobey the
 king my father and made me reject the proposals of princes
 of my own class. You'll find out soon enough that not
 everyone would do these things. I'm sad to think that when
 the woman you're with now dumps you, you'll remember
 me and feel sad. Go on, do it. The lamb is begging the
 butcher to kill it. Where's your knife? You're too slow to do
 what your master wants even though I want it too.

 She says the writing won't be a "stomacher" on her heart. A "stomacher" is the part of a dress that fits over the corset and covers the torso. The paper covers the front of her heart as if it's this piece of the heart's clothing.

PISANIO

Good lady, ever since I was ordered to do this I haven't slept
 a wink.

IMOGEN

Do it, then go to bed.

PISANIO

I'd rather stay awake until I was blind.

IMOGEN

Wherefore then
Didst undertake it? Why hast thou abused
So many miles with a pretence? this place?
115 Mine action and thine own? our horses' labour?
The time inviting thee? the perturb'd court,
For my being absent? whereunto I never
Purpose return. Why hast thou gone so far,
To be unbent when thou hast ta'en thy stand,
120 The elected deer before thee?

PISANIO

But to win time
To lose so bad employment; in the which
I have consider'd of a course. Good lady,
Hear me with patience.

IMOGEN

125 Talk thy tongue weary; speak
I have heard I am a strumpet; and mine ear
Therein false struck, can take no greater wound,
Nor tent to bottom that. But speak.

PISANIO

Then, madam,
130 I thought you would not back again.

IMOGEN

Most like;
Bringing me here to kill me.

PISANIO

Not so, neither:
But if I were as wise as honest, then
135 My purpose would prove well. It cannot be
But that my master is abused:
Some villain, ay, and singular in his art.
Hath done you both this cursed injury.

IMOGEN

Some Roman courtezan.

PISANIO

140 No, on my life.
I'll give but notice you are dead and send him
Some bloody sign of it; for 'tis commanded
I should do so: you shall be miss'd at court,
And that will well confirm it.

IMOGEN

145 Why good fellow,
What shall I do the while? where bide? how live?
Or in my life what comfort, when I am
Dead to my husband?

PISANIO

If you'll back to the court--

IMOGEN

150 No court, no father; nor no more ado
With that harsh, noble, simple nothing,
That Cloten, whose love-suit hath been to me
As fearful as a siege.

PISANIO

If not at court,
155 Then not in Britain must you bide.

IMOGEN

Where then
Hath Britain all the sun that shines? Day, night,
Are they not but in Britain? I' the world's volume
Our Britain seems as of it, but not in 't;

IMOGEN

Then why did you start this? Why did you lie to me to get me to come so many miles? To this place? Why did we do all this? Why make our horses work so hard? Why wait so long? Why let the court get upset about my absence? I'll never go back there. Why have you gone this far, just to change your mind when you were about to do it, and your victim was in front of you like a deer you were hunting?

PISANIO

Just to win some time to think about how to get out of doing this terrible thing. And I've thought of something in that time. Listen to me patiently.

IMOGEN

Talk as much as you want, go on. I have read that I am a prostitute, and my ear, injured by that lie, can't be wounded any more than that, or cured. But talk.

PISANIO

Then, ma'am, I thought you wouldn't go back.

IMOGEN

That makes sense, since you were bringing me here to kill me.

PISANIO

No, not at all. But if I'm as wise as I am honest, this plan will end well. My master must have been lied to. Some criminal, really good at doing what he does, has told this lie about you.

IMOGEN

Some Roman prostitute.

PISANIO

No, I promise. I'll tell him you are dead and send him some blood-covered thing to prove it, because that's what he's ordered me to do. Your absence at court will be noticed, and that will make it seem true.

IMOGEN

My good man, what will I do in all that time? Where will I live? How will I support myself? And how will I be able to stand my life, when my husband wants me dead?

PISANIO

If you want to go back to the court--

IMOGEN

No court, no father. And I don't want to deal anymore with that mean, noble, stupid, no one, Cloten, whose attempt to win me over was as terrible as being attacked.

PISANIO

If you don't want to go back to court, you shouldn't stay in Britain.

IMOGEN

Then where should I go? Is Britain the only place where sun shines? Is it the only place with day and night? Compared to the whole world, Britain seems like part of it but separate

In a great pool a swan's nest: prithee, think
There's livers out of Britain.

PISANIO

I am most glad
You think of other place. The ambassador,
Lucius the Roman, comes to Milford-Haven
165 To-morrow: now, if you could wear a mind
Dark as your fortune is, and but disguise
That which, to appear itself, must not yet be
But by self-danger, you should tread a course
Pretty and full of view; yea, haply, near
170 The residence of Posthumus; so nigh at least
That though his actions were not visible, yet
Report should render him hourly to your ear
As truly as he moves.

IMOGEN

O, for such means!
175 Though peril to my modesty, not death on't,
I would adventure.

PISANIO

Well, then, here's the point:
You must forget to be a woman; change
Command into obedience: fear and niceness--
180 The handmaids of all women, or, more truly,
Woman its pretty self--into a waggish courage:
Ready in gibes, quick-answer'd, saucy and
As quarrelous as the weasel; nay, you must
Forget that rarest treasure of your cheek,
185 Exposing it--but, O, the harder heart!
Alack, no remedyl--to the greedy touch
Of common-kissing Titan, and forget
Your laboursome and dainty trims, wherein
You made great Juno angry.

IMOGEN

190 Nay, be brief
I see into thy end, and am almost
A man already.

PISANIO

First, make yourself but like one.
Fore-thinking this, I have already fit--
195 'Tis in my cloak-bag--doublet, hat, hose, all
That answer to them: would you in their serving,
And with what imitation you can borrow
From youth of such a season, 'fore noble Lucius
Present yourself, desire his service, tell him
200 wherein you're happy,--which you'll make him know,
If that his head have ear in music,--doubtless
With joy he will embrace you, for he's honourable
And doubling that, most holy. Your means abroad,
You have me, rich; and I will never fail
205 Beginning nor supplayment.

IMOGEN

Thou art all the comfort
The gods will diet me with. Prithee, away:
There's more to be consider'd; but we'll even
All that good time will give us: this attempt
210 I am soldier to, and will abide it with
A prince's courage. Away, I prithee.

PISANIO

Well, madam, we must take a short farewell,
Lest, being miss'd, I be suspected of
Your carriage from the court. My noble mistress,
215 Here is a box; I had it from the queen:
What's in't is precious; if you are sick at sea,
Or stomach-qualm'd at land, a dram of this
Will drive away distemper. To some shade,
And fit you to your manhood. May the gods

from it. It's like a swan's nest in a huge lake. Please,
remember there are people who live outside of Britain.

PISANIO

I am glad you're thinking about other countries. The Roman
ambassador, Lucius, is coming to Milford-Haven tomorrow.
If you could be secretive given your bad situation, and wear
a disguise because your real appearance could only put you
in danger, you could go where you want to go safely. Yes,
you could even end up next to where Posthumus is staying.
Close enough at least that although you couldn't see him,
you would hear every hour about whatever he was doing.

IMOGEN

What wouldn't I do for that information! This puts my
reputation in danger, but it isn't necessarily deadly to it.

PISANIO

Well then, here's what I recommend: you should stop being
a woman, and exchange obedience for commands, fear and
sensitivity (which are natural to women, or really, which are
the essence of being a woman) for mischievous courage.
You should be quick to insult people and talk back. Be rude
and as violent as a weasel. You should stop protecting your
skin (what a terrible thing, but it's the only way!), and let
the sun shine on it as it does on everyone else. And you
should give up all the work you put every day into
primping, which makes the goddess Juno angry.

IMOGEN

All right, that's enough. I see what you're getting at, and I'm
already almost done becoming a man.

PISANIO

First, just make yourself look like one. Planning on this, I
already found a jacket, hat, and pants that will fit you.
They're in my bag. Wearing them and acting as much like a
man as you can, introduce yourself to noble Lucius, ask to
be his servant, and tell him what you're good at. You can
show him, if he knows anything about music. I'm sure he'll
be glad to help you because he's honorable and, moreover,
very religious. He'll pay for your travel abroad and I'll help
with anything I can.

IMOGEN

You're the only comfort the gods have given me now. Come
on, let's go. We have more to think about, but we'll set
everything right as far as we can. I will do my best at this,
and I'll be as brave as a prince. Let's go, please.

PISANIO

Well, ma'am, I have to say good-bye for now, because if
they realize I'm gone from court they'll suspect me of
helping you escape. Here's a box. I got it from the queen.
What's in it is worth a lot. If you're sea-sick, or just have a
stomach-ache on land, a mouthful of this will cure you. Find
somewhere to hide, and become a man. May the gods
protect you!

Direct you to the best!

IMOGEN

Amen: I thank thee.

Exeunt, severally

IMOGEN

Amen. Thank you.

They exit in different directions.

Act 3, Scene 5

Shakespeare

Enter CYMBELINE, QUEEN, CLOTEN, LUCIUS, Lords, and Attendants

CYMBELINE

Thus far; and so farewell.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Thanks, royal sir.
My emperor hath wrote, I must from hence;
And am right sorry that I must report ye
5 My master's enemy.

CYMBELINE

Our subjects, sir,
Will not endure his yoke; and for ourself
To show less sovereignty than they, must needs
Appear unkinglike.

CAIUS LUCIUS

10 So, sir: I desire of you
A conduct over-land to Milford-Haven.
Madam, all joy befall your grace!

QUEEN

And you!

CYMBELINE

My lords, you are appointed for that office;
15 The due of honour in no point omit.
So farewell, noble Lucius.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Your hand, my lord.

CLOTEN

Receive it friendly; but from this time forth
I wear it as your enemy.

CAIUS LUCIUS

20 Sir, the event
Is yet to name the winner: fare you well.

CYMBELINE

Leave not the worthy Lucius, good my lords,
Till he have cross'd the Severn. Happiness!

Exeunt LUCIUS and Lords

QUEEN

25 He goes hence frowning: but it honours us
That we have given him cause.

CLOTEN

'Tis all the better;
Your valiant Britons have their wishes in it.

Shakescleare Translation

CYMBELINE, the QUEEN, CLOTEN, LUCIUS, and some Lords and Attendants enter.

CYMBELINE

That's all I have to say, so goodbye.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Thanks, sir. My emperor wrote to me to leave. I am sorry I'll have to tell him you're his enemy.

CYMBELINE

My subjects won't allow him to oppress us anymore. And if I were less eager for freedom than they are, I would seem less king-like than them.

CAIUS LUCIUS

All right, sir. I'd like to be accompanied to Milford-Haven over land. Ma'am, my best wishes to you.

QUEEN

And you!

CYMBELINE

My lords, you're here to accompany him. Treat him well.
Goodbye, noble Lucius.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Let me shake your hand, my lord.

CLOTEN

Shake it as a friend, but from now on my hand will be your enemy.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Sir, we don't know how the fight will go yet. Goodbye.

CYMBELINE

Don't leave honorable Lucius, my good lords, until he has crossed the river Severn. Best wishes!

LUCIUS and the Lords exit.

QUEEN

He's leaving us with a frown. It reflects well on us that we gave him a reason to frown.

CLOTEN

It's the best thing. Your subjects the brave Britons are getting what they want.

CYMBELINE

Lucius hath wrote already to the emperor
 30 How it goes here. It fits us therefore ripely
 Our chariots and our horsemen be in readiness:
 The powers that he already hath in Gallia
 Will soon be drawn to head, from whence he moves
 His war for Britain.

QUEEN

35 'Tis not sleepy business;
 But must be look'd to speedily and strongly.

CYMBELINE

Our expectation that it would be thus
 Hath made us forward. But, my gentle queen,
 Where is our daughter? She hath not appear'd
 40 Before the Roman, nor to us hath tender'd
 The duty of the day: she looks us like
 A thing more made of malice than of duty:
 We have noted it. Call her before us; for
 We have been too slight in sufferance.

Exit an Attendant

QUEEN

45 Royal sir,
 Since the exile of Posthumus, most retired
 Hath her life been; the cure whereof, my lord,
 'Tis time must do. Beseech your majesty,
 Forbear sharp speeches to her: she's a lady
 50 So tender of rebukes that words are strokes
 And strokes death to her.

Re-enter Attendant

CYMBELINE

Where is she, sir? How
 Can her contempt be answer'd?

ATTENDANT

Please you, sir,
 55 Her chambers are all lock'd; and there's no answer
 That will be given to the loudest noise we make.

QUEEN

My lord, when last I went to visit her,
 She pray'd me to excuse her keeping close,
 Whereto constrain'd by her infirmity,
 60 She should that duty leave unpaid to you,
 Which daily she was bound to proffer: this
 She wish'd me to make known; but our great court
 Made me to blame in memory.

CYMBELINE

Her doors lock'd?
 65 Not seen of late? Grant, heavens, that which I fear
 Prove false!

Exit

QUEEN

Son, I say, follow the king.

CLOTEN

That man of hers, Pisanio, her old servant,
 70 have not seen these two days.

QUEEN

Go, look after.

Exit CLOTEN

CYMBELINE

Lucius already wrote to the emperor about what happened here. So we should prepare our war chariots and cavalry. The emperor will summon the troops he has stationed in France. From there, he'll attack Britain.

QUEEN

We can't be lazy about this, but have to act quickly and well.

CYMBELINE

I thought this would happen so I prepared for this. But, my dear queen, where is our daughter? She didn't talk to the Roman ambassador, and hasn't come to say good morning to me yet. She's become mean and forgotten her responsibilities. I've noticed. Tell her to come see me. I've been too easygoing with her punishment.

An Attendant exits.

QUEEN

Sir, she hasn't been around people very much since Posthumus was exiled. She needs time to get over that. Please, your majesty, don't be too hard on her. She's so sensititve to criticism that criticizing her is like hitting her, and hitting her is like killing her.

The Attendant re-enters.

CYMBELINE

Where is she, sir? What can I say in response to the disrespect she shows me?

ATTENDANT

Sir, her rooms are locked, and there was no answer even when we knocked as loudly as we could.

QUEEN

My lord, when I last visited her she asked me to forgive her for staying in her room. Because she's not feeling well, she said she wouldn't be able to come see you every day the way she used to. She wanted me to tell you this, but I was distracted by all the things happening in court and forgot.

CYMBELINE

Her doors are locked? She hasn't been seen lately? Gods, please let me be wrong about what I'm afraid has happened!

He exits.

QUEEN

Son, follow the king.

CLOTEN

That old servant of hers, Pisanio, hasn't been seen for two days.

QUEEN

Go, follow him.

CLOTEN exits.

QUEEN

Pisanio, thou that stand'st so for Posthumus!
He hath a drug of mine; I pray his absence
75 Proceed by swallowing that; for he believes
It is a thing most precious. But for her,
Where is she gone? Haply, despair hath seized her,
Or, wing'd with fervor of her love, she's flown
To her desired Posthumus: gone she is
80 To death or to dishonour; and my end
Can make good use of either: she being down,
I have the placing of the British crown.

Re-enter CLOTEM

How now, my son!

CLOTEM

85 'Tis certain she is fled.
Go in and cheer the king: he rages; none
Dare come about him.

QUEEN

[Aside] All the better: may
This night forestall him of the coming day!

90 *Exit***CLOTEM**

I love and hate her: for she's fair and royal,
And that she hath all courtly parts more exquisite
Than lady, ladies, woman; from every one
The best she hath, and she, of all compounded,
95 Outsell them all; I love her therefore: but
Disdaining me and throwing favours on
The low Posthumus slanders so her judgment
That what's else rare is choked; and in that point
I will conclude to hate her, nay, indeed,
100 To be revenged upon her. For when fools Shall--

Enter PISANIO

Who is here? What, are you packing, sirrah?
Come hither: ah, you precious pander! Villain,
Where is thy lady? In a word; or else
Thou art straightway with the fiends.

PISANIO

105 O, good my lord!

CLOTEM

Where is thy lady? Or, by Jupiter,--
I will not ask again. Close villain,
I'll have this secret from thy heart, or rip
Thy heart to find it. Is she with Posthumus?
110 From whose so many weights of baseness cannot
A dram of worth be drawn.

PISANIO

Alas, my lord,
How can she be with him? When was she missed?
He is in Rome.

CLOTEM

115 Where is she, sir? Come nearer;
No further halting: satisfy me home
What is become of her.

PISANIO

O, my all-worthy lord!

CLOTEM

All-worthy villain!
120 Discover where thy mistress is at once,

QUEEN

Pisanio, you substitute for Posthumus! He has a drug of mine. I pray that he's absent from court because he drank it, believing it was a really effective medicine. But as for her, where is she? Maybe she's depressed, or her love has made her run away to see her beloved Posthumus. She's gone, and is either dead or dishonored. I can work with either of those outcomes. Now she's out of the way, I decide who gets the British crown.

CLOTEM re-enters.

Well, son?

CLOTEM

She's definitely run away. Go and comfort the king. He's furious. No one dares go near him.

QUEEN

[To herself] That's all for the best. I hope he dies tonight!

*She exits.***CLOTEM**

I love and hate her. She's beautiful and royal, and all her desirable parts are more beautiful than those of any lady, and ladies, any woman. She's taken the best parts from all women, and mixing them all together is worth more than any of them. That's why I love her. But disrespecting me and throwing herself away on low Posthumus makes her seem so brainless that all her other good qualities don't matter. So for that I'll decide to hate her, no, more than that: to be revenged against her. Because when foolish people—

PISANIO enters.

Who is here? What are you up to? Come here, you dainty pimp! You thug, where's your mistress? Tell me now, or I'll kill you and send you to hell.

PISANIO

Oh, my good lord!

CLOTEM

Where is your mistress? Or, by Jupiter—I won't ask again. You sneaking thug, I'll get this secret out of your brain, or rip out your brain. Is she with Posthumus? He's so worthless, he doesn't have an ounce of goodness in him.

PISANIO

Unfortunately, sir, how could she be with him? How long has she been gone? He's in Rome.

CLOTEM

Where is she, sir? Come closer. Don't delay any more. Tell me what happened to her.

PISANIO

Oh, my excellent lord!

CLOTEM

You excellent thug! Tell me where your mistress is at once, with the next words you say. No more of this "excellent

At the next word: no more of 'worthy lord!'
Speak, or thy silence on the instant is
Thy condemnation and thy death.

PISANIO

Then, sir,
125 This paper is the history of my knowledge
Touching her flight.

Presenting a letter

CLOTHEN

Let's see't. I will pursue her
Even to Augustus' throne.

PISANIO

130 *[Aside]* Or this, or perish.
She's far enough; and what he learns by this
May prove his travel, not her danger.

CLOTHEN

Hum!

PISANIO

135 *[Aside]* I'll write to my lord she's dead. O Imogen,
Safe mayst thou wander, safe return again!

CLOTHEN

Sirrah, is this letter true?

PISANIO

Sir, as I think.

CLOTHEN

140 It is Posthumus' hand; I know't. Sirrah, if thou
wouldst not be a villain, but do me true service,
undergo those employments wherein I should have
cause to use thee with a serious industry, that is,
what villany soe'er I bid thee do, to perform it
directly and truly, I would think thee an honest
man: thou shouldst neither want my means for thy
145 relief nor my voice for thy preferment.

PISANIO

Well, my good lord.

CLOTHEN

150 Wilt thou serve me? for since patiently and
constantly thou hast stuck to the bare fortune of
that beggar Posthumus, thou canst not, in the
course of gratitude, but be a diligent follower of
mine: wilt thou serve me?

PISANIO

Sir, I will.

CLOTHEN

Give me thy hand; here's my purse. Hast any of thy
late master's garments in thy possession?

PISANIO

155 I have, my lord, at my lodging, the same suit he
wore when he took leave of my lady and mistress.

CLOTHEN

The first service thou dost me, fetch that suit
hither: let it be thy lint service; go.

PISANIO

I shall, my lord.

lord" stuff! Speak, or your silence will condemn you to
death.

PISANIO

Then, sir, this paper contains everything I know about her
escape.

He hands CLOTHEN a letter.

CLOTHEN

Let's see this. I will follow her even as far as Augustus's
throne in Rome.

PISANIO

[To himself] I had no choice except to give him the letter or
die. She's far enough away, and what he learns from the
letter might make him travel, but won't put her in danger.

CLOTHEN

Hmm!

PISANIO

[To himself] I'll write to my master that she's dead. Oh
Imogen, travel safely and come back safe!

CLOTHEN

Sir, is this letter real?

PISANIO

I think so, sir.

CLOTHEN

It's Posthumus's handwriting: I recognize it. Sir, if you don't
want to be a thug anymore but instead want to be a good
servant to me, do the things I tell you as well as you can. I
mean, whatever criminal acts I ask you to do, do
immediately and well. Then I'll think you're an honest man.
You'll always be able to count on my money to get you out
of trouble and I'll be a character reference for you.

PISANIO

All right, my good lord.

CLOTHEN

Will you obey me? Given how patiently and loyally you
stuck by that beggar Posthumus, who has no money, you'll
definitely be loyal to me. Will you obey me?

PISANIO

Sir, I will.

CLOTHEN

Give me your hand: here's my purse. Do you have access to
any of your last master's clothes?

PISANIO

My lord, I have in my room the outfit he wore when he said
goodbye to my mistress.

CLOTHEN

The first thing you'll do in my service is fetch that outfit. It'll
be a laundry run. Go.

PISANIO

I will, my lord.

125

130

135

140

145

150

155

160

Exit

He exits.

CLOTEM

Meet thee at Milford-Haven!--I forgot to ask him one thing; I'll remember't anon:--even there, thou villain Posthumus, will I kill thee. I would these garments were come. She said upon a time--the bitterness of it I now belch from my heart--that she held the very garment of Posthumus in more respect than my noble and natural person together with the adornment of my qualities. With that suit upon my back, will I ravish her: first kill him, and in her eyes; there shall she see my valour, which will then be a torment to her contempt. He on the ground, my speech of insultment ended on his dead body, and when my lust hath dined,--which, as I say, to vex her I will execute in the clothes that she so praised,--to the court I'll knock her back, foot her home again. She hath despised me rejoicingly, and I'll be merry in my revenge.

165

170

175

Re-enter PISANIO, with the clothes

Be those the garments?

PISANIO

180 Ay, my noble lord.

CLOTEM

How long is't since she went to Milford-Haven?

PISANIO

She can scarce be there yet.

CLOTEM

Bring this apparel to my chamber; that is the second thing that I have commanded thee: the third is, 185 that thou wilt be a voluntary mute to my design. Be but dutious, and true preferment shall tender itself to thee. My revenge is now at Milford: would I had wings to follow it! Come, and be true.

185

*Exit***PISANIO**

Thou bid'st me to my loss: for true to thee
190 Were to prove false, which I will never be,
To him that is most true. To Milford go,
And find not her whom thou pursuest. Flow, flow,
You heavenly blessings, on her! This fool's speed
Be cross'd with slowness; labour be his meed!

190

*Exit***CLOTEM**

"Meet you at Milford-Haven!" I forgot to ask him one thing. I'll remember what it is soon. You thug, Posthumus, I'll kill you there. I wish those clothes were here already. She said once—it was so mean it makes me belch—that she respected Posthumus's clothes more than my noble and well endowed body and all my good qualities combined. Wearing that suit, I'll rape her. First I'll kill him, while she watches. Then she'll see how brave I am, and she'll be sorry about disrespecting me. With him lying on the ground, once my insulting speech to his dead body is over, and when I have satisfied my lust—which, as I said, to get back at her I'll do while wearing the clothes she was so enthusiastic about—I'll drag her back to court, kick her home. She was happy while insulting me, and I'll be happy to get my revenge on her.

PISANIO re-enters with the clothes.

Are those the clothes?

PISANIO

Yes, my noble lord.

CLOTEM

How long ago did she go to Milford-Haven?

PISANIO

She'll be getting there around now.

CLOTEM

Bring these clothes to my room. That is the second order I've given you. The third is, that you won't say anything about my plan. Just be obedient and I'll promote you. I'll get my revenge at Milford. I wish I had wings so I could get there more quickly. Come on, and be loyal to me.

*He exits.***PISANIO**

You're asking me to do something self-destructive. If I'm loyal to you, I'll betray the most honest man in the world, which I'll never do. Go to Milford, and don't find the woman you're chasing. Bless her, gods! Slow this fool down, and let his only reward be to work hard!

He exits.

Act 3, Scene 6

Shakespeare*Enter IMOGEN, in boy's clothes***IMOGEN**

I see a man's life is a tedious one:
I have tired myself, and for two nights together
Have made the ground my bed. I should be sick,
But that my resolution helps me. Milford,
5 When from the mountain-top Pisanio show'd thee,
Thou wast within a ken: O Jove! I think
Foundations fly the wretched; such, I mean,
Where they should be relieved. Two beggars told me
I could not miss my way: will poor folks lie,
10 That have afflictions on them, knowing 'tis
A punishment or trial? Yes; no wonder,

Shakescleare Translation*IMOGEN enters, dressed as a boy.***IMOGEN**

I see that a man's life is hard. I've tired myself out, and I slept on the ground for two nights in a row. I would have gotten sick, except that I'm determined not to. Milford, when Pisanio showed you to me from the mountain-top, you seemed close. Oh, Jove! I think help isn't given to desperate people—I mean, the help that should be given to them. Two beggars told me I was on the right road. How can poor people lie when they themselves are suffering, when they know what the consequences are? No wonder, given that rich people don't tell the truth either. Sinning when you have everything you need is worse than lying to get

When rich ones scarce tell true. To lapse in fulness
Is sorer than to lie for need, and falsehood
Is worse in kings than beggars. My dear lord!
15 Thou art one o' the false ones. Now I think on thee,
My hunger's gone; but even before, I was
At point to sink for food. But what is this?
Here is a path to't: 'tis some savage hold:
I were best not to call; I dare not call:
20 yet famine,
Ere clean it o'erthrow nature, makes it valiant,
Plenty and peace breeds cowards: hardness ever
Of hardiness is mother. Ho! who's here?
If any thing that's civil, speak; if savage,
25 Take or lend. Ho! No answer? Then I'll enter.
Best draw my sword: and if mine enemy
But fear the sword like me, he'll scarcely look on't.
Such a foe, good heavens!

Exit, to the cave

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS

You, Polydore, have proved best woodman and
Are master of the feast: Cadwal and I
Will play the cook and servant; 'tis our match:
The sweat of industry would dry and die,
But for the end it works to. Come; our stomachs
Will make what's homely savoury: weariness
35 Can snore upon the flint, when resty sloth
Finds the down pillow hard. Now peace be here,
Poor house, that keep'st thyself!

GUIDERIUS

I am thoroughly weary.

ARVIRAGUS

I am weak with toil, yet strong in appetite.

GUIDERIUS

40 There is cold meat i' the cave; we'll browse on that,
Whilst what we have kill'd be cook'd.

BELARIUS

[*Looking into the cave*]
Stay; come not in.
But that it eats our victuals, I should think
45 Here were a fairy.

GUIDERIUS

What's the matter, sir?

BELARIUS

By Jupiter, an angel! or, if not,
An earthly paragon! Behold divineness
No elder than a boy!

50

Re-enter IMOGEN

IMOGEN

Good masters, harm me not:
Before I enter'd here, I call'd; and thought
To have begg'd or bought what I have took:
good troth,
55 I have stol'n nought, nor would not, though I had found
Gold strew'd i' the floor. Here's money for my meat:
I would have left it on the board so soon
As I had made my meal, and parted
With prayers for the provider.

GUIDERIUS

60 Money, youth?

what you need, and lying is a worse sin for kings than
beggars. My dear husband! You're one of the liars. Now I'm
thinking about you, I'm not hungry any more, even though I
was about to faint from hunger. But what's this? There's a
path to it. It's some savage's hiding place. I shouldn't call
out. I don't dare to call out. But starvation, before it kills
you, makes you brave. Prosperity and peace make people
cowards. Hardship always makes people strong. Hello!
Who's there? If there's anyone civilized, speak. If you're a
savage, take my life or give me something to eat. Hello! No
answer? Then I'll go in. I'd better take out my sword. And if
my enemy is as afraid of my sword as I am, he'll barely be
able to look at it. Please grant me an enemy like that, gods!

She exits, into the cave.

BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS enter.

BELARIUS

You, Polydore, have shown yourself to be the best hunter
and you will be master of the feast. Cadwal and I will play at
being cooks and servants. That's what we agreed on. No
one would work if they didn't get anything in return. Come
on, we're hungry enough to think a humble meal tastes
delicious. Tired people can fall asleep on hard rock, while
lazy people aren't able to sleep even on down pillows. Now,
may everything be peaceful here, in our house that's been
left empty!

GUIDERIUS

I'm exhausted.

ARVIRAGUS

I'm tired from working, but hunger makes me strong.

GUIDERIUS

There's cold food in the cave. We'll snack on that while we
cook what we killed.

BELARIUS

[*Looking into the cave*] Wait, don't go in. If it weren't eating
our food, I'd think it was a fairy.

GUIDERIUS

What's the matter, sir?

BELARIUS

An angel, by Jupiter! Or, if not, something with no equal on
earth! No older than a boy.

IMOGEN re-enters.

IMOGEN

Don't hurt me. I called out before I went in there, and
wanted to beg for or buy what I took. I promise I haven't
stolen anything, and I wouldn't even if I found gold
scattered over the floor. Here's money for my food. I would
have left it on the table as soon as I had eaten, and would
have left praying for the people who provided it.

GUIDERIUS

Money, young man!

ARVIRAGUS

All gold and silver rather turn to dirt!
As 'tis no better reckon'd, but of those
Who worship dirty gods.

IMOGEN

I see you're angry:
65 Know, if you kill me for my fault, I should
Have died had I not made it.

BELARIUS

Whither bound?

IMOGEN

To Milford-Haven.

BELARIUS

What's your name?

IMOGEN

70 Fidele, sir. I have a kinsman who
Is bound for Italy; he embark'd at Milford;
To whom being going, almost spent with hunger,
I am fall'n in this offence.

BELARIUS

Prithee, fair youth,
75 Think us no churls, nor measure our good minds
By this rude place we live in. Well encounter'd!
'Tis almost night: you shall have better cheer
Ere you depart: and thanks to stay and eat it.
Boys, bid him welcome.

GUIDERIUS

80 Were you a woman, youth,
I should woo hard but be your groom. In honesty,
I bid for you as I'd buy.

ARVIRAGUS

I'll make't my comfort
He is a man; I'll love him as my brother:
85 And such a welcome as I'd give to him
After long absence, such is yours: most welcome!
Be sprightly, for you fall 'mongst friends.

IMOGEN

'Mongst friends,
If brothers.

90

Aside

IMOGEN

Would it had been so, that they
Had been my father's sons! then had my prize
Been less, and so more equal ballasting
To thee, Posthumus.

BELARIUS

95 He wrings at some distress.

GUIDERIUS

Would I could free'it!

ARVIRAGUS

Or I, whate'er it be,
What pain it cost, what danger. God's!

BELARIUS

Hark, boys.

100

Whispering

ARVIRAGUS

Gold and silver should just turn to dirt, since it isn't worth
any more than dirt except to people who worship dirty
gods.

IMOGEN

I see you're angry. You should know, if you kill me for what I
did, I would have died anyway if I hadn't done it.

BELARIUS

Where are you heading?

IMOGEN

To Milford-Haven.

BELARIUS

What's your name?

IMOGEN

Fidele ¹, sir. A relative of mine is going to Italy. He got on a
ship at Milford. I was going to meet him and almost died of
hunger on the way.

¹ The name that Imogen chooses means "faithful" in French and Italian.

BELARIUS

Please, handsome youth, don't think we're peasants, and
don't make assumptions about our characters based on
this wild place we live in. Welcome! It's almost night. We'll
feed you better before you leave, and we'll thank you for
staying and eating. Boys, welcome him.

GUIDERIUS

If you were a woman, young man, I would try everything to
get you to marry me. Really, that's what I think of you.

ARVIRAGUS

I'll make the best of him being a man: I'll love him like he's
my brother. And I'll welcome him in the same way I'd
welcome my brother after he was gone a long time. You're
very welcome. Cheer up, you're among friends now!

IMOGEN

If we're like brothers, then we're definitely friends.

To herself.

I wish it were true and that they were my father's sons!
Then I wouldn't have mattered as much, and you would
have seemed more like my equal, Posthumus.

BELARIUS

He's sad about something.

GUIDERIUS

I wish I could do something about it!

ARVIRAGUS

And me, however painful and hard it was to fix it. By the
gods!

BELARIUS

Listen, boys.

He whispers to them.

IMOGEN

Great men,
That had a court no bigger than this cave,
That did attend themselves and had the virtue
Which their own conscience seal'd them--laying by
105 That nothing-gift of differing multitudes--
Could not out-peer these twain. Pardon me, gods!
I'd change my sex to be companion with them,
Since Leonatus's false.

BELARIUS

It shall be so.
110 Boys, we'll go dress our hunt. Fair youth, come in:
Discourse is heavy, fasting; when we have supp'd,
We'll mannerly demand thee of thy story,
So far as thou wilt speak it.

GUIDERIUS

Pray, draw near.

ARVIRAGUS

115 The night to the owl and morn to the lark
less welcome.

IMOGEN

Thanks, sir.

ARVIRAGUS

I pray, draw near.

Exeunt

IMOGEN

Great men who had a court the size of this cave, who were their own servants and considered themselves virtuous (because the opinions everyone else has of you don't matter) couldn't be nobler than these two. Forgive me, gods, but I would rather be a man so I could be friends with them, especially since Leonatus is untrustworthy.

BELARIUS

Let's do that. Boys, let's prepare the meat. Handsome young man, come on in. It's hard to talk when you're hungry. When we have eaten, we'll politely ask you for your story, as much of it as you want to tell us.

GUIDERIUS

Please, come closer.

ARVIRAGUS

The night is less welcome to owls and the morning to larks than you are to us here.

IMOGEN

Thank you, sir.

ARVIRAGUS

Please, come closer.

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 7

Shakespeare

Enter two Senators and Tribunes

FIRST SENATOR

This is the tenor of the emperor's writ:
That since the common men are now in action
'Gainst the Pannonians and Dalmatians,
And that the legions now in Gallia are
5 Full weak to undertake our wars against
The fall'n-off Britons, that we do incite
The gentry to this business. He creates
Lucius preconsul: and to you the tribunes,
For this immediate levy, he commands
10 His absolute commission. Long live Caesar!

FIRST TRIBUNE

Is Lucius general of the forces?

SECOND SENATOR

Ay.

FIRST TRIBUNE

Remaining now in Gallia?

FIRST SENATOR

With those legions
15 Which I have spoke of, whereunto your levy
Must be supplyant: the words of your commission
Will tie you to the numbers and the time
Of their dispatch.

FIRST TRIBUNE

We will discharge our duty.

Shakescleare Translation

Two SENATORS and two TRIBUNES enter.

FIRST SENATOR

This is what the emperor writes: that since the commoners are fighting the Pannonians and Dalmatians, and the legions now in France are too weak to fight the rebelling Britons, we should recruit the nobles to do this. He makes Lucius preconsul, and he's ordering you tribunes to recruit people. Long live Caesar!

FIRST TRIBUNE

Is Lucius leading the forces?

SECOND SENATOR

Yes.

FIRST TRIBUNE

He's still in France?

FIRST SENATOR

With those legions I mentioned, which you'll supplement with the people you recruit. The documents I gave you will tell you the numbers needed and when they'll leave.

FIRST TRIBUNE

We'll do our duty.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter CLOTEM

CLOTEM
 I am near to the place where they should meet, if
 Pisanio have mapped it truly. How fit his garments
 serve me! Why should his mistress, who was made by
 him that made the tailor, not be fit too? the
 5 rather--saving reverence of the word--for 'tis said
 a woman's fitness comes by fits. Therein I must
 play the workman. I dare speak it to myself--for it
 is not vain-glory for a man and his glass to confer
 in his own chamber-- I mean, the lines of my body are
 10 as well drawn as his; no less young, more strong,
 not beneath him in fortunes, beyond him in the
 advantage of the time, above him in birth, alike
 conversant in general services, and more remarkable
 in single oppositions: yet this imperceptible
 15 thing loves him in my despite. What mortality is!
 Posthumus, thy head, which now is growing upon thy
 shoulders, shall within this hour be off; thy
 mistress enforced; thy garments cut to pieces before
 20 thy face: and all this done, spurn her home to her
 father; who may haply be a little angry for my so
 rough usage; but my mother, having power of his
 testiness, shall turn all into my commendations. My
 horse is tied up safe: out, sword, and to a sore
 25 purpose! Fortune, put them into my hand! This is
 the very description of their meeting-place; and
 the fellow dares not deceive me.

Exit

Shakescleare Translation

CLOTEM enters.

CLOTEM
 I'm near the place where they're supposed to meet, if
 Pisanio's map is right. His clothes fit me really well! Why
 shouldn't his wife, who was made by the same god who
 made the tailor who made the clothes, fit  me just as
 well? Or rather, as it were, it's said women have fits when
 you fit well. I will have to do some work. If I say so
 myself—and it's not vanity for a man to look in a mirror in
 his own room—my body is as attractive as his. I'm as young,
 stronger, not less rich than he is, more powerful, more
 noble, able to do the same things, and better at fighting.
 But this dimwitted thing loves him instead of me. Humans
 are such fools! Posthumus, your head, which is now
 growing on top of your shoulders, will come off within an
 hour, your wife will be raped, your clothes will be cut to
 pieces in front of your face, and all of this done to kick her
 home to her father. He may be a little angry at me for my
 rough treatment of her. But my mother is able to calm him
 and will make him see that this reflects well on me. My
 horse is safely tied up. Out, sword, and do terrible things!
 Luck, give them to me! This is exactly the meeting place he
 described, and that fellow doesn't dare lie to me.

 Clotem puns on "fit" as in the fit of
 a piece of clothing and "fit" as in
 sexual compatibility.

He exits.

Act 4, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter, from the cave, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, and IMOGEN

BELARIUS

[To IMOGEN] You are not well: remain here in the cave;
 We'll come to you after hunting.

ARVIRAGUS

[To IMOGEN] Brother, stay here.
 Are we not brothers?

IMOGEN

5 So man and man should be;
 But clay and clay differs in dignity,
 Whose dust is both alike. I am very sick.

GUIDERIUS

Go you to hunting; I'll abide with him.

Shakescleare Translation

BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, and IMOGEN enter from
 the cave.

BELARIUS

[To IMOGEN] You aren't feeling well. Stay here in the cave.
 We'll come back to see you after hunting.

ARVIRAGUS

[To IMOGEN] Brother, stay here. We're brothers, aren't we?

IMOGEN

Just as men should be to each other. But some men are
 thought to be worth more than others, even though they're
 made out of the same stuff. I am very sick.

GUIDERIUS

You go hunting. I'll stay with him.

IMOGEN

So sick I am not, yet I am not well;
 But not so citizen a wanton as
 To seem to die ere sick: so please you, leave me;
 Stick to your journal course: the breach of custom
 Is breach of all. I am ill, but your being by me
 Cannot amend me; society is no comfort
 To one not sociable: I am not very sick,
 Since I can reason of it. Pray you, trust me here:
 I'll rob none but myself; and let me die,
 Stealing so poorly.

GUIDERIUS

I love thee; I have spoke it
 How much the quantity, the weight as much,
 As I do love my father.

BELARIUS

What! how! how!

ARVIRAGUS

If it be sin to say so, I yoke me
 In my good brother's fault: I know not why
 I love this youth; and I have heard you say,
 Love's reason's without reason: the bier at door,
 And a demand who is't shall die, I'd say
 'My father, not this youth.'

BELARIUS

[Aside] O noble strain!
 O worthiness of nature! breed of greatness!
 Cowards father cowards and base things sire base:
 Nature hath meal and bran, contempt and grace.
 I'm not their father; yet who this should be,
 Doth miracle itself, loved before me.
 'Tis the ninth hour o' the morn.

ARVIRAGUS

Brother, farewell.

IMOGEN

I wish ye sport.

ARVIRAGUS

You health. So please you, sir.

IMOGEN

[Aside] These are kind creatures. Gods, what lies
 I have heard!
 Our courtiers say all's savage but at court:
 Experience, O, thou disprovest report!
 The imperious seas breed monsters, for the dish
 Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish.
 I am sick still; heart-sick. Pisanio,
 I'll now taste of thy drug.

Swallows some

GUIDERIUS

I could not stir him:
 He said he was gentle, but unfortunate;
 Dishonestly afflicted, but yet honest.

ARVIRAGUS

Thus did he answer me: yet said, hereafter
 I might know more.

BELARIUS

To the field, to the field!
 We'll leave you for this time: go in and rest.

ARVIRAGUS

We'll not be long away.

IMOGEN

I'm not that sick, although I'm not well. But I won't be like a weak city person and act like I'm dying when I'm just sick. Please, leave me alone. Do what you usually do all day. There's nothing worse than breaking a routine. I am sick, but you staying with me won't make me better. Company is no help for someone who's antisocial. I'm not very sick, since I can talk reasonably. Please, trust me to stay here. I won't rob anyone except myself. Let me die and steal only from myself.

 "Stealing so poorly" the phrase used in the original text implies that Imogen would not be stealing much from herself if she died since she owns nothing.

GUIDERIUS

I love you. I have already told you how much, and how deeply: as much as I love my father.

BELARIUS

What? What did you say?

ARVIRAGUS

If it's a sin to say that, I'll sin too along with my brother. I don't know why I love this young man. I have heard you say that the reason for love is unreasonable. If a coffin were at the door and we were told someone had to die, I'd say, "My father, not this young man."

BELARIUS

[To himself] What a noble thing to say! They're so naturally virtuous! And high-born! Cowards give birth to cowards and low things give birth to low things. Nature is like grain: it contains flour that you keep and bran you throw away. In the same way, there are low and high people. I am not their father. I have no idea who this person is they love more than me. [To the others] It's nine in the morning.

ARVIRAGUS

Goodbye, brother.

IMOGEN

Have fun.

ARVIRAGUS

Get better. Let's go, sir.

IMOGEN

[To herself] These are kind people. I've been told such terrible lies! Our courtiers say everyone who isn't at court is a savage! But my experience shows this isn't true! The seas contain monsters, but the fish that live in little rivers taste just as good. I am still sick—sick with sadness. Pisanio, I'll try your medicine.

She swallows some.

GUIDERIUS

I couldn't get him to tell me anything. He said he was a noble, but in a bad situation. He was in trouble, but an honest man.

ARVIRAGUS

He answered me in the same way. But he said I might learn more later.

BELARIUS

Let's go, let's hunt! We'll leave you for now. Go inside and rest.

ARVIRAGUS

We won't be away for long.

BELARIUS

55 Pray, be not sick,
For you must be our housewife.

IMOGEN

Well or ill,
I am bound to you.

BELARIUS

And shalt be ever.

60

Exit IMOGEN, to the cave

BELARIUS

This youth, how'er distress'd, appears he hath had
Good ancestors.

ARVIRAGUS

How angel-like he sings!

GUIDERIUS

65 But his neat cookery! he cut our roots
In characters,
And sauced our broths, as Juno had been sick
And he her dieter.

ARVIRAGUS

Nobly he yokes
70 A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh
Was that it was, for not being such a smile;
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
From so divine a temple, to commix
With winds that sailors rail at.

GUIDERIUS

75 I do note
That grief and patience, rooted in him both,
Mingle their spurs together.

ARVIRAGUS

Grow, patience!
And let the stinking elder, grief, untwine
80 His perishing root with the increasing vine!

BELARIUS

It is great morning. Come, away!--
Who's there?

Enter CLOTEN

CLOTEN

I cannot find those runagates; that villain
85 Hath mock'd me. I am faint.

BELARIUS

'Those runagates!'
Means he not us? I partly know him: 'tis
Cloten, the son o' the queen. I fear some ambush.
I saw him not these many years, and yet
90 I know 'tis he. We are held as outlaws: hence!

GUIDERIUS

He is but one: you and my brother search
What companies are near: pray you, away;
Let me alone with him.

Exeunt BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS

Please, don't be sick. You have to be our housewife.

IMOGEN

Sick or healthy, we're in this together.

BELARIUS

And always will be.

IMOGEN exits, to the cave.

BELARIUS

This young man seems like he's in trouble, but like he's
from a good family.

ARVIRAGUS

He sings like an angel!

GUIDERIUS

And his cooking! He cut our root vegetables into the shapes
of letters, and made our soups taste so good that it was as
though the goddess Juno were sick and he were in charge
of feeding her.

ARVIRAGUS

Nobly, he smiles but sighs, as if the sigh was sighing
because it wasn't a beautiful smile. The smile makes fun of
the sigh, because it flies out from its holy home in that boy
to mix with winds that sailors swear at.

GUIDERIUS

I did notice that he seemed to be feeling a combination of
sadness and patience, as though those feelings were plants
growing together.

ARVIRAGUS

I hope that patience grows! And that grief, a stinking tree,²
separates its dying root from the growing vine of
patience!

² An "elder," the tree referenced in the original text, had strong-smelling leaves. It was thought to be the tree upon which Judas hanged himself after betraying Jesus.

BELARIUS

It's midmorning. Come on, let's go—who's there?

CLOTEN enters.

CLOTEN

I can't find those runaways. That thug was lying to me. I feel
faint.

BELARIUS

"Those runaways!" He must mean us! I sort of know him.
It's Cloten, the queen's son. I'm worried there are people
here to ambush us. I haven't seen him for years, but I know
it's him. We're outlaws. Let's go!

GUIDERIUS

There's only one of him. You and my brother should look to
see if there are other people here. Go, please. Leave me
alone with him.

BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS exit.

CLOTEN

95 Soft! What art you
That fly me thus? some villain mountaineers?
I have heard of such. What slave art thou?

GUIDERIUS

A thing
More slavish did I ne'er than answering
100 A slave without a knock.

CLOTEN

Thou art a robber,
A law-breaker, a villain: yield thee, thief.

GUIDERIUS

To who? to thee? What art thou? Have not I
An arm as big as thine? a heart as big?
105 Thy words, I grant, are bigger, for I wear not
My dagger in my mouth. Say what thou art,
Why I should yield to thee?

CLOTEN

Thou villain base,
Know'st me not by my clothes?

GUIDERIUS

110 No, nor thy tailor, rascal,
Who is thy grandfather: he made those clothes,
Which, as it seems, make thee.

CLOTEN

Thou precious varlet,
My tailor made them not.

GUIDERIUS

115 Hence, then, and thank
The man that gave them thee. Thou art some fool;
I am loath to beat thee.

CLOTEN

Thou injurious thief,
Hear but my name, and tremble.

GUIDERIUS

120 What's thy name?

CLOTEN

Cloten, thou villain.

GUIDERIUS

125 Cloten, thou double villain, be thy name,
I cannot tremble at it: were it Toad, or
Adder, Spider,
'Twould move me sooner.

CLOTEN

To thy further fear,
Nay, to thy mere confusion, thou shalt know
I am son to the queen.

GUIDERIUS

130 I am sorry for 't; not seeming
So worthy as thy birth.

CLOTEN

Art not afraid?

GUIDERIUS

Those that I reverence those I fear, the wise:
At fools I laugh, not fear them.

CLOTEN

Wait! Who are you, running at me like that? Some
mountain-climbing bandit? I have heard of those people.
What kind of slave are you?

GUIDERIUS

I never did anything more slavish than what I'm doing right
now: answering a slave without hitting him.

CLOTEN

You're a robber, a law-breaker, a thug. Surrender, thief.

GUIDERIUS

To who? To you? Who are you? Don't I have an arm as
strong as yours? A heart that's just as good? Your words are
stronger, but that's because I don't insult strangers. Tell me
who you are. Why would I surrender to you?

CLOTEN

You low thug, don't you know who I am from my clothes?

GUIDERIUS

No, or from your tailor, you good-for-nothing, who I bet is
your grandfather. He made your clothes, and it seems that
your clothes make you who you are.

CLOTEN

You ridiculous criminal, my tailor didn't make them.

GUIDERIUS

Go away, then, and go thank the man who gave them to
you. You're some fool. It would be wrong to beat you up.

CLOTEN

You insulting thief, hear my name and be afraid.

GUIDERIUS

What's your name?

CLOTEN

Cloten, you thug.

GUIDERIUS

Cloten, you double thug, if that's your name, fine, but I
can't be afraid of it. If it were Toad, or Snake, or Spider, it
would be more likely to scare me.

CLOTEN

To scare you more, to completely overwhelm you, I'll tell
you I'm the queen's son.

GUIDERIUS

I'm sorry to hear it. You don't live up to your noble family.

CLOTEN

Aren't you afraid?

GUIDERIUS

I'm afraid of the people I respect, wise people. I laugh at
fools—I'm not afraid of them.

CLOTEM

Die the death:

- 135 When I have slain thee with my proper hand,
I'll follow those that even now fled hence,
And on the gates of Lud's-town set your heads:
Yield, rustic mountaineer.

Exeunt, fighting

Re-enter BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS

No companies abroad?

ARVIRAGUS

- 140 None in the world: you did mistake him, sure.

BELARIUS

I cannot tell: long is it since I saw him,
But time hath nothing blurr'd those lines of favour
Which then he wore; the snatches in his voice,
And burst of speaking, were as his: I am absolute
145 'Twas very Cloten.

ARVIRAGUS

In this place we left them:
I wish my brother make good time with him,
You say he is so fell.

BELARIUS

- Being scarce made up,
150 I mean, to man, he had not apprehension
Of roaring terrors; for the effect of judgment
Is oft the cause of fear. But, see, thy brother.

Re-enter GUIDERIUS, with CLOTEM'S head

GUIDERIUS

This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse;
There was no money in't: not Hercules
155 Could have knock'd out his brains, for he had none:
Yet I not doing this, the fool had borne
My head as I do his.

BELARIUS

What hast thou done?

GUIDERIUS

- 160 I am perfect what: cut off one Cloten's head,
Son to the queen, after his own report;
Who call'd me traitor, mountaineer, and swore
With his own single hand he'd take us in
Displace our heads where--thank the gods!--they grow,
And set them on Lud's-town.

BELARIUS

- 165 We are all undone.

GUIDERIUS

- Why, worthy father, what have we to lose,
But that he swore to take, our lives? The law
Protects not us: then why should we be tender
To let an arrogant piece of flesh threat us,
170 Play judge and executioner all himself,
For we do fear the law? What company
Discover you abroad?

CLOTEM

Die, then. When I have killed you with my own hand, I'll
keep following those people who ran away just now, and I'll
stick all of your heads on the gates of Lud-town. Surrender,
you hillbilly.

They exit, fighting.

BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS re-enter.

BELARIUS

You didn't see any soldiers out there?

ARVIRAGUS

Not a single one. You must have gotten him confused with
someone else.

BELARIUS

I can't tell. It's a long time since I saw him, but time hasn't
made me forget what he looked like. The sound of his voice
and the way he speaks in short bursts sounded like what he
remembered. I'm absolutely sure it was Cloten himself.

ARVIRAGUS

We left them here. I hope my brother deals with him
quickly, since you say he's so dangerous.

BELARIUS

When he was barely grown up, he wasn't afraid of the most
horrible danger. Having good judgement is often what
makes you afraid. There's your brother.

GUIDERIUS re-enters, holding CLOTEM'S head.

GUIDERIUS

This Cloten fellow was a fool, like an empty purse with no
money in it. Even Hercules couldn't have knocked out his
brains, because he didn't have any. But if I hadn't done this,
the fool would have been carrying my head the way I'm
carrying his.

BELARIUS

What did you do?

GUIDERIUS

I know exactly what I did: cut off some man Cloten's head, a
son of the queen according to him. He called me a traitor, a
mountain bandit, and promised that he himself would take
our heads off the necks they grow on now (thank the gods!)
and stick them on the gates of Lud's-town.

BELARIUS

We're done for.

GUIDERIUS

But father, what do we have to lose except what he
promised he'd take, our lives? The law doesn't protect us,
so why should we let an arrogant lump threaten us and play
at being a judge and executioner all by himself, because
we're afraid of the law? How many soldiers did you see
around here?

BELARIUS

No single soul
Can we set eye on; but in all safe reason
175 He must have some attendants. Though his humour
Was nothing but mutation, ay, and that
From one bad thing to worse; not frenzy, not
Absolute madness could so far have raved
To bring him here alone; although perhaps
180 It may be heard at court that such as we
Cave here, hunt here, are outlaws, and in time
May make some stronger head; the which he hearing--
As it is like him--might break out, and swear
He'll fetch us in; yet is't not probable
185 To come alone, either he so undertaking,
Or they so suffering: then on good ground we fear,
If we do fear this body hath a tail
More perilous than the head.

ARVIRAGUS

Let ordinance
190 Come as the gods foresay it: howsoe'er,
My brother hath done well.

BELARIUS

I had no mind
To hunt this day: the boy Fidele's sickness
Did make my way long forth.

GUIDERIUS

195 With his own sword,
Which he did wave against my throat, I have ta'en
His head from him: I'll throw't into the creek
Behind our rock; and let it to the sea,
And tell the fishes he's the queen's son, Cloten:
200 That's all I reck.

*Exit***BELARIUS**

I fear 'twill be revenged:
Would, Polydote, thou hadst not done't! though valour
Becomes thee well enough.

ARVIRAGUS

Would I had done't
205 So the revenge alone pursued me! Polydore,
I love thee brotherly, but envy much
Thou hast robb'd me of this deed: I would revenges,
That possible strength might meet, would seek us
through
210 And put us to our answer.

BELARIUS

Well, 'tis done:
We'll hunt no more to-day, nor seek for danger
Where there's no profit. I prithee, to our rock;
You and Fidele play the cooks: I'll stay
215 Till hasty Polydore return, and bring him
To dinner presently.

ARVIRAGUS

Poor sick Fidele!
I'll weringly to him: to gain his colour
I'd let a parish of such Clotens' blood,
220 And praise myself for charity.

*Exit***BELARIUS**

O thou goddess,
Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st
In these two princely boys! They are as gentle
As zephyrs blowing below the violet,
225 Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,

BELARIUS

We didn't see a single one, but we should assume he had attendants with him. Although he was unpredictable and went from one bad idea to another, it wasn't complete madness that brought him so far from court alone. Although maybe it was said at court that people like us who live in caves here and hunt here are outlaws and could band together to be stronger. He heard this and it's very likely that he stood up and promised he'd round us up. But it's not likely either that he would want to come alone or that they would let him. We should worry that he was the [head](#) of a company of dangerous soldiers.

3 The terms "body," "tail," and "head" in the original text pun on Cloten's beheading and the potential army that he could be leading to recover the lost princes.

ARVIRAGUS

Let the future go the way the gods want it to. However it goes, my brother did the right thing.

BELARIUS

I didn't feel like hunting today. The boy Fidele's sickness was weighing on me all the way here.

GUIDERIUS

I took his head from him with his own sword, which he waved at my throat. I'll throw that sword into the stream behind our cave, and let it float to the sea and tell the fish he's the queen's son, Cloten. That's all I have to say.

*He exits.***BELARIUS**

I'm worried they'll get their revenge for this. I wish you hadn't done this, Polydore! Though your bravery is a credit to you.

ARVIRAGUS

I wish I had done it so I was the only one who would be punished! Polydore, I love you as a brother but I'm jealous because you robbed me of the opportunity to kill him. I hope they follow us looking for revenge so we can fight them.

BELARIUS

Well, it's done. We won't hunt any more today, or look for danger pointlessly. Please, let's go back to our cave. You and Fidele cook something. I'll stay here until reckless Polydore returns, and bring him home for dinner soon.

*He exits.***ARVIRAGUS**

Poor sick Fidele! I'll hurry back to him. To make him look less pale I'd stab a whole parish full of fools like Cloten and be proud of my good deed.

BELARIUS

Oh you goddess, holy Nature, you show yourself so clearly in these two princely boys! They are as gentle as breezes blowing around a violet without shaking it, but as rough when they get angry as the strongest wind that knocks a pine down from a mountain into a valley. It's amazing how

Their royal blood enchafed, as the rudest wind,
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And make him stoop to the vale. 'Tis wonder
That an invisible instinct should frame them
230 To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,
Civility not seen from other, valour
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop
As if it had been sow'd. Yet still it's strange
What Cloten's being here to us portends,
235 Or what his death will bring us.

Re-enter GUIDERIUS

GUIDERIUS

Where's my brother?
I have sent Cloten's clotpoll down the stream,
In embassy to his mother: his body's hostage
For his return.

Solemn music

BELARIUS

240 My ingenious instrument!
Hark, Polydore, it sounds! But what occasion
Hath Cadwal now to give it motion? Hark!

GUIDERIUS

Is he at home?

BELARIUS

He went hence even now.

GUIDERIUS

245 What does he mean? since death of my dear'st mother
it did not speak before. All solemn things
Should answer solemn accidents. The matter?
Triumphs for nothing and lamenting toys
Is jollity for apes and grief for boys.
250 Is Cadwal mad?

BELARIUS

Look, here he comes,
And brings the dire occasion in his arms
Of what we blame him for.

Re-enter ARVIRAGUS, with IMOGEN, as dead, bearing her in his arms

ARVIRAGUS

255 The bird is dead
That we have made so much on. I had rather
Have skipp'd from sixteen years of age to sixty,
To have turn'd my leaping-time into a crutch,
Than have seen this.

GUIDERIUS

260 O sweetest, fairest lily!
My brother wears thee not the one half so well
As when thou grew'st thyself.

BELARIUS

O melancholy!
Who ever yet could sound thy bottom? find
265 The ooze, to show what coast thy sluggish crare
Might easiest harbour in? Thou blessed thing!
Jove knows what man thou mightst have made; but I,
Thou diest, a most rare boy, of melancholy.
How found you him?

ARVIRAGUS

270 Stark, as you see:
Thus smiling, as some fly hid tickled slumber,
Not as death's dart, being laugh'd at; his

by instinct they act like royalty, with honor that was never taught to them, politeness that is unmatched in anyone, and bravery that grows wild but grows as well as if it were deliberately planted. But I don't know what Cloten being here means for us, or what the consequences of his death will be.

GUIDERIUS re-enters.

GUIDERIUS

Where's my brother? I sent Cloten's head down the stream, with a message to his mother. His body stays here as a hostage to make sure he comes back.

Sad music plays.

BELARIUS

My instrument! Listen, Polydore, it's being played! But why has Cadwal brought it out? Listen!

GUIDERIUS

Is he at home?

BELARIUS

He just left here.

GUIDERIUS

What is he doing? It hasn't been played since my dear mother died. You should only seem to be sad because something sad has happened. What's going on? Celebrating over nothing and crying over nothing is happiness fit only for apes and sadness for boys. Is Cadwal crazy?

BELARIUS

Look, here he comes, and carries in his arm the sad thing we were saying he should be responding to.

ARVIRAGUS re-enters, carrying IMOGEN, who seems dead, in his arms.

ARVIRAGUS

The bird we were so fond of is dead. I would rather have skipped from sixteen years old to sixty, to give up my leaping time in my youth for a crutch, than see this.

GUIDERIUS

Oh, sweetest, most beautiful lily! Your brother isn't wearing you half as well on his arms as you wore yourself when you were alive.

BELARIUS

Oh, this is a bottomless sorrow! It's like a deep sea with no mud on the bottom to make you hope you were approaching a harbor with your slow sadness! You blessed thing! Jove knows what kind of man you would have become. But I know you died as a unique boy, of sadness. How did you find him?

ARVIRAGUS

Dead, as you see. Smiling like this, as though he had been tickled by a fly while sleeping, laughing as though death's arrow had not hit him, lying on his right side.

right cheek
Reposing on a cushion.

GUIDERIUS

275 Where?

ARVIRAGUS

O' the floor;
His arms thus leagued: I thought he slept, and put
My clouted brogues from off my feet, whose rudeness
Answer'd my steps too loud.

GUIDERIUS

280 Why, he but sleeps:
If he be gone, he'll make his grave a bed;
With female fairies will his tomb be haunted,
And worms will not come to thee.

ARVIRAGUS

With fairest flowers
285 Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
The azured harebell, like thy veins, no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
290 Out-sweeten'd not thy breath: the ruddock would,
With charitable bill,--O bill, sore-shaming
Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
Without a monument!--bring thee all this;
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
295 To winter-ground thy corse.

GUIDERIUS

Prithee, have done;
And do not play in wench-like words with that
Which is so serious. Let us bury him,
And not protract with admiration what
300 Is now due debt. To the grave!

ARVIRAGUS

Say, where shall's lay him?

GUIDERIUS

By good Euriphile, our mother.

ARVIRAGUS

Be't so:
And let us, Polydore, though now our voices
305 Have got the mannish crack, sing him to the ground,
As once our mother; use like note and words,
Save that Euriphile must be Fidele.

GUIDERIUS

Cadwal,
I cannot sing: I'll weep, and word it with thee;
310 For notes of sorrow out of tune are worse
Than priests and fanes that lie.

ARVIRAGUS

We'll speak it, then.

BELARIUS

Great griefs, I see, medicine the less; for Cloten
Is quite forgot. He was a queen's son, boys;
315 And though he came our enemy, remember
He was paid for that: though mean and
mighty, rotting
Together, have one dust, yet reverence,
That angel of the world, doth make distinction
320 Of place 'twixt high and low. Our foe was princely
And though you took his life, as being our foe,
Yet bury him as a prince.

GUIDERIUS

Where?

ARVIRAGUS

On the floor, with his arms together like this. I thought he
was sleeping, and took my heavy shoes off my feet because
they made my steps too loud.

GUIDERIUS

He's only sleeping. If he's gone, we'll make his grave a bed.
May only female fairies haunt his tomb, so that worms
won't come.

ARVIRAGUS

I'll decorate your sad grave with the most beautiful flowers
while it's still summer and I still live here, Fidele. You'll have
the flower that's like your face, pale primrose, and the
harebell as blue as your veins, and the eglantine, which it's
no slander to say is not sweeter than your breath was. A
robin would kindly bring you all these flowers in his bill,
making those heirs who inherit a lot of money and don't
build a tomb for their fathers ashamed! Yes, and soft moss
too, when there are no flowers, to make your body ready for
winter.

GUIDERIUS

Please, stop talking, and don't play around with girlish
words about something so serious. Let's bury him, and not
keep being amazed about something that's over and done
with. To the grave!

ARVIRAGUS

Where will we bury him?

GUIDERIUS

Next to our mother, good Euriphile.

ARVIRAGUS

All right. And let us, Polydore, even though our voices have
changed, sing goodbye to him as we did with our mother.
Let's use the same tune and words, substituting Fidele for
Euriphile.

GUIDERIUS

Cadwall, I can't sing. I'll cry and talk with you. But sad songs
out of tune are worse than lying priests and temples.

ARVIRAGUS

We'll say it then.

BELARIUS

I see that a greater sadness makes you forget a lesser one,
because Cloten has been completely forgotten. He was a
queen's son, boys. And although he came as our enemy,
remember that he paid for that. Although high and low
people rot into the same dust, still, respect for higher
classes distinguishes high and low people while they are
alive. Our enemy was a prince and although you took his
life because he was your enemy, you should bury him in a
way fitting for a prince.

GUIDERIUS

Pray You, fetch him hither.
Thersites' body is as good as Ajax',
When neither are alive.

325

ARVIRAGUS

If you'll go fetch him,
We'll say our song whilst. Brother, begin.

*Exit BELARIUS***GUIDERIUS**

Nay, Cadwal, we must lay his head to the east;
330 My father hath a reason for't.

ARVIRAGUS

'Tis true.

GUIDERIUS

Come on then, and remove him.

ARVIRAGUS

So. Begin.

SONG**GUIDERIUS**

335 Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
340 As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

ARVIRAGUS

Fear no more the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
345 The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

GUIDERIUS

Fear no more the lightning flash,

ARVIRAGUS

Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;

GUIDERIUS

Fear not slander, censure rash;

ARVIRAGUS

350 Thou hast finish'd joy and moan:

ARVIRAGUS

All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

GUIDERIUS

No exorciser harm thee!

ARVIRAGUS

Nor no witchcraft charm thee!

GUIDERIUS

355 Ghost unlaid forbear thee!

ARVIRAGUS

Nothing ill come near thee!

GUIDERIUS

Please, fetch him. Thersites's body is as good as Ajax's
when they're both dead. 

 Two characters in the Trojan wars. Ajax was a famous hero, Thersites a lower-class comic character.

ARVIRAGUS

If you go fetch him, we'll say our song while you're gone.
Brother, you begin.

*BELARIUS exits.***GUIDERIUS**

No, Cadwal, his head has to point east. My father has some
reason for that.

ARVIRAGUS

It's true.

GUIDERIUS

Come on then, move him.

ARVIRAGUS

All right. Begin.

SONG**GUIDERIUS**

Don't fear the heat of the sun anymore
Or the furious rage of winter
You have finished your work in this world
And have gone home and collected your pay.
Golden boys and girls all must,
Like dandelions, turn into dust.

ARVIRAGUS

Don't fear the anger of important people any more,
You are safe from a tyrant's punishment.
Don't worry anymore about finding clothes and food.
Now sticks are the same thing as oak trees to you.
Kings' power, knowledge, and medicine must
All turn to dust in the same way.

GUIDERIUS

Don't be afraid of lightning bolts.

ARVIRAGUS

Or the thunder that everyone is afraid of.

GUIDERIUS

Don't be afraid of slander or thoughtless criticism.

ARVIRAGUS

You're through with joy and sighing.

ARVIRAGUS

All young lovers, all lovers must
Turn themselves in to you, and turn to dust.

GUIDERIUS

May no exorcist harm you!

ARVIRAGUS

And no witchcraft cast a spell on you!

GUIDERIUS

May restless ghosts leave you alone!

ARVIRAGUS

May nothing evil come near you!

ARVIRAGUS

Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!

Re-enter BELARIUS, with the body of CLOTEN

GUIDERIUS

360 We have done our obsequies: come, lay him down.

BELARIUS

Here's a few flowers; but 'bout midnight, more:
The herbs that have on them cold dew o' the night
Are strewings fit'tst for graves. Upon their faces.
You were as flowers, now wither'd: even so
365 These herblets shall, which we upon you strew.
Come on, away: apart upon our knees.
The ground that gave them first has them again:
Their pleasures here are past, so is their pain.

Exeunt BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

IMOGEN

[Awaking] Yes, sir, to Milford-Haven; which is
370 the way?--
I thank you.--By yond bush?--Pray, how far thither?
'Ods pittikins! can it be six mile yet?--
I have gone all night. 'Faith, I'll lie down and sleep.
But, soft! no bedfellow!--O gods and goddesses!

Seeing the body of CLOTEN

375 These flowers are like the pleasures of the world;
This bloody man, the care on't. I hope I dream;
For so I thought I was a cave-keeper,
And cook to honest creatures: but 'tis not so;
'Twas but a bolt of nothing, shot at nothing,
380 Which the brain makes of fumes: our very eyes
Are sometimes like our judgments, blind. Good faith,
I tremble stiff with fear: but if there be
Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity
As a wren's eye, fear'd gods, a part of it!
385 The dream's here still: even when I wake, it is
Without me, as within me; not imagined, felt.
A headless man! The garments of Posthumus!
I know the shape of's leg: this is his hand;
His foot Mercurial; his Martial thigh;
390 The brawns of Hercules: but his Jovial face
Murder in heaven?--How!--'Tis gone. Pisanio,
All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks,
And mine to boot, be darted on thee! Thou,
Conspired with that irregulous devil, Cloten,
395 Hast here cut off my lord. To write and read
Be henceforth treacherous! Damn'd Pisanio
Hath with his forged letters,--damn'd Pisanio--
From this most bravest vessel of the world
Struck the main-top! O Posthumus! alas,
400 Where is thy head? where's that? Ay me!
where's that?
Pisanio might have kill'd thee at the heart,
And left this head on. How should this be? Pisanio?
'Tis he and Cloten: malice and lucre in them
405 Have laid this woe here. O, 'tis pregnant, pregnant!
The drug he gave me, which he said was precious
And cordial to me, have I not found it
Murderous to the senses? That confirms it home:
This is Pisanio's deed, and Cloten's: O!
410 Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood,
That we the horrider may seem to those
Which chance to find us: O, my lord, my lord!

Falls on the body

Enter LUCIUS, a Captain and other Officers, and a Soothsayer

ARVIRAGUS

Enjoy a quiet death,
And may your grave be famous!

BELARIUS re-enters, carrying CLOTEN's body.

GUIDERIUS

We have finished our ceremony. Come on, set him down.

BELARIUS

Here are a few flowers. We'll pick more around midnight.
Plants that have cold nighttime dew on them are the most appropriate decorations for graves. Put them on their faces. You used to be like flowers, and have wilted. These plants we are scattering on you will too. Come on, let's go. Let's pray elsewhere. The earth that they came from now holds them again. Their joys here are past, and so is their pain.

BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS exit.

IMOGEN

[Waking up] Yes, sir, how do I get to Milford-Haven?--Thank you.--Past that bush?--How far away is it?--God, can it be another six miles?--I've walked all night. I'll lie down and sleep. But wait! Not with anyone!--Oh gods and goddesses!

She sees CLOTEN's body.

These flowers are like the pleasures of this world, and this bloody man is like the sadness in it. I hope I'm dreaming. I thought I lived in a cave, and was a cook for honest men. But that's not true. It was a lightning bolt that came from nowhere and hit nothing, invented by my brain. People's eyes are sometimes as bad as their judgement. Goodness, I'm still trembling with fear. But if there is still left in heaven a drop of pity as small as a bird's eye, please give me a part of it, gods! The dream's still here. Even when I wake up, it's outside me as well as inside. I can feel it, not just imagine it. A headless man! Posthumus's clothes! I recognize the shape of his leg. This is his hand. His foot like Mercury's ⁵. His thigh like Mars's ⁶. His muscles like Hercules's ⁷. But his Jove-like face--oh gods!--how could this be--it's gone. Pisanio, may all the curses Hecuba ⁸ threw at the Greeks, added to mine, be thrown at you! You plotted with that strange devil, Cloten, to kill my lord in this way. May writing and reading be considered treason from now on! Damned Pisanio with his fake letters - damned Pisanio - knocked the main mast off the best ship in the world! Oh Posthumus! Where is your head? Where is it? Where is it? Pisanio could have stabbed you in the heart and left your head on. How could this happen? Pisanio? It's him and Cloten. Resentment and the desire for money made them do this. Oh, I see how it went! ⁹ The drug he gave me, which he said was effective and would make me feel better--didn't it knock me out? That confirms it. Pisanio did this, and Cloten! Oh! I'll put your blood on my pale cheek so that we seem more frightening to anyone who happens to see us. Oh, my husband, my husband!

⁵ The messenger of the gods, so his feet are fast.

⁶ The god of war, so strong and attractive.

⁷ A very strong hero.

⁸ They invaded her city of Troy and killed her family.

⁹ The term "pregnant" in the original text can also mean "full of meaning" as Imogen implies here.

She falls on the body.

LUCIUS, a Captain and other Officers, and a SOOTHSAYER enter.

CAPTAIN

To them the legions garrison'd in Gailia,
After your will, have cross'd the sea, attending
415 You here at Milford-Haven with your ships:
They are in readiness.

CAIUS LUCIUS

But what from Rome?

CAPTAIN

The senate hath stirr'd up the confiners
And gentlemen of Italy, most willing spirits,
420 That promise noble service: and they come
Under the conduct of bold Iachimo, the Duke
of Siena's brother.

CAIUS LUCIUS

When expect you them?

CAPTAIN

With the next benefit o' the wind.

CAIUS LUCIUS

425 This forwardness
Makes our hopes fair. Command our present numbers
Be muster'd; bid the captains look to't. Now, sir,
What have you dream'd of late of this war's purpose?

SOOTHSAYER

Last night the very gods show'd me a vision--
430 I fast and pray'd for their intelligence--thus:
I saw Jove's bird, the Roman eagle, wing'd
From the spongy south to this part of the west,
There vanish'd in the sunbeams: which portends--
Unless my sins abuse my divination--

435 Success to the Roman host.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Dream often so,
And never false. Soft, ho! what trunk is here
Without his top? The ruin speaks that sometime
It was a worthy building. How! a page!
440 Or dead, or sleeping on him? But dead rather;
For nature doth abhor to make his bed
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead.
Let's see the boy's face.

CAPTAIN

He's alive, my lord.

CAIUS LUCIUS

445 He'll then instruct us of this body. Young one,
Inform us of thy fortunes, for it seems
They crave to be demanded. Who is this
Thou makest thy bloody pillow? Or who was he
That, otherwise than noble nature did,
450 Hath alter'd that good picture? What's thy interest
In this sad wreck? How came it? Who is it?
What art thou?

IMOGEN

I am nothing: or if not,
Nothing to be were better. This was my master,
455 A very valiant Briton and a good,
That here by mountaineers lies slain. Alas!
There is no more such masters: I may wander
From east to occident, cry out for service,
Try many, all good, serve truly, never
460 Find such another master.

CAPTAIN

The troops stationed in Gallia, as you asked, crossed the sea
to meet you here in Milford-Haven with your ships. They're
ready.

CAIUS LUCIUS

But what have you heard from Rome?

CAPTAIN

The senate encouraged those remaining at home and the
noblemen of Italy, willing fighters who will serve well. They
are coming under the leadership of brave Iachimo, the Duke
of Siena's brother.

CAIUS LUCIUS

When do you expect them to get here?

CAPTAIN

When the next wind blows this way.

CAIUS LUCIUS

They're early, which is a good sign for us. Muster our troops.
Ask the captains to do that.
[To the SOOTHSAYER] Now, sir, what have you dreamed
about the outcome of this war?

SOOTHSAYER

Last night the gods themselves showed me a vision. I had
fasted and prayed for news from them. I saw Jove's bird,
the Roman eagle, fly from the marshy south to this part of
the west and vanish into the sun. This means, unless my
sins make me interpret this wrong, that the Roman army
will win.

CAIUS LUCIUS

May you often dream that, and never be wrong about it.
Wait! Whose body is here without a head? What's left of this
ruined building seems to show that it was once noble. A
page boy! Dead or sleeping? Dead probably, because it isn't
natural to sleep next to or on dead people. Let's see the
boy's face.

CAPTAIN

He's alive, sir.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Then he'll tell us about this body. Young one, tell us what
happened to you, because it's impossible not to ask. Who is
this you're using as a bloody pillow? Or who was it who did
this to him so unnaturally? What do you have to do with this
tragedy? How did it happen? Who is it? Who are you?

IMOGEN

I'm no one, or if not, I wish I were. This was my master, a
very brave and good British man, killed by mountain
bandits. There are no more masters like this one. I could
wander from east to west, calling out I wanted to serve
someone, try many masters, all good, serve them well, and
never find another master like this one.

CAIUS LUCIUS

'Lack, good youth!
Thou movest no less with thy complaining than
Thy master in bleeding: say his name, good friend.

IMOGEN

Richard du Champ.

465

Aside

If I do lie and do
No harm by it, though the gods hear, I hope
They'll pardon it.--Say you, sir?

CAIUS LUCIUS

470 Thy name?

IMOGEN

Fidele, sir.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Thou dost approve thyself the very same:
Thy name well fits thy faith, thy faith thy name.
Wilt take thy chance with me? I will not say
475 Thou shalt be so well master'd, but, be sure,
No less beloved. The Roman emperor's letters,
Sent by a consul to me, should not sooner
Than thine own worth prefer thee: go with me.

IMOGEN

I'll follow, sir. But first, an't please the gods,
480 I'll hide my master from the flies, as deep
As these poor pickaxes can dig; and when
With wild wood-leaves and weeds I ha' strew'd his
grave,
And on it said a century of prayers,
485 Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep and sigh;
And leaving so his service, follow you,
So please you entertain me.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Ay, good youth!
And rather father thee than master thee.
490 My friends,
The boy hath taught us manly duties: let us
Find out the prettiest daisied plot we can,
And make him with our pikes and partisans
A grave: come, arm him. Boy, he is preferr'd
495 By thee to us, and he shall be interr'd
As soldiers can. Be cheerful; wipe thine eyes
Some falls are means the happier to arise.

Exeunt

CAIUS LUCIUS

Poor young man! You're making me as sad by complaining
as your master is by bleeding. Tell me his name, good
friend.

IMOGEN

Richard du Champ.

She speaks to herself.

If I lie and don't hurt anyone by doing it, even though the
gods hear, I hope they'll forgive me. What did you say, sir?

CAIUS LUCIUS

What's your name?

IMOGEN

Fidele, sir.

CAIUS LUCIUS

You show yourself to be exactly what that name means:
faithful. Your name fits your faithfulness well, your
faithfulness fits your name. Will you take your chances with
me? I won't say I'll be as good a master, but be sure I won't
love you any less than he did. Even if the Roman emperor
sent a consul to me with a letter praising you, it wouldn't
make me value you any more than your own virtue does.
Come with me.

IMOGEN

I'll follow you, sir. But first, if it's all right with the gods, I'll
hide my master from the flies, as deep as I can dig with my
hands. And when I have covered his grave with wild leaves
and plants I'll say a hundred prayers over it, the ones I
know, twice, and cry and sigh. And leaving his employment
in that way, I'll follow you if you would like to employ me.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Good young man! I wish I were your father instead of your
master. My friends, the boy has shown us how to be a man.
Let's find the prettiest patch of daisies we can and dig him a
grave with our spears and poles. Come on, give him a
weapon. Boy, you've given him a good recommendation
and he will be buried as well as soldiers can manage. Cheer
up. Wipe your eyes. Some misfortunes lead to situations
that make you happier.

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter CYMBELINE, Lords, PISANIO, and Attendants

CYMBELINE

Again; and bring me word how 'tis with her.

Exit an Attendant

CYMBELINE

A fever with the absence of her son,
A madness, of which her life's in danger. Heavens,

Shakescleare Translation

CYMBELINE, Lords, PISANIO, and Attendants enter.

CYMBELINE

Go back, and report to me how she's feeling.

An Attendant exits.

CYMBELINE

She got feverish after her son disappeared, went crazy, and
might die. Gods, you're so cruel to me all at once! Imogen,

How deeply you at once do touch me! Imogen,
The great part of my comfort, gone; my queen
Upon a desperate bed, and in a time
When fearful wars point at me; her son gone,
So needful for this present: it strikes me, past
10 The hope of comfort. But for thee, fellow,
Who needs must know of her departure and
Dost seem so ignorant, we'll enforce it from thee
By a sharp torture.

PISANIO

Sir, my life is yours;
15 I humbly set it at your will; but, for my mistress,
I nothing know where she remains, why gone,
Nor when she purposes return. Beseech your highness,
Hold me your loyal servant.

FIRST LORD

Good my liege,
20 The day that she was missing he was here:
I dare be bound he's true and shall perform
All parts of his subjection loyally. For Cloten,
There wants no diligence in seeking him,
And will, no doubt, be found.

CYMBELINE

25 The time is troublesome.

To PISANIO

We'll slip you for a season; but our jealousy
Does yet depend.

FIRST LORD

30 So please your majesty,
The Roman legions, all from Gallia drawn,
Are landed on your coast, with a supply
Of Roman gentlemen, by the senate sent.

CYMBELINE

Now for the counsel of my son and queen!
35 I am amazed with matter.

FIRST LORD

Good my liege,
Your preparation can affront no less
Than what you hear of: come more, for more
you're ready:
40 The want is but to put those powers in motion
That long to move.

CYMBELINE

I thank you. Let's withdraw;
And meet the time as it seeks us. We fear not
What can from Italy annoy us; but
45 We grieve at chances here. Away!

Exeunt all but PISANIO

PISANIO

I heard no letter from my master since
I wrote him Imogen was slain: 'tis strange:
Nor hear I from my mistress who did promise
To yield me often tidings: neither know I
50 What is betid to Cloten; but remain
Perplex'd in all. The heavens still must work.
Wherein I am false I am honest; not true, to be true.
These present wars shall find I love my country,
Even to the note o' the king, or I'll fall in them.
55 All other doubts, by time let them be clear'd:
Fortune brings in some boats that are not steer'd.

Exit

my main source of comfort, is gone. My queen is sick in bed, and I'm about to go to war. Her son is necessary for that, but he's gone. I don't have any hope left. You, you must know something about where she went even though you're acting ignorant. We'll get it out of you by some horrible torture.

PISANIO

Sir, my life belongs to you. You can do whatever you want with it. But as for my mistress, I don't know where she is, why she left, or when she plans to come back. Please, your highness, believe I'm a loyal servant to you.

FIRST LORD

Your highness, he was here the day she went missing. I promise he's honest and will do his duty loyally. As for Cloten, we're doing everything we can to find him and I'm sure we will.

CYMBELINE

This is a hard time.

To PISANIO

I'll let you go for now, but you're not necessarily getting out of being punished.

FIRST LORD

Your majesty, the Roman legions have left Gallia and landed on your coast, along with some Roman nobles sent by the senate.

CYMBELINE

I wish my son and queen were here to advise me! I don't know what to do.

FIRST LORD

Your highness, you were prepared for this many troops. If more arrive, you're ready for them too. You only have to give your waiting troops their marching orders.

CYMBELINE

Thank you. Let's leave, and do what we need to. I'm not afraid of how Italy can annoy us. But I'm sad about what's happened here. Let's go!

All exit except PISANIO.

PISANIO

I haven't heard anything from my master since I wrote to him that Imogen was killed. It's strange. I haven't heard from my mistress either, even though she promised to write to me often. Nor do I know what happened to Cloten. I'm puzzled about everything. The gods have to work this out. By lying I'm being honest. In this coming war I will show I love my country as much as the king does, or I'll die in it. Let time answer any other questions. Luck sometimes brings boats safely to shore that don't have anyone steering them.

He exits.

Act 4, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS.

GUIDERIUS

The noise is round about us.

BELARIUS

Let us from it.

ARVIRAGUS

What pleasure, sir, find we in life, to lock it
From action and adventure?

GUIDERIUS

5 Nay, what hope
Have we in hiding us? This way, the Romans
Must or for Britons slay us, or receive us
For barbarous and unnatural revolts
During their use, and slay us after.

BELARIUS

10 Sons,
We'll higher to the mountains; there secure us.
To the king's party there's no going: newness
Of Cloten's death--we being not known, not muster'd
Among the bands--may drive us to a render
15 Where we have lived, and so extort from's that
Which we have done, whose answer would be death
Drawn on with torture.

GUIDERIUS

This is, sir, a doubt
In such a time nothing becoming you,
20 Nor satisfying us.

ARVIRAGUS

It is not likely
That when they hear the Roman horses neigh,
Behold their quarter'd fires, have both their eyes
And ears so cloy'd importantly as now,
25 That they will waste their time upon our note,
To know from whence we are.

BELARIUS

O, I am known
Of many in the army: many years,
Though Cloten then but young, you see, not wore him
30 From my remembrance. And, besides, the king
Hath not deserved my service nor your loves;
Who find in my exile the want of breeding,
The certainty of this hard life; aye hopeless
To have the courtesy your cradle promised,
35 But to be still hot summer's tamings and
The shrinking slaves of winter.

GUIDERIUS

Than be so
Better to cease to be. Pray, sir, to the army:
I and my brother are not known; yourself
40 So out of thought, and thereto so o'ergrown,
Cannot be question'd.

ARVIRAGUS

By this sun that shines,
I'll thither: what thing is it that I never
Did see man die! scarce ever look'd on blood,
45 But that of coward hares, hot goats, and venison!
Never bestrid a horse, save one that had

Shakescleare Translation

BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS enter.

GUIDERIUS

There's noise all around us.

BELARIUS

Let's run from it.

ARVIRAGUS

What is the point of a life safe from fighting and
adventures?

GUIDERIUS

And what hope do we have in being able to hide? This way,
either the Romans will kill us for being Britons, or use us to
start a violent rebellion and kill us afterwards.

BELARIUS

Sons, let's go higher up the mountains and find a safe place
there. We can't join the king's side. Cloten's recent death
and us not being known by anyone in the army may force
us to reveal where we used to live and what we did. The
result would be that we would be tortured to death.

GUIDERIUS

That's a dishonorable fear for you to have, and we don't
agree.

ARVIRAGUS

It isn't likely that when they can hear the Roman horses
neighing, see their campfires, and have so many important
things to look at and listen to, that they will waste time
wondering where we came from.

BELARIUS

Oh, many people in the army know me. After many years,
although Cloten was very young then, you see, I could still
recognize him. And besides, the king hasn't deserved my
help or for you to love him. By exiling me he forced you to
be badly raised and to live this hard life. You can't have the
noble training you should have by birth, but instead have to
work in the heat of summer and the cold of winter.

GUIDERIUS

It would be better to die than to live like that. Please sir,
let's go to the army. No one knows me and my brother.
They've forgotten you so completely that no one will
question you.

ARVIRAGUS

By the sun, I'm going. How is it that I have never seen a man
die? I've hardly seen blood, except of cowardly hares, lustful
goats, and deer! I've never ridden a horse, except one that
was used to a rider like me who has never worn a spur!  I
am ashamed to look at the holy sun, to be given the gift of

 A "rowel" is a part of a spur, attached to the sharp part made of "iron".

A rider like myself, who ne'er wore rowel
Nor iron on his heel! I am ashamed
To look upon the holy sun, to have
50 The benefit of his blest beams, remaining
So long a poor unknown.

GUIDERIUS

By heavens, I'll go:
If you will bless me, sir, and give me leave,
I'll take the better care, but if you will not,
55 The hazard therefore due fall on me by
The hands of Romans!

ARVIRAGUS

So say I amen.

BELARIUS

No reason I, since of your lives you set
So slight a valuation, should reserve
60 My crack'd one to more care. Have with you, boys!
If in your country wars you chance to die,
That is my bed too, lads, an there I'll lie:
Lead, lead.

Aside

The time seems long; their blood
65 thinks scorn,
Till it fly out and show them princes born.

Exeunt

its blessed beams, while remaining unknown and poor for so long.²

² A "rowel" is a part of a spur, attached to the sharp part made of "iron".

GUIDERIUS

I'll go, by the gods. If you give me your blessing and permission, sir, I'll be better off, but if you don't want to, I'll take my chances fighting the Romans!

ARVIRAGUS

I say the same thing.

BELARIUS

There's no reason for me, since you care so little about your lives, to take care of my old one. Let's go, boys! If you happen to die in your country's war, then I will too. Lead on.

To himself.

They're impatient. Their noble blood will now reveal itself proving them to be princes.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter POSTHUMUS, with a bloody handkerchief

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Yea, bloody cloth, I'll keep thee, for I wish'd
Thou shouldst be colour'd thus. You married ones,
If each of you should take this course, how many
Must murder wives much better than themselves
5 For wryng but a little! O Pisanio!
Every good servant does not all commands:
No bond but to do just ones. Gods! if you
Should have ta'en vengeance on my faults, I never
Had lived to put on this: so had you saved
10 The noble Imogen to repent, and struck
Me, wretch more worth your vengeance. But, alack,
You snatch some hence for little faults; that's love,
To have them fall no more: you some permit
To second ills with ills, each elder worse,
15 And make them dread it, to the doers' thrif.
But Imogen is your own: do your best wills,
And make me blest to obey! I am brought hither
Among the Italian gentry, and to fight
Against my lady's kingdom: 'tis enough
20 That, Britain, I have kill'd thy mistress; peace!
I'll give no wound to thee. Therefore, good heavens,
Hear patiently my purpose: I'll disrobe me
Of these Italian weeds and suit myself
As does a Briton peasant: so I'll fight
25 Against the part I come with; so I'll die
For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life
Is every breath a death; and thus, unknown,
Pitied nor hated, to the face of peril
Myself I'll dedicate. Let me make men know
30 More valour in me than my habits show.
Gods, put the strength o' the Leonati in me!

Shakescpeare Translation

POSTHUMUS enters holding a bloody handkerchief.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Yes, bloody cloth, I'll keep you, because I wanted you to be this color. You who are married, if all of you did this, so many of you would murder wives who are much better than you just for straying a bit! Oh Pisanio! Good servants don't obey every order. Their duty is just to obey the moral ones. Gods, if you had taken revenge on me for my sins, I would never have lived long enough to do this and you would have given the noble Imogen a chance to repent and punished me, who deserve it more. But sadly you kill some of us for small sins. That shows your love for those people, because you keep them from sinning worse. Some you allow to do evil after evil, each one worse, so that they are afraid of your revenge but can only be punished once. But Imogen is with you now. Do what you want, and bless me for obeying you! I am brought here along with the Italian nobles, to fight against my wife's country. It's enough that I've killed your ruler, Britain. Let's be at peace! I won't attack you. So, gods, listen to what I mean to do: I'll take off these Italian clothes and dress like a British peasant. So I'll fight against the army I came with. And that way I'll die for you, oh Imogen, since I already feel like I'm dying for you with every breath I take. And so, unknown, neither pitied nor hated, I'll face danger. Let me show more bravery in this than I usually do. Gods, give me the strength of a Leonatus! To make the world feel ashamed, I'll turn the usual fashion around by making myself seem less noble on the outside and more on the inside.

To shame the guise o' the world, I will begin
The fashion, less without and more within.

Exit

He exits.

Act 5, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter, from one side, LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and the Roman Army: from the other side, the British Army; POSTHUMUS LEONATUS following, like a poor soldier. They march over and go out. Then enter again, in skirmish, IACHIMO and POSTHUMUS LEONATUS he vanquisheth and disarmeth IACHIMO, and then leaves him

IACHIMO

The heaviness and guilt within my bosom
Takes off my manhood: I have belied a lady,
The princess of this country, and the air on't
Revengingly enfeebles me; or could this carl,
5 A very drudge of nature's, have subdued me
In my profession? Knighthoods and honours, borne
As I wear mine, are titles but of scorn.
If that thy gentry, Britain, go before
This lout as he exceeds our lords, the odds
10 Is that we scarce are men and you are gods.

Exit

The battle continues; the Britons fly; CYMBELINE is taken: then enter, to his rescue, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS

Stand, stand! We have the advantage of the ground;
The lane is guarded: nothing routs us but
The villany of our fears.

ARVIRAGUS

Stand, stand, and fight!

15

Re-enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and seconds the Britons: they rescue CYMBELINE, and exeunt. Then re-enter LUCIUS, and IACHIMO, with IMOGEN

CAIUS LUCIUS

Away, boy, from the troops, and save thyself;
For friends kill friends, and the disorder's such
As war were hoodwink'd.

IACHIMO

'Tis their fresh supplies.

CAIUS LUCIUS

20 It is a day turn'd strangely: or betimes
Let's reinforce, or fly.

Exeunt

Shakescleare Translation

LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and the Roman Army enter on one side. On the other, the British Army, including POSTHUMUS LEONATUS dressed like a poor soldier. They both march over the stage and exit. POSTHUMUS LEONATUS enters, fighting IACHIMO. He wins and disarms IACHIMO, then exits.

IACHIMO

The sadness and guilt in my heart make me less of a man. I lied about a woman, the princess of this country, and the country's air in revenge makes me weak, or how else could this peasant, this manual laborer, be better at my job than I am? Knighthoods and honors like the ones I have are worth nothing except as insults to me. If your nobles, Britain, surpass this oaf in fighting even as he surpasses our own nobles, it would seem that we're barely men and you're gods.

He exits.

The battle continues. The Britons runs away. CYMBELINE is captured. BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS enter to rescue him.

BELARIUS

Stand your ground! We have the advantage in this place. They can't sneak up on us in this alley. Nothing is making us run away except that we are afraid.

ARVIRAGUS

Stand your grounds and fight!

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS re-enters and stands with the Britons. They rescue CYMBELINE and exit. Then LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and IMOGEN re-enter.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Run, boy, away from the army and save yourself. Friends are killing friends and it's as much of a mess as if we were all blindfolded.

IACHIMO

It's because they just got fresh troops.

CAIUS LUCIUS

The day went unexpectedly. Let's reinforce the troops soon or run away.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and a British Lord

Shakescleare Translation

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and a British Lord enter.

LORD

Camest thou from where they made the stand?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I did.

Though you, it seems, come from the fliers.

LORD

I did.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

No blame be to you, sir; for all was lost,
But that the heavens fought: the king himself
Of his wings destitute, the army broken,
And but the backs of Britons seen, all flying
Through a straight lane; the enemy full-hearted,
Lolling the tongue with slaughtering, having work
More plentiful than tools to do't, struck down
Some mortally, some slightly touch'd, some falling
Merely through fear; that the straight pass was damm'd
With dead men hurt behind, and cowards living
To die with lengthen'd shame.

LORD

Where was this lane?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Close by the battle, ditch'd, and wall'd with turf;
Which gave advantage to an ancient soldier,
An honest one, I warrant; who deserved
So long a breeding as his white beard came to,
In doing this for's country: athwart the lane,
He, with two striplings-lads more like to run
The country base than to commit such slaughter
With faces fit for masks, or rather fairer
Than those for preservation cased, or shame--
Made good the passage; cried to those that fled,
'Our Britain s harts die flying, not our men:
To darkness fleet souls that fly backwards. Stand;
Or we are Romans and will give you that
Like beasts which you shun beastly, and may save,
But to look back in frown: stand, stand.'
These three,
Three thousand confident, in act as many--
For three performers are the file when all
The rest do nothing--with this word 'Stand, stand,'
Accommodated by the place, more charming
With their own nobleness, which could have turn'd
A distaff to a lance, gilded pale looks,
Part shame, part spirit renew'd; that some,
turn'd coward
But by example--O, a sin in war,
Damn'd in the first beginners!--gan to look
The way that they did, and to grin like lions
Upon the pikes o' the hunters. Then began
A stop i' the chaser, a retire, anon
A rout, confusion thick; forthwith they fly
Chickens, the way which they stoop'd eagles; slaves,
The strides they victors made; and now our cowards,
Like fragments in hard voyages, became
The life o' the need: having found the backdoor open
Of the unguarded hearts, heavens, how they wound!
Some slain before; some dying; some their friends
O'er borne i' the former wave: ten, chased by one,
Are now each one the slaughter-man of twenty:
Those that would die or ere resist are grown
The mortal bugs o' the field.

LORD

This was strange chance
A narrow lane, an old man, and two boys.

LORD

Did you come from where they made a stand?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I did. But it seems like you were one of the people who ran away.

LORD

I was.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I don't blame you, sir, because there was no hope except that the gods fought for us. The king was trapped alone, the army beaten up, and no one could see anything except the backs of Britons running away through a narrow alley. The enemy, rejoicing, was eager to slaughter them, with more people to kill than they had weapons to do it with. Some people were killed, some a little injured, some just fell down from fear. The narrow way was dammed up with dead men hit in the back, and cowards who stayed alive to die of shame later.

LORD

Where was this alley?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Next to the battlefield, with ditches on the sides and walls made of grass. This gave an opportunity to an ancient solder, an honest one I bet. He deserved to be made as noble as his white beard was long for doing this in the service of his country. He, along with two young boys more likely to run races in the countryside than kill people this way, with faces attractive enough to make masks out of, or rather more beautiful than anyone whose face was made into a mask to remind people of their virtue or shame--they protected the passageway. They called to the men running away: "British deer die while running away, not British men. The souls of people who run away go to hell. Stand your ground, or we will act like Romans and treat you like animals because you're running away like animals. You can save yourselves by just turning around and frowning. Stand your ground." These three were as confident as if there were three thousand of them, and had the same effect as three thousand--because three people can make a difference when no one else is doing anything. They said "stand your ground" and looked at home where they were, and convinced people by their example, which could even have turned a woman's stick for spinning wool into a spear. They made people seem less afraid, partly because they were ashamed to and partly because their courage came back. Some people, who were acting like cowards just because everyone else was--which is a sin in war and the people who began this trend should be damned!--began to act the same as the three men and to bare their teeth like lions at hunters' spears. Then the chase ended, the enemy fell back and was defeated, and there was nothing but confusion in their ranks. Immediately they ran like chickens when before they acted like eagles. They went back like slaves over the space they first crossed like conquerors. And now those who were cowards at first on our side, like crumbs that save your life when you're starving on a long journey, saved the day. Finding the enemies' backs unprotected, they stabbed them to the heart! They trampled over some men who had been killed before, some who were dying, some who fell over in the crowd. Before, ten men were chased by one, but those men turned around and killed twenty. The men who chose to die rather than give up became the terror of the battlefield.

LORD

This was a strange coincidence: a narrow road, an old man, and two boys.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Nay, do not wonder at it: you are made
 60 Rather to wonder at the things you hear
 Than to work any. Will you rhyme upon't,
 And vent it for a mockery? Here is one:
 'Two boys, an old man twice a boy, a lane,
 Preserved the Britons, was the Romans' bane.'

LORD

65 Nay, be not angry, sir.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

'Lack, to what end?
 Who dares not stand his foe, I'll be his friend;
 For if he'll do as he is made to do,
 I know he'll quickly fly my friendship too.
 70 You have put me into rhyme.'

LORD

Farewell; you're angry.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Still going?

Exit Lord

This is a lord! O noble misery,
 To be i' the field, and ask 'what news?' of me!
 To-day how many would have given their honours
 To have saved their carcasses! took heel to do't,
 And yet died too! I, in mine own woe charm'd,
 Could not find death where I did hear him groan,
 80 Nor feel him where he struck: being an ugly monster,
 'Tis strange he hides him in fresh cups, soft beds,
 Sweet words; or hath more ministers than we
 That draw his knives i' the war. Well, I will find him
 For being now a favourer to the Briton,
 85 No more a Briton, I have resumed again
 The part I came in: fight I will no more,
 But yield me to the veriest hind that shall
 Once touch my shoulder. Great the slaughter is
 Here made by the Roman; great the answer be
 90 Britons must take. For me, my ransom's death;
 On either side I come to spend my breath;
 Which neither here I'll keep nor bear again,
 But end it by some means for Imogen.

Enter two British Captains and Soldiers

FIRST CAPTAIN

Great Jupiter be praised! Lucius is taken.
 95 'Tis thought the old man and his sons were angels.

SECOND CAPTAIN

There was a fourth man, in a silly habit,
 That gave the affront with them.

FIRST CAPTAIN

So 'tis reported:
 But none of 'em can be found. Stand! who's there?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

A Roman,
 Who had not now been drooping here, if seconds
 Had answer'd him.

SECOND CAPTAIN

Lay hands on him; a dog!
 A leg of Rome shall not return to tell
 105 What crows have peck'd them here. He brags
 his service
 As if he were of note: bring him to the king.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

No, don't be amazed. It's your nature to be amazed at
 things you hear about rather than do anything yourself. Are
 you going to make a poem about it and act it out? Here's
 one: "Two boys, an old man in his second childhood, and a
 road saved the British and destroyed the Romans."

LORD

Don't be angry, sir?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Why should I? I'll be friends with anyone who doesn't dare
 stay and fight his enemy. Because if he does what is natural
 to him, I know he'll run away from my friendship too. You
 made me rhyme.

LORD

Goodbye: you're angry?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Still running away?

The LORD exits.

That was a lord? Oh what a noble hardship, to be in the
 battlefield and ask me "what's going on?" Today so many
 chose to give up their honor to save their bodies! They ran
 to do it, but died anyway! I, cloaked in my own sadness,
 couldn't find death even where I heard him groaning, and
 couldn't get hit by him even where he was striking people
 down. He's an ugly monster, so it's strange he hides in
 refreshing cups, soft beds, and sweet words, and has more
 minions than there are soldiers taking knives out to serve
 him in the war. Well, because he's on the British side, I
 won't be a British soldier anymore. I'll go back to the side I
 came here with. I won't fight any more, but surrender to the
 lowest soldier who just touches me on the shoulder once.
 The Romans killed a lot of people here, and the Britons will
 punish them for it. My prize will be death. I've fought on
 both sides, but instead of sticking with one or the other I'll
 die for Imogen's sake.

Two British CAPTAINS and some Soldiers enter.

FIRST CAPTAIN

May great Jupiter be praised! Lucius has been captured. It's
 believed that the old man and his sons were angels.

SECOND CAPTAIN

There was a fourth man, in humble clothes, who fought
 with them.

FIRST CAPTAIN

I've heard that said. But none of them can be found. Stop!
 Who's there?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

A Roman, who wouldn't have been stuck here if people had
 come to his help.

SECOND CAPTAIN

Grab him. He's a dog! Not even a single Roman leg will
 make it home to report what crows pecked it here. He's
 bragging about his fighting as if he's important. Bring him
 to the king.

Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, Soldiers, Attendants, and Roman Captives. The Captains present POSTHUMUS LEONATUS to CYMBELINE, who delivers him over to a Gaoler: then exeunt omnes

CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, Soldiers, Attendants, and Roman Captives enter. The captains present POSTHUMUS LEONATUS to CYMBELINE, who hands him over to a JAILER. Then they all exit.

Act 5, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and two Gaolers

FIRST GAOLER

You shall not now be stol'n, you have locks upon you;
So graze as you find pasture.

SECOND GAOLER

Ay, or a stomach.

Exeunt Gaolers

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

5 Most welcome, bondage! for thou art a way,
think, to liberty: yet am I better
Than one that's sick o' the gout; since he had rather
Groan so in perpetuity than be cured
By the sure physician, death, who is the key
10 To unbar these locks. My conscience, thou art fetter'd
More than my shanks and wrists: you good gods, give me
The penitent instrument to pick that bolt,
Then, free for ever! Is't enough I am sorry?
So children temporal fathers do appease;
15 Gods are more full of mercy. Must I repent?
I cannot do it better than in gyves,
Desired more than constrain'd: to satisfy,
If of my freedom 'tis the main part, take
No stricter render of me than my all.
20 I know you are more clement than vile men,
Who of their broken debtors take a third,
A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again
On their abatement: that's not my desire:
For Imogen's dear life take mine; and though
25 'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life; you coind' it:
'Tween man and man they weigh not every stamp;
Though light, take pieces for the figure's sake:
You rather mine, being yours: and so, great powers,
If you will take this audit, take this life,
30 And cancel these cold bonds. O Imogen!
I'll speak to thee in silence.

Sleeps

Solemn music. Enter, as in an apparition, SICILIUS LEONATUS, father to Posthumus Leonatus, an old man, attired like a warrior; leading in his hand an ancient matron, his wife, and mother to Posthumus Leonatus, with music before them: then, after other music, follow the two young Leonati, brothers to Posthumus Leonatus, with wounds as they died in the wars. They circle Posthumus Leonatus round, as he lies sleeping

SICILIUS LEONATUS

No more, thou thunder-master, show
Thy spite on mortal flies:
With Mars fall out, with Juno chide,
35 That thy adulteries
Rates and revenges.
Hath my poor boy done aught but well,
Whose face I never saw?
I died whilst in the womb he stay'd
40 Attending nature's law:

Shakesclare Translation

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and two JAILERS enter.

FIRST JAILER

You won't be rescued, you're locked up. So you can eat whatever you find.

SECOND JAILER

Or whatever you're hungry for.

The JAILERS exit.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Welcome, slavery! You are a way to find freedom. I'm better off than someone sick with gout. He would prefer to suffer forever than to be cured by that talented doctor, death, the key to these locks. My consciousness, you're less free than my legs and arms. Good gods, give me the pick to pick that lock, then I'll be free forever! Is it enough that I'm sorry for what I did? That's how children get their fathers to forgive them. Gods are more merciful. Do I have to repent? I couldn't do it better than while tied up. And it's more that I want to than that I have to. As a punishment, just take everything I have from me and no more. I know you're kinder than disgusting humans, who take a third of what people in debt owe, or a sixth or a tenth, and leave them the rest so they can earn their money back. That's not what I want. In return for Imogen's precious life, take mine. Although it's not as precious, it's still a life. You created it. Humans don't weigh every coin we exchange. Even if they're lighter than they should be , we accept that they have a certain value because of the image stamped onto them. There's even more reason for you to take mine since I was created in your image. And so, gods, examine this financial record and cancel the loan. Oh Imogen! I'll speak to you by staying silent.

 1 It was common practice for forgers to lighten the weight of coins in order to conserve material.

He falls asleep.

Sad music plays. The ghost of SICILIUS LEONATUS, who is Posthumus Leonatus's father, enters, along with an old man dressed like a warrior. He leads an old woman, who is his wife and Posthumus Leonatus's mother, by the hand. Then, while different music plays, the two young sons of Leonatus, Posthumus's brothers, enter covered in wounds as though they died in battle. They surround Posthumus Leonatus as he sleeps.

SICILIUS LEONATUS

You thunder-god , don't punish human flies anymore. Disagree with Mars and fight with Juno who gets angry and gets her revenge for your adultery. Has my poor boy, whose face I never got to see, done anything wrong? I died while he was still in his mother's womb, growing naturally. People say you're a father to orphans, and you should have been a father to him and protected him from this pain.

 2 Sicilius is addressing Jove, the god of thunder, invoked often throughout the play.

Whose father then, as men report
Thou orphans' father art,
Thou shouldst have been, and shielded him
From this earth-vexing smart.

MOTHER

45 Lucina lent not me her aid,
But took me in my throes;
That from me was Posthumus ript,
Came crying 'mongst his foes,
A thing of pity!

SICILIUS LEONATUS

50 Great nature, like his ancestry,
Moulded the stuff so fair,
That he deserved the praise o' the world,
As great Sicilius' heir.

FIRST BROTHER

When once he was mature for man,
In Britain where was he
That could stand up his parallel;
Or fruitful object be
In eye of Imogen, that best
Could deem his dignity?

MOTHER

60 With marriage wherefore was he mock'd,
To be exiled, and thrown
From Leonati seat, and cast
From her his dearest one,
Sweet Imogen?

SICILIUS LEONATUS

65 Why did you suffer Iachimo,
Slight thing of Italy,
To taint his nobler heart and brain
With needless jealousy;
And to become the geck and scorn
70 O' th' other's villany?

SECOND BROTHER

For this from stiller seats we came,
Our parents and us twain,
That striking in our country's cause
Fell bravely and were slain,
Our fealty and Tenantius' right
75 With honour to maintain.

FIRST BROTHER

Like hardiment Posthumus hath
To Cymbeline perform'd:
Then, Jupiter, thou king of gods,
80 Why hast thou thus adjourn'd
The graces for his merits due,
Being all to dolours turn'd?

SICILIUS LEONATUS

Thy crystal window ope; look out;
No longer exercise
85 Upon a valiant race thy harsh
And potent injuries.

MOTHER

Since, Jupiter, our son is good,
Take off his miseries.

SICILIUS LEONATUS

Peep through thy marble mansion; help;
90 Or we poor ghosts will cry
To the shining synod of the rest
Against thy deity.

MOTHER

Lucina  didn't help me but killed me while I was in labor.
So Posthumus was cut out of me and arrived crying
surrounded by enemies, a pitiful little thing!

 Lucina was the Roman goddess of
childbirth.

SICILIUS LEONATUS

Nature and his genes made him so attractive that he
deserved to be praised by the whole world as Sicilius's heir.

FIRST BROTHER

When he had grown into a man, who else in Britain was
equal to him or who else could compete with him in
Imogen's affection, she who more than anyone could see
how virtuous he was?

MOTHER

Why was he punished for getting married, exiled and driven
out of the Leonatus family home, and separated from his
beloved, sweet Imogen?

SICILIUS LEONATUS

Why did you let Iachimo, a worthless Italian, infect his noble
heart and mind with pointless jealousy? And let him be
duped by Iachimo's trickery?

SECOND BROTHER

We came from more peaceful places, our parents and the
two of us. Fighting for our country, we fell bravely and died
in battle, to show our loyalty and to win for Tenantius.

FIRST BROTHER

Posthumus did the same service for Cymbeline. So, Jupiter,
king of the gods, why have you put off rewarding him as he
deserves, now he's in so much trouble?

SICILIUS LEONATUS

Open your window, look down, don't punish a brave people
so harshly.

MOTHER

Jupiter, since our son is a good person, don't let him be
miserable.

SICILIUS LEONATUS

Look out of your marble palace! Help! Or we poor ghosts
will complain about you to the assembly of the rest of the
gods.

SECOND BROTHER

Help, Jupiter; or we appeal,
And from thy justice fly.

95

Jupiter descends in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle: he throws a thunderbolt. The Apparitions fall on their knees

JUPITER

No more, you petty spirits of region low,
Offend our hearing; hush! How dare you ghosts
Accuse the thunderer, whose bolt, you know,
Sky-planted batters all rebelling coasts?
100 Poor shadows of Elysium, hence, and rest
Upon your never-withering banks of flowers:
Be not with mortal accidents opprest;
No care of yours it is; you know 'tis ours.
Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift,
105 The more delay'd, delighted. Be content;
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift:
His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent.
Our Jovial star reign'd at his birth, and in
Our temple was he married. Rise, and fade.
110 He shall be lord of lady Imogen,
And happier much by his affliction made.
This tablet lay upon his breast, wherein
Our pleasure his full fortune doth confine:
and so, away: no further with your din
115 Express impatience, lest you stir up mine.
Mount, eagle, to my palace crystalline.

Ascends

SICILIUS LEONATUS

He came in thunder; his celestial breath
Was sulphurous to smell: the holy eagle
Stoop'd as to foot us: his ascension is
120 More sweet than our blest fields: his royal bird
Prunes the immortal wing and cloys his beak,
As when his god is pleased.

ALL

Thanks, Jupiter!

SICILIUS LEONATUS

The marble pavement closes, he is enter'd
125 His radiant root. Away! and, to be blest,
Let us with care perform his great behest.

The Apparitions vanish

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

[Waking] Sleep, thou hast been a grandsire, and begot
A father to me; and thou hast created
130 A mother and two brothers: but, O scorn!
Gone! they went hence so soon as they were born:
And so I am awake. Poor wretches that depend
On greatness' favour dream as I have done,
Wake and find nothing. But, alas, I swerve:
135 Many dream not to find, neither deserve,
And yet are steep'd in favours: so am I,
That have this golden chance and know not why.
What fairies haunt this ground? A book? O rare one!
Be not, as is our fangled world, a garment
140 Nobler than that it covers: let thy effects
So follow, to be most unlike our courtiers,
As good as promise.

Reads

'When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown,
without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of
145 tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be
lopped branches, which, being dead many years,

SECOND BROTHER

Help, Jupiter, or we will appeal to them and give up on your justice system.

Jupiter descends with thunder and lightning, sitting on an eagle. He throws a thunderbolt and the Ghosts fall to their knees.

JUPITER

Don't offend us by talking anymore, you minor spirits from below! Shh! How dare you ghosts accuse me of these things when you know my lightning bolts shoot from the sky at all rebelling countries? Poor ghosts from Elysium , go away, and rest on your hills covered in undying flowers. Don't worry about what happens on earth. It isn't any of your business, and you know it's mine. I make trouble for the people I love best, because postponing my help makes people appreciate it more. You can be sure, my power will save your son even though he's been laid low. Things that will comfort him are being taken care of, and the things he's going through are good for him. He was born under my star, and was married in my temple. Get up and fade away. He will be lady Imogen's husband, and this suffering will make him happier in the end. Set this tablet on his chest, where I've set down his destiny. So, go away. Don't make any more noise saying you're impatient, or I'll become impatient too. Fly up, eagle, to my crystal palace.

 "Elysium" is the part of the underworld for heroes.

He flies away.

SICILIUS LEONATUS

He came surrounded by thunder. His holy breath smelled like sulphur. The holy eagle stooped as though it would kick us. Seeing him fly away is more beautiful than the blessed fields we live in. His royal bird is cleaning his immortal wing and keeping his beak shut, as he does when his god is pleased.

ALL

Thanks, Jupiter!

SICILIUS LEONATUS

The marble roof closes: he has gone back to the bright place where he lives. Let's go! And we should do exactly as he asked so he blesses us.

The Ghosts disappear.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

[Waking up] Sleep, you were like a grandfather: you gave birth to a father for me, and you created a mother and two brothers. But what a terrible joke! They're gone! They vanished as quickly as they appeared. So I'm awake now. Poor people who depend on the kindness of great men dream the same kinds of dreams as me, and wake up to find that they have nothing. But I'm wrong. Many don't dream about getting anything or deserve to get anything but are drowned in presents. That's true of me, since I had this wonderful dream and don't know why. What fairies haunt this place?
[Finding the tablet] A book! Oh, it's a beautiful one! Don't be like this unpredictable world and have a cover that looks more noble than what it's covering. Don't be like courtiers and instead be as good as you appear to be.

He reads.

"When a lion's cub, not knowing himself, finds and is embraced by a piece of soft air without looking for it, and when branches are cut from a noble cedar tree and, after being dead many years, come back to life and are re-

shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock and
freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries,
Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.'
150 'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
Tongue and brain not; either both or nothing;
Or senseless speaking or a speaking such
As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,
The action of my life is like it, which
155 I'll keep, if but for sympathy.

Re-enter First Gaoler

FIRST GAOLER

Come, sir, are you ready for death?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Over-roasted rather; ready long ago.

FIRST GAOLER

Hanging is the word, sir: if
you be ready for that, you are well cooked.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

160 So, if I prove a good repast to the
spectators, the dish pays the shot.

FIRST GAOLER

A heavy reckoning for you, sir. But the comfort is,
you shall be called to no more payments, fear no
more tavern-bills; which are often the sadness of
165 parting, as the procuring of mirth: you come in
flint for want of meat, depart reeling with too
much drink; sorry that you have paid too much, and
sorry that you are paid too much; purse and brain
both empty; the brain the heavier for being too
170 light, the purse too light, being drawn of
heaviness: of this contradiction you shall now be
quit. O, the charity of a penny cord! It sums up
thousands in a trice: you have no true debtor and
creditor but it; of what's past, is, and to come,
175 the discharge: your neck, sir, is pen, book and
counters; so the acquittance follows.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I am merrier to die than thou art to live.

FIRST GAOLER

180 Indeed, sir, he that sleeps feels not the
tooth-ache: but a man that were to sleep your
sleep, and a hangman to help him to bed, I think he
would change places with his officer; for, look you,
sir, you know not which way you shall go.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Yes, indeed do I, fellow.

FIRST GAOLER

185 Your death has eyes in 's head then; I have not seen
him so pictured: you must either be directed by
some that take upon them to know, or do take upon
yourself that which I am sure you do not know, or
jump the after inquiry on your own peril: and how
you shall speed in your journey's end, I think you'll
190 never return to tell one.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I tell thee, fellow, there are none want eyes to
direct them the way I am going, but such as wink and
will not use them.

attached to the old trunk and grow again, then
Posthumus's sorrows will end, and Britain will be fortunate,
prosperous, and peaceful." I'm still dreaming, or this is the
sort of thing crazy people say without knowing what they
mean. Either both those things, or nothing I can think of. It's
either meaningless words or words that are impossible to
understand. Whatever this writing is, my life is like it in that
it's also difficult, so I'll keep it because we're alike.

The FIRST JAILER enters.

FIRST JAILER

Come on, sir, are you ready to die?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I was ready long ago. Now I'm overdone.

FIRST JAILER

You're going to be hanged, sir. If you're ready for that,
you're well cooked. 

 The Jailer picks up on
Posthumus's use of "over-roasted" in
the original text.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Well, if I give the spectators a good meal, it's worth the
trouble of killing and cooking me.

FIRST JAILER

Bad luck for you, sir. But the good news is you won't have to
pay any more bills or worry about the check in bars, which
often makes you sad when you leave even though you're
paying to be made happy by alcohol. You come in starving
and leave staggering from drinking too much. You're sad
you gave so much money, and sad that you took so much
alcohol in. Your wallet and your head are both empty. Your
head is worse off for feeling light and your wallet that used
to be heavier is too light. You won't have to deal with this
contradiction anymore. A rope you can buy for a penny is so
kind! It can save you thousands of pounds at once. It's the
only one who really owes you or lends you anything. It can
discharge you from the past, the present and the future.
Your neck is its pen, book, and counter. It forgives you
your debt immediately.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I'm happier to die than you are to live.

FIRST JAILER

Yes, sir, someone who's asleep doesn't feel his toothache,
but I think that someone who sleeps the kind of sleep
you're going to would gladly change places with the
hangman helping him to bed. Because, you see, sir, you
don't know which way you're going to go, to hell or heaven.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Yes, I do.

FIRST JAILER

Then your grim reaper has eyes in his skull. I haven't seen
him illustrated that way. You must either have been told
that by people who pretend to know, or you've decided for
yourself what I'm sure you don't know and chosen to skip
the judgement after you die, which is risky. I think you'll
never come back to tell me how that will go for you.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Believe me, fellow, there's no one who can't see where I'm
going except those who keep their eyes closed and refuse
to use them.

FIRST GAOLER

What an infinite mock is this, that a man should have the best use of eyes to see the way of blindness! I am sure hanging's the way of winking.

195

Enter a Messenger

MESSENGER

Knock off his manacles; bring your prisoner to the king.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Thou bring'st good news; I am called to be made free.

FIRST GAOLER

200 I'll be hang'd then.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Thou shalt be then freer than a gaoler; no bolts for the dead.

Exeunt POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and Messenger

FIRST GAOLER

Unless a man would marry a gallows and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone. Yet, on my conscience, there are verier knaves desire to live, for all he be a Roman: and there be some of them too that die against their wills; so should I, if I were one. I would we were all of one mind, and one mind good; O, there were desolation of gaolers and gallowses! I speak against my present profit, but my wish hath a preferment in 't.

205

210

Exeunt

FIRST JAILER

What a joke that is, that a man would use his eyes to see what blindness looks like. I'm sure hanging is a way to shut your eyes.

A MESSENGER enters.

MESSENGER

Take off his handcuffs and bring your prisoner to the king.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

You bring good news. I'm being summoned to be set free.

FIRST JAILER

If that's true then I'll be hanged.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Then you will be freer than a jailor, because no locks can stop the dead.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and the MESSENGER exit.

FIRST JAILER

Unless a man married a noose and gave birth to young nooses, I never saw anyone so likely to be hanged. But I swear there are worse criminals who want to live, even though he's a Roman. And there are some of them who die against their wills. I would, if I were a criminal. I wish we all got along, and were all good people. Oh, then there would be no jobs for jailers and nooses! I'm arguing against my own profit, but I would also wish to be promoted to do something else.

He exits.

Act 5, Scene 5

Shakespeare

Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, Lords, Officers, and Attendants

CYMBELINE

Stand by my side, you whom the gods have made
Preservers of my throne. Woe is my heart
That the poor soldier that so richly fought,
Whose rags shamed gilded arms, whose naked breast
5 Stepp'd before larges of proof, cannot be found:
He shall be happy that can find him, if
Our grace can make him so.

5

BELARIUS

I never saw
Such noble fury in so poor a thing;
10 Such precious deeds in one that promises nought
But beggary and poor looks.

10

CYMBELINE

No tidings of him?

PISANIO

He hath been search'd among the dead and living,
But no trace of him.

15

CYMBELINE

To my grief, I am
The heir of his reward;

Shakescpeare Translation

CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, Lords, Officers, and Attendants enter.

CYMBELINE

Stand next to me, you whom the gods aided to save my throne. I'm sad that the poor soldier who fought so well, whose ragged clothes made those wearing golden armor ashamed of themselves, who stepped up unprotected to fight nobles known for their skill, can't be found. Anyone who finds him will be made happy if that's within my power.

BELARIUS

I never saw such a poor man show such noble fierceness.
He did such amazing things for someone who looked like a beggar.

CYMBELINE

There's no news of him?

PISANIO

He's been searched for among those who are dead and alive, but there's no trace of him.

CYMBELINE

Sadly, I'll have to keep his reward...

To BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

which I will add
 To you, the liver, heart and brain of Britain,
 By whom I grant she lives. 'Tis now the time
 To ask of whence you are. Report it.

BELARIUS

Sir,
 In Cambria are we born, and gentlemen:
 Further to boast were neither true nor modest,
 Unless I add, we are honest.

CYMBELINE

Bow your knees.
 Arise my knights o' the battle: I create you
 Companions to our person and will fit you
 With dignities becoming your estates.

Enter CORNELIUS and Ladies

30 There's business in these faces. Why so sadly
 Greet you our victory? you look like Romans,
 And not o' the court of Britain.

CORNELIUS

Hail, great king!
 35 To sour your happiness, I must report
 The queen is dead.

CYMBELINE

Who worse than a physician
 Would this report become? But I consider,
 By medicine life may be prolong'd, yet death
 40 Will seize the doctor too. How ended she?

CORNELIUS

With horror, madly dying, like her life,
 Which, being cruel to the world, concluded
 Most cruel to herself. What she confess'd
 I will report, so please you: these her women
 45 Can trip me, if I err; who with wet cheeks
 Were present when she finish'd.

CYMBELINE

Prithee, say.

CORNELIUS

First, she confess'd she never loved you, only
 Affected greatness got by you, not you:
 50 Married your royalty, was wife to your place;
 Abhor'd your person.

CYMBELINE

She alone knew this;
 And, but she spoke it dying, I would not
 Believe her lips in opening it. Proceed.

CORNELIUS

55 Your daughter, whom she bore in hand to love
 With such integrity, she did confess
 Was as a scorpion to her sight; whose life,
 But that her flight prevented it, she had
 Ta'en off by poison.

CYMBELINE

60 O most delicate fiend!
 Who is 't can read a woman? Is there more?

CORNELIUS

More, sir, and worse. She did confess she had
 For you a mortal mineral; which, being took,
 Should by the minute feed on life and lingering

To BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS.

To add to yours. You three are like Britain's liver, heart, and brain. Britain stays alive because of you. It's now time to ask you where you come from. Tell me.

BELARIUS

Sir, we were born in Cambria. We're gentlemen. I can't tell you anything else while telling the truth and being humble, except that we're honest.

CYMBELINE

Kneel down, and when you get up you will be knights. I make you my companions, and I will give you titles as honorable as you are.

CORNELIUS and some Ladies enter.

I can tell something has happened. Why do you look so sad after we won? You look like Romans, not British courtiers.

CORNELIUS

Hello, great king! I have to ruin your happiness by telling you the queen is dead.

CYMBELINE

It doesn't reflect well on a doctor to report that someone they were treating died. But I suppose that although life can be made longer with medicine, eventually even a doctor dies. How did she die?

CORNELIUS

Horribly, dying in a frenzy like she lived her life. In that life she was cruel to everyone else, and her life ended cruelly for her. I'll tell you what she confessed, if you don't mind. Her women here can cut me off if I get anything wrong. They were there, crying, when she died.

CYMBELINE

Please, tell me.

CORNELIUS

First, she confessed she never loved you and only desired the power she got from you, not you. She married your royalty, was a wife to your social position, but hated you.

CYMBELINE

She was the only one who knew that. Except that she said it while she was dying, I wouldn't believe it even from her own mouth. Go on.

CORNELIUS

She pretended to love your daughter deeply, but confessed that she actually hated her. If Imogen hadn't run away, the queen would have poisoned her.

CYMBELINE

What a sneaky demon! Who can know what women are actually like? Is there more?

CORNELIUS

There's more, sir, and it's worse. She confessed she had a poison prepared for you that, when you swallowed it, would make you waste away and die slowly. She meant to

By inches waste you: in which time she purposed,
By watching, weeping, tendance, kissing, to
O'ercome you with her show, and in time,
When she had fitted you with her craft, to work
Her son into the adoption of the crown:
70 But, failing of her end by his strange absence,
Grew shameless-desperate; open'd, in despite
Of heaven and men, her purposes; repented
The evils she hatch'd were not effected; so
Despairing died.

CYMBELINE

75 Heard you all this, her women?

FIRST LADY

We did, so please your highness.

CYMBELINE

Mine eyes
Were not in fault, for she was beautiful;
Mine ears, that heard her flattery; nor my heart,
80 That thought her like her seeming: it had
been vicious
To have mistrusted her: yet, O my daughter!
That it was folly in me, thou mayst say,
And prove it in thy feeling. Heaven mend all!

Enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO, the Soothsayer, and other Roman Prisoners, guarded; POSTHUMUS LEONATUS behind, and IMOGEN

85 Thou comest not, Caius, now for tribute that
The Britons have razed out, though with the loss
Of many a bold one; whose kinsmen have made suit
That their good souls may be appeased with slaughter
Of you their captives, which ourself have granted:
90 So think of your estate.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Consider, sir, the chance of war: the day
Was yours by accident; had it gone with us,
We should not, when the blood was cool,
have threaten'd
95 Our prisoners with the sword. But since the gods
Will have it thus, that nothing but our lives
May be call'd ransom, let it come: sufficeth
A Roman with a Roman's heart can suffer:
Augustus lives to think on't: and so much
100 For my peculiar care. This one thing only
I will entreat; my boy, a Briton born,
Let him be ransom'd: never master had
A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,
So tender over his occasions, true,
105 Sofeat, so nurse-like: let his virtue join
With my request, which I make bold your highness
Cannot deny; he hath done no Briton harm,
Though he have served a Roman: save him, sir,
And spare no blood beside.

CYMBELINE

110 I have surely seen him:
His favour is familiar to me. Boy,
Thou hast look'd thyself into my grace,
And art mine own. I know not why, wherefore,
To say 'live, boy:' ne'er thank thy master, live:
115 And ask of Cymbeline what boon thou wilt,
Fitting my bounty and thy state, I'll give it;
Yea, though thou do demand a prisoner,
The noblest ta'en.

IMOGEN

I humbly thank your highness.

stay up, cry, tend to you, kiss you, and to overcome you with her show of love. In time, when she had killed you with her poison, she would have gotten her son onto the throne. But when her plan failed after he disappeared so strangely, she grew desperately shameless and admitted her plots against the gods and people, regretted that she did not succeed in doing the evil things she had planned, and died in despair.

CYMBELINE

Did you, her women, hear all of this?

FIRST LADY

We did, your highness.

CYMBELINE

My eyes weren't wrong, she was beautiful. Or my ears, that heard the flattering things she said. Or my heart, that thought she was what she seemed to be. It would have been a sin to not trust her. But oh, my daughter! You can say I was foolish, and prove it by what you went through. May the gods save us all!

LUCIUS, IACHIMO, the SOOTHSAYER, and other Roman Prisoners enter, with Guards. POSTHUMUS LEONATUS follows them. IMOGEN enters separately, still disguised as Fidele.

Caius, you're not here now for the tribute that we Britons crossed out of the account books, although at the cost of losing many brave men. Their relatives have asked that the dead men's souls should be put at rest by killing you, their captives. I agreed, so think about your wills.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Sir, consider how much is up to chance in war. You won by accident. If we had won, we would not have threatened to kill our prisoners in cold blood. But since that's the way the gods want it and we can pay no ransom except our lives, let death come. A Roman can suffer with Roman strength. Augustus is still alive to think about this. And so much for me. I will only ask you one thing: my boy, born a Briton—let him be ransomed. No master ever had as kind, dutiful, and hardworking a page, so gentle in doing his job, so quick, so nurse-like. Don't deny my request because I'm sure you can't deny his virtue. He hasn't harmed any Britons, although he served a Roman. Save him and no one else, sir.

CYMBELINE

I'm sure I've seen him before. He looks familiar. Boy, you've attracted my attention and now work for me. I don't know why I'm saying "stay alive, boy." Don't thank your master for it. Stay alive, and ask Cymbeline whatever favor you want that is proper for me to give and for you to ask, and I'll grant it. Even if you ask for a prisoner, even the noblest one captured.

IMOGEN

Thank you, your highness.

CAIUS LUCIUS

120 I do not bid thee beg my life, good lad;
And yet I know thou wilt.

IMOGEN

No, no: alack,
There's other work in hand: I see a thing
Bitter to me as death: your life, good master,
125 Must shuffle for itself.

CAIUS LUCIUS

The boy disdains me,
He leaves me, scorns me: briefly die their joys
That place them on the truth of girls and boys.
Why stands he so perplex'd?

CYMBELINE

130 What wouldest thou, boy?
I love thee more and more: think more and more
What's best to ask. Know'st him thou look'st on? speak,
Wilt have him live? Is he thy kin? thy friend?

IMOGEN

He is a Roman; no more kin to me
135 Than I to your highness; who, being born your vassal,
Am something nearer.

CYMBELINE

Wherefore eyest him so?

IMOGEN

I'll tell you, sir, in private, if you please
To give me hearing.

CYMBELINE

140 Ay, with all my heart,
And lend my best attention. What's thy name?

IMOGEN

Fidele, sir.

CYMBELINE

Thou'rt my good youth, my page;
I'll be thy master: walk with me; speak freely.

145

CYMBELINE and IMOGEN converse apart

BELARIUS

Is not this boy revived from death?

ARVIRAGUS

One sand another
Not more resembles that sweet rosy lad
Who died, and was Fidele. What think you?

150 The same dead thing alive.

BELARIUS

Peace, peace! see further; he eyes us not; forbear;
Creatures may be alike: were 't he, I am sure
He would have spoke to us.

GUIDERIUS

But we saw him dead.

BELARIUS

155 Be silent; let's see further.

PISANIO

[Aside] It is my mistress:
Since she is living, let the time run on

CAIUS LUCIUS

I'm not asking you to beg for my life, dear boy, but I know you will.

IMOGEN

No, no, I'm sorry. There's something else going on. I see something as terrible to me as death itself. Your life will have to take care of itself, good master.

CAIUS LUCIUS

The boy disrespects me. He abandons me and sneers at me. People who trust in the honesty of girls and boys will be disappointed. Why is he standing there looking so amazed?

CYMBELINE

What do you want, boy? I love you more and more. Think more and more about what you should ask for. Do you know the man you're looking at? Tell me, do you want him to live? Is he a family member? A friend?

IMOGEN

He's a Roman. He's no closer a family member to me than I am to you, your highness. Even though I was born your subject, I am more closely related to you.

CYMBELINE

Why are you looking at him like that?

IMOGEN

I'll tell you privately, if you agree to listen to me.

CYMBELINE

Yes, with all my heart, and I'll pay close attention. What's your name?

IMOGEN

Fidele, sir.

CYMBELINE

You're my good young man, my page. I'll be your master. Walk with me. You can tell me anything.

CYMBELINE and IMOGEN talk.

BELARIUS

Isn't this the boy come back to life?

ARVIRAGUS

One grain of sand doesn't look more like another than that boy looks like the sweet attractive one who died and was Fidele. What do you think?

GUIDERIUS

It's the same dead person, come back to life.

BELARIUS

Wait! Let's keep watching. He doesn't see us. Wait. Sometimes people look alike. If it were him, I'm sure he would have talked to us.

GUIDERIUS

But we saw him dead.

BELARIUS

Be quiet. Let's keep watching.

PISANIO

[To himself] It's my mistress. Since she's alive, I don't care what happens.

To good or bad.

CYMBELINE and IMOGEN come forward

CYMBELINE

160 Come, stand thou by our side;
Make thy demand aloud.

To IACHIMO

Sir, step you forth;
Give answer to this boy, and do it freely;
Or, by our greatness and the grace of it,
Which is our honour, bitter torture shall
165 Winnow the truth from falsehood. On, speak to him.

IMOGEN

My boon is, that this gentleman may render
Of whom he had this ring.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

170 *[Aside]* What's that to him?

CYMBELINE

That diamond upon your finger, say
How came it yours?

IACHIMO

Thou'l torture me to leave unspoken that
Which, to be spoke, would torture thee.

CYMBELINE

175 How! me?

IACHIMO

I am glad to be constrain'd to utter that
Which torments me to conceal. By villany
I got this ring: 'twas Leonatus' jewel;
Whom thou didst banish; and--which more may
180 grieve thee,
As it doth me--a nobler sir ne'er lived
'Twixt sky and ground. Wilt thou hear more, my lord?

CYMBELINE

All that belongs to this.

IACHIMO

That paragon, thy daughter,--
185 For whom my heart drops blood, and my false spirits
Quail to remember--Give me leave; I faint.

CYMBELINE

My daughter! what of her? Renew thy strength:
I had rather thou shouldst live while nature will
Than die ere I hear more: strive, man, and speak.

IACHIMO

190 Upon a time,--unhappy was the clock
That struck the hour!--it was in Rome,--accursed
The mansion where!--'twas at a feast,--O, would
Our viands had been poison'd, or at least
Those which I heaved to head!--the good Posthumus--
195 What should I say? he was too good to be
Where ill men were; and was the best of all
Amongst the rarest of good ones,--sitting sadly,
Hearing us praise our loves of Italy
For beauty that made barren the swell'd boast
200 Of him that best could speak, for feature, laming
The shrine of Venus, or straight-pight Minerva.
Postures beyond brief nature, for condition,
A shop of all the qualities that man
Loves woman for, besides that hook of wiving,
205 Fairness which strikes the eye--

CYMBELINE and IMOGEN come back.

CYMBELINE

Come on, stand next to me and say what you want out loud.

To IACHIMO

Sir, step forward. Answer this boy, and do it honestly, or by
my power and what makes it great, which is my honor,
you'll be tortured horribly to separate truth from lies. Go
on, talk to him.

IMOGEN

What I ask is, for this gentleman to tell me where he got this
ring.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

[To himself] What does that have to do with him?

CYMBELINE

That diamond ring on your finger, how did you get it?

IACHIMO

You're threatening to torture me if I don't say something
that, when I say it, will torture you.

CYMBELINE

What, me?

IACHIMO

I'm glad to be forced to reveal a secret that is so painful to
keep. I got this ring dishonestly. It was Leonatus's ring,
whom you banished, and--this may make you as sad as it
makes me--who is the noblest man who ever lived. Do you
want to hear more, sir?

CYMBELINE

Everything to do with this.

IACHIMO

That ideal woman, your daughter--mentioning her, my
heart bleeds and my lying mind cringes--I'm sorry, I feel
faint.

CYMBELINE

My daughter! What about her? Be strong. I would prefer you
to live while you can than to die without telling me more.
Try harder, and tell me.

IACHIMO

Once--and curse the clock that struck the hour!--it was in
Rome--curse the house where this happened!--it was at a
feast--oh, I wish our food had been poisoned, or at least the
food I threw in my mouth!--the good Posthumus--What can
I say? He was too good to be around bad men, and he was
the best of all good men--sitting sadly, hearing us say that
our Italian lovers were more beautiful than even the best
speaker could boast, and were more beautiful than the
goddesses Venus or tall Minerva. We were describing them
as beyond anything nature could make, like they were
shops filled with all the qualities that men love women for,
outside the trap of marriage. Beauty that hits the eye--

CYMBELINE

I stand on fire:
Come to the matter.

IACHIMO

All too soon I shall,
Unless thou wouldest grieve quickly. This Posthumus,
210 Most like a noble lord in love and one
That had a royal lover, took his hint;
And, not dispraising whom we praised,—therein
He was as calm as virtue—he began
His mistress' picture; which by his tongue
215 being made,
And then a mind put in't, either our brags
Were crack'd of kitchen-trolls, or his description
Proved us unspeaking sots.

CYMBELINE

Nay, nay, to the purpose.

IACHIMO

220 Your daughter's chastity—there it begins.
He spoke of her, as Dian had hot dreams,
And she alone were cold: whereat I, wretch,
Made scruple of his praise; and wager'd with him
Pieces of gold 'gainst this which then he wore
225 Upon his honour'd finger, to attain
In suit the place of's bed and win this ring
By hers and mine adultery. He, true knight,
No lesser of her honour confident
Than I did truly find her, stakes this ring;
230 And would so, had it been a carbuncle
Of Phoebus' wheel, and might so safely, had it
Been all the worth of's car. Away to Britain
Post I in this design: well may you, sir,
Remember me at court; where I was taught
235 Of your chaste daughter the wide difference
'Twixt amorous and villainous. Being thus quench'd
Of hope, not longing, mine Italian brain
'Gan in your duller Britain operate
Most vilely; for my vantage, excellent:
240 And, to be brief, my practise so prevail'd,
That I return'd with simular proof enough
To make the noble Leonatus mad,
By wounding his belief in her renown
With tokens thus, and thus; averting notes
245 Of chamber-hanging, pictures, this her bracelet,—
O cunning, how I got it!—nay, some marks
Of secret on her person, that he could not
But think her bond of chastity quite crack'd,
I having ta'en the forfeit. Whereupon—
250 Methinks, I see him now—

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

[Advancing] Ay, so thou dost,
Italian fiend! Ay me, most credulous fool,
Egregious murderer, thief, any thing
That's due to all the villains past, in being,
255 To come! O, give me cord, or knife, or poison,
Some upright justicer! Thou, king, send out
For torturers ingenious: it is I
That all the abhorred things o' the earth amend
By being worse than they. I am Posthumus,
260 That kill'd thy daughter:—villain-like, I lie—
That caused a lesser villain than myself,
A sacrilegious thief, to do't: the temple
Of virtue was she; yea, and she herself.
Spit, and throw stone s, cast mire upon me, set
265 The dogs o' the street to bay me: every villain
Be call'd Posthumus Leonatus; and
Be villany less than 'twas! O Imogen!
My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,
Imogen, Imogen!

CYMBELINE

I'm in suspense. Get to the point.

IACHIMO

I will all too soon, unless you're eager to be sad.
Posthumus, like a noble lord in love, with a royal lover, took
this opportunity. Not insulting the women we praised—he
was as calm as virtue itself would be—he began to describe
his wife. When he described what she looked like, and then
added an excellent mind to the picture, we were left
sounding like we were praising ugly kitchen servants or like
we were silent idiots.

CYMBELINE

No, no, get to the point.

IACHIMO

Your daughter's faithfulness—that's where it begins. He
spoke of her as if even the virgin goddess Diana had wet
dreams, and only his wife felt nothing sexual. So I, criminal
that I am, doubted what he said. And I bet him gold against
this ring, which he wore on his honorable finger, that I
would sleep with his wife and win this ring by committing
adultery with her. He, a true noble, was confident that she
was as honorable as I soon found out she was, and bet this
ring. He would have done the same thing if it was a jewel
from the wheel of the sun-god's chariot, and could have
done it safely even if it had been worth the whole chariot.
So I hurried off to Britain with this plan. You may well
remember seeing me in court, where I was taught by your
loyal daughter the huge difference between being in love
and being wicked. Losing hope but not my desire, my
Italian brain began to plot cleverly in your slower country of
Britain. I took advantage of people's slowness. To cut to the
point, my plot worked well enough that I returned with
enough fake proof to make noble Leonatus go crazy by
hurting his trust in her honor with certain details, throwing
in descriptions of wall-hangings, paintings, her bracelet
here—oh, I stole it so cleverly! Even some secret marks on
her body, so that he had to believe that she had been
unfaithful to him with me. So - It's like I can see him now—

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

[Stepping forward] Yes, you can, you Italian devil! Gullible
fool, horrible murderer, doing anything any criminal ever
did, is doing, will do! Give me a rope, or a knife, or poison,
some honest way to get justice! You, king, send for clever
torturers! I am the thing that makes all the disgusting
things on earth seem better by being worse than they are. I
am Posthumus, who killed your daughter—like a criminal,
I'm lying—who made a lesser criminal, an unholy thief, do
it. She was the temple of virtue, and she was herself. Spit,
throw stones, throw mud on me, set the dogs in the street
on me. May every criminal be called Posthumus Leonatus,
and may evil itself seem less bad compared to me! Oh
Imogen! My queen, my life, my wife! Oh Imogen, Imogen,
Imogen!

IMOGEN

270 Peace, my lord; hear, hear--

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Shall's have a play of this? Thou scornful page,
There lie thy part.

Striking her: she falls

PISANIO

O, gentlemen, help!
275 Mine and your mistress! O, my lord Posthumus!
You ne'er kill'd Imogen til now. Help, help!
Mine honour'd lady!

CYMBELINE

Does the world go round?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

How come these staggers on me?

PISANIO

280 Wake, my mistress!

CYMBELINE

If this be so, the gods do mean to strike me
To death with mortal joy.

PISANIO

How fares thy mistress?

IMOGEN

O, get thee from my sight;
285 Thou gavest me poison: dangerous fellow, hence!
Breathe not where princes are.

CYMBELINE

The tune of Imogen!

PISANIO

Lady,
The gods throw stones of sulphur on me, if
290 That box I gave you was not thought by me
A precious thing: I had it from the queen.

CYMBELINE

New matter still?

IMOGEN

It poison'd me.

CORNELIUS

O gods!
295 I left out one thing which the queen confess'd.
Which must approve thee honest: 'If Pisano
Have,' said she, 'given his mistress that confection
Which I gave him for cordial, she is served
As I would serve a rat.'

CYMBELINE

300 What's this, Cornelius?

CORNELIUS

The queen, sir, very oft importuned me
To temper poisons for her, still pretending
The satisfaction of her knowledge only
In killing creatures vile, as cats and dogs,
305 Of no esteem: I, dreading that her purpose
Was of more danger, did compound for her
A certain stuff, which, being ta'en, would cease
The present power of life, but in short time
All offices of nature should again

IMOGEN

Wait, my lord. Listen, listen--

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Do you think this is a play? You mocking page, this is your
part.

He hits her and she falls down.

PISANIO

Oh gentlemen, help! This is my mistress and your wife! Oh,
my lord Posthumus! You never killed Imogen until now.
Help, help! My dear lady!

CYMBELINE

Is the world spinning?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

What's happening to me?

PISANIO

Wake up, mistress!

CYMBELINE

If this is true, the gods are trying to kill me with happiness.

PISANIO

How is your wife?

IMOGEN

Get away from me. You gave me poison. You dangerous
man, get out of here! Don't breathe in the same room as
royalty.

CYMBELINE

Imogen's voice!

PISANIO

Ma'am, throw stinking rocks at me if I didn't think that box I
gave you was powerful medicine. I got it from the queen.

CYMBELINE

More new information?

IMOGEN

It poisoned me.

CORNELIUS

Oh gods! I left out one thing the queen confessed, which
proves you to be honest. She said, "If Pisano has given his
mistress that potion I told him was medicine, she's as dead
as a rat drinking rat poison."

CYMBELINE

What does that mean, Cornelius?

CORNELIUS

Sir, the queen often begged me to make poison for her,
always pretending she wanted to learn by killing low
creatures, like cats and dogs, that no one cared about. I,
worrying she actually meant to do something worse, made
her a mixture that would make anyone who drank it seem
dead but would after a short time make all the parts of their
body work again. Did you drink any of it?

Do their due functions. Have you ta'en of it?

IMOGEN

Most like I did, for I was dead.

BELARIUS

My boys,
There was our error.

GUIDERIUS

This is, sure, Fidele.

IMOGEN

315 Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?
Think that you are upon a rock; and now
Throw me again.

Embracing him

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Hang there like a fruit, my soul,
320 Till the tree die!

CYMBELINE

How now, my flesh, my child!
What, makest thou me a dullard in this act?
Wilt thou not speak to me?

IMOGEN

[Kneeling] Your blessing, sir.

BELARIUS

325 [To GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS] Though you did love
this youth, I blame ye not:
You had a motive for't.

CYMBELINE

My tears that fall
Prove holy water on thee! Imogen,
330 Thy mother's dead.

IMOGEN

I am sorry for't, my lord.

CYMBELINE

O, she was nought; and long of her it was
That we meet here so strangely: but her son
Is gone, we know not how nor where.

PISANIO

335 My lord,
Now fear is from me, I'll speak troth. Lord Cloten,
Upon my lady's missing, came to me
With his sword drawn; foam'd at the mouth, and swore,
If I discover'd not which way she was gone,
340 It was my instant death . By accident,
had a feigned letter of my master's
Then in my pocket; which directed him
To seek her on the mountains near to Milford;
Where, in a frenzy, in my master's garments,
345 Which he enforced from me, away he posts
With unchaste purpose and with oath to violate
My lady's honour: what became of him
I further know not.

GUIDERIUS

Let me end the story:
350 I slew him there.

IMOGEN

Probably, because I was dead.

BELARIUS

My boys, that's where we went wrong.

GUIDERIUS

This is definitely Fidele.

IMOGEN

Why did you push your wife away from you? Pretend you're
on the side of a cliff, and see if you can push me away again.

She hugs him.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

My dear, you're like my soul. Hang there like you're fruit and
I'm a tree until this tree dies!

CYMBELINE

My flesh and blood, my child! You're acting like I don't
matter. Won't you speak to me?

IMOGEN

[Kneeling] Give me your blessing, sir.

BELARIUS

[To GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS] I don't blame you for
loving this young man. You had a reason to.

CYMBELINE

May my tears falling on you act like holy water! Imogen,
your mother's dead.

IMOGEN

I'm sorry, sir.

CYMBELINE

Oh, she was worthless. It's no thanks to her that we're
meeting here so strangely. But her son is gone, and we
don't know how or where.

PISANIO

My lord, now that I'm not afraid any more, I'll tell you the
truth. When my mistress went missing, Lord Cloten came to
me with his sword out, foamed at the mouth, and promised
that I would die at once if I didn't tell him where she had
gone. By chance, I had a lying letter from my master in my
pocket, which told him to look for her in the mountains
near Milford. In a frenzy, wearing my master's clothes which
he forced me to give him, he rode away with a sinful plan,
promising to rape my mistress. I don't know anything more
about what happened.

GUIDERIUS

Let me end the story: I killed him there.

CYMBELINE

Marry, the gods forbend!
I would not thy good deeds should from my lips
Pluck a baird sentence: prithee, valiant youth,
Deny't again.

GUIDERIUS

355 I have spoke it, and I did it.

CYMBELINE

He was a prince.

GUIDERIUS

A most incivil one: the wrongs he did me
Were nothing prince-like; for he did provoke me
With language that would make me spurn the sea,
If it could so roar to me: I cut off's head;
And am right glad he is not standing here
To tell this tale of mine.

CYMBELINE

I am sorry for thee:
By thine own tongue thou art condemn'd, and must
Endure our law: thou'rt dead.

IMOGEN

That headless man
I thought had been my lord.

CYMBELINE

Bind the offender,
And take him from our presence.

BELARIUS

370 Stay, sir king:
This man is better than the man he slew,
As well descended as thyself; and hath
More of thee merited than a band of Clotens
Had ever scar for.

To the Guard

375 Let his arms alone;
They were not born for bondage.

CYMBELINE

Why, old soldier,
Wilt thou undo the worth thou art unpaid for,
380 By tasting of our wrath? How of descent
As good as we?

ARVIRAGUS

In that he spake too far.

CYMBELINE

And thou shalt die for't.

BELARIUS

We will die all three:
385 But I will prove that two on's are as good
As I have given out him. My sons, I must,
For mine own part, unfold a dangerous speech,
Though, haply, well for you.

ARVIRAGUS

Your danger's ours.

GUIDERIUS

390 And our good his.

CYMBELINE

Gods forbid! You've done good deeds—I don't want to have
to order you thrown in jail. Please, brave young man, deny
it.

GUIDERIUS

I said it, and I did it.

CYMBELINE

He was a prince.

GUIDERIUS

A very rude one. He didn't treat me like he was a prince. He
provoked me with language that would make me mad
enough to kick the sea if it roared at me like that. I cut off
his head. And I am very happy he is not standing here
instead of me to tell this story.

CYMBELINE

I'm sorry, but you've condemned yourself by saying this
and have to face your punishment under our law. You're
dead.

IMOGEN

I thought that headless man was my husband.

CYMBELINE

Tie up the criminal and take him out of my sight.

BELARIUS

Wait, sir king. This man is nobler than the man he killed,
from as good a family as you, and has deserved more from
you than a gang of Clotens could.

To the GUARD.

Leave his arms alone. They weren't born to be unfree.

CYMBELINE

You old soldier, do you want to undo all the good deeds I
haven't paid you for yet, and make me angry? How is he
from as good a family as me?

ARVIRAGUS

He didn't really mean that.

CYMBELINE

And you'll die for that.

BELARIUS

All three of us will die. But I will prove that two of us are as
good as I said. My sons, I have to say something dangerous
for me, but perhaps good for you.

ARVIRAGUS

Anything dangerous for you is dangerous for us.

GUIDERIUS

And anything good for us is good for you.

BELARIUS

Have at it then, by leave.
Thou hadst, great king, a subject who
Was call'd Belarius.

CYMELINE

What of him? he is
A banish'd traitor.

395

BELARIUS

He it is that hath
Assumed this age; indeed a banish'd man;
I know not how a traitor.

CYMELINE

Take him hence:
The whole world shall not save him.

400

BELARIUS

Not too hot:
First pay me for the nursing of thy sons;
And let it be confiscate all, so soon
As I have received it.

CYMELINE

405 Nursing of my sons!

405

BELARIUS

I am too blunt and saucy: here's my knee:
Ere I arise, I will prefer my sons;
Then spare not the old father. Mighty sir,
These two young gentlemen, that call me father
410 And think they are my sons, are none of mine;
They are the issue of your loins, my liege,
And blood of your begetting.

CYMELINE

How! my issue!

410

BELARIUS

So sure as you your father's. I, old Morgan,
415 Am that Belarius whom you sometime banish'd:
Your pleasure was my mere offence, my punishment
Itself, and all my treason; that I suffer'd
Was all the harm I did. These gentle princes--
For such and so they are--these twenty years
420 Have I train'd up: those arts they have as I
Could put into them; my breeding was, sir, as
Your highness knows. Their nurse, Euriphile,
Whom for the theft I wedded, stole these children
Upon my banishment: I moved her to't,
425 Having received the punishment before,
For that which I did then: beaten for loyalty
Excited me to treason: their dear loss,
The more of you 'twas felt, the more it shaped
Unto my end of stealing them. But, gracious sir,
430 Here are your sons again; and I must lose
Two of the sweetest companions in the world.
The benediction of these covering heavens
Fall on their heads like dew! for they are worthy
To inlay heaven with stars.

CYMELINE

435 Thou weep'st, and speak'st.
The service that you three have done is more
Unlike than this thou tell'st. I lost my children:
If these be they, I know not how to wish
A pair of worthier sons.

435

BELARIUS

440 Be pleased awhile.
This gentleman, whom I call Polydore,
Most worthy prince, as yours, is true Guiderius:

BELARIUS

Well then, I'll say it. Great king, you had a subject called
Belarius.

CYMELINE

What about him? He is a banished traitor.

BELARIUS

I was him before I grew old. I was indeed banished, but I
don't know what makes me a traitor.

CYMELINE

Take him away. Nothing can save him.

BELARIUS

Wait. First pay me for bringing up your sons, and then you
can take the reward away as soon as you give it to me.

CYMELINE

Bringing up my sons!

BELARIUS

I am being too blunt and disrespectful. I'm kneeling before
you. Before I get up, I will promote my sons. Then don't
show their old father any mercy. Sir, these two young men
who call me father and think they are my sons are not
related to me. They are your children, sir, and your own
flesh and blood.

CYMELINE

What! My children!

BELARIUS

As certainly as you are your father's child. I, old Morgan, am
the Belarius you banished. Your whim was my only crime,
punishment, and treason. I never did anything wrong
except suffer. These kind princes—because they are kind
and they are princes—I brought up for twenty years. I
taught them everything I could. Sir, you know what my
education was. Their nurse, Euriphile, stole the children
when I was banished, and I married her in return for this
favor. I convinced her to do it, having already been
punished for the crime I committed then. Having been
punished for being loyal, I decided to be a traitor. I wanted
to steal them to hurt you. But, dear sir, here are your sons
back. I'm losing two of the best friends in the world. May
the gods make blessings rain down on them like dew! They
are virtuous enough that they should be made into
constellations.

CYMELINE

You're crying while you speak. The good deeds you did for
me were more surprising than this story you're telling. I lost
my children. If these are those children, I don't think it
would be possible to have two better sons.

BELARIUS

Wait a moment. This man I call Polydore is really your
Guiderius, worthy king. This man, my Cadwal, is your
younger royal son Arviragus. He, sir, was wrapped in a

This gentleman, my Cadwal, Arviragus,
Your younger princely son; he, sir, was lapp'd
445 In a most curious mantle, wrought by the hand
Of his queen mother, which for more probation
I can with ease produce.

CYMBELINE
Guiderius had
Upon his neck a mole, a sanguine star;
450 It was a mark of wonder.

BELARIUS
This is he;
Who hath upon him still that natural stamp:
It was wise nature's end in the donation,
To be his evidence now.

CYMBELINE
455 O, what, am I
A mother to the birth of three? Ne'er mother
Rejoiced deliverance more. Blest pray you be,
That, after this strange starting from your orbs,
may reign in them now! O Imogen,
460 Thou hast lost by this a kingdom.

IMOGEN
No, my lord;
I have got two worlds by 't. O my gentle brothers,
Have we thus met? O, never say hereafter
But I am truest speaker you call'd me brother,
465 When I was but your sister; I you brothers,
When ye were so indeed.

CYMBELINE
Did you e'er meet?

ARVIRAGUS
Ay, my good lord.

GUIDERIUS
And at first meeting loved;
470 Continued so, until we thought he died.

CORNELIUS
By the queen's dram she swallow'd.

CYMBELINE
O rare instinct!
When shall I hear all through? This fierce
abridgement
475 Hath to it circumstantial branches, which
Distinction should be rich in. Where? how lived you?
And when came you to serve our Roman captive?
How parted with your brothers? how first met them?
Why fled you from the court? and whither? These,
480 And your three motives to the battle, with
I know not how much more, should be demanded;
And all the other by-dependencies,
From chance to chance: but nor the time nor place
Will serve our long inter'gatories. See,
485 Posthumus anchors upon Imogen,
And she, like harmless lightning, throws her eye
On him, her brother, me, her master, hitting
Each object with a joy: the counterchange
Is severally in all. Let's quit this ground,
490 And smoke the temple with our sacrifices.

To BELARIUS

Thou art my brother; so we'll hold thee ever.

beautifully woven blanket, made by his mother the queen,
which I can easily show you for more proof.

CYMBELINE
Guiderius had a mole on his neck, a red star. It was an
amazing thing.

BELARIUS
This is him, and he still has that mark. Nature was wise in
giving it to him, since now it's evidence for him.

CYMBELINE
Am I a mother giving birth to three children? No mother was
ever happier to deliver children. After strangely changing
social classes, may you be blessed in the one you've come
back to! Oh Imogen, you've lost a kingdom because of this.

IMOGEN
No, my lord, I have gained two whole worlds. Oh my dear
brothers, have we met this way? Never say I don't tell the
truth more than you do. You called me brother although I
was only your sister, but I called you brothers and that was
exactly you where.

CYMBELINE
Did you meet each other before?

ARVIRAGUS
Yes, sir.

GUIDERIUS
And loved each other from the first, and still did until we
thought he died.

CORNELIUS
Because of the queen's potion she drank.

CYMBELINE
What an amazing instinct! When will I hear all the details?
This rough abridged version has so many side stories that I
should know more about. Where? How did you live? How
did you come to be a servant to my Roman prisoner? How
did you leave your brothers? How did you first meet them?
Why did you run away from the court? And where? I should
ask these things, and the reason you three joined the battle,
and I don't know what else. And all the other
circumstances, from the beginning. But this isn't the time or
place to ask complicated questions. See, Posthumus is like
a ship anchored to Imogen, and she's shooting glances like
harmless lightning bolts at him, her brother, me, and her
old master, hitting all of us with her joy. We all have
different expressions. Let's leave, and fill the temple with
smoke from our burnt offerings to the gods.

To BELARIUS

I'll always consider you my brother.

IMOGEN

You are my father too, and did relieve me,
To see this gracious season.

CYMBELINE

495 All o'erjoy'd,
Save these in bonds: let them be joyful too,
For they shall taste our comfort.

IMOGEN

My good master,
I will yet do you service.

CAIUS LUCIUS

500 Happy be you!

CYMBELINE

The forlorn soldier, that so nobly fought,
He would have well become this place, and graced
The thankings of a king.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I am, sir,
505 The soldier that did company these three
In poor beseeming: 'twas a fitment for
The purpose I then follow'd. That I was he,
Speak, Iachimo: I had you down and might
Have made you finish.

IACHIMO

510 [Kneeling] I am down again:
But now my heavy conscience sinks my knee,
As then your force did. Take that life, beseech you,
Which I so often owe: but your ring first;
And here the bracelet of the truest princess

515 That ever swore her faith.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Kneel not to me:
The power that I have on you is, to spare you;
The malice towards you to forgive you: live,
And deal with others better.

CYMBELINE

520 Nobly doom'd!
We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law;
Pardon's the word to all.

ARVIRAGUS

You holp us, sir,
As you did mean indeed to be our brother;
525 Joy'd are we that you are.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Your servant, princes. Good my lord of Rome,
Call forth your soothsayer: as I slept, methought
Great Jupiter, upon his eagle back'd,
530 Appear'd to me, with other spritely shows
Of mine own kindred: when I waked, I found
This label on my bosom; whose containing
Is so from sense in hardness, that I can
Make no collection of it: let him show
His skill in the construction.

CAIUS LUCIUS

535 Philarmonus!

SOOTHSAYER

Here, my good lord.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Read, and declare the meaning.

IMOGEN

You are like another father to me and helped me survive
long enough to see all this.

CYMBELINE

Everyone is happy, except these people who are tied up. Let
them be happy too—we'll share our joy with them.

IMOGEN

[Untying CAIUS LUCIUS] My good master, I'll do you one
more service.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Bless you!

CYMBELINE

That last soldier who fought so nobly: he would have been
a good addition and I would have been honored to thank
him.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Sir, I am the soldier who kept these three company. I was
dressed humbly in accordance with the plan I had then. Tell
them that it was me, Iachimo. I knocked you to the ground
and could have killed you.

IACHIMO

[Kneeling] And now I'm on the ground again. But now it's
my bad conscience making me sink to my knee, while
before it was your strength. Take that life, please, that I owe
you. But take your ring first. And here's the bracelet of the
most honest princess who ever swore to be faithful.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Don't kneel to me. I'll show my power over you by letting
you live, and punish you by forgiving you. Live, and treat
other people more honestly

CYMBELINE

That was a noble judgement! I'll learn forgiveness from my
son-in-law. Everyone is pardoned.

ARVIRAGUS

You helped us, sir, as if you were our brother. We're happy
that you really are.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I'm your servant, princes. My good Roman lord, call for your
soothsayer. As I slept, I thought great Jupiter appeared to
me on his eagle, along with the ghosts of my own family
members. When I woke, I found this document on my chest.
What it says is so hard to understand that I don't have any
idea what it means. He should test his skill by figuring it out.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Philarmonus!

SOOTHSAYER

Here, my good lord.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Read this, and tell us what it means.

SOOTHSAYER

[Reads] "When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be lopped branches, which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty."

540
545 Thou, Leonatus, art the lion's whelp;
The fit and apt construction of thy name,
Being Leonatus, doth import so much.

To CYMBELINE

The piece of tender air, thy virtuous daughter,
550 Which we call 'mollis aer,' and 'mollis aer'
We term it 'mulier.' which 'mulier' I divine
Is this most constant wife; who, even now,
Answering the letter of the oracle,
Unknown to you, unsought, were clipp'd about
555 With this most tender air.

CYMBELINE

This hath some seeming.

SOOTHSAYER

The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,
Personates thee: and thy lopp'd branches point
Thy two sons forth; who, by Belarius stol'n,
560 For many years thought dead, are now revived,
To the majestic cedar join'd, whose issue
Promises Britain peace and plenty.

CYMBELINE

Well
My peace we will begin. And, Caius Lucius,
565 Although the victor, we submit to Caesar,
And to the Roman empire; promising
To pay our wonted tribute, from the which
We were dissuaded by our wicked queen;
Whom heavens, in justice, both on her and hers,
570 Have laid most heavy hand.

SOOTHSAYER

The fingers of the powers above do tune
The harmony of this peace. The vision
Which I made known to Lucius, ere the stroke
Of this yet scarce-cold battle, at this instant
575 Is full accomplish'd; for the Roman eagle,
From south to west on wing soaring aloft,
Lessen'd herself, and in the beams o' the sun
So vanish'd: which foreshow'd our princely eagle,
The imperial Caesar, should again unite
580 His favour with the radiant Cymbeline,
Which shines here in the west.

CYMBELINE

Laud we the gods;
And let our crooked smokes climb to their nostrils
From our blest altars. Publish we this peace
585 To all our subjects. Set we forward: let
A Roman and a British ensign wave
Friendly together: so through Lud's-town march:
And in the temple of great Jupiter
Our peace we'll ratify; seal it with feasts.
590 Set on there! Never was a war did cease,
Ere bloody hands were wash'd, with such a peace.

Exeunt

SOOTHSAYER

[Reads] "When a lion's cub, not knowing himself, finds a piece of soft air and is hugged by it without looking for it, and when branches are cut from a noble cedar tree and, after being dead many years, come back to life and are reattached to the old trunk and grow again, then Posthumus's sorrows will end, and Britain will be fortunate, prosperous, and peaceful." You, Leonatus, are the lion's cub. That's what your name, Leonatus, means.

To CYMBELINE

The piece of soft air is your virtuous daughter. The word for "woman" in Latin, "mulier," comes from "mollis aer," soft air. The "mulier" is, I think, this faithful wife. Just now, as the prophecy says, you didn't recognize her and didn't think you would find her, but you were hugged by this soft air.

CYMBELINE

That makes sense.

SOOTHSAYER

The tall cedar, royal Cymbeline, stands for you. And your cut branches are your two sons who, stolen by Belarius and for many years thought to be dead, are now brought back to life and attached to the old cedar, whose children are a sign of coming peace and prosperity for Britain.

CYMBELINE

Well, that peace will begin now. And, Caius Lucius, although we won, we submit to Caesar and the Roman empire and promise to pay our usual tribute. I was convinced not to by my evil queen, who, along with her son, has been punished terribly by the gods.

SOOTHSAYER

The gods are tuning the music of this peace. The vision I told Lucius about before this recent battle has now come true. The Roman eagle, flying from south to west, has completely vanished into the sun. This showed that our royal eagle, the emperor Caesar, would again unite with bright Cymbeline who shines here in the west.

CYMBELINE

Let us praise the gods, and burn offerings at our blessed altars until the smoke reaches their noses. Announce this peace to all our subjects. Let's set out together. A Roman and a British flag will wave together like friends. March through Lud's-town and we'll make our peace official in the temple of great Jupiter, then celebrate with feasts. Let's go! A war was never ended with such a peace, before the blood was even washed off the soldiers' hands.

They exit.

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