CYMBELINE

by William Shakespeare

Dramatis Personae

CYMBELINE, king of Britain.

CLOTEN, son to the Queen by a former husband.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, a gentleman, husband to Imogen.

BELARIUS, a banished lord disguised under the name of Morgan.

GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS, sons to Cymbeline, disguised under the

names of POLYDORE and CADWAL, supposed sons to Morgan.

PHILARIO, Italian, friend to Posthumus.

IACHIMO, Italian, friend to Philario.

CAIUS LUCIUS, general of the Roman forces.

PISANIO, servant to Posthumus.

CORNELIUS, a physician.

A Roman Captain.

Two British Captains.

A Frenchman, friend to Philario.

Two Lords of Cymbeline's court.

Two Gentlemen of the same.

Two Gaolers.

Queen, wife to Cymbeline.

Imogen, daughter to Cymbeline by a former Queen.

Helen, a lady attending on Imogen.

Lords, Ladies, Roman Senators, Tribunes, a Soothsayer, a

Dutchman, a Spaniard, Musicians, Officers, Captains, Soldiers,

Messengers, and other Attendants.

Apparitions.

SCENE: Britain; Rome.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE I. Britain. The garden of Cymbeline's palace.

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.

His daughter, and the heir of's kingdom, whom

He purpos'd 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

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 desir'd the match: but not a courtier,

Although they wear their faces to the bent

Of the King's looks, 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

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

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?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I cannot delve him to the root. His father

Was call'd Sicilius, who did join his honour

Against the Romans with Cassibelan,

But had his titles by Tenantius whom

He serv'd with glory and admir'd success,

So gain'd the sur-addition Leonatus;

And had, besides this gentleman in question,

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,

Big of this gentleman our theme, deceas'd

As he was born. The King he takes the babe

To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,

Breeds him and makes him of his bed-chamber,

Puts to him all the learnings that his time

Could make him the receiver of; which he took,

As we do air, fast as 'twas minist'red,

And in's spring became a harvest; liv'd in court--

Which rare it is to do--most prais'd, most lov'd,

A sample to the youngest, to the more mature

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

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.

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 stolen, and to this hour no guess in knowledge

Which way they went.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

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.

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,

The Queen, and Princess.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter the QUEEN, POSTHUMUS, and IMOGEN.]

QUEEN.

No, be assur'd you shall not find me, daughter,

After the slander of most stepmothers,

Evil-ey'd unto you. You're my prisoner, but

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

You lean'd unto his sentence with what patience

Your wisdom may inform you.

POSTHUMUS.

Please your Highness,

I will from hence to-day.

QUEEN.

You know the peril.

I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying

The pangs of barr'd affections, though the King

Hath charg'd you should not speak together.

[Exit.]

IMOGEN.

O dissembling courtesy! How fine this tyrant

Can tickle where she wounds! My dearest husband,

I something fear my father's wrath; but nothing--

Always reserv'd my holy duty--what

His rage can do on me. You must be gone;

And I shall here abide the hourly shot

Of angry eyes, not comforted to live,

But that there is this jewel in the world

That I may see again.

POSTHUMUS.

My queen! my mistress!

O lady, weep no more, lest I give cause

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

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

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;

Pays dear for my offences.

[Exit.]

POSTHUMUS.

Should we be taking leave

As long a term as yet we have to live,

The loathness to depart would grow. Adieu!

IMOGEN.

Nay, stay a little.

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.

How, how! another?

You gentle gods, give me but this I have,

And cere up my embracements from a next

With bonds of death! Remain, remain thou here

[Putting on the ring.]

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

Upon this fairest prisoner.

[Putting a bracelet upon her arm.]

IMOGEN.

O the gods!

When shall we see again?

[Enter CYMBELINE and LORDS.]

POSTHUMUS.

Alack, the King!

CYMBELINE.

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.

The gods protect you!

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.

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

Subdues all pangs, all fears.

CYMBELINE.

Past grace? obedience?

IMOGEN.

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

CYMBELINE.

That mightst have had the sole son of my queen!

IMOGEN.

O blest, that I might not! I chose an eagle,

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.

O thou vile one!

IMOGEN.

Sir, It is your fault that I have lov'd Posthumus.

You bred him as my playfellow, and he is

A man worth any woman; overbuys me

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!

[Re-enter QUEEN.]

CYMBELINE. Thou foolish thing!

--They were again together; you have done

Not after our command. Away with her,

And pen her up.

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.

Nay, let her languish

A drop of blood a day; and, being aged,

Die of this folly!

[Exeunt CYMBELINE and LORDS.]

[Enter PISANIO.]

QUEEN.

Fie! you must give way.

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

PISANIO.

My lord your son drew on my master.

QUEEN.

Ha! No harm, I trust, is done?

PISANIO.

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.

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.

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 pleas'd you to employ me.

QUEEN.

This hath been

Your faithful servant. I dare lay mine honour

He will remain so.

PISANIO.

I humbly thank your Highness.

QUEEN.

Pray, walk a while.

IMOGEN.

About some half-hour hence,

I Pray you, speak with me; you shall at least

Go see my lord aboard. For this time leave me.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

The same. A public place.

[Enter CLOTEN 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.

CLOTEN.

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

SECOND LORD.

[Aside.]

No, faith; not so much as his patience.

FIRST LORD.

Hurt him! His body's a passable carcass, if he be not

hurt; it is a throughfare for steel, if it be not hurt.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside.]

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

CLOTEN.

The villain would not stand me.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside.]

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

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!

CLOTEN.

I would they had not come between us.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside.]

So would I, till you had measur'd how long a fool you

were upon the ground.

CLOTEN.

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 damn'd.

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.

CLOTEN.

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.

CLOTEN.

You'll go with us?

FIRST LORD.

I'll attend your lordship.

CLOTEN.

Nay, come, let's go together.

SECOND LORD.

Well, my lord.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A room in CYMBELINE'S palace.

[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 I not have it, 'twere a paper lost,

As offer'd mercy is. What was the last

That he spake to thee?

PISANIO.

It was his queen, his queen!

IMOGEN.

Then wav'd his handkerchief?

PISANIO.

And kiss'd it, madam.

IMOGEN.

Senseless linen! happier therein than I!

And that was all?

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,

Still waving, as the fits and stirs of's mind

Could best express how slow his soul sail'd on,

How swift his ship.

IMOGEN.

Thou shouldst have made him

As little as a crow, or less, ere left

To after-eye him.

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;

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?

PISANIO.

Be assured, madam,

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

Such thoughts and such, or I could make him swear

The shes of Italy should not betray

Mine interest and his honour, or have charg'd 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

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,

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.]

SCENE IV.

Rome. PHILARIO'S house.

[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 look'd on him

without the help of 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 furnish'd than now he

is with that which makes him both without and 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, 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 to extend him; be it

but to fortify her judgement, 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?

PHILARIO.

His father and I were soldiers together; to whom I have been

often bound for no less than my life.

[Enter POSTHUMUS.]

Here comes the Briton. Let him be so entertained amongst you as

suits with gentlemen of your knowing to a stranger of his

quality.--I beseech you all, be better known to this gentleman,

whom I commend to you as a noble friend of mine. How worthy he

is I will leave to appear hereafter, rather than story him in

his own hearing.

FRENCHMAN.

Sir, we have known together in Orleans.

POSTHUMUS.

Since when I have been debtor to you for courtesies,

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 slight and trivial a nature.

POSTHUMUS.

By your pardon, sir, I was then a young traveller; rather shunn'd

to go even with what I heard than in my every action to be guided

by others' experiences: but upon my mended judgement--if I offend

[not] to say 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.

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 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 opinion by this

worn out.

POSTHUMUS.

She holds her virtue still, and I my mind.

IACHIMO.

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

POSTHUMUS.

Being so far provok'd as I was in France, I would abate her

nothing, though I profess myself her adorer, not her friend.

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 excelled many.

But I have not seen the most precious diamond that is, nor you the

lady.

POSTHUMUS.

I prais'd her as I rated her; so do I my stone.

IACHIMO.

What do you esteem it at?

POSTHUMUS.

More than the world enjoys.

IACHIMO.

Either your unparagon'd mistress is dead, or she's outpriz'd by a

trifle.

POSTHUMUS.

You are mistaken. The one may be sold, or given, if there were

wealth enough for the purchase, or merit for the gift; the other is

not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods.

IACHIMO.

Which the gods have given you?

POSTHUMUS.

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-

accomplish'd courtier, would hazard the winning both of first

and last.

POSTHUMUS.

Your Italy contains none so accomplish'd 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;

notwithstanding, I fear not my ring.

PHILARIO.

Let us leave here, gentlemen.

POSTHUMUS.

Sir, with all my heart. This worthy signior, I thank him, makes

no stranger of me; we are familiar at first.

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.

No, no.

IACHIMO.

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.

You are a great deal abus'd in too bold a persuasion; and I doubt

not you sustain what you're worthy of by your attempt.

IACHIMO.

What's that?

POSTHUMUS.

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.

Would I had put my estate and my neighbour's on the approbation

of what I have spoke!

POSTHUMUS.

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, that, commend 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 reserv'd.

POSTHUMUS.

I will wage against your gold, gold to it. My ring 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.

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.

Will you? I shall but lend my diamond till your return. Let

there be covenants drawn between's. My 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.

By the gods, it is one. If I bring you no sufficient testimony

that I have enjoy'd the dearest bodily part of your mistress, my

ten thousand ducats 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.

I embrace these conditions; let us have articles betwixt us.

Only, thus far you shall answer: if you make your voyage upon her

and give me directly to understand you have prevail'd, I am no

further your enemy; she is not worth our debate. If she remain

unseduc'd, you not making it appear otherwise, for your ill

opinion and the assault you 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 Britain, lest the bargain

should catch cold and starve. I will fetch my gold and have our

two wagers recorded.

POSTHUMUS.

Agreed.

[Exeunt POSTHUMUS and IACHIMO.]

FRENCHMAN.

Will this hold, think you?

PHILARIO.

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

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V.

Britain. A room in CYMBELINE'S palace.

[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.

[Exeunt LADIES.]

Now, master doctor, have you brought those drugs?

CORNELIUS.

Pleaseth your Highness, ay. Here they are, madam.

[Presenting a small box.]

But I beseech your Grace, without offence,--

My conscience bids me ask--wherefore you have

Commanded of me these most poisonous compounds,

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 judgement 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 practice but make hard your heart.

Besides, the seeing these effects will be

Both noisome and infectious.

QUEEN. O, content thee.

[Enter PISANIO.]

[Aside.]

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 ling'ring 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 a while,

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.]

QUEEN.

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

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,

And every day that comes comes to

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.]

Thou tak'st 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 prithee, take it;

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,

Who shall take notice of thee. I'll move the King

To any shape of thy preferment such

As thou'lt desire; and then myself, I chiefly,

That set thee on to this desert, am bound

To load thy merit richly. Call my women.

Think on my words.

[Exit PISANIO.]

A sly and constant knave,

Not to be shak'd; the agent for his master

And the remembrancer of her to hold

The hand-fast to her lord. I have given him that

Which, if he take, shall quite unpeople her

Of liegers for her sweet, and which she after,

Except she bend her humour, shall be assur'd

To taste of too.

[Re-enter PISANIO and LADIES.]

So, so; well done, well done.

The violets, cowslips, and the primroses,

Bear to my closet. Fare thee well, Pisanio;

Think on my words.

[Exeunt QUEEN and LADIES.]

PISANIO.

And shall do;

But when to my good lord I prove untrue,

I'll choke myself. There's all I'll do for you.

[Exit.]

SCENE VI.

The same. Another room in the palace.

[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

Vexations of it! Had I been thief-stolen,

As my two brothers, happy! but most miserable

Is the desire that's glorious. Blessed be those,

How mean soe'er, that have their honest wills,

Which seasons comfort. Who may this be? Fie!

[Enter PISANIO and IACHIMO.]

PISANIO.

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.

[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,

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.

[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--

But even the very middle of my heart

Is warm'd by the rest--and take 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.

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

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.

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 judgement,

For idiots in this case of favour would

Be wisely definite; nor i' the appetite;

Sluttery to such neat excellence oppos'd

Should make desire vomit emptiness,

Not so allur'd to feed.

IMOGEN.

What is the matter, trow?

IACHIMO.

The cloyed will,--

That satiate yet unsatisfi'd 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.

[To PISANIO.]

Beseech you, sir, desire

My man's abode where I did leave him.

He is strange and peevish.

PISANIO.

I was going, sir,

To give him welcome.

[Exit.]

IMOGEN.

Continues well my lord? His health, beseech you?

IACHIMO.

Well, madam.

IMOGEN.

Is he dispos'd 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,

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

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,

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.

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.

IACHIMO.

Not he; but yet heaven's bounty towards him might

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.

Two creatures heartily.

IMOGEN.

Am I one, sir?

You look on me; what wreck discern you in me

Deserves your pity?

IACHIMO.

Lamentable! What,

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.

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

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

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

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

With labour; then lie peeping in an eye

Base and illustrious 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.

My lord, I fear,

Has forgot Britain.

IACHIMO.

And himself. Not I,

Inclin'd to this intelligence, pronounce

The beggary of his change; but 'tis your graces

That from my mutest conscience to my tongue

Charms this report out.

IMOGEN.

Let me hear no more.

IACHIMO.

O dearest soul! your cause doth strike my heart

With pity, that doth make me sick. A lady

So fair, and fasten'd to an empery

Would make the great'st king double,--to be partner'd

With tomboys hir'd with that self-exhibition

Which your own coffers yield! with diseas'd ventures

That play with all infirmities for gold

Which rottenness can lend nature! such boil'd stuff

As well might poison poison! Be reveng'd;

Or she that bore you was no queen, and you

Recoil from your great stock.

IMOGEN.

Reveng'd!

How should I be reveng'd? 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 reveng'd?

IACHIMO.

Should he make me

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,

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

So long attended thee. If thou wert honourable,

Thou wouldst 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

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

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.

The credit that thy lady hath of thee

Deserves thy trust, and thy most perfect goodness

Her assur'd credit. Blessed live you long

A lady to the worthiest sir that ever

Country call'd his! and you his mistress, only

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

That he enchants 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,

More than a mortal seeming. Be not angry,

Most mighty princess, that I have adventur'd

To try your taking of a false report; which hath

Honour'd with confirmation your great judgement

In the election of a sir so rare,

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.

My humble thanks. I had almost forgot

To entreat your Grace but in a small request,

And yet of moment too, for it concerns

Your lord, myself, and other noble friends,

Are partners in the business.

IMOGEN.

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

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.

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,

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

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.

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.

I will write.

Send your trunk to me; it shall safe be kept,

And truly yielded you. You're very welcome.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Britain. Before CYMBELINE'S palace.

[Enter CLOTEN and the two LORDS.]

CLOTEN.

Was there ever man had such luck! When I kiss'd 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.

CLOTEN.

When a gentleman is dispos'd 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.

CLOTEN.

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

my rank!

SECOND LORD.

[Aside.]

To have smelt like a fool.

CLOTEN.

I am not vex'd more at anything 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.

[Aside.]

You are cock and capon too; and you crow, cock, with your comb

on.

CLOTEN.

Sayest thou?

SECOND LORD.

It is not fit your lordship should undertake every companion that

you give offence to.

CLOTEN.

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.

CLOTEN.

Why, so I say.

FIRST LORD.

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

CLOTEN.

A stranger, and I not known 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 Leonatus'

friends.

CLOTEN.

Leonatus! a banish'd rascal; and he's another, whatsoever he be.

Who told you of this stranger?

FIRST LORD.

One of your lordship's pages.

CLOTEN.

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

SECOND LORD.

You cannot derogate, my lord.

CLOTEN.

Not easily, I think.

SECOND LORD.

[Aside.]

You are a fool granted; therefore your issues, being foolish, do

not derogate.

CLOTEN.

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 CLOTEN and FIRST LORD.]

That such a crafty devil as is his mother

Should yield the world this ass! A woman that

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 endur'st,

Betwixt a father by thy step-dame govern'd,

A mother hourly coining plots, a wooer

More hateful than the foul expulsion is

Of thy dear husband! Then that horrid act

Of the divorce he'd make! The heavens hold firm

The walls of thy dear honour, keep unshak'd

That temple, thy fair mind, that thou mayst stand

To enjoy thy banish'd lord and this great land!

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

IMOGEN'S bedchamber in CYMBELINE'S palace:

a trunk in one corner of it.

[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.

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 seiz'd me wholly.

[Exit LADY.]

To your protection I commend 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'erlabour'd sense

Repairs itself by rest. Our Tarquin thus

Did softly press the rushes, ere he waken'd

The chastity he wounded. Cytherea!

How bravely thou becom'st thy bed, fresh lily,

And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!

But kiss one kiss! Rubies unparagon'd,

How dearly they do't! '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, lac'd

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.

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,

Thus in a chapel lying! Come off, come off!

[Taking 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

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?

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.

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.]

SCENE III.

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 turn'd 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.

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.]

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

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,

And Phoebus gins arise

His steeds to water at those springs

On chalic'd 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.

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.

[Exeunt Musicians.]

[Enter CYMBELINE and QUEEN.]

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 fatherly.

--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 assail'd her with musics, 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 on't,

And then she's yours.

QUEEN.

You are most bound to the King,

Who lets go by no vantages that may

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 inspir'd to do those duties which

You tender to her; that you in all obey her,

Save when command to your dismission tends,

And therein you are senseless.

CLOTEN.

Senseless? Not so.

[Enter a MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER.

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

According to the honour of his sender;

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

To employ you towards this Roman. Come, our queen.

[Exeunt all but CLOTEN.]

CLOTEN.

If she be up, I'll speak with her; if not,

Let her lie still and dream. By your leave, ho!

[Knocks.]

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

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.

By your leave.

[Knocks.]

[Enter a LADY.]

LADY.

Who's there that knocks?

CLOTEN.

A gentleman.

LADY.

No more?

CLOTEN.

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?

CLOTEN.

Your lady's person. Is she ready?

LADY.

Ay,

To keep her chamber.

CLOTEN.

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

LADY.

How! my good name? Or to report of you

What I shall think is good?--The Princess!

[Enter IMOGEN.]

CLOTEN.

Good morrow, fairest. Sister, your sweet hand.

[Exit LADY.]

IMOGEN.

Good morrow, sir. You lay out too much pains

For purchasing but trouble. The thanks I give

Is telling you that I am poor of thanks,

And scarce can spare them.

CLOTEN.

Still, I swear I love you.

IMOGEN.

If you but said so, 'twere as deep with me.

If you swear still, your recompense is still

That I regard it not.

CLOTEN.

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,

I shall unfold equal discourtesy

To your best kindness. One of your great knowing

Should learn, being taught, forbearance.

CLOTEN.

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

IMOGEN.

Fools are not mad folks.

CLOTEN.

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,

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

To accuse myself I hate you; which I had rather

You felt than make't my boast.

CLOTEN.

You sin against

Obedience, which you owe your father. For

The contract you pretend with that base wretch,

One bred of alms and foster'd with cold dishes,

With scraps o' the court, it is no contract, none;

And though it be allowed in meaner parties--

Yet who than he more mean?--to knit their souls--

On whom there is no more dependency

But brats and beggary,--in self-figur'd knot,

Yet you are curb'd from that enlargement by

The consequence o' the crown, and must not foil

The precious note of it with a base slave,

A hilding for a livery, a squire's cloth,

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,

Even to the point of envy, if 'twere made

Comparative for your virtues, to be styl'd

The under-hangman of his kingdom, and hated

For being preferr'd so well.

CLOTEN.

The south-fog rot him!

IMOGEN.

He never can meet more mischance than come

To be but nam'd of thee. His mean'st 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?

[Missing the bracelet.]

Pisanio!

[Enter PISANIO.]

CLOTEN.

"His garments!" Now the devil--

IMOGEN.

To Dorothy my woman hie thee presently--

CLOTEN.

"His garment!"

IMOGEN.

I am sprited with a fool,

Frighted, and ang'red worse. Go bid my woman

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

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.

[Exit PISANIO.]

CLOTEN.

You have abus'd me

"His meanest garment!"

IMOGEN.

Ay, I said so, sir.

If you will make't an action, call witness to't.

CLOTEN.

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.

I'll be reveng'd.

"His meanest garment!" Well.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.

Rome. PHILARIO'S house.

[Enter POSTHUMUS and PHILARIO.]

POSTHUMUS.

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.

Not any, but abide the change of time,

Quake in the present winter's state, and wish

That warmer days would come. In these fear'd hopes,

I barely gratify your love; they failing,

I must die much your debtor.

PHILARIO.

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,

Or look upon our Romans, whose remembrance

Is yet fresh in their grief.

POSTHUMUS.

I do believe,

Statist though I am none, nor like to be,

That this will prove a war; and you shall hear

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

Smil'd at their lack of skill, but found their courage

Worthy his frowning at. Their discipline,

Now wing-led with their courages, will make known

To their approvers they are people such

That mend upon the world.

[Enter IACHIMO.]

PHILARIO.

See! Iachimo!

POSTHUMUS.

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.

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.

And therewithal the best; or let her beauty

Look through a casement to allure false hearts

And be false with them.

IACHIMO.

Here are letters for you.

POSTHUMUS.

Their tenour good, I trust.

IACHIMO.

'Tis very like.

PHILARIO.

Was Caius Lucius in the Britain court

When you were there?

IACHIMO.

He was expected then,

But not approach'd.

POSTHUMUS.

All is well yet.

Sparkles this stone as it was wont, or is't not

Too dull for your good wearing?

IACHIMO.

If I have lost it,

I should have lost the worth of it in gold.

I'll make a journey twice as far, to enjoy

A second night of such sweet shortness which

Was mine in Britain; for the ring is won.

POSTHUMUS.

The stone's too hard to come by.

IACHIMO.

Not a whit,

Your lady being so easy.

POSTHUMUS.

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

The knowledge of your mistress home, I grant

We were to question farther; 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

By both your wills.

POSTHUMUS.

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

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

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.

Proceed.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

She priz'd it once.

POSTHUMUS.

May be she pluck'd it off

To send it me.

IACHIMO.

She writes so to you, doth she?

POSTHUMUS.

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

[Gives the ring.]

It is a basilisk unto mine eye,

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.

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 her women, being corrupted,

Hath stolen it from her?

POSTHUMUS.

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.

By Jupiter, I had it from her arm.

POSTHUMUS.

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!

And by a stranger! No, he hath enjoy'd 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

Divide themselves between you!

PHILARIO.

Sir, be patient.

This is not strong enough to be believ'd

Of one persuaded well of--

POSTHUMUS.

Never talk on't;

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,

I kiss'd it; and it gave me present hunger

To feed again, though full. You do remember

This stain upon her?

POSTHUMUS.

Ay, and it doth confirm

Another stain, as big as hell can hold,

Were there no more but it.

IACHIMO.

Will you hear more?

POSTHUMUS.

Spare your arithmetic; never count the turns;

Once, and a million!

IACHIMO.

I'll be sworn--

POSTHUMUS.

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.

IACHIMO.

I'll deny nothing.

POSTHUMUS.

O, that I had her here, to tear her limbmeal!

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.

IACHIMO.

With all my heart.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V.

Another room in PHILARIO'S house.

[Enter POSTHUMUS.]

POSTHUMUS.

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

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

And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with

A pudency 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,--was't not?--

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

The woman's part in me! For there's no motion

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;

Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,

Nice longing, slanders, mutability,

All faults that may be nam'd, nay, that hell knows,

Why, hers, in part or all; but rather, all.

For even to vice

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.

The very devils cannot plague them better.

[Exit.]

ACT FIFTH. SCENE I.

Britain. The Roman camp.

[Enter POSTHUMUS [with a bloody handkerchief.]

POSTHUMUS.

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

For wrying 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 liv'd to put on this; so had you saved

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,

And make them dread it, to the doer's thrift.

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

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

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

More valour in me than my habits show.

Gods, put the strength o' the Leonati in me!

To shame the guise o' the world, I will begin

The fashion, less without and more within.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

Field of battle between the British and Roman camps.

[Enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and the Roman Army at one door;

and the Briton army at another; LEONATUS POSTHUMUS

following, like a poor soldier. They march over and go out.

Alarums. Then enter again, in skirmish, IACHIMO, and

POSTHUMUS: 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,

A very drudge of nature's, have subdu'd 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

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 villainy of our fears.

GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS.

Stand, stand, and fight!

[Re-enter POSTHUMUS, and seconds the Britons. They rescue

CYMBELINE, and exeunt. Then re-enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO,

and IMOGEN.]

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.

LUCIUS.

It is a day turn'd strangely. Or betimes

Let's reinforce, or fly.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

Another part of the field.

[Enter POSTHUMUS and a Briton LORD.]

LORD.

Cam'st thou from where they made the stand?

POSTHUMUS.

I did;

Though you, it seems, come from the fliers.

LORD.

I did.

POSTHUMUS.

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 strait lane; the enemy full-hearted,

Lolling the tongue with slaught'ring, 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 length'ned shame.

LORD.

Where was this lane?

POSTHUMUS.

Close by the battle, ditch'd, and wall'd with turf;

Which gave advantage to an ancient soldier,

An honest one, I warrant; who deserv'd

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 cas'd, 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 back-door open

Of the unguarded hearts, heavens, how they wound!

Some slain before; some dying; some their friends

O'erborne i' the former wave; ten, chas'd 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!

POSTHUMUS.

Nay, do not wonder at it; you are made

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,

Preserv'd the Britons, was the Romans' bane."

LORD.

Nay, be not angry, sir.

POSTHUMUS.

'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.

You have put me into rhyme.

LORD.

Farewell; you're angry.

[Exit.]

POSTHUMUS.

Still going? 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 sav'd 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,

Nor feel him where he struck. Being an ugly monster,

'Tis strange he hides him in fresh cups, soft beds,

Sweet words; or hath moe ministers than we

That draw his knives i' the war. Well, I will find him;

For being now a favourer to the Briton,

No more a Briton, I have resum'd 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

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 prais'd! Lucius is taken.

'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.

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

What crows have peck'd them here. He brags his service,

As if he were of note. Bring him to the King.

[Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS,

PISANIO, [SOLDIERS, ATTENDANTS] and Roman captives.

The CAPTAINS present POSTHUMUS to CYMBELINE, who

delivers him over to a Gaoler. [Then exeunt omnes.]

SCENE IV.

A British prison.

[Enter POSTHUMUS and two GAOLERS.]

FIRST GAOLER.

You shall not now be stolen, you have locks upon you;

So graze as you find pasture.

SECOND GAOLER.

Ay, or a stomach.

[Exeunt GAOLERS.]

POSTHUMUS.

Most welcome bondage! for thou art a way,

I 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 cur'd

By the sure physician, Death, who is the key

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;

Gods are more full of mercy. Must I repent,

I cannot do it better than in gyves,

Desir'd more than constrain'd: to satisfy,

If of my freedom 'tis the main part, take

No stricter render of me than my all.

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

'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life; you coin'd 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,

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, an old man, attired

like a warrior; leading in his hand an ancient matron, his wife,

and mother to POSTHUMUS, with music before them. Then,

after other music, follow the two young LEONATI, brothers

to POSTHUMUS, with wounds as they died in the wars. They

circle POSTHUMUS round, as he lies sleeping.]

SICILIUS.

No more, thou thunder-master, show

Thy spite on mortal flies:

With Mars fall out, with Juno chide,

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

Attending Nature's law;

Whose father then, as men report

Thou orphans' father art,

Thou shouldst have been, and shielded him

From this earth-vexing smart.

MOTHER.

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.

Great Nature, like his ancestry,

Moulded the stuff so fair,

That he deserv'd 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.

With marriage wherefore was he mock'd,

To be exil'd, and thrown

From Leonati seat, and cast

From her his dearest one,

Sweet Imogen?

SICILIUS.

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

O' the other's villainy?

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

With honour to maintain.

FIRST BROTHER.

Like hardiment Posthumus hath

To Cymbeline perform'd.

Then, Jupiter, thou king of gods,

Why hast thou thus adjourn'd

The graces for his merits due,

Being all to dolours turn'd?

SICILIUS.

Thy crystal window ope; look out;

No longer exercise

Upon a valiant race thy harsh

And potent injuries.

MOTHER.

Since, Jupiter, our son is good,

Take off his miseries.

SICILIUS.

Peep through thy marble mansion; help;

Or we poor ghosts will cry

To the shining synod of the rest

Against thy deity.

BOTH BROTHERS.

Help, Jupiter; or we appeal,

And from thy justice fly.

[JUPITER descends in thunder and lightning, sitting

upon an eagle; he throws a thunderbolt. The GHOSTS

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?

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,

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.

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 farther with your din

Express impatience, lest you stir up mine.

Mount, eagle, to my palace crystalline.

[Ascends.]

SICILIUS.

He came in thunder; his celestial breath

Was sulphurous to smell. The holy eagle

Stoop'd, as to foot us. His ascension is

More sweet than our blest fields. His royal bird

Prunes the immortal wing and cloys his beak,

As when his god is pleas'd.

ALL.

Thanks, Jupiter!

SICILIUS.

The marble pavement closes, he is enter'd

His radiant roof. Away! and, to be blest,

Let us with care perform his great behest.

[The GHOSTS] vanish.]

POSTHUMUS.

[Waking.]

Sleep, thou hast been a grandsire, and begot

A father to me, and thou hast created

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.

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

Nobler than that it covers! Let thy effects

So follow, to be most unlike our courtiers,

As good as promise!

[Reads.]

"Whenas 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 lopp'd 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."

'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

I'll keep, if but for sympathy.

[Re-enter GAOLER.]

GAOLER.

Come, sir, are you ready for death?

POSTHUMUS.

Over-roasted rather; ready long ago.

GAOLER.

Hanging is the word, sir If you be ready for that, you are

well cook'd.

POSTHUMUS.

So, if I prove a good repast to the spectators, the dish

pays the shot.

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 parting, as the procuring of

mirth. You come in faint 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 light, the purse too light, being drawn of

heaviness. O, 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 debitor and creditor but it; of what's past, is, and

to come, the discharge. Your neck, sir, is pen, book, and counters;

so the acquittance follows.

POSTHUMUS.

I am merrier to die than thou art to live.

GAOLER.

Indeed, sir, he that sleeps feels not the toothache; 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.

Yes, indeed do I, fellow.

GAOLER.

Your Death has eyes in's head, then; I have not seen him so

pictur'd. You must either be directed by some that take upon them

to know, or to 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 never return to

tell one.

POSTHUMUS.

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.

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.

[Enter a MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER.

Knock off his manacles; bring your prisoner to the King.

POSTHUMUS.

Thou bring'st good news; I am call'd to be made free.

GAOLER.

I'll be hang'd then.

POSTHUMUS.

Thou shalt be then freer than a gaoler; no bolts for the dead.

[Exeunt all but the GAOLER.]

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.

[Exit.]

SCENE V.

CYMBELINE'S tent.

[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 sham'd gilded arms, whose naked breast

Stepp'd before targes of proof, cannot be found.

He shall be happy that can find him, if

Our grace can make him so.

BELARIUS.

I never saw

Such noble fury in so poor a thing;

Such precious deeds in one that promis'd nought

But beggary and poor looks.

CYMBELINE.

No tidings of him?

PISANIO.

He hath been search'd among the dead and living,

But no trace of him.

CYMBELINE.

To my grief, I am

The heir of 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.]

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!

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

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

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 lov'd you; only

Affected greatness got by you, not you;

Married your royalty, was wife to your place,

Abhorr'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.

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.

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 ling'ring

By inches waste you; in which time she purpos'd,

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;

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.

Heard you all this, her women?

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,

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 behind, and IMOGEN.]

Thou com'st not, Caius, now for tribute; that

The Britons have raz'd out, though with the loss

Of many a bold one, whose kinsmen have made suit

That their good souls may be appeas'd with slaughter

Of you their captives, which ourself have granted.

So think of your estate.

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

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

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,

So feat, so nurse-like. Let his virtue join

With my request, which I'll make bold your Highness

Cannot deny. He hath done no Briton harm,

Though he have serv'd a Roman. Save him, sir,

And spare no blood beside.

CYMBELINE.

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,

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.

LUCIUS.

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,

Must shuffle for itself.

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.

What wouldst 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

Than I to your Highness; who, being born your vassal,

Am something nearer.

CYMBELINE.

Wherefore ey'st him so?

IMOGEN.

I'll tell you, sir, in private, if you please

To give me hearing.

CYMBELINE.

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.

[CYMBELINE and IMOGEN talk apart.]

BELARIUS.

Is not this boy, reviv'd from death,--

ARVIRAGUS.

One sand another

Not more resembles,--that sweet rosy lad

Who died, and was Fidele. What think you?

GUIDERIUS.

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.

Be silent; let's see further.

PISANIO.

[Aside.]

It is my mistress.

Since she is living, let the time run on

To good or bad.

[CYMBELINE and IMOGEN come forward.]

CYMBELINE.

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

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.

[Aside.]

What's that to him?

CYMBELINE.

That diamond upon your finger, say

How came it yours?

IACHIMO.

Thou'lt torture me to leave unspoken that

Which, to be spoke, would torture thee.

CYMBELINE.

How! me?

IACHIMO.

I am glad to be constrain'd to utter that

Which torments me to conceal. By villainy

I got this ring. 'Twas Leonatus' jewel,

Whom thou didst banish; and--which more may grieve thee,

As it doth me--a nobler sir ne'er liv'd

'Twixt sky and ground. Wilt thou hear more, my lord?

CYMBELINE.

All that belongs to this.

IACHIMO.

That paragon, thy daughter,--

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.

Upon a time,--unhappy was the clock

That struck the hour!--it was in Rome,--accurs'd

The mansion where!--'twas at a feast,--O, would

Our viands had been poison'd, or at least

Those which I heav'd to head!--the good Posthumus--

What should I say? He was too good to be

Where ill men were; and was the best of all

Amongst the rar'st of good ones,--sitting sadly,

Hearing us praise our loves of Italy

For beauty that made barren the swell'd boast

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,

Fairness which strikes the eye--

CYMBELINE.

I stand on fire:

Come to the matter.

IACHIMO.

All too soon I shall,

Unless thou wouldst grieve quickly. This Posthumus,

Most like a noble lord in love and one

That had a royal lover, took his hint;

And not dispraising whom we prais'd,--therein

He was as calm as virtue,--he began

His mistress' picture; which by his tongue being made,

And then a mind put in't, either our brags

Were crack'd of kitchen trulls, or his description

Prov'd us unspeaking sots.

CYMBELINE.

Nay, nay, to th' purpose.

IACHIMO.

Your daughter's chastity--there it begins.

He spake 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

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;

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

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;

And, to be brief, my practice so prevail'd,

That I return'd with similar proof enough

To make the noble Leonatus mad,

By wounding his belief in her renown

With tokens thus, and thus; averring notes

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--

Methinks, I see him now--

POSTHUMUS.

[Advancing.]

Ay, so thou dost,

Italian fiend! Ay me, most credulous fool,

Egregious murderer, thief, anything

That's due to all the villains past, in being,

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,

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 stones, cast mire upon me, set

The dogs o' the street to bay me; every villain

Be call'd Posthumus Leonatus; and

Be villainy less than 'twas! O Imogen

My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,

Imogen, Imogen!

IMOGEN.

Peace, my lord; hear, hear--

POSTHUMUS.

Shall's have a play of this? Thou scornful page,

There lies thy part.

[Striking her; she falls.]

PISANIO.

O gentlemen, help

Mine and your mistress! O, my lord Posthumus!

You ne'er kill'd Imogen till now. Help, help!

Mine honour'd lady!

CYMBELINE.

Does the world go round?

POSTHUMUS.

How comes these staggers on me?

PISANIO.

Wake, my mistress!

CYMBELINE.

If this be so, the gods do mean to strike me

To death with mortal joy.

PISANIO.

How fares my mistress?

IMOGEN.

O, get thee from my sight;

Thou gav'st 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

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!

I left out one thing which the Queen confess'd,

Which must approve thee honest. "If Pisanio

Have," said she "given his mistress that confection

Which I gave him for cordial, she is serv'd

As I would serve a rat."

CYMBELINE.

What's this, Cornelius?

CORNELIUS.

The Queen, sir, very oft importun'd me

To temper poisons for her, still pretending

The satisfaction of her knowledge only

In killing creatures vile, as cats and dogs,

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

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.

Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?

Think that you are upon a rock, and now

Throw me again.

[Embracing him.]

POSTHUMUS.

Hang there like fruit, my soul,

Till the tree die!

CYMBELINE.

How now, my flesh, my child!

What, mak'st thou me a dullard in this act?

Wilt thou not speak to me?

IMOGEN.

[Kneeling.]

Your blessing, sir.

BELARIUS.

[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,

Thy mother's dead.

IMOGEN.

I am sorry for't, my lord.

CYMBELINE.

O, she was naught; and long of her it was

That we meet here so strangely; but her son

Is gone, we know not how nor where.

PISANIO.

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,

It was my instant death. By accident,

I 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,

Which he enforc'd 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:

I slew him there.

CYMBELINE.

Marry, the gods forfend!

I would not thy good deeds should from my lips

Pluck a hard sentence. Prithee, valiant youth,

Deny't again.

GUIDERIUS.

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.

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.]

Let his arms alone;

They were not born for bondage.

CYMBELINE.

Why, old soldier,

Wilt thou undo the worth thou art unpaid for,

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

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.

And our good his.

BELARIUS.

Have at it then, by leave.

Thou hadst, great King, a subject who

Was call'd Belarius.

CYMBELINE.

What of him? He is

A banish'd traitor.

BELARIUS.

He it is that hath

Assum'd this age, indeed a banish'd man;

I know not how a traitor.

CYMBELINE.

Take him hence,

The whole world shall not save him.

BELARIUS.

Not too hot.

First pay me for the nursing of thy sons;

And let it be confiscate all so soon

As I have receiv'd it.

CYMBELINE.

Nursing of my sons!

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,

And think they are my sons, are none of mine;

They are the issue of your loins, my liege,

And blood of your begetting.

CYMBELINE.

How! my issue!

BELARIUS.

So sure as you your father's. I, old Morgan,

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

Have I train'd up. Those arts they have as

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 mov'd her to't,

Having receiv'd 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 shap'd

Unto my end of stealing them. But, gracious sir,

Here are your sons again; and I must lose

Two of the sweet'st 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.

CYMBELINE.

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.

BELARIUS.

Be pleas'd awhile.

This gentleman, whom I call Polydore,

Most worthy prince, as yours, is true Guiderius;

This gentleman, my Cadwal, Arviragus,

Your younger princely son. He, sir, was lapp'd

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;

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.

O, what, am I

A mother to the birth of three? Ne'er mother

Rejoic'd deliverance more. Blest pray you be,

That, after this strange starting from your orbs,

You may reign in them now! O Imogen,

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,

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 lov'd;

Continu'd 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 abridgment

Hath to it circumstantial branches, which

Distinction should be rich in. Where, how liv'd 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,

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,

Posthumus anchors upon Imogen,

And she, like harmless lightning, throws her eye

On him, her brothers, me, her master, hitting

Each object with a joy; the counterchange

Is severally in all. Let's quit this ground,

And smoke the temple with our sacrifices.

[To BELARIUS.]

Thou art my brother; so we'll hold thee ever.

IMOGEN.

You are my father too, and did relieve me,

To see this gracious season.

CYMBELINE.

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.

LUCIUS.

Happy be you!

CYMBELINE.

The forlorn soldier, that so nobly fought,

He would have well becom'd this place, and grac'd

The thankings of a king.

POSTHUMUS.

I am, sir,

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.

[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

That ever swore her faith.

POSTHUMUS.

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.

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;

Joy'd are we that you are.

POSTHUMUS.

Your servant, Princes. Good my lord of Rome,

Call forth your soothsayer. As I slept, methought

Great Jupiter, upon his eagle back'd,

Appear'd to me, with other spritely shows

Of mine own kindred. When I wak'd, 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.

LUCIUS.

Philarmonus!

SOOTHSAYER.

Here, my good lord.

LUCIUS.

Read, and declare the meaning.

SOOTHSAYER.

[Reads.]

"Whenas a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown, without

seeking find, and be embrac'd by a piece of tender air; and

when from a stately cedar shall be lopp'd 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."

Thou, Leonatus, art the lion's whelp;

The fit and apt construction of thy name,

Being leo-natus, doth import so much.

[To CYMBELINE.]

The piece of tender air, thy virtuous daughter,

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

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 stolen,

For many years thought dead, are now reviv'd,

To the majestic cedar join'd, whose issue

Promises Britain peace and plenty.

CYMBELINE.

Well;

My peace we will begin. And, Caius Lucius,

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,

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 yet this scarce-cold battle, at this instant

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

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 bless'd altars. Publish we this peace

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.

Set on there! Never was a war did cease,

Ere bloody hands were wash'd, with such a peace.

[Exeunt.]