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Cymbeline

by William Shakespeare [Tudor edition]

November, 1998 [Etext #1538]

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#### 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 uneduc'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 depend 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;  
Sluttry 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 dismissal 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 thoroughly; 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  
Revengefully 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 debtor 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 help 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.]

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