

## CYMBELINE

A line-by-line translation

## Act 1, Scene 1

## Shakespeare

*Enter two Gentlemen***FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

But what's the matter?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

None but the king?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

And why so?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

You speak him far.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

What's his name and birth?

## Shakescleare Translation

*Two gentlemen enter.***FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Every man you meet these days is frowning. Our bodies are  
in agreement with the planetary influences <sup>1</sup> just as the  
courtiers's moods seem to reflect the king's.

<sup>1</sup> In Shakespeare's period, people believed that actions and emotions were affected by the movements of the planets.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

What's wrong?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

Only the king?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

Why?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

You speak highly of him.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

I cannot speak highly of him enough. What I say is too low  
and his virtue cannot be accurately measured <sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The terms "crush" and "unfold" in the original text pick up on a fabric metaphor. Fabric can either be crushed together or unfolded and measured accurately.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

What's his name and family?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

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

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

70 How long is this ago?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Some twenty years.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

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

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

I do well believe you.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

*Exeunt*

*Enter the QUEEN, POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and IMOGEN*

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

I don't know his whole family tree. His father was called Sicilius. Sicilius fought against the Romans with Cassibelan, but was granted nobility under Tenantius. He served Tenantius so gloriously and was so well-known for his achievements that he was given the additional name "Leonatus <sup>3</sup>". He had two other sons, in addition to this man we are talking about, who died fighting in the wars taking place at the time. Their father, who was old and fond of his children, was so sad that he died. His sensitive wife, pregnant with this man who is the theme of our conversation, died as he was born. The king took the baby under his protection, called him Posthumus <sup>4</sup> Leonatus, raised him, and made him one of his closest attendants. He gave him as much of an education as Posthumus could find time for. Posthumus took to this education as naturally as people take to air, that is, he took it in as quickly as it was given to him. He fulfilled his potential when he grew up, and lived in court—a rare thing to do—greatly praised and greatly loved. He was an example to the youngest, to the full-grown a model for their own behavior, and seemed to serious <sup>5</sup> observers like a child leading old people. As for his wife, who is the reason he is now banished, her own excellence <sup>6</sup> shows how much she valued him and his virtue. By the fact that she chose him you can clearly understand what kind of man he is.

<sup>3</sup> Leonatus means "born of a lion" in Latin.

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

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

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

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

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Yes, his only child. He had two sons. Pay attention, if this is something you want to hear about. When the older one was three and the other one was still in his swaddling clothes <sup>7</sup>, they were stolen from their nursery, and to this day no one has any idea where they went.

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

How long ago was this?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

About twenty years.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

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

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

I believe you.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

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

*They exit.*

*The QUEEN, POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and IMOGEN enter.*

**QUEEN**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**QUEEN**

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

*Exit*

**IMOGEN**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*Re-enter QUEEN*

**QUEEN**

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

*Aside*

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Yes your highness, I will leave today.

**QUEEN**

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

*She exits.*

**IMOGEN**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*The QUEEN re-enters.*

**QUEEN**

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

*She speaks to herself* .

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

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

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

**IMOGEN**

Nay, stay a little:

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*Putting on the ring*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*Putting a bracelet upon her arm*

**IMOGEN**

O the gods!  
When shall we see again?

*Enter CYMBELINE and Lords*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Alack, the king!

**CYMBELINE**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*Exit*

**IMOGEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

Past grace? Obedience?

**IMOGEN**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*He puts on the ring.*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

*[To the ring]* Stay, stay there

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

<sup>10</sup> This could mean either a handcuff made of love or a handcuff to hold love.

*He puts a bracelet on her arm.*

**IMOGEN**

Oh gods! When will we see each other again?

*CYMBELINE and some lords enter.*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Oh no, the king!

**CYMBELINE**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*POSTHUMUS exits.*

**IMOGEN**

Death can't hurt worse than this.

**CYMBELINE**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

So you are past showing me grace? Past obedience?

**IMOGEN**

I am past hope, and in despair. In that way I am past grace <sup>11</sup>

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

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

**CYMBELINE**

That mightst have had the sole son of my queen!

**IMOGEN**

170 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**

175 O thou vile one!

**IMOGEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

What, art thou mad?

**IMOGEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

185 Thou foolish thing!

*Re-enter QUEEN*

**CYMBELINE**

190 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**

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

*Exeunt CYMBELINE and Lords*

**QUEEN**

Fie! you must give way.

*Enter PISANIO*

**QUEEN**

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

**PISANIO**

My lord your son drew on my master.

**CYMBELINE**

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

**IMOGEN**

I'm lucky I didn't! I chose an eagle and avoided a [vulture](#) <sup>12</sup>

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**IMOGEN**

No, I made it shine more brightly.

**CYMBELINE**

You disgusting person!

**IMOGEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

Are you crazy?

**IMOGEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

You foolish thing!

*The QUEEN re-enters.*

**CYMBELINE**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

*CYMBELINE and the lords exit.*

**QUEEN**

Come on! You have to give up.

*PISANIO enters.*

**QUEEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Your son drew his sword against my master Posthumus.

**QUEEN**

Ha!  
No harm, I trust, is done?

**PISANIO**

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

**QUEEN**

I am very glad on't.

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**PISANIO**

I humbly thank your highness.

**QUEEN**

Pray, walk awhile.

**IMOGEN**

225 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*

**QUEEN**

What! I hope no one was hurt?

**PISANIO**

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

**QUEEN**

I am very glad to hear that.

**IMOGEN**

Your son is my father's friend. He defends him. Drawing his sword against an exile! What a brave man! <sup>1</sup> I wish they were both in Africa together, and that I were near them with a needle, to poke whichever one retreated from the fight. Why did you leave your master?

<sup>1</sup> This is sarcastic.

**PISANIO**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Thank you, your highness.

**QUEEN**

Please, walk with me awhile.

**IMOGEN**

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

*They exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter 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**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

### Shakescleare Translation

*CLOTEN and two Lords enter.*

**FIRST LORD**

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

<sup>1</sup> Cloten's attempt to fight Posthumus was referenced in the previous scene.

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**FIRST LORD**

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

15 *[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**

20 *[Aside]* So would I, till you had measured 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 damned.

**FIRST LORD**

25 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**

30 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**

35 I'll attend your lordship.

**FIRST LORD**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

That criminal wouldn't stand and fight me.

**SECOND LORD**

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

**FIRST LORD**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

I wish they hadn't separated us.

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**FIRST LORD**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

You'll go with me?

**FIRST LORD**

I'll visit you later, my lord.

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

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

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

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

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

**CLOTEN**

Nay, come, let's go together.

**SECOND LORD**

Well, my lord.

*Exeunt*

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

All right, my lord.

*They exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter IMOGEN and PISANIO*

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

It was his queen, his queen!

**IMOGEN**

Then waved his handkerchief?

**PISANIO**

And kiss'd it, madam.

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Thou shouldst have made him  
As little as a crow, or less, ere left  
20 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,  
25 Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from  
The smallness of a gnat to air, and then  
Have turn'd mine eye and wept. But, good Pisanio,  
When shall we hear from him?

**PISANIO**

Be assured, madam,  
30 With his next vantage.

**IMOGEN**

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

### Shakescleare Translation

*IMOGEN and PISANIO enter.*

**IMOGEN**

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

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

**PISANIO**

It was "my queen, my queen!"

**IMOGEN**

Then he waved his handkerchief?

**PISANIO**

And kissed it, ma'am.

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

I did, ma'am.

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

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

*Enter a Lady*

**LADY**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Madam, I shall.

*Exeunt*

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

*A LADY enters.*

**LADY**

The queen would like to see you, your highness.

**IMOGEN**

*[To PISANIO]* Do the things I told you to do.

*[To the LADY]* I will go see the queen.

**PISANIO**

I will, ma'am.

*They exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 4

### Shakespeare

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

And then his banishment.

**IACHIMO**

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

### Shakescleare Translation

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

**IACHIMO**

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

 *Philario and Iachimo are discussing Posthumus's virtues.*

**PHILARIO**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

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

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

And now he's exiled.

**IACHIMO**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

*Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS*

**PHILARIO**

30 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 LEONATUS**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

40 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 LEONATUS**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

She holds her virtue still and I my mind.

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

*POSTHUMUS LEONATUS enters.*

**PHILARIO**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

Sir, we met in Orleans.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**FRENCHMAN**

No, it's fine. It was a public argument and so no one would  
think it was wrong to tell you about it. It was a lot like an  
argument we had last night when we all raved about our  
girlfriends at home. This man, Posthumus, was saying that  
his girlfriend was more beautiful, a better person, wiser,  
less sexual, better in every way, and less easy <sup>3</sup> than than  
even the best women in France, and he threatened to fight  
anyone who disagreed.

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

<sup>3</sup> The phrase "attemptable" in the original text implies sexual availability. The Frenchman is describing how Posthumus praised his girlfriend for being faithful to him and not easily tempted into affairs with other men.

**IACHIMO**

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  
70 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 LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

What do you esteem it at?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

75 More than the world enjoys.

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

Which the gods have given you?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Which, by their graces, I will keep.

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

Let us leave here, gentlemen.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

No, no.

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

How much do you think it's worth?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

More than is contained in the world.

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

Which the gods have given to you?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Which, if they let me, I will keep.

**IACHIMO**

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

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

Let's leave, gentlemen.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

 Literally, if opportunity or chance was his friend.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

No, no.

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

What's that?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

What lady would you choose to assail?

**IACHIMO**

Yours; whom in constancy you think stands so safe.  
I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring,  
125 that, 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 reserved.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

130 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 LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

140 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**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

What's that?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

What woman would you choose to harass?

**IACHIMO**

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

<sup>6</sup> A valuable coin.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

I won't let this bet happen.

**IACHIMO**

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

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Agreed.

*Exeunt POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and IACHIMO*

**FRENCHMAN**

Will this hold, think you?

**PHILARIO**

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

*Exeunt*

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I agree.

*POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and IACHIMO exit.*

**FRENCHMAN**

Do you think they'll go through with this?

**PHILARIO**

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

*They exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 5

### Shakespeare

*Enter QUEEN, Ladies, and CORNELIUS*

**QUEEN**

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

**FIRST LADY**

I, madam.

**QUEEN**

Dispatch.

5

*Exeunt Ladies*

**QUEEN**

Now, master doctor, have you brought those drugs?

**CORNELIUS**

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

*Presenting a small box*

**CORNELIUS**

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

### Shakescleare Translation

*The QUEEN, her ladies, and CORNELIUS enter.*

**QUEEN**

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

**FIRST LADY**

I do, ma'am.

**QUEEN**

Do it.

*The ladies exit.*

**QUEEN**

Now, doctor, have you brought those drugs?

**CORNELIUS**

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

*He shows her a small box.*

**CORNELIUS**

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

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

**QUEEN**

15 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  
20 For my confections? Having thus far proceeded,--  
Unless thou think'st me devilish--is't not meet  
That I did amplify my judgment in  
Other conclusions? I will try the forces  
Of these thy compounds on such creatures as  
25 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  
30 Shall from this practise but make hard your heart:  
Besides, the seeing these effects will be  
Both noisome and infectious.

**QUEEN**

O, content thee.

*Enter PISANIO*

*Aside*

**QUEEN**

35 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**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CORNELIUS**

*[Aside]* I do not like her. She doth think she has  
Strange lingering poisons: I do know her spirit,  
45 And will not trust one of her malice with  
A drug of such damn'd nature. Those she has  
Will stupefy and dull the sense awhile;  
Which first, perchance, she'll prove on  
cats and dogs,  
50 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,  
55 So to be false with her.

**QUEEN**

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

**CORNELIUS**

I humbly take my leave.

*Exit*

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CORNELIUS**

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

**QUEEN**

Don't worry.

*PISANIO enters.*

*She speaks to herself.*

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

*[To Pisanio]* Hey, Pisanio!

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

**CORNELIUS**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CORNELIUS**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CORNELIUS**

Good bye.

*He exits.*

**QUEEN**

60 Weeps she still, say'st thou? Dost thou think in time  
 She will not quench and let instructions enter  
 Where folly now possesses? Do thou work:  
 When thou shalt bring me word she loves my son,  
 I'll tell thee on the instant thou art then

65 As great as is thy master, greater, for  
 His fortunes all lie speechless and his name  
 Is at last gasp: return he cannot, nor  
 Continue where he is: to shift his being  
 Is to exchange one misery with another,

70 And every day that comes comes to decay  
 A day's work in him. What shalt thou expect,  
 To be 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*

**QUEEN**

75 Thou takest up  
 Thou know'st not what; but take it for thy labour:  
 It is a thing I made, which hath the king  
 Five times redeem'd from death: I do not know  
 What is more cordial. Nay, I prethee, take it;

80 It is an earnest of a further good  
 That I mean to thee. Tell thy mistress how  
 The case stands with her; do't as from thyself.  
 Think what a chance thou changest on, but think  
 Thou hast thy mistress still, to boot, my son,

85 Who shall take notice of thee: I'll move the king  
 To any shape of thy preferment such  
 As thou'lt desire; and then myself, I chiefly,  
 That set thee on to this desert, am bound  
 To load thy merit richly. Call my women:

90 Think on my words.

*Exit PISANIO*

**QUEEN**

A sly and constant knave,  
 Not to be shaken; the agent for his master  
 And the remembrancer of her to hold  
 The hand-fast to her lord. I have given him that

95 Which, if he take, shall quite unpeople her  
 Of liegers for her sweet, and which she after,  
 Except she bend her humour, shall be assured  
 To taste of too.

*Re-enter PISANIO and Ladies*

**QUEEN**

So, so: well done, well done:

100 The violets, cowslips, and the primroses,  
 Bear to my closet. Fare thee well, Pisanio;  
 Think on my words.

*Exeunt QUEEN and Ladies*

**PISANIO**

And shall do:  
 But when to my good lord I prove untrue,

105 I'll choke myself: there's all I'll do for you.

*Exit*

**QUEEN**

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

*The QUEEN drops the box. PISANIO picks it up.*

**QUEEN**

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

*PISANIO exits.*

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

*PISANIO and some ladies re-enter.*

**QUEEN**

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

*The QUEEN and the ladies exit.*

**PISANIO**

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

*He exits.*

## Act 1, Scene 6

Shakespeare

Shakescleare Translation

Enter IMOGEN

**IMOGEN**

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

Enter PISANIO and IACHIMO

**PISANIO**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

15

*Presents a letter*

**IMOGEN**

Thanks, good sir:  
You're kindly welcome.

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

What makes your admiration?

**IACHIMO**

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

IMOGEN enters.

**IMOGEN**

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

PISANIO and IACHIMO enter.

**PISANIO**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

*He gives her a letter.*

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Why are you staring?

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

What is the matter, trow?

**IACHIMO**

The cloyed will,

That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub

55 Both fill'd and running, ravening first the lamb  
Longs after for the garbage.

**IMOGEN**

What, dear sir,

Thus raps you? Are you well?

**IACHIMO**

Thanks, madam; well.

60

*To PISANIO*

Beseech you, sir, desire

My man's abode where I did leave him: he

Is strange and peevish.

**PISANIO**

65 I was going, sir,

To give him welcome.

*Exit*

**IMOGEN**

Continues well my lord? His health, beseech you?

**IACHIMO**

Well, madam.

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

Exceeding pleasant; none a stranger there

So merry and so gamesome: he is call'd

The Briton reveller.

**IMOGEN**

When he was here,

75 He did incline to sadness, and oft-times

Not knowing why.

**IACHIMO**

I never saw him sad.

There is a Frenchman his companion, one

An eminent monsieur, that, it seems, much loves

80 A Gallian girl at home; he furnaces

The thick sighs from him, whiles the jolly Briton--

Your lord, I mean--laughs from's free lungs, cries 'O,

Can my sides hold, to think that man, who knows

By history, report, or his own proof,

85 What woman is, yea, what she cannot choose

But must be, will his free hours languish for

Assured bondage?'

**IMOGEN**

Will my lord say so?

**IACHIMO**

Ay, madam, with his eyes in flood with laughter:

90 It is a recreation to be by

And hear him mock the Frenchman. But, heavens know,

Some men are much to blame.

**IMOGEN**

Not he, I hope.

**IMOGEN**

Come on, what's the matter?

**IACHIMO**

He's stuffed himself, he's satisfied his desire but is not

satisfied, he's a tub that's filled but still emptying out, he's

devoured the lamb and now is hungry for garbage.

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

Thanks, ma'am. Well...

*To PISANIO*

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

and grumpy.

**PISANIO**

I was just going, sir, to welcome him.

*He exits.*

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

Well, ma'am.

**IMOGEN**

Is he happy? I hope he is.

**IACHIMO**

He's very good company. There's no other stranger there so

happy and eager to play games. He's called the British

partier.

**IMOGEN**

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

know why.

**IACHIMO**

I never saw him be sad. He has a companion, a Frenchman,

a well-known man, who is in love with a French girl back

home. He's always sighing like a furnace for her, while the

cheerful Briton—your husband, I mean—laughs deeply, and

cries out: "Oh, I think I'll split my sides laughing, just

thinking that any man who knows by history, other people's

stories, or his own experience, what women are like,

no—what they can't help being like, would spend his free

time pining for a woman who would make him her slave!"

**IMOGEN**

My husband says that?

**IACHIMO**

Yes, ma'am, crying with laughter. It's such fun to be near

him and hear him make fun of the Frenchman. Heaven

knows, some men do terrible things.

**IMOGEN**

Not him, I hope.

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

What do you pity, sir?

**IACHIMO**

100 Two creatures heartily.

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

135 My lord, I fear,  
 Has forgot Britain.

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Let me hear no more.

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

What do you pity, sir?

**IACHIMO**

Two people, with all my heart.

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

I'm afraid that my husband has forgotten Britain.

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Don't say any more.

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

What, ho, Pisanio!

**IACHIMO**

Let me my service tender on your lips.

**IMOGEN**

Away! I do condemn mine ears that have  
 170 So long attended thee. If thou wert honourable,  
 Thou 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  
 175 Solicit'st here a lady that disdains  
 Thee and the devil alike. What ho, Pisanio!  
 The king my father shall be made acquainted  
 Of thy assault: if he shall think it fit,  
 A saucy stranger in his court to mart  
 180 As in a Romish stew and to expound  
 His beastly mind to us, he hath a court  
 He little cares for and a daughter who  
 He not respects at all. What, ho, Pisanio!

**IACHIMO**

O happy Leonatus! I may say  
 185 The credit that thy lady hath of thee  
 Deserves thy trust, and thy most perfect goodness  
 Her assured credit. Blessed live you long!  
 A lady to the worthiest sir that ever  
 Country call'd his! and you his mistress, only  
 190 For the most worthiest fit! Give me your pardon.  
 I have spoke this, to know if your affiance  
 Were deeply rooted; and shall make your lord,  
 That which he is, new o'er: and he is one  
 The truest manner'd; such a holy witch  
 195 That he 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,  
 200

**IACHIMO**

Oh poor thing! Your situation strikes so much pity into my heart that it makes me sick. A woman so beautiful, and who comes with a kingdom, would double the value of even the greatest king. But you're shared with whores <sup>1</sup> paid with your own money! Add to that his terrible unnatural plans to gamble with all kinds of disgusting people for gold <sup>2</sup>! These spotted people could poison poison! You should get your revenge. Or your mother was no queen, and you're letting down your noble family.

<sup>1</sup> "Tomboy," the word used in the original text, is another word for whore.

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

<sup>3</sup> This is sexual innuendo: he's sleeping with different women.

**IMOGEN**

Pisanio!

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

You're making up for your behavior.

**IACHIMO**

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

More than a mortal seeming. Be not angry,  
Most mighty princess, that I have adventured  
To try your taking a false report; which hath  
Honour'd with confirmation your great judgment  
In the election of a sir so rare,

205 Which you know cannot err: the love I bear him  
Made me to fan you thus, but the gods made you,  
Unlike all others, chaffless. Pray, your pardon.

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

215 Pray, what is't?

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

O, no, no.

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

What is it?

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Oh, no, no.

**IACHIMO**

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

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

*Exeunt**They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 1

## Shakespeare

*Enter CLOTEN and two Lords***CLOTEN**

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

**FIRST LORD**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

No my lord;

*Aside*

nor crop the ears of them.

15

**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**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

Sayest thou?

## Shakescleare Translation

*CLOTEN and two lords enter.***CLOTEN**

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

**FIRST LORD**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

No.

*He speaks to himself.*

Or cut off the oaths' ears. <sup>1</sup>

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

*[To himself]* He would have been a stinky fool too then. <sup>2</sup>

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

*[To himself]* You're a rooster and a chicken <sup>3</sup>. And you're crowing like a foolish rooster. <sup>4</sup>

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

<sup>4</sup> He means that Cloten is wearing a cock's comb, which makes him a "cockscumb", a fool.

**CLOTEN**

What did you say?

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

Ay, it is fit for your lordship only.

**CLOTEN**

Why, so I say.

**FIRST LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

A stranger, and I not know on't!

**SECOND LORD**

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

**FIRST LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**FIRST LORD**

One of your lordship's pages.

**CLOTEN**

45 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**

50 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*

**SECOND LORD**

55 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 endurest,  
60 Betwixt a father by thy step-dame govern'd, A mother hourly coining plots, a wooer More hateful than the foul expulsion is

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

That's what I'm saying.

**FIRST LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**FIRST LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**FIRST LORD**

One of your servants.

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

Not easily, I think.

**SECOND LORD**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**SECOND LORD**

I'll meet you there.

*CLOTEN and the FIRST LORD exit.*

**SECOND LORD**

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

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

*Exit*

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

*He exits.*

## Act 2, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

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

**IMOGEN**

Who's there? my woman Helen?

**LADY**

Please you, madam

**IMOGEN**

What hour is it?

**LADY**

Almost midnight, madam.

**IMOGEN**

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

*Exit Lady*

**IMOGEN**

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

*Taking off her bracelet*

### Shakescleare Translation

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

**IMOGEN**

Who's there? Is it my attendant Helen?

**LADY**

Yes, ma'am.

**IMOGEN**

What time is it?

**LADY**

Almost midnight, ma'am.

**IMOGEN**

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

*The LADY exits.*

**IMOGEN**

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

*She falls asleep. IACHIMO comes out of the trunk.*

**IACHIMO**

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

*[To her bracelet]* Come off, come off.

*He takes off her bracelet.*

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

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

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

*Clock strikes*

One, two, three: time, time!

*Goes into the trunk. The scene closes*

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

*The clock strikes.*

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

*He goes into the trunk. The scene ends.*

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

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

## Act 2, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

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

#### FIRST LORD

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

#### CLOTEN

It would make any man cold to lose.

#### FIRST LORD

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

#### CLOTEN

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

#### FIRST LORD

10 Day, my lord.

#### CLOTEN

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

*Enter Musicians*

#### CLOTEN

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

*SONG*

#### MUSICIANS

20

### Shakescleare Translation

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

#### FIRST LORD

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

#### CLOTEN

Losing would make any man feel cold.

#### FIRST LORD

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

#### CLOTEN

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

#### FIRST LORD

It's already day, my lord.

#### CLOTEN

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

*MUSICIANS enter.*

#### CLOTEN

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

*The MUSICIANS sing.*

#### MUSICIANS

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

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

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

**CLOTEN**

So, get you gone. If this penetrate, I will  
 30 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*

**SECOND LORD**

Here comes the king.

**CLOTEN**

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

*Enter CYMBELINE and QUEEN*

**CLOTEN**

Good morrow to your majesty and to my gracious mother.

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

Senseless! not so.

*Enter a Messenger*

**MESSENGER**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

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

**CLOTEN**

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

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

*The musicians exit.*

**SECOND LORD**

Here comes the king.

**CLOTEN**

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

*CYMBELINE and the QUEEN enter.*

**CLOTEN**

Good morning, your majesty and my mother.

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

Dumb! I'm not.

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**MESSENGER**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

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

*Exeunt all but CLOTEN*

**CLOTEN**

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

*Knocks*

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

*Knocks*

85 By your leave.

*Enter a Lady*

**LADY**

Who's there that knocks?

**CLOTEN**

A gentleman.

**LADY**

No more?

**CLOTEN**

90 Yes, and a gentlewoman's son.

**LADY**

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

**CLOTEN**

Your lady's person: is she ready?

**LADY**

95 Ay,  
 To keep her chamber.

**CLOTEN**

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

**LADY**

100 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*

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

*All but CLOTEN exit.*

**CLOTEN**

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

*He knocks.*

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

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

*He knocks.*

Hello!

*A LADY enters.*

**LADY**

Who's knocking out there?

**CLOTEN**

A gentleman.

**LADY**

That's all?

**CLOTEN**

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

**LADY**

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

**CLOTEN**

Your mistress. Is she ready?

**LADY**

Yes, to stay in her room.

**CLOTEN**

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

**LADY**

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

*IMOGEN enters.*

**CLOTEN**

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

*The LADY exits.*

**IMOGEN**

105 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**

110 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**

115 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**

120 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,  
125 You put me to forget a lady's manners,  
By being so verbal: and learn now, for all,  
That I, which know my heart, do here pronounce,  
By the very truth of it, I care not for you,  
And am so near the lack of charity--  
130 To accuse myself--I hate you; which I had rather  
You felt than make't my boast.

**CLOTEN**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

Still, I promise I love you.

**IMOGEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

That's no answer.

**IMOGEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**IMOGEN**

Fools are not crazy.

**CLOTEN**

Are you calling me a fool?

**IMOGEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

The south-fog rot him!

**IMOGEN**

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

*Enter PISANIO*

**CLOTEN**

160 'His garment!' Now the devil--

**IMOGEN**

To Dorothy my woman hie thee presently--

**CLOTEN**

'His garment!'

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

'Twill not be lost.

**IMOGEN**

I hope so: go and search.  
175

*Exit PISANIO*

**CLOTEN**

You have abused me:  
'His meanest garment!'

**IMOGEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

180 I will inform your father.

**IMOGEN**

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

*Exit*

**CLOTEN**

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

*Exit*

**CLOTEN**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

*PISANIO enters.*

**CLOTEN**

"Any piece of clothing!" The devil--

**IMOGEN**

*[To Pisanio]* Go to Dorothy, my attendant--

**CLOTEN**

"Any piece of clothing!"

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

It won't be lost.

**IMOGEN**

I hope so. Go look for it.

*PISANIO exits.*

**CLOTEN**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

I'll tell your father.

**IMOGEN**

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

*She exits.*

**CLOTEN**

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

*He exits.*

## Act 2, Scene 4

## Shakespeare

*Enter POSTHUMUS and PHILARIO*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

What means do you make to him?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*Enter IACHIMO*

**PHILARIO**

- 30 See! Iachimo!

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

Welcome, sir.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

## Shakescleare Translation

*POSTHUMUS and PHILARIO enter.*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

What are you doing to try to contact the king?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*IACHIMO enters.*

**PHILARIO**

Look! Iachimo!

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

Welcome, sir.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

Here are letters for you.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Their tenor good, I trust.

**IACHIMO**

'Tis very like.

**PHILARIO**

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

**IACHIMO**

He was expected then,  
But not approach'd.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

The stone's too hard to come by.

**IACHIMO**

Not a whit,  
Your lady being so easy.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Proceed.

**IACHIMO**

Here are letters for you.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I hope they contain good news.

**IACHIMO**

Probably.

**PHILARIO**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

Not at all, since your wife is so easy.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Go on.

**IACHIMO**

First, her bedchamber--  
 85 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  
 90 The press of boats or pride: a piece of work  
 So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive  
 In workmanship and value; which I wonder'd  
 Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,  
 Since the true life on't was--

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

More particulars  
 Must justify my knowledge.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

100 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  
 105 So likely to report themselves: the cutter  
 Was as another nature, dumb; outwent her,  
 Motion and breath left out.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

This is a thing  
 Which you might from relation likewise reap,  
 110 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  
 115 Depending on their brands.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

This is her honour!  
 Let it be granted you have seen all this--and praise  
 Be given to your remembrance-- the description  
 Of what is in her chamber nothing saves  
 120 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  
 125 To that your diamond; I'll keep them.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

You must, or you will be dishonored.

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

Well then, assuming you can...

*He shows him the bracelet.*

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

She prized it once.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

She writes so to you, doth she?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*Gives the ring*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

140 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.  
145 O, above measure false!

**PHILARIO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

155 By Jupiter, I had it from her arm.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

175 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?

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Maybe she took it off to send it to me.

**IACHIMO**

Does she write that in her letter to you?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*He gives IACHIMO the ring.*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**PHILARIO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Never talk about it. They slept together.

**IACHIMO**

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

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

Will you hear more?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

I'll be sworn--

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

185 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 LEONATUS**

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

*Exit*

**PHILARIO**

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

**IACHIMO**

With all my heart.

*Exeunt*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

Do you want to hear more?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

I promise—

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

**IACHIMO**

I won't deny anything.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*He exits.*

**PHILARIO**

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

**IACHIMO**

Absolutely.

*They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 5

### Shakespeare

*Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

### Shakescleare Translation

*POSTHUMUS LEONATUS enters.*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

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

*Exit*

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

*He exits.*

## Act 3, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

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

#### CYMBELINE

Now say, what would Augustus Caesar with us?

#### CAIUS LUCIUS

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

#### QUEEN

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

#### CLOTEN

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

#### QUEEN

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

### Shakescleare Translation

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

#### CYMBELINE

Tell us, what does August Caesar want from us?

#### CAIUS LUCIUS

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

#### QUEEN

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

#### CLOTEN

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

#### QUEEN

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

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

And Britons strut with courage.

**CLOTEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

Son, let your mother end.

**CLOTEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**LORDS**

We do.

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Let proof speak.

**CLOTEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

Son, let your mother end this conversation.

**CLOTEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**LORDS**

We do.

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

We'll see.

<sup>2</sup> "Pannonians" and "Dalmatians" are inhabitants of Hungary and a region called Dalmatia near the Adriatic sea.

**CLOTEN**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

So, sir.

**CYMBELINE**

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

*Exeunt*

**CLOTEN**

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

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Fine, sir.

**CYMBELINE**

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

*They exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter PISANIO, with a letter*

**PISANIO**

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

*Reading*

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

*Enter IMOGEN*

**IMOGEN**

25 How now, Pisanio!

**PISANIO**

Madam, here is a letter from my lord.

**IMOGEN**

Who? thy lord? that is my lord, Leonatus!  
O, learn'd indeed were that astronomer  
That knew the stars as I his characters;  
30 He'd lay the future open. You good gods,  
Let what is here contain'd relish of love,  
Of my lord's health, of his content, yet not  
That we two are asunder; let that grieve him:  
Some griefs are med'cinable; that is one of them,  
35

### Shakescleare Translation

*PISANIO enters, holding a letter.*

**PISANIO**

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

*He reads the letter.*

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

 He calls the paper

*IMOGEN enters.*

**IMOGEN**

Hello, Pisanio!

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

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

*Reads*

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

**PISANIO**

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

*Aside*

and too much too.

75

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

85 Madam, you're best consider.

**IMOGEN**

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

*Exeunt*

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

*She reads the letter.*

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

**PISANIO**

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

*He speaks to himself.*

Or too much.

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Ma'am, you should think this through.

**IMOGEN**

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

*They exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 3

## Shakespeare

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

**BELARIUS**

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

**GUIDERIUS**

10 Hail, heaven!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Hail, heaven!

**BELARIUS**

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

**GUIDERIUS**

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

**ARVIRAGUS**

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

**BELARIUS**

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

## Shakescleare Translation

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

**BELARIUS**

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

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

**GUIDERIUS**

Hello, sky!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Hello, sky!

**BELARIUS**

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

**GUIDERIUS**

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

**ARVIRAGUS**

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

**BELARIUS**

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

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

**GUIDERIUS**

70 Uncertain favour!

**BELARIUS**

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

*Exeunt GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS*

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

*Exit*

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

**GUIDERIUS**

Luck is so unpredictable!

**BELARIUS**

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

*GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS exit.*

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

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

*He exits.*

## Act 3, Scene 4

## Shakespeare

*Enter PISANIO and IMOGEN***IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Alas, good lady!

**IMOGEN**

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

## Shakescleare Translation

*PISANIO and IMOGEN enter.***IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Poor lady!

**IMOGEN**

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

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

**PISANIO**

Good madam, hear me.

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

110 Do't, and to bed then.

**PISANIO**

I'll wake mine eye-balls blind first.

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

**PISANIO**

Ma'am, listen to me.

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Do it, then go to bed.

**PISANIO**

I'd rather stay awake until I was blind.

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

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Most like;  
 Bringing me here to kill me.

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Some Roman courtesan.

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

If you'll back to the court--

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Where then  
 Hath Britain all the sun that shines? Day, night,  
 Are they not but in Britain? I' the world's volume  
 Our Britain seems as of it, but not in 't;  
 160

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

Some Roman prostitute.

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

If you want to go back to the court--

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Well, madam, we must take a short farewell,  
Lest, being miss'd, I be suspected of  
Your carriage from the court. My noble mistress,  
215 Here is a box; I had it from the queen:  
What's in't is precious; if you are sick at sea,  
Or stomach-qualm'd at land, a dram of this  
Will drive away distemper. To some shade,  
And fit you to your manhood. May the gods  
220

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**IMOGEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

Direct you to the best!

**IMOGEN**

Amen: I thank thee.

*Exeunt, severally*

**IMOGEN**

Amen. Thank you.

*They exit in different directions.*

## Act 3, Scene 5

### Shakespeare

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

**CYMBELINE**

Thus far; and so farewell.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

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

**QUEEN**

And you!

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Your hand, my lord.

**CLOTEN**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

*Exeunt LUCIUS and Lords*

**QUEEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

### Shakescleare Translation

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

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

**QUEEN**

And you!

**CYMBELINE**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Let me shake your hand, my lord.

**CLOTEN**

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

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

*LUCIUS and the Lords exit.*

**QUEEN**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

*Exit an Attendant*

**QUEEN**

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

*Re-enter Attendant*

**CYMBELINE**

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

**ATTENDANT**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

*Exit*

**QUEEN**

Son, I say, follow the king.

**CLOTEN**

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

**QUEEN**

Go, look after.

*Exit CLOTEN*

**CYMBELINE**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

*An Attendant exits.*

**QUEEN**

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

*The Attendant re-enters.*

**CYMBELINE**

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

**ATTENDANT**

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

**QUEEN**

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

**CYMBELINE**

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

*He exits.*

**QUEEN**

Son, follow the king.

**CLOTEN**

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

**QUEEN**

Go, follow him.

*CLOTEN exits.*

**QUEEN**

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

*Re-enter CLOTEN*

How now, my son!

**CLOTEN**

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

**QUEEN**

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

*Exit*

**CLOTEN**

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

*Enter PISANIO*

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

**PISANIO**

105 O, good my lord!

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

O, my all-worthy lord!

**CLOTEN**

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

**QUEEN**

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

*CLOTEN re-enters.*

Well, son?

**CLOTEN**

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

**QUEEN**

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

*She exits.*

**CLOTEN**

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

*PISANIO enters.*

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

**PISANIO**

Oh, my good lord!

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Oh, my excellent lord!

**CLOTEN**

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

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

**PISANIO**

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

*Presenting a letter*

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**CLOTEN**

Hum!

**PISANIO**

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

**CLOTEN**

Sirrah, is this letter true?

**PISANIO**

Sir, as I think.

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Well, my good lord.

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Sir, I will.

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

160 I shall, my lord.

*Exit*

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

**PISANIO**

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

*He hands CLOTEN a letter.*

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**CLOTEN**

Hmm!

**PISANIO**

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

**CLOTEN**

Sir, is this letter real?

**PISANIO**

I think so, sir.

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

All right, my good lord.

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

Sir, I will.

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

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

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

I will, my lord.

*He exits.*

**CLOTEN**

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

*Re-enter PISANIO, with the clothes*

Be those the garments?

**PISANIO**

180 Ay, my noble lord.

**CLOTEN**

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

**PISANIO**

She can scarce be there yet.

**CLOTEN**

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

*Exit*

**PISANIO**

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

*Exit*

**CLOTEN**

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

*PISANIO re-enters with the clothes.*

Are those the clothes?

**PISANIO**

Yes, my noble lord.

**CLOTEN**

How long ago did she go to Milford-Haven?

**PISANIO**

She'll be getting there around now.

**CLOTEN**

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

*He exits.*

**PISANIO**

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

*He exits.*

## Act 3, Scene 6

### Shakespeare

*Enter IMOGEN, in boy's clothes*

**IMOGEN**

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

### Shakesclare Translation

*IMOGEN enters, dressed as a boy.*

**IMOGEN**

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

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

*Exit, to the cave*

*Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS*

**BELARIUS**

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

**GUIDERIUS**

I am thoroughly weary.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I am weak with toil, yet strong in appetite.

**GUIDERIUS**

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

**BELARIUS**

*[Looking into the cave]*

Stay; come not in.

But that it eats our victuals, I should think

45 Here were a fairy.

**GUIDERIUS**

What's the matter, sir?

**BELARIUS**

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

50

*Re-enter IMOGEN*

**IMOGEN**

Good masters, harm me not:

Before I enter'd here, I call'd; and thought  
To have begg'd or bought what I have took:  
good troth,

55 I have stol'n nought, nor would not, though I had found  
Gold strew'd i' the floor. Here's money for my meat:  
I would have left it on the board so soon  
As I had made my meal, and parted  
With prayers for the provider.

**GUIDERIUS**

60 Money, youth?

what you need, and lying is a worse sin for kings than  
beggars. My dear husband! You're one of the liars. Now I'm  
thinking about you, I'm not hungry any more, even though I  
was about to faint from hunger. But what's this? There's a  
path to it. It's some savage's hiding place. I shouldn't call  
out. I don't dare to call out. But starvation, before it kills  
you, makes you brave. Prosperity and peace make people  
cowards. Hardship always makes people strong. Hello!  
Who's there? If there's anyone civilized, speak. If you're a  
savage, take my life or give me something to eat. Hello! No  
answer? Then I'll go in. I'd better take out my sword. And if  
my enemy is as afraid of my sword as I am, he'll barely be  
able to look at it. Please grant me an enemy like that, gods!

*She exits, into the cave.*

*BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS enter.*

**BELARIUS**

You, Polydore, have shown yourself to be the best hunter  
and you will be master of the feast. Cadwal and I will play at  
being cooks and servants. That's what we agreed on. No  
one would work if they didn't get anything in return. Come  
on, we're hungry enough to think a humble meal tastes  
delicious. Tired people can fall asleep on hard rock, while  
lazy people aren't able to sleep even on down pillows. Now,  
may everything be peaceful here, in our house that's been  
left empty!

**GUIDERIUS**

I'm exhausted.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I'm tired from working, but hunger makes me strong.

**GUIDERIUS**

There's cold food in the cave. We'll snack on that while we  
cook what we killed.

**BELARIUS**

*[Looking into the cave]* Wait, don't go in. If it weren't eating  
our food, I'd think it was a fairy.

**GUIDERIUS**

What's the matter, sir?

**BELARIUS**

An angel, by Jupiter! Or, if not, something with no equal on  
earth! No older than a boy.

*IMOGEN re-enters.*

**IMOGEN**

Don't hurt me. I called out before I went in there, and  
wanted to beg for or buy what I took. I promise I haven't  
stolen anything, and I wouldn't even if I found gold  
scattered over the floor. Here's money for my food. I would  
have left it on the table as soon as I had eaten, and would  
have left praying for the people who provided it.

**GUIDERIUS**

Money, young man!

**ARVIRAGUS**

All gold and silver rather turn to dirt!  
As 'tis no better reckon'd, but of those  
Who worship dirty gods.

**IMOGEN**

I see you're angry:  
65 Know, if you kill me for my fault, I should  
Have died had I not made it.

**BELARIUS**

Whither bound?

**IMOGEN**

To Milford-Haven.

**BELARIUS**

What's your name?

**IMOGEN**

70 Fidele, sir. I have a kinsman who  
Is bound for Italy; he embark'd at Milford;  
To whom being going, almost spent with hunger,  
I am fall'n in this offence.

**BELARIUS**

Prithee, fair youth,  
75 Think us no churls, nor measure our good minds  
By this rude place we live in. Well encounter'd!  
'Tis almost night: you shall have better cheer  
Ere you depart: and thanks to stay and eat it.  
Boys, bid him welcome.

**GUIDERIUS**

80 Were you a woman, youth,  
I should woo hard but be your groom. In honesty,  
I bid for you as I'd buy.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I'll make't my comfort  
He is a man; I'll love him as my brother:  
85 And such a welcome as I'd give to him  
After long absence, such is yours: most welcome!  
Be sprightly, for you fall 'mongst friends.

**IMOGEN**

'Mongst friends,  
If brothers.

90

*Aside*

**IMOGEN**

Would it had been so, that they  
Had been my father's sons! then had my prize  
Been less, and so more equal ballasting  
To thee, Posthumus.

**BELARIUS**

95 He wrings at some distress.

**GUIDERIUS**

Would I could free't!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Or I, whate'er it be,  
What pain it cost, what danger. God's!

**BELARIUS**

100

Hark, boys.

*Whispering*

**ARVIRAGUS**

Gold and silver should just turn to dirt, since it isn't worth  
any more than dirt except to people who worship dirty  
gods.

**IMOGEN**

I see you're angry. You should know, if you kill me for what I  
did, I would have died anyway if I hadn't done it.

**BELARIUS**

Where are you heading?

**IMOGEN**

To Milford-Haven.

**BELARIUS**

What's your name?

**IMOGEN**

Fidele , sir. A relative of mine is going to Italy. He got on a  
ship at Milford. I was going to meet him and almost died of  
hunger on the way.

 The name that Imogen chooses  
means "faithful" in French and Italian.

**BELARIUS**

Please, handsome youth, don't think we're peasants, and  
don't make assumptions about our characters based on  
this wild place we live in. Welcome! It's almost night. We'll  
feed you better before you leave, and we'll thank you for  
staying and eating. Boys, welcome him.

**GUIDERIUS**

If you were a woman, young man, I would try everything to  
get you to marry me. Really, that's what I think of you.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I'll make the best of him being a man: I'll love him like he's  
my brother. And I'll welcome him in the same way I'd  
welcome my brother after he was gone a long time. You're  
very welcome. Cheer up, you're among friends now!

**IMOGEN**

If we're like brothers, then we're definitely friends.

*To herself.*

I wish it were true and that they were my father's sons!  
Then I wouldn't have mattered as much, and you would  
have seemed more like my equal, Posthumus.

**BELARIUS**

He's sad about something.

**GUIDERIUS**

I wish I could do something about it!

**ARVIRAGUS**

And me, however painful and hard it was to fix it. By the  
gods!

**BELARIUS**

Listen, boys.

*He whispers to them.*

**IMOGEN**

Great men,  
That had a court no bigger than this cave,  
That did attend themselves and had the virtue  
Which their own conscience seal'd them--laying by  
105 That nothing-gift of differing multitudes--  
Could not out-peer these twain. Pardon me, gods!  
I'd change my sex to be companion with them,  
Since Leonatus's false.

**BELARIUS**

It shall be so.  
110 Boys, we'll go dress our hunt. Fair youth, come in:  
Discourse is heavy, fasting; when we have supp'd,  
We'll mannerly demand thee of thy story,  
So far as thou wilt speak it.

**GUIDERIUS**

Pray, draw near.

**ARVIRAGUS**

115 The night to the owl and morn to the lark  
less welcome.

**IMOGEN**

Thanks, sir.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I pray, draw near.

*Exeunt*

**IMOGEN**

Great men who had a court the size of this cave, who were  
their own servants and considered themselves virtuous  
(because the opinions everyone else has of you don't  
matter) couldn't be nobler than these two. Forgive me,  
gods, but I would rather be a man so I could be friends with  
them, especially since Leonatus is untrustworthy.

**BELARIUS**

Let's do that. Boys, let's prepare the meat. Handsome  
young man, come on in. It's hard to talk when you're  
hungry. When we have eaten, we'll politely ask you for your  
story, as much of it as you want to tell us.

**GUIDERIUS**

Please, come closer.

**ARVIRAGUS**

The night is less welcome to owls and the morning to larks  
than you are to us here.

**IMOGEN**

Thank you, sir.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Please, come closer.

*They exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 7

### Shakespeare

*Enter two Senators and Tribunes*

**FIRST SENATOR**

This is the tenor of the emperor's writ:  
That since the common men are now in action  
'Gainst the Pannonians and Dalmatians,  
And that the legions now in Gallia are  
5 Full weak to undertake our wars against  
The fall'n-off Britons, that we do incite  
The gentry to this business. He creates  
Lucius preconsul: and to you the tribunes,  
For this immediate levy, he commends  
10 His absolute commission. Long live Caesar!

**FIRST TRIBUNE**

Is Lucius general of the forces?

**SECOND SENATOR**

Ay.

**FIRST TRIBUNE**

Remaining now in Gallia?

**FIRST SENATOR**

With those legions  
15 Which I have spoke of, whereunto your levy  
Must be supplyant: the words of your commission  
Will tie you to the numbers and the time  
Of their dispatch.

**FIRST TRIBUNE**

20 We will discharge our duty.

### Shakescleare Translation

*Two SENATORS and two TRIBUNES enter.*

**FIRST SENATOR**

This is what the emperor writes: that since the commoners  
are fighting the Pannonians and Dalmatians, and the  
legions now in France are too weak to fight the rebelling  
Britons, we should recruit the nobles to do this. He makes  
Lucius preconsul, and he's ordering you tribunes to recruit  
people. Long live Caesar!

**FIRST TRIBUNE**

Is Lucius leading the forces?

**SECOND SENATOR**

Yes.

**FIRST TRIBUNE**

He's still in France?

**FIRST SENATOR**

With those legions I mentioned, which you'll supplement  
with the people you recruit. The documents I gave you will  
tell you the numbers needed and when they'll leave.

**FIRST TRIBUNE**

We'll do our duty.

*Exeunt**They exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter CLOTEN***CLOTEN**

I am near to the place where they should meet, if Pisanio have mapped it truly. How fit his garments serve me! Why should his mistress, who was made by him that made the tailor, not be fit too? the  
 5 rather--saving reverence of the word--for 'tis said a woman's fitness comes by fits. Therein I must play the workman. I dare speak it to myself--for it is not vain-glory for a man and his glass to confer in his own chamber-- I mean, the lines of my body are  
 10 as well drawn as his; no less young, more strong, not beneath him in fortunes, beyond him in the advantage of the time, above him in birth, alike conversant in general services, and more remarkable in single oppositions: yet this imperceivable  
 15 thing loves him in my despite. What mortality is! Posthumus, thy head, which now is growing upon thy shoulders, shall within this hour be off; thy mistress enforced; thy garments cut to pieces before thy face: and all this done, spurn her home to her  
 20 father; who may haply be a little angry for my so rough usage; but my mother, having power of his testiness, shall turn all into my commendations. My horse is tied up safe: out, sword, and to a sore purpose! Fortune, put them into my hand! This is  
 25 the very description of their meeting-place; and the fellow dares not deceive me.

*Exit*

### Shakescleare Translation

*CLOTEN enters.***CLOTEN**

I'm near the place where they're supposed to meet, if Pisanio's map is right. His clothes fit me really well! Why shouldn't his wife, who was made by the same god who made the tailor who made the clothes, fit me just as well? Or rather, as it were, it's said women have fits when you fit well. I will have to do some work. If I say so myself—and it's not vanity for a man to look in a mirror in his own room—my body is as attractive as his. I'm as young, stronger, not less rich than he is, more powerful, more noble, able to do the same things, and better at fighting. But this dimwitted thing loves him instead of me. Humans are such fools! Posthumus, your head, which is now growing on top of your shoulders, will come off within an hour, your wife will be raped, your clothes will be cut to pieces in front of your face, and all of this done to kick her home to her father. He may be a little angry at me for my rough treatment of her. But my mother is able to calm him and will make him see that this reflects well on me. My horse is safely tied up. Out, sword, and do terrible things! Luck, give them to me! This is exactly the meeting place he described, and that fellow doesn't dare lie to me.

 Cloten puns on "fit" as in the fit of a piece of clothing and "fit" as in sexual compatibility.

*He exits.*

## Act 4, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter, from the cave, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, and IMOGEN***BELARIUS**

*[To IMOGEN]* You are not well: remain here in the cave; We'll come to you after hunting.

**ARVIRAGUS**

*[To IMOGEN]* Brother, stay here. Are we not brothers?

**IMOGEN**

5 So man and man should be;  
 But clay and clay differs in dignity,  
 Whose dust is both alike. I am very sick.

**GUIDERIUS**

Go you to hunting; I'll abide with him.

### Shakescleare Translation

*BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, and IMOGEN enter from the cave.***BELARIUS**

*[To IMOGEN]* You aren't feeling well. Stay here in the cave. We'll come back to see you after hunting.

**ARVIRAGUS**

*[To IMOGEN]* Brother, stay here. We're brothers, aren't we?

**IMOGEN**

Just as men should be to each other. But some men are thought to be worth more than others, even though they're made out of the same stuff. I am very sick.

**GUIDERIUS**

You go hunting. I'll stay with him.

**IMOGEN**

So sick I am not, yet I am not well;  
 10 But not so citizen a wanton as  
 To seem to die ere sick: so please you, leave me;  
 Stick to your journal course: the breach of custom  
 Is breach of all. I am ill, but your being by me  
 Cannot amend me; society is no comfort  
 15 To one not sociable: I am not very sick,  
 Since I can reason of it. Pray you, trust me here:  
 I'll rob none but myself; and let me die,  
 Stealing so poorly.

**GUIDERIUS**

I love thee; I have spoke it  
 20 How much the quantity, the weight as much,  
 As I do love my father.

**BELARIUS**

What! how! how!

**ARVIRAGUS**

If it be sin to say so, I yoke me  
 In my good brother's fault: I know not why  
 25 I love this youth; and I have heard you say,  
 Love's reason's without reason: the bier at door,  
 And a demand who is't shall die, I'd say  
 'My father, not this youth.'

**BELARIUS**

*[Aside]* O noble strain!  
 30 O worthiness of nature! breed of greatness!  
 Cowards father cowards and base things sire base:  
 Nature hath meal and bran, contempt and grace.  
 I'm not their father; yet who this should be,  
 Doth miracle itself, loved before me.  
 35 'Tis the ninth hour o' the morn.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Brother, farewell.

**IMOGEN**

I wish ye sport.

**ARVIRAGUS**

You health. So please you, sir.

**IMOGEN**

*[Aside]* These are kind creatures. Gods, what lies  
 40 I have heard!  
 Our courtiers say all's savage but at court:  
 Experience, O, thou disprovest report!  
 The imperious seas breed monsters, for the dish  
 Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish.  
 45 I am sick still; heart-sick. Pisanio,  
 I'll now taste of thy drug.

*Swallows some*

**GUIDERIUS**

I could not stir him:  
 He said he was gentle, but unfortunate;  
 Dishonestly afflicted, but yet honest.

**ARVIRAGUS**

50 Thus did he answer me: yet said, hereafter  
 I might know more.

**BELARIUS**

To the field, to the field!  
 We'll leave you for this time: go in and rest.

**ARVIRAGUS**

We'll not be long away.

**IMOGEN**

I'm not that sick, although I'm not well. But I won't be like a  
 weak city person and act like I'm dying when I'm just sick.  
 Please, leave me alone. Do what you usually do all day.  
 There's nothing worse than breaking a routine. I am sick,  
 but you staying with me won't make me better. Company is  
 no help for someone who's antisocial. I'm not very sick,  
 since I can talk reasonably. Please, trust me to stay here. I  
 won't rob anyone except myself. Let me die and steal only  
from myself. 

 "Stealing so poorly" the phrase used in the original text implies that Imogen would not be stealing much from herself if she died since she owns nothing.

**GUIDERIUS**

I love you. I have already told you how much, and how  
 deeply: as much as I love my father.

**BELARIUS**

What? What did you say?

**ARVIRAGUS**

If it's a sin to say that, I'll sin too along with my brother. I  
 don't know why I love this young man. I have heard you say  
 that the reason for love is unreasonable. If a coffin were at  
 the door and we were told someone had to die, I'd say, "My  
 father, not this young man."

**BELARIUS**

*[To himself]* What a noble thing to say! They're so naturally  
 virtuous! And high-born! Cowards give birth to cowards and  
 low things give birth to low things. Nature is like grain: it  
 contains flour that you keep and bran you throw away. In  
 the same way, there are low and high people. I am not their  
 father. I have no idea who this person is they love more  
 than me. *[To the others]* It's nine in the morning.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Goodbye, brother.

**IMOGEN**

Have fun.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Get better. Let's go, sir.

**IMOGEN**

*[To herself]* These are kind people. I've been told such  
 terrible lies! Our courtiers say everyone who isn't at court is  
 a savage! But my experience shows this isn't true! The seas  
 contain monsters, but the fish that live in little rivers taste  
 just as good. I am still sick—sick with sadness. Pisanio, I'll  
 try your medicine.

*She swallows some.*

**GUIDERIUS**

I couldn't get him to tell me anything. He said he was a  
 noble, but in a bad situation. He was in trouble, but an  
 honest man.

**ARVIRAGUS**

He answered me in the same way. But he said I might learn  
 more later.

**BELARIUS**

Let's go, let's hunt! We'll leave you for now. Go inside and  
 rest.

**ARVIRAGUS**

We won't be away for long.

**BELARIUS**

55 Pray, be not sick,  
For you must be our housewife.

**IMOGEN**

Well or ill,  
I am bound to you.

**BELARIUS**

And shalt be ever.

60

*Exit IMOGEN, to the cave*

**BELARIUS**

This youth, how'er distress'd, appears he hath had  
Good ancestors.

**ARVIRAGUS**

How angel-like he sings!

**GUIDERIUS**

65 But his neat cookery! he cut our roots  
In characters,  
And sauced our broths, as Juno had been sick  
And he her dieter.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Nobly he yokes

70 A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh  
Was that it was, for not being such a smile;  
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly  
From so divine a temple, to commix  
With winds that sailors rail at.

**GUIDERIUS**

75 I do note  
That grief and patience, rooted in him both,  
Mingle their spurs together.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Grow, patience!

80 And let the stinking elder, grief, untwine  
His perishing root with the increasing vine!

**BELARIUS**

It is great morning. Come, away!--  
Who's there?

*Enter CLOTEN*

**CLOTEN**

I cannot find those runagates; that villain  
85 Hath mock'd me. I am faint.

**BELARIUS**

'Those runagates!'

Means he not us? I partly know him: 'tis  
Cloten, the son o' the queen. I fear some ambush.  
I saw him not these many years, and yet

90 I know 'tis he. We are held as outlaws: hence!

**GUIDERIUS**

He is but one: you and my brother search  
What companies are near: pray you, away;  
Let me alone with him.

*Exeunt BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS*

**BELARIUS**

Please, don't be sick. You have to be our housewife.

**IMOGEN**

Sick or healthy, we're in this together.

**BELARIUS**

And always will be.

*IMOGEN exits, to the cave.*

**BELARIUS**

This young man seems like he's in trouble, but like he's  
from a good family.

**ARVIRAGUS**

He sings like an angel!

**GUIDERIUS**

And his cooking! He cut our root vegetables into the shapes  
of letters, and made our soups taste so good that it was as  
though the goddess Juno were sick and he were in charge  
of feeding her.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Nobly, he smiles but sighs, as if the sigh was sighing  
because it wasn't a beautiful smile. The smile makes fun of  
the sigh, because it flies out from its holy home in that boy  
to mix with winds that sailors swear at.

**GUIDERIUS**

I did notice that he seemed to be feeling a combination of  
sadness and patience, as though those feelings were plants  
growing together.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I hope that patience grows! And that grief, a stinking tree,<sup>2</sup>  
separates its dying root from the growing vine of  
patience!

<sup>2</sup> An "elder," the tree referenced in the original text, had strong-smelling leaves. It was thought to be the tree upon which Judas hanged himself after betraying Jesus.

**BELARIUS**

It's midmorning. Come on, let's go—who's there?

*CLOTEN enters.*

**CLOTEN**

I can't find those runaways. That thug was lying to me. I feel  
faint.

**BELARIUS**

"Those runaways!" He must mean us! I sort of know him.

It's Cloten, the queen's son. I'm worried there are people  
here to ambush us. I haven't seen him for years, but I know  
it's him. We're outlaws. Let's go!

**GUIDERIUS**

There's only one of him. You and my brother should look to  
see if there are other people here. Go, please. Leave me  
alone with him.

*BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS exit.*

**CLOTEN**

95 Soft! What are you  
That fly me thus? some villain mountaineers?  
I have heard of such. What slave art thou?

**GUIDERIUS**

A thing  
More slavish did I ne'er than answering  
100 A slave without a knock.

**CLOTEN**

Thou art a robber,  
A law-breaker, a villain: yield thee, thief.

**GUIDERIUS**

To who? to thee? What art thou? Have not I  
An arm as big as thine? a heart as big?  
105 Thy words, I grant, are bigger, for I wear not  
My dagger in my mouth. Say what thou art,  
Why I should yield to thee?

**CLOTEN**

Thou villain base,  
Know'st me not by my clothes?

**GUIDERIUS**

110 No, nor thy tailor, rascal,  
Who is thy grandfather: he made those clothes,  
Which, as it seems, make thee.

**CLOTEN**

Thou precious varlet,  
My tailor made them not.

**GUIDERIUS**

115 Hence, then, and thank  
The man that gave them thee. Thou art some fool;  
I am loath to beat thee.

**CLOTEN**

Thou injurious thief,  
Hear but my name, and tremble.

**GUIDERIUS**

120 What's thy name?

**CLOTEN**

Cloten, thou villain.

**GUIDERIUS**

Cloten, thou double villain, be thy name,  
I cannot tremble at it: were it Toad, or  
Adder, Spider,  
125 'Twould move me sooner.

**CLOTEN**

To thy further fear,  
Nay, to thy mere confusion, thou shalt know  
I am son to the queen.

**GUIDERIUS**

I am sorry for 't; not seeming  
130 So worthy as thy birth.

**CLOTEN**

Art not afeard?

**GUIDERIUS**

Those that I reverence those I fear, the wise:  
At fools I laugh, not fear them.

**CLOTEN**

Wait! Who are you, running at me like that? Some  
mountain-climbing bandit? I have heard of those people.  
What kind of slave are you?

**GUIDERIUS**

I never did anything more slavish than what I'm doing right  
now: answering a slave without hitting him.

**CLOTEN**

You're a robber, a law-breaker, a thug. Surrender, thief.

**GUIDERIUS**

To who? To you? Who are you? Don't I have an arm as  
strong as yours? A heart that's just as good? Your words are  
stronger, but that's because I don't insult strangers. Tell me  
who you are. Why would I surrender to you?

**CLOTEN**

You low thug, don't you know who I am from my clothes?

**GUIDERIUS**

No, or from your tailor, you good-for-nothing, who I bet is  
your grandfather. He made your clothes, and it seems that  
your clothes make you who you are.

**CLOTEN**

You ridiculous criminal, my tailor didn't make them.

**GUIDERIUS**

Go away, then, and go thank the man who gave them to  
you. You're some fool. It would be wrong to beat you up.

**CLOTEN**

You insulting thief, hear my name and be afraid.

**GUIDERIUS**

What's your name?

**CLOTEN**

Cloten, you thug.

**GUIDERIUS**

Cloten, you double thug, if that's your name, fine, but I  
can't be afraid of it. If it were Toad, or Snake, or Spider, it  
would be more likely to scare me.

**CLOTEN**

To scare you more, to completely overwhelm you, I'll tell  
you I'm the queen's son.

**GUIDERIUS**

I'm sorry to hear it. You don't live up to your noble family.

**CLOTEN**

Aren't you afraid?

**GUIDERIUS**

I'm afraid of the people I respect, wise people. I laugh at  
fools—I'm not afraid of them.

**CLOTEN**

Die the death:

135 When I have slain thee with my proper hand,  
I'll follow those that even now fled hence,  
And on the gates of Lud's-town set your heads:  
Yield, rustic mountaineer.

*Exeunt, fighting*

*Re-enter BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS*

**BELARIUS**

No companies abroad?

**ARVIRAGUS**

140 None in the world: you did mistake him, sure.

**BELARIUS**

I cannot tell: long is it since I saw him,  
But time hath nothing blurr'd those lines of favour  
Which then he wore; the snatches in his voice,  
And burst of speaking, were as his: I am absolute  
145 'Twas very Cloten.

**ARVIRAGUS**

In this place we left them:  
I wish my brother make good time with him,  
You say he is so fell.

**BELARIUS**

Being scarce made up,  
150 I mean, to man, he had not apprehension  
Of roaring terrors; for the effect of judgment  
Is oft the cause of fear. But, see, thy brother.

*Re-enter GUIDERIUS, with CLOTEN'S head*

**GUIDERIUS**

This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse;  
There was no money in't: not Hercules  
155 Could have knock'd out his brains, for he had none:  
Yet I not doing this, the fool had borne  
My head as I do his.

**BELARIUS**

What hast thou done?

**GUIDERIUS**

I am perfect what: cut off one Cloten's head,  
160 Son to the queen, after his own report;  
Who call'd me traitor, mountaineer, and swore  
With his own single hand he'd take us in  
Displace our heads where--thank the gods!--they grow,  
And set them on Lud's-town.

**BELARIUS**

165 We are all undone.

**GUIDERIUS**

Why, worthy father, what have we to lose,  
But that he swore to take, our lives? The law  
Protects not us: then why should we be tender  
To let an arrogant piece of flesh threaten us,  
170 Play judge and executioner all himself,  
For we do fear the law? What company  
Discover you abroad?

**CLOTEN**

Die, then. When I have killed you with my own hand, I'll  
keep following those people who ran away just now, and I'll  
stick all of your heads on the gates of Lud-town. Surrender,  
you hillbilly.

*They exit, fighting.*

*BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS re-enter.*

**BELARIUS**

You didn't see any soldiers out there?

**ARVIRAGUS**

Not a single one. You must have gotten him confused with  
someone else.

**BELARIUS**

I can't tell. It's a long time since I saw him, but time hasn't  
made me forget what he looked like. The sound of his voice  
and the way he speaks in short bursts sounded like what he  
remembered. I'm absolutely sure it was Cloten himself.

**ARVIRAGUS**

We left them here. I hope my brother deals with him  
quickly, since you say he's so dangerous.

**BELARIUS**

When he was barely grown up, he wasn't afraid of the most  
horrible danger. Having good judgement is often what  
makes you afraid. There's your brother.

*GUIDERIUS re-enters, holding CLOTEN'S head.*

**GUIDERIUS**

This Cloten fellow was a fool, like an empty purse with no  
money in it. Even Hercules couldn't have knocked out his  
brains, because he didn't have any. But if I hadn't done this,  
the fool would have been carrying my head the way I'm  
carrying his.

**BELARIUS**

What did you do?

**GUIDERIUS**

I know exactly what I did: cut off some man Cloten's head, a  
son of the queen according to him. He called me a traitor, a  
mountain bandit, and promised that he himself would take  
our heads off the necks they grow on now (thank the gods!)  
and stick them on the gates of Lud's-town.

**BELARIUS**

We're done for.

**GUIDERIUS**

But father, what do we have to lose except what he  
promised he'd take, our lives? The law doesn't protect us,  
so why should we let an arrogant lump threaten us and play  
at being a judge and executioner all by himself, because  
we're afraid of the law? How many soldiers did you see  
around here?

**BELARIUS**

No single soul  
 Can we set eye on; but in all safe reason  
 175 He must have some attendants. Though his humour  
 Was nothing but mutation, ay, and that  
 From one bad thing to worse; not frenzy, not  
 Absolute madness could so far have raved  
 To bring him here alone; although perhaps  
 180 It may be heard at court that such as we  
 Cave here, hunt here, are outlaws, and in time  
 May make some stronger head; the which he hearing--  
 As it is like him--might break out, and swear  
 He'd fetch us in; yet is't not probable  
 185 To come alone, either he so undertaking,  
 Or they so suffering: then on good ground we fear,  
 If we do fear this body hath a tail  
 More perilous than the head.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Let ordinance  
 190 Come as the gods foresay it: howsoe'er,  
 My brother hath done well.

**BELARIUS**

I had no mind  
 To hunt this day: the boy Fidele's sickness  
 Did make my way long forth.

**GUIDERIUS**

195 With his own sword,  
 Which he did wave against my throat, I have ta'en  
 His head from him: I'll throw't into the creek  
 Behind our rock; and let it to the sea,  
 And tell the fishes he's the queen's son, Cloten:  
 200 That's all I reckon.

*Exit***BELARIUS**

I fear 'twill be revenged:  
 Would, Polydote, thou hadst not done't! though valour  
 Becomes thee well enough.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Would I had done't  
 205 So the revenge alone pursued me! Polydore,  
 I love thee brotherly, but envy much  
 Thou hast robb'd me of this deed: I would revenges,  
 That possible strength might meet, would seek us  
 through  
 210 And put us to our answer.

**BELARIUS**

Well, 'tis done:  
 We'll hunt no more to-day, nor seek for danger  
 Where there's no profit. I prithe, to our rock;  
 You and Fidele play the cooks: I'll stay  
 215 Till hasty Polydore return, and bring him  
 To dinner presently.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Poor sick Fidele!  
 I'll weringly to him: to gain his colour  
 I'd let a parish of such Clotens' blood,  
 220 And praise myself for charity.

*Exit***BELARIUS**

O thou goddess,  
 Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st  
 In these two princely boys! They are as gentle  
 As zephyrs blowing below the violet,  
 225 Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,

**BELARIUS**

We didn't see a single one, but we should assume he had attendants with him. Although he was unpredictable and went from one bad idea to another, it wasn't complete madness that brought him so far from court alone. Although maybe it was said at court that people like us who live in caves here and hunt here are outlaws and could band together to be stronger. He heard this and it's very likely that he stood up and promised he'd round us up. But it's not likely either that he would want to come alone or that they would let him. We should worry that he was the head of a company of dangerous soldiers.

 The terms "body," "tail," and "head" in the original text pun on Cloten's beheading and the potential army that he could be leading to recover the lost princes.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Let the future go the way the gods want it to. However it goes, my brother did the right thing.

**BELARIUS**

I didn't feel like hunting today. The boy Fidele's sickness was weighing on me all the way here.

**GUIDERIUS**

I took his head from him with his own sword, which he waved at my throat. I'll throw that sword into the stream behind our cave, and let it float to the sea and tell the fish he's the queen's son, Cloten. That's all I have to say.

*He exits.***BELARIUS**

I'm worried they'll get their revenge for this. I wish you hadn't done this, Polydore! Though your bravery is a credit to you.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I wish I had done it so I was the only one who would be punished! Polydore, I love you as a brother but I'm jealous because you robbed me of the opportunity to kill him. I hope they follow us looking for revenge so we can fight them.

**BELARIUS**

Well, it's done. We won't hunt any more today, or look for danger pointlessly. Please, let's go back to our cave. You and Fidele cook something. I'll stay here until reckless Polydore returns, and bring him home for dinner soon.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Poor sick Fidele! I'll hurry back to him. To make him look less pale I'd stab a whole parish full of fools like Cloten and be proud of my good deed.

*He exits.***BELARIUS**

Oh you goddess, holy Nature, you show yourself so clearly in these two princely boys! They are as gentle as breezes blowing around a violet without shaking it, but as rough when they get angry as the strongest wind that knocks a pine down from a mountain into a valley. It's amazing how

230 Their royal blood enchafed, as the rudest wind,  
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,  
And make him stoop to the vale. 'Tis wonder  
That an invisible instinct should frame them  
To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,  
Civility not seen from other, valour  
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop  
As if it had been sow'd. Yet still it's strange  
What Cloten's being here to us portends,  
235 Or what his death will bring us.

*Re-enter GUIDERIUS*

**GUIDERIUS**

Where's my brother?  
I have sent Cloten's clotpoll down the stream,  
In embassy to his mother: his body's hostage  
For his return.

*Solemn music*

**BELARIUS**

240 My ingenious instrument!  
Hark, Polydore, it sounds! But what occasion  
Hath Cadwal now to give it motion? Hark!

**GUIDERIUS**

Is he at home?

**BELARIUS**

He went hence even now.

**GUIDERIUS**

245 What does he mean? since death of my dear'st mother  
it did not speak before. All solemn things  
Should answer solemn accidents. The matter?  
Triumphs for nothing and lamenting toys  
Is jollity for apes and grief for boys.  
250 Is Cadwal mad?

**BELARIUS**

Look, here he comes,  
And brings the dire occasion in his arms  
Of what we blame him for.

*Re-enter ARVIRAGUS, with IMOGEN, as dead, bearing her in his arms*

**ARVIRAGUS**

255 The bird is dead  
That we have made so much on. I had rather  
Have skipp'd from sixteen years of age to sixty,  
To have turn'd my leaping-time into a crutch,  
Than have seen this.

**GUIDERIUS**

260 O sweetest, fairest lily!  
My brother wears thee not the one half so well  
As when thou grew'st thyself.

**BELARIUS**

O melancholy!  
Who ever yet could sound thy bottom? find  
265 The ooze, to show what coast thy sluggish crare  
Might easiliest harbour in? Thou blessed thing!  
Jove knows what man thou mightst have made; but I,  
Thou diedst, a most rare boy, of melancholy.  
How found you him?

**ARVIRAGUS**

270 Stark, as you see:  
Thus smiling, as some fly hid tickled slumber,  
Not as death's dart, being laugh'd at; his

by instinct they act like royalty, with honor that was never  
taught to them, politeness that is unmatched in anyone,  
and bravery that grows wild but grows as well as if it were  
deliberately planted. But I don't know what Cloten being  
here means for us, or what the consequences of his death  
will be.

*GUIDERIUS re-enters.*

**GUIDERIUS**

Where's my brother? I sent Cloten's head down the stream,  
with a message to his mother. His body stays here as a  
hostage to make sure he comes back.

*Sad music plays.*

**BELARIUS**

My instrument! Listen, Polydore, it's being played! But why  
has Cadwal brought it out? Listen!

**GUIDERIUS**

Is he at home?

**BELARIUS**

He just left here.

**GUIDERIUS**

What is he doing? It hasn't been played since my dear  
mother died. You should only seem to be sad because  
something sad has happened. What's going on? Celebrating  
over nothing and crying over nothing is happiness fit only  
for apes and sadness for boys. Is Cadwal crazy?

**BELARIUS**

Look, here he comes, and carries in his arm the sad thing  
we were saying he should be responding to.

*ARVIRAGUS re-enters, carrying IMOGEN, who seems dead,  
in his arms.*

**ARVIRAGUS**

The bird we were so fond of is dead. I would rather have  
skipped from sixteen years old to sixty, to give up my  
leaping time in my youth for a crutch, than see this.

**GUIDERIUS**

Oh, sweetest, most beautiful lily! Your brother isn't wearing  
you half as well on his arms as you wore yourself when you  
were alive.

**BELARIUS**

Oh, this is a bottomless sorrow! It's like a deep sea with no  
mud on the bottom to make you hope you were  
approaching a harbor with your slow sadness! You blessed  
thing! Jove knows what kind of man you would have  
become. But I know you died as a unique boy, of sadness.  
How did you find him?

**ARVIRAGUS**

Dead, as you see. Smiling like this, as though he had been  
tickled by a fly while sleeping, laughing as though death's  
arrow had not hit him, lying on his right side.

right cheek  
Reposing on a cushion.

**GUIDERIUS**

275 Where?

**ARVIRAGUS**

O' the floor;  
His arms thus leagued: I thought he slept, and put  
My clouted brogues from off my feet, whose rudeness  
Answer'd my steps too loud.

**GUIDERIUS**

280 Why, he but sleeps:  
If he be gone, he'll make his grave a bed;  
With female fairies will his tomb be haunted,  
And worms will not come to thee.

**ARVIRAGUS**

With fairest flowers  
285 Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,  
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack  
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor  
The azured harebell, like thy veins, no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,  
290 Out-sweeten'd not thy breath: the ruddock would,  
With charitable bill,--O bill, sore-shaming  
Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie  
Without a monument!--bring thee all this;  
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,  
295 To winter-ground thy corse.

**GUIDERIUS**

Prithee, have done;  
And do not play in wench-like words with that  
Which is so serious. Let us bury him,  
And not protract with admiration what  
300 Is now due debt. To the grave!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Say, where shall's lay him?

**GUIDERIUS**

By good Euriphile, our mother.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Be't so:  
And let us, Polydore, though now our voices  
305 Have got the mannish crack, sing him to the ground,  
As once our mother; use like note and words,  
Save that Euriphile must be Fidele.

**GUIDERIUS**

Cadwal,  
I cannot sing: I'll weep, and word it with thee;  
310 For notes of sorrow out of tune are worse  
Than priests and fanes that lie.

**ARVIRAGUS**

We'll speak it, then.

**BELARIUS**

Great griefs, I see, medicine the less; for Cloten  
Is quite forgot. He was a queen's son, boys;  
315 And though he came our enemy, remember  
He was paid for that: though mean and  
mighty, rotting  
Together, have one dust, yet reverence,  
That angel of the world, doth make distinction  
320 Of place 'tween high and low. Our foe was princely  
And though you took his life, as being our foe,  
Yet bury him as a prince.

**GUIDERIUS**

Where?

**ARVIRAGUS**

On the floor, with his arms together like this. I thought he  
was sleeping, and took my heavy shoes off my feet because  
they made my steps too loud.

**GUIDERIUS**

He's only sleeping. If he's gone, we'll make his grave a bed.  
May only female fairies haunt his tomb, so that worms  
won't come.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I'll decorate your sad grave with the most beautiful flowers  
while it's still summer and I still live here, Fidele. You'll have  
the flower that's like your face, pale primrose, and the  
harebell as blue as your veins, and the eglantine, which it's  
no slander to say is not sweeter than your breath was. A  
robin would kindly bring you all these flowers in his bill,  
making those heirs who inherit a lot of money and don't  
build a tomb for their fathers ashamed! Yes, and soft moss  
too, when their are no flowers, to make your body ready for  
winter.

**GUIDERIUS**

Please, stop talking, and don't play around with girlish  
words about something so serious. Let's bury him, and not  
keep being amazed about something that's over and done  
with. To the grave!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Where will we bury him?

**GUIDERIUS**

Next to our mother, good Euriphile.

**ARVIRAGUS**

All right. And let us, Polydore, even though our voices have  
changed, sing goodbye to him as we did with our mother.  
Let's use the same tune and words, substituting Fidele for  
Euriphile.

**GUIDERIUS**

Cadwal, I can't sing. I'll cry and talk with you. But sad songs  
out of tune are worse than lying priests and temples.

**ARVIRAGUS**

We'll say it then.

**BELARIUS**

I see that a greater sadness makes you forget a lesser one,  
because Cloten has been completely forgotten. He was a  
queen's son, boys. And although he came as our enemy,  
remember that he paid for that. Although high and low  
people rot into the same dust, still, respect for higher  
classes distinguishes high and low people while they are  
alive. Our enemy was a prince and although you took his  
life because he was your enemy, you should bury him in a  
way fitting for a prince.

**GUIDERIUS**

Pray You, fetch him hither.  
Thersites' body is as good as Ajax',  
325 When neither are alive.

**ARVIRAGUS**

If you'll go fetch him,  
We'll say our song the whilst. Brother, begin.

*Exit BELARIUS*

**GUIDERIUS**

330 Nay, Cadwal, we must lay his head to the east;  
My father hath a reason for't.

**ARVIRAGUS**

'Tis true.

**GUIDERIUS**

Come on then, and remove him.

**ARVIRAGUS**

So. Begin.

*SONG*

**GUIDERIUS**

335 Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious winter's rages;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
340 As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Fear no more the frown o' the great;  
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;  
Care no more to clothe and eat;  
To thee the reed is as the oak:  
345 The sceptre, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

**GUIDERIUS**

Fear no more the lightning flash,

**ARVIRAGUS**

Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;

**GUIDERIUS**

Fear not slander, censure rash;

**ARVIRAGUS**

350 Thou hast finish'd joy and moan:

**ARVIRAGUS**

All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

**GUIDERIUS**

No exorciser harm thee!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Nor no witchcraft charm thee!

**GUIDERIUS**

355 Ghost unlaid forbear thee!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Nothing ill come near thee!

**GUIDERIUS**

Please, fetch him. Thersites's body is as good as Ajax's  
when they're both dead. 

 Two characters in the Trojan wars. Ajax was a famous hero, Thersites a lower-class comic character.

**ARVIRAGUS**

If you go fetch him, we'll say our song while you're gone.  
Brother, you begin.

*BELARIUS exits.*

**GUIDERIUS**

No, Cadwal, his head has to point east. My father has some  
reason for that.

**ARVIRAGUS**

It's true.

**GUIDERIUS**

Come on then, move him.

**ARVIRAGUS**

All right. Begin.

*SONG*

**GUIDERIUS**

Don't fear the heat of the sun anymore  
Or the furious rage of winter  
You have finished your work in this world  
And have gone home and collected your pay.  
Golden boys and girls all must,  
Like dandelions, turn into dust.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Don't fear the anger of important people any more,  
You are safe from a tyrant's punishment.  
Don't worry anymore about finding clothes and food.  
Now sticks are the same thing as oak trees to you.  
Kings' power, knowledge, and medicine must  
All turn to dust in the same way.

**GUIDERIUS**

Don't be afraid of lightning bolts.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Or the thunder that everyone is afraid of.

**GUIDERIUS**

Don't be afraid of slander or thoughtless criticism.

**ARVIRAGUS**

You're through with joy and sighing.

**ARVIRAGUS**

All young lovers, all lovers must  
Turn themselves in to you, and turn to dust.

**GUIDERIUS**

May no exorcist harm you!

**ARVIRAGUS**

And no witchcraft cast a spell on you!

**GUIDERIUS**

May restless ghosts leave you alone!

**ARVIRAGUS**

May nothing evil come near you!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Quiet consummation have;  
And renowned be thy grave!

*Re-enter BELARIUS, with the body of CLOTEN*

**GUIDERIUS**

360 We have done our obsequies: come, lay him down.

**BELARIUS**

Here's a few flowers; but 'bout midnight, more:  
The herbs that have on them cold dew o' the night  
Are strewings fitt'st for graves. Upon their faces.  
You were as flowers, now wither'd: even so  
365 These herblets shall, which we upon you strew.  
Come on, away: apart upon our knees.  
The ground that gave them first has them again:  
Their pleasures here are past, so is their pain.

*Exeunt BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS*

**IMOGEN**

[Awaking] Yes, sir, to Milford-Haven; which is  
370 the way?--  
I thank you.--By yond bush?--Pray, how far thither?  
'Ods pittikins! can it be six mile yet?--  
I have gone all night. 'Faith, I'll lie down and sleep.  
But, soft! no bedfellow!--O gods and goddesses!

*Seeing the body of CLOTEN*

375 These flowers are like the pleasures of the world;  
This bloody man, the care on't. I hope I dream;  
For so I thought I was a cave-keeper,  
And cook to honest creatures: but 'tis not so;  
'Twas but a bolt of nothing, shot at nothing,  
380 Which the brain makes of fumes: our very eyes  
Are sometimes like our judgments, blind. Good faith,  
I tremble stiff with fear: but if there be  
Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity  
As a wren's eye, fear'd gods, a part of it!  
385 The dream's here still: even when I wake, it is  
Without me, as within me; not imagined, felt.  
A headless man! The garments of Posthumus!  
I know the shape of's leg: this is his hand;  
His foot Mercurial; his Martial thigh;  
390 The brawns of Hercules; but his Jovial face  
Murder in heaven?--How!--'Tis gone. Pisanio,  
All curses madd'd Hecuba gave the Greeks,  
And mine to boot, be darted on thee! Thou,  
Conspired with that irregular devil, Cloten,  
395 Hast here cut off my lord. To write and read  
Be henceforth treacherous! Damn'd Pisanio  
Hath with his forged letters,--damn'd Pisanio--  
From this most bravest vessel of the world  
Struck the main-top! O Posthumus! alas,  
400 Where is thy head? where's that? Ay me!  
where's that?  
Pisanio might have kill'd thee at the heart,  
And left this head on. How should this be? Pisanio?  
'Tis he and Cloten: malice and lucre in them  
405 Have laid this woe here. O, 'tis pregnant, pregnant!  
The drug he gave me, which he said was precious  
And cordial to me, have I not found it  
Murderous to the senses? That confirms it home:  
This is Pisanio's deed, and Cloten's: O!  
410 Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood,  
That we the horrider may seem to those  
Which chance to find us: O, my lord, my lord!

*Falls on the body*

*Enter LUCIUS, a Captain and other Officers, and a Soothsayer*

**ARVIRAGUS**

Enjoy a quiet death,  
And may your grave be famous!

*BELARIUS re-enters, carrying CLOTEN's body.*

**GUIDERIUS**

We have finished our ceremony. Come on, set him down.

**BELARIUS**

Here are a few flowers. We'll pick more around midnight.  
Plants that have cold nighttime dew on them are the most  
appropriate decorations for graves. Put them on their faces.  
You used to be like flowers, and have wilted. These plants  
we are scattering on you will too. Come on, let's go. Let's  
pray elsewhere. The earth that they came from now holds  
them again. Their joys here are past, and so is their pain.

*BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS exit.*

**IMOGEN**

[Waking up] Yes, sir, how do I get to Milford-Haven?—Thank  
you.—Past that bush?—How far away is it?—God, can it be  
another six miles?—I've walked all night. I'll lie down and  
sleep. But wait! Not with anyone!—Oh gods and goddesses!

*She sees CLOTEN's body.*

These flowers are like the pleasures of this world, and this  
bloody man is like the sadness in it. I hope I'm dreaming. I  
thought I lived in a cave, and was a cook for honest men.  
But that's not true. It was a lightning bolt that came from  
nowhere and hit nothing, invented by my brain. People's  
eyes are sometimes as bad as their judgement. Goodness,  
I'm still trembling with fear. But if there is still left in heaven  
a drop of pity as small as a bird's eye, please give me a part  
of it, gods! The dream's still here. Even when I wake up, it's  
outside me as well as inside. I can feel it, not just imagine it.  
A headless man! Posthumus's clothes! I recognize the shape  
of his leg. This is his hand. His foot like Mercury's <sup>5</sup>. His  
thigh like Mars's <sup>6</sup>. His muscles like Hercules's <sup>7</sup>. But his  
Jove-like face—oh gods!—how could this be—it's gone.  
Pisanio, may all the curses Hecuba <sup>8</sup> threw at the Greeks,  
added to mine, be thrown at you! You plotted with that  
strange devil, Cloten, to kill my lord in this way. May writing  
and reading be considered treason from now on! Damned  
Pisanio with his fake letters - damned Pisanio - knocked the  
main mast off the best ship in the world! Oh Posthumus!  
Where is your head? Where is it? Where is it? Pisanio could  
have stabbed you in the heart and left your head on. How  
could this happen? Pisanio? It's him and Cloten.  
Resentment and the desire for money made them do this.  
Oh, I see how it went! <sup>9</sup> The drug he gave me, which he  
said was effective and would make me feel better—didn't it  
knock me out? That confirms it. Pisanio did this, and  
Cloten! Oh! I'll put your blood on my pale cheek so that we  
seem more frightening to anyone who happens to see us.  
Oh, my husband, my husband!

*She falls on the body.*

*LUCIUS, a Captain and other Officers, and a SOOTHSAYER  
enter.*

<sup>5</sup> The messenger of the gods, so his feet are fast.

<sup>6</sup> The god of war, so strong and attractive.

<sup>7</sup> A very strong hero.

<sup>8</sup> They invaded her city of Troy and killed her family.

<sup>9</sup> The term "pregnant" in the original text can also mean "full of meaning" as Imogen implies here.

**CAPTAIN**

To them the legions garrison'd in Gallia,  
After your will, have cross'd the sea, attending  
415 You here at Milford-Haven with your ships:  
They are in readiness.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

But what from Rome?

**CAPTAIN**

The senate hath stirr'd up the confiners  
And gentlemen of Italy, most willing spirits,  
420 That promise noble service: and they come  
Under the conduct of bold Iachimo,  
Syenna's brother.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

When expect you them?

**CAPTAIN**

With the next benefit o' the wind.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

This forwardness  
Makes our hopes fair. Command our present numbers  
Be muster'd; bid the captains look to't. Now, sir,  
425 What have you dream'd of late of this war's purpose?

**SOOTHSAYER**

Last night the very gods show'd me a vision--  
430 I fast and pray'd for their intelligence--thus:  
I saw Jove's bird, the Roman eagle, wing'd  
From the spongy south to this part of the west,  
There vanish'd in the sunbeams: which portends--  
Unless my sins abuse my divination--  
435 Success to the Roman host.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Dream often so,  
And never false. Soft, ho! what trunk is here  
Without his top? The ruin speaks that sometime  
It was a worthy building. How! a page!  
440 Or dead, or sleeping on him? But dead rather;  
For nature doth abhor to make his bed  
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead.  
Let's see the boy's face.

**CAPTAIN**

He's alive, my lord.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

He'll then instruct us of this body. Young one,  
Inform us of thy fortunes, for it seems  
They crave to be demanded. Who is this  
Thou makest thy bloody pillow? Or who was he  
That, otherwise than noble nature did,  
450 Hath alter'd that good picture? What's thy interest  
In this sad wreck? How came it? Who is it?  
What art thou?

**IMOGEN**

I am nothing: or if not,  
Nothing to be were better. This was my master,  
455 A very valiant Briton and a good,  
That here by mountaineers lies slain. Alas!  
There is no more such masters: I may wander  
From east to occident, cry out for service,  
Try many, all good, serve truly, never  
460 Find such another master.

**CAPTAIN**

The troops stationed in Gallia, as you asked, crossed the sea  
to meet you here in Milford-Haven with your ships. They're  
ready.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

But what have you heard from Rome?

**CAPTAIN**

The senate encouraged those remaining at home and the  
noblemen of Italy, willing fighters who will serve well. They  
are coming under the leadership of brave Iachimo, the Duke  
of Siena's brother.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

When do you expect them to get here?

**CAPTAIN**

When the next wind blows this way.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

They're early, which is a good sign for us. Muster our troops.  
Ask the captains to do that.  
*[To the SOOTHSAYER]* Now, sir, what have you dreamed  
about the outcome of this war?

**SOOTHSAYER**

Last night the gods themselves showed me a vision. I had  
fasted and prayed for news from them. I saw Jove's bird,  
the Roman eagle, fly from the marshy south to this part of  
the west and vanish into the sun. This means, unless my  
sins make me interpret this wrong, that the Roman army  
will win.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

May you often dream that, and never be wrong about it.  
Wait! Whose body is here without a head? What's left of this  
ruined building seems to show that it was once noble. A  
page boy! Dead or sleeping? Dead probably, because it isn't  
natural to sleep next to or on dead people. Let's see the  
boy's face.

**CAPTAIN**

He's alive, sir.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Then he'll tell us about this body. Young one, tell us what  
happened to you, because it's impossible not to ask. Who is  
this you're using as a bloody pillow? Or who was it who did  
this to him so unnaturally? What do you have to do with this  
tragedy? How did it happen? Who is it? Who are you?

**IMOGEN**

I'm no one, or if not, I wish I were. This was my master, a  
very brave and good British man, killed by mountain  
bandits. There are no more masters like this one. I could  
wander from east to west, calling out I wanted to serve  
someone, try many masters, all good, serve them well, and  
never find another master like this one.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

'Lack, good youth!  
Thou movest no less with thy complaining than  
Thy master in bleeding; say his name, good friend.

**IMOGEN**

Richard du Champ.

465

*Aside*

If I do lie and do  
No harm by it, though the gods hear, I hope  
They'll pardon it.--Say you, sir?

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

470 Thy name?

**IMOGEN**

Fidele, sir.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Thou dost approve thyself the very same:  
Thy name well fits thy faith, thy faith thy name.  
Wilt take thy chance with me? I will not say  
475 Thou shalt be so well master'd, but, be sure,  
No less beloved. The Roman emperor's letters,  
Sent by a consul to me, should not sooner  
Than thine own worth prefer thee: go with me.

**IMOGEN**

I'll follow, sir. But first, an't please the gods,  
480 I'll hide my master from the flies, as deep  
As these poor pickaxes can dig; and when  
With wild wood-leaves and weeds I ha' strew'd his  
grave,  
And on it said a century of prayers,  
485 Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep and sigh;  
And leaving so his service, follow you,  
So please you entertain me.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Ay, good youth!  
And rather father thee than master thee.  
490 My friends,  
The boy hath taught us manly duties: let us  
Find out the prettiest daisied plot we can,  
And make him with our pikes and partisans  
A grave: come, arm him. Boy, he is preferr'd  
495 By thee to us, and he shall be interr'd  
As soldiers can. Be cheerful; wipe thine eyes  
Some falls are means the happier to arise.

*Exeunt*

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Poor young man! You're making me as sad by complaining  
as your master is by bleeding. Tell me his name, good  
friend.

**IMOGEN**

Richard du Champ.

*She speaks to herself.*

If I lie and don't hurt anyone by doing it, even though the  
gods hear, I hope they'll forgive me. What did you say, sir?

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

What's your name?

**IMOGEN**

Fidele, sir.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

You show yourself to be exactly what that name means:  
faithful. Your name fits your faithfulness well, your  
faithfulness fits your name. Will you take your chances with  
me? I won't say I'll be as good a master, but be sure I won't  
love you any less than he did. Even if the Roman emperor  
sent a consul to me with a letter praising you, it wouldn't  
make me value you any more than your own virtue does.  
Come with me.

**IMOGEN**

I'll follow you, sir. But first, if it's all right with the gods, I'll  
hide my master from the flies, as deep as I can dig with my  
hands. And when I have covered his grave with wild leaves  
and plants I'll say a hundred prayers over it, the ones I  
know, twice, and cry and sigh. And leaving his employment  
in that way, I'll follow you if you would like to employ me.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Good young man! I wish I were your father instead of your  
master. My friends, the boy has shown us how to be a man.  
Let's find the prettiest patch of daisies we can and dig him a  
grave with our spears and poles. Come on, give him a  
weapon. Boy, you've given him a good recommendation  
and he will be buried as well as soldiers can manage. Cheer  
up. Wipe your eyes. Some misfortunes lead to situations  
that make you happier.

*They exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter CYMBELINE, Lords, PISANIO, and Attendants*

**CYMBELINE**

Again; and bring me word how 'tis with her.

*Exit an Attendant*

**CYMBELINE**

A fever with the absence of her son,  
A madness, of which her life's in danger. Heavens,

5

### Shakesclare Translation

*CYMBELINE, Lords, PISANIO, and Attendants enter.*

**CYMBELINE**

Go back, and report to me how she's feeling.

*An Attendant exits.*

**CYMBELINE**

She got feverish after her son disappeared, went crazy, and  
might die. Gods, you're so cruel to me all at once! Imogen,

How deeply you at once do touch me! Imogen,  
The great part of my comfort, gone; my queen  
Upon a desperate bed, and in a time  
When fearful wars point at me; her son gone,  
So needful for this present: it strikes me, past  
10 The hope of comfort. But for thee, fellow,  
Who needs must know of her departure and  
Dost seem so ignorant, we'll enforce it from thee  
By a sharp torture.

**PISANIO**

Sir, my life is yours;  
15 I humbly set it at your will; but, for my mistress,  
I nothing know where she remains, why gone,  
Nor when she purposes return. Beseech your highness,  
Hold me your loyal servant.

**FIRST LORD**

Good my liege,  
20 The day that she was missing he was here:  
I dare be bound he's true and shall perform  
All parts of his subjection loyally. For Cloten,  
There wants no diligence in seeking him,  
And will, no doubt, be found.

**CYMBELINE**

25 The time is troublesome.

*To PISANIO*

We'll slip you for a season; but our jealousy  
Does yet depend.

**FIRST LORD**

30 So please your majesty,  
The Roman legions, all from Gallia drawn,  
Are landed on your coast, with a supply  
Of Roman gentlemen, by the senate sent.

**CYMBELINE**

Now for the counsel of my son and queen!  
35 I am amazed with matter.

**FIRST LORD**

Good my liege,  
Your preparation can affront no less  
Than what you hear of: come more, for more  
you're ready:  
40 The want is but to put those powers in motion  
That long to move.

**CYMBELINE**

I thank you. Let's withdraw;  
And meet the time as it seeks us. We fear not  
What can from Italy annoy us; but  
45 We grieve at chances here. Away!

*Exeunt all but PISANIO*

**PISANIO**

I heard no letter from my master since  
I wrote him Imogen was slain: 'tis strange:  
Nor hear I from my mistress who did promise  
To yield me often tidings: neither know I  
50 What is betid to Cloten; but remain  
Perplex'd in all. The heavens still must work.  
Wherein I am false I am honest; not true, to be true.  
These present wars shall find I love my country,  
Even to the note o' the king, or I'll fall in them.  
55 All other doubts, by time let them be clear'd:  
Fortune brings in some boats that are not steer'd.

*Exit*

my main source of comfort, is gone. My queen is sick in bed,  
and I'm about to go to war. Her son is necessary for that,  
but he's gone. I don't have any hope left. You, you must  
know something about where she went even though you're  
acting ignorant. We'll get it out of you by some horrible  
torture.

**PISANIO**

Sir, my life belongs to you. You can do whatever you want  
with it. But as for my mistress, I don't know where she is,  
why she left, or when she plans to come back. Please, your  
highness, believe I'm a loyal servant to you.

**FIRST LORD**

Your highness, he was here the day she went missing. I  
promise he's honest and will do his duty loyally. As for  
Cloten, we're doing everything we can to find him and I'm  
sure we will.

**CYMBELINE**

This is a hard time.

*To PISANIO*

I'll let you go for now, but you're not necessarily getting out  
of being punished.

**FIRST LORD**

Your majesty, the Roman legions have left Gallia and landed  
on your coast, along with some Roman nobles sent by the  
senate.

**CYMBELINE**

I wish my son and queen were here to advise me! I don't  
know what to do.

**FIRST LORD**

Your highness, you were prepared for this many troops. If  
more arrive, you're ready for them too. You only have to  
give your waiting troops their marching orders.

**CYMBELINE**

Thank you. Let's leave, and do what we need to. I'm not  
afraid of how Italy can annoy us. But I'm sad about what's  
happened here. Let's go!

*All exit except PISANIO.*

**PISANIO**

I haven't heard anything from my master since I wrote to  
him that Imogen was killed. It's strange. I haven't heard  
from my mistress either, even though she promised to write  
to me often. Nor do I know what happened to Cloten. I'm  
puzzled about everything. The gods have to work this out.  
By lying I'm being honest. In this coming war I will show I  
love my country as much as the king does, or I'll die in it.  
Let time answer any other questions. Luck sometimes  
brings boats safely to shore that don't have anyone steering  
them.

*He exits.*

## Act 4, Scene 4

## Shakespeare

*Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS.*

**GUIDERIUS**

The noise is round about us.

**BELARIUS**

Let us from it.

**ARVIRAGUS**

What pleasure, sir, find we in life, to lock it  
From action and adventure?

**GUIDERIUS**

5 Nay, what hope  
Have we in hiding us? This way, the Romans  
Must or for Britons slay us, or receive us  
For barbarous and unnatural revolts  
During their use, and slay us after.

**BELARIUS**

10 Sons,  
We'll higher to the mountains; there secure us.  
To the king's party there's no going: newness  
Of Cloten's death--we being not known, not muster'd  
Among the bands--may drive us to a render  
15 Where we have lived, and so extort from's that  
Which we have done, whose answer would be death  
Drawn on with torture.

**GUIDERIUS**

This is, sir, a doubt  
In such a time nothing becoming you,  
20 Nor satisfying us.

**ARVIRAGUS**

It is not likely  
That when they hear the Roman horses neigh,  
Behold their quarter'd fires, have both their eyes  
And ears so cloy'd importantly as now,  
25 That they will waste their time upon our note,  
To know from whence we are.

**BELARIUS**

O, I am known  
Of many in the army: many years,  
Though Cloten then but young, you see, not wore him  
30 From my remembrance. And, besides, the king  
Hath not deserved my service nor your loves;  
Who find in my exile the want of breeding,  
The certainty of this hard life; aye hopeless  
To have the courtesy your cradle promised,  
35 But to be still hot summer's tamings and  
The shrinking slaves of winter.

**GUIDERIUS**

Than be so  
Better to cease to be. Pray, sir, to the army:  
I and my brother are not known; yourself  
40 So out of thought, and thereto so o'ergrown,  
Cannot be question'd.

**ARVIRAGUS**

By this sun that shines,  
I'll thither: what thing is it that I never  
Did see man die! scarce ever look'd on blood,  
45 But that of coward hares, hot goats, and venison!  
Never bestrid a horse, save one that had

## Shakescleare Translation

*BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS enter.*

**GUIDERIUS**

There's noise all around us.

**BELARIUS**

Let's run from it.

**ARVIRAGUS**

What is the point of a life safe from fighting and  
adventures?

**GUIDERIUS**

And what hope do we have in being able to hide? This way,  
either the Romans will kill us for being Britons, or use us to  
start a violent rebellion and kill us afterwards.

**BELARIUS**

Sons, let's go higher up the mountains and find a safe place  
there. We can't join the king's side. Cloten's recent death  
and us not being known by anyone in the army may force  
us to reveal where we used to live and what we did. The  
result would be that we would be tortured to death.

**GUIDERIUS**

That's a dishonorable fear for you to have, and we don't  
agree.

**ARVIRAGUS**

It isn't likely that when they can hear the Roman horses  
neighing, see their campfires, and have so many important  
things to look at and listen to, that they will waste time  
wondering where we came from.

**BELARIUS**

Oh, many people in the army know me. After many years,  
although Cloten was very young then, you see, I could still  
recognize him. And besides, the king hasn't deserved my  
help or for you to love him. By exiling me he forced you to  
be badly raised and to live this hard life. You can't have the  
noble training you should have by birth, but instead have to  
work in the heat of summer and the cold of winter.

**GUIDERIUS**

It would be better to die than to live like that. Please sir,  
let's go to the army. No one knows me and my brother.  
They've forgotten you so completely that no one will  
question you.

**ARVIRAGUS**

By the sun, I'm going. How is it that I have never seen a man  
die? I've hardly seen blood, except of cowardly hares, lustful  
goats, and deer! I've never ridden a horse, except one that  
was used to a rider like me who has never worn a spur!  I  
am ashamed to look at the holy sun, to be given the gift of

 A "rowel" is a part of a spur,  
attached to the sharp part made of  
"iron".

A rider like myself, who ne'er wore rowel  
Nor iron on his heel! I am ashamed  
To look upon the holy sun, to have  
50 The benefit of his blest beams, remaining  
So long a poor unknown.

**GUIDERIUS**

By heavens, I'll go:  
If you will bless me, sir, and give me leave,  
I'll take the better care, but if you will not,  
55 The hazard therefore due fall on me by  
The hands of Romans!

**ARVIRAGUS**

So say I amen.

**BELARIUS**

No reason I, since of your lives you set  
So slight a valuation, should reserve  
60 My crack'd one to more care. Have with you, boys!  
If in your country wars you chance to die,  
That is my bed too, lads, an there I'll lie:  
Lead, lead.

*Aside*

The time seems long; their blood  
65 thinks scorn,  
Till it fly out and show them princes born.

*Exeunt*

its blessed beams, while remaining unknown and poor for  
so long. 

 A "rowel" is a part of a spur, attached to the sharp part made of "iron".

**GUIDERIUS**

I'll go, by the gods. If you give me your blessing and  
permission, sir, I'll be better off, but if you don't want to, I'll  
take my chances fighting the Romans!

**ARVIRAGUS**

I say the same thing.

**BELARIUS**

There's no reason for me, since you care so little about your  
lives, to take care of my old one. Let's go, boys! If you  
happen to die in your country's war, then I will too. Lead on.

*To himself.*

They're impatient. Their noble blood will now reveal itself  
proving them to be princes.

*They exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter POSTHUMUS, with a bloody handkerchief*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Yea, bloody cloth, I'll keep thee, for I wish'd  
Thou shouldst be colour'd thus. You married ones,  
If each of you should take this course, how many  
Must murder wives much better than themselves  
5 For 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 lived to put on this: so had you saved  
10 The noble Imogen to repent, and struck  
Me, wretch more worth your vengeance. But, alack,  
You snatch some hence for little faults; that's love,  
To have them fall no more: you some permit  
To second ills with ills, each elder worse,  
15 And make them dread it, to the doers' 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  
20 That, Britain, I have kill'd thy mistress; peace!  
I'll give no wound to thee. Therefore, good heavens,  
Hear patiently my purpose: I'll disrobe me  
Of these Italian weeds and suit myself  
As does a Briton peasant: so I'll fight  
25 Against the part I come with; so I'll die  
For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life  
Is every breath a death; and thus, unknown,  
Pitied nor hated, to the face of peril  
Myself I'll dedicate. Let me make men know  
30 More valour in me than my habits show.  
Gods, put the strength o' the Leonati in me!

### Shakescleare Translation

*POSTHUMUS enters holding a bloody handkerchief.*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Yes, bloody cloth, I'll keep you, because I wanted you to be  
this color. You who are married, if all of you did this, so  
many of you would murder wives who are much better than  
you just for straying a bit! Oh Pisanio! Good servants don't  
obey every order. Their duty is just to obey the moral ones.  
Gods, if you had taken revenge on me for my sins, I would  
never have lived long enough to do this and you would have  
given the noble Imogen a chance to repent and punished  
me, who deserve it more. But sadly you kill some of us for  
small sins. That shows your love for those people, because  
you keep them from sinning worse. Some you allow to do  
evil after evil, each one worse, so that they are afraid of  
your revenge but can only be punished once. But Imogen is  
with you now. Do what you want, and bless me for obeying  
you! I am brought here along with the Italian nobles, to  
fight against my wife's country. It's enough that I've killed  
your ruler, Britain. Let's be at peace! I won't attack you. So,  
gods, listen to what I mean to do: I'll take off these Italian  
clothes and dress like a British peasant. So I'll fight against  
the army I came with. And that way I'll die for you, oh  
Imogen, since I already feel like I'm dying for you with every  
breath I take. And so, unknown, neither pitied nor hated, I'll  
face danger. Let me show more bravery in this than I usually  
do. Gods, give me the strength of a Leonatus! To make the  
world feel ashamed, I'll turn the usual fashion around by  
making myself seem less noble on the outside and more on  
the inside.

To shame the guise o' the world, I will begin  
The fashion, less without and more within.

Exit

He exits.

## Act 5, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter, from one side, LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and the Roman Army: from the other side, the British Army; POSTHUMUS LEONATUS following, like a poor soldier. They march over and go out. Then enter again, in skirmish, IACHIMO and POSTHUMUS LEONATUS he vanquisheth and disarmeth IACHIMO, and then leaves him*

#### IACHIMO

The heaviness and guilt within my bosom  
Takes off my manhood: I have belied a lady,  
The princess of this country, and the air on't  
Revengefully enfeebles me; or could this carl,  
5 A very drudge of nature's, have subdued me  
In my profession? Knighthoods and honours, borne  
As I wear mine, are titles but of scorn.  
If that thy gentry, Britain, go before  
This lout as he exceeds our lords, the odds  
10 Is that we scarce are men and you are gods.

Exit

*The battle continues; the Britons fly; CYMBELINE is taken: then enter, to his rescue, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS*

#### BELARIUS

Stand, stand! We have the advantage of the ground;  
The lane is guarded: nothing routs us but  
The villany of our fears.

#### ARVIRAGUS

Stand, stand, and fight!

*Re-enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and seconds the Britons: they rescue CYMBELINE, and exeunt. Then re-enter LUCIUS, and IACHIMO, with IMOGEN*

#### CAIUS LUCIUS

Away, boy, from the troops, and save thyself;  
For friends kill friends, and the disorder's such  
As war were hoodwink'd.

#### IACHIMO

'Tis their fresh supplies.

#### CAIUS LUCIUS

20 It is a day turn'd strangely: or betimes  
Let's reinforce, or fly.

Exeunt

### Shakescleare Translation

*LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and the Roman Army enter on one side. On the other, the British Army, including POSTHUMUS LEONATUS dressed like a poor soldier. They both march over the stage and exit. POSTHUMUS LEONATUS enters, fighting IACHIMO. He wins and disarms IACHIMO, then exits.*

#### IACHIMO

The sadness and guilt in my heart make me less of a man. I lied about a woman, the princess of this country, and the country's air in revenge makes me weak, or how else could this peasant, this manual laborer, be better at my job than I am? Knighthoods and honors like the ones I have are worth nothing except as insults to me. If your nobles, Britain, surpass this oaf in fighting even as he surpasses our own nobles, it would seem that we're barely men and you're gods.

He exits.

*The battle continues. The Britons runs away. CYMBELINE is captured. BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS enter to rescue him.*

#### BELARIUS

Stand your ground! We have the advantage in this place. They can't sneak up on us in this alley. Nothing is making us run away except that we are afraid.

#### ARVIRAGUS

Stand your grounds and fight!

*POSTHUMUS LEONATUS re-enters and stands with the Britons. They rescue CYMBELINE and exit. Then LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and IMOGEN re-enter.*

#### CAIUS LUCIUS

Run, boy, away from the army and save yourself. Friends are killing friends and it's as much of a mess as if we were all blindfolded.

#### IACHIMO

It's because they just got fresh troops.

#### CAIUS LUCIUS

The day went unexpectedly. Let's reinforce the troops soon or run away.

They exit.

## Act 5, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and a British Lord*

### Shakescleare Translation

*POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and a British Lord enter.*

**LORD**

Camest thou from where they made the stand?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I did.  
Though you, it seems, come from the fliers.

**LORD**

I did.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

5 No blame be to you, sir; for all was lost,  
But that the heavens fought: the king himself  
Of his wings destitute, the army broken,  
And but the backs of Britons seen, all flying  
Through a straight lane; the enemy full-hearted,  
10 Lolling the tongue with slaughtering, having work  
More plentiful than tools to do't, struck down  
Some mortally, some slightly touch'd, some falling  
Merely through fear; that the straight pass was damm'd  
With dead men hurt behind, and cowards living  
15 To die with lengthen'd shame.

**LORD**

Where was this lane?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Close by the battle, ditch'd, and wall'd with turf;  
Which gave advantage to an ancient soldier,  
An honest one, I warrant; who deserved  
20 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  
25 Than those for preservation cased, or shame--  
Made good the passage; cried to those that fled,  
'Our Britain's hearts die flying, not our men:  
To darkness fleet souls that fly backwards. Stand;  
Or we are Romans and will give you that  
30 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  
35 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,  
40 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  
45 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  
50 The life o' the need: having found the backdoor open  
Of the unguarded hearts, heavens, how they wound!  
Some slain before; some dying; some their friends  
O'er borne i' the former wave: ten, chased by one,  
Are now each one the slaughter-man of twenty:  
55 Those that would die or ere resist are grown  
The mortal bugs o' the field.

**LORD**

This was strange chance  
A narrow lane, an old man, and two boys.

**LORD**

Did you come from where they made a stand?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I did. But it seems like you were one of the people who ran away.

**LORD**

I was.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I don't blame you, sir, because there was no hope except that the gods fought for us. The king was trapped alone, the army beaten up, and no one could see anything except the backs of Britons running away through a narrow alley. The enemy, rejoicing, was eager to slaughter them, with more people to kill than they had weapons to do it with. Some people were killed, some a little injured, some just fell down from fear. The narrow way was dammed up with dead men hit in the back, and cowards who stayed alive to die of shame later.

**LORD**

Where was this alley?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Next to the battlefield, with ditches on the sides and walls made of grass. This gave an opportunity to an ancient soldier, an honest one I bet. He deserved to be made as noble as his white beard was long for doing this in the service of his country. He, along with two young boys more likely to run races in the countryside than kill people this way, with faces attractive enough to make masks out of, or rather more beautiful than anyone whose face was made into a mask to remind people of their virtue or shame—they protected the passageway. They called to the men running away: "British deer die while running away, not British men. The souls of people who run away go to hell. Stand your ground, or we will act like Romans and treat you like animals because you're running away like animals. You can save yourselves by just turning around and frowning. Stand your ground." These three were as confident as if there were three thousand of them, and had the same effect as three thousand—because three people can make a difference when no one else is doing anything. They said "stand your ground" and looked at home where they were, and convinced people by their example, which could even have turned a woman's stick for spinning wool into a spear. They made people seem less afraid, partly because they were ashamed to and partly because their courage came back. Some people, who were acting like cowards just because everyone else was—which is a sin in war and the people who began this trend should be damned!--began to act the same as the three men and to bare their teeth like lions at hunters' spears. Then the chase ended, the enemy fell back and was defeated, and there was nothing but confusion in their ranks. Immediately they ran like chickens when before they acted like eagles. They went back like slaves over the space they first crossed like conquerors. And now those who were cowards at first on our side, like crumbs that save your life when you're starving on a long journey, saved the day. Finding the enemies' backs unprotected, they stabbed them to the heart! They trampled over some men who had been killed before, some who were dying, some who fell over in the crowd. Before, ten men were chased by one, but those men turned around and killed twenty. The men who chose to die rather than give up became the terror of the battlefield.

**LORD**

This was a strange coincidence: a narrow road, an old man, and two boys.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Nay, do not wonder at it: you are made  
 60 Rather to wonder at the things you hear  
 Than to work any. Will you rhyme upon't,  
 And vent it for a mockery? Here is one:  
 'Two boys, an old man twice a boy, a lane,  
 Preserved the Britons, was the Romans' bane.'

**LORD**

65 Nay, be not angry, sir.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

'Lack, to what end?  
 Who dares not stand his foe, I'll be his friend;  
 For if he'll do as he is made to do,  
 I know he'll quickly fly my friendship too.  
 70 You have put me into rhyme.

**LORD**

Farewell; you're angry.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Still going?

*Exit Lord*

This is a lord! O noble misery,  
 75 To be i' the field, and ask 'what news?' of me!  
 To-day how many would have given their honours  
 To have saved their carcasses! took heel to do't,  
 And yet died too! I, in mine own woe charm'd,  
 Could not find death where I did hear him groan,  
 80 Nor feel him where he struck: being an ugly monster,  
 'Tis strange he hides him in fresh cups, soft beds,  
 Sweet words; or hath more ministers than we  
 That draw his knives i' the war. Well, I will find him  
 For being now a favourer to the Briton,  
 85 No more a Briton, I have resumed again  
 The part I came in: fight I will no more,  
 But yield me to the veriest hind that shall  
 Once touch my shoulder. Great the slaughter is  
 Here made by the Roman; great the answer be  
 90 Britons must take. For me, my ransom's death;  
 On either side I come to spend my breath;  
 Which neither here I'll keep nor bear again,  
 But end it by some means for Imogen.

*Enter two British Captains and Soldiers*

**FIRST CAPTAIN**

Great Jupiter be praised! Lucius is taken.  
 95 'Tis thought the old man and his sons were angels.

**SECOND CAPTAIN**

There was a fourth man, in a silly habit,  
 That gave the affront with them.

**FIRST CAPTAIN**

So 'tis reported:  
 But none of 'em can be found. Stand! who's there?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

100 A Roman,  
 Who had not now been drooping here, if seconds  
 Had answer'd him.

**SECOND CAPTAIN**

Lay hands on him; a dog!  
 A leg of Rome shall not return to tell  
 105 What crows have peck'd them here. He brags  
 his service  
 As if he were of note: bring him to the king.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

No, don't be amazed. It's your nature to be amazed at  
 things you hear about rather than do anything yourself. Are  
 you going to make a poem about it and act it out? Here's  
 one: "Two boys, an old man in his second childhood, and a  
 road saved the British and destroyed the Romans."

**LORD**

Don't be angry, sir?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Why should I? I'll be friends with anyone who doesn't dare  
 stay and fight his enemy. Because if he does what is natural  
 to him, I know he'll run away from my friendship too. You  
 made me rhyme.

**LORD**

Goodbye: you're angry?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Still running away?

*The LORD exits.*

That was a lord? Oh what a noble hardship, to be in the  
 battlefield and ask me "what's going on?" Today so many  
 chose to give up their honor to save their bodies! They ran  
 to do it, but died anyway! I, cloaked in my own sadness,  
 couldn't find death even where I heard him groaning, and  
 couldn't get hit by him even where he was striking people  
 down. He's an ugly monster, so it's strange he hides in  
 refreshing cups, soft beds, and sweet words, and has more  
 minions than there are soldiers taking knives out to serve  
 him in the war. Well, because he's on the British side, I  
 won't be a British soldier anymore. I'll go back to the side I  
 came here with. I won't fight any more, but surrender to the  
 lowest soldier who just touches me on the shoulder once.  
 The Romans killed a lot of people here, and the Britons will  
 punish them for it. My prize will be death. I've fought on  
 both sides, but instead of sticking with one or the other I'll  
 die for Imogen's sake.

*Two British CAPTAINS and some Soldiers enter.*

**FIRST CAPTAIN**

May great Jupiter be praised! Lucius has been captured. It's  
 believed that the old man and his sons were angels.

**SECOND CAPTAIN**

There was a fourth man, in humble clothes, who fought  
 with them.

**FIRST CAPTAIN**

I've heard that said. But none of them can be found. Stop!  
 Who's there?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

A Roman, who wouldn't have been stuck here if people had  
 come to his help.

**SECOND CAPTAIN**

Grab him. He's a dog! Not even a single Roman leg will  
 make it home to report what crows pecked it here. He's  
 bragging about his fighting as if he's important. Bring him  
 to the king.

Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, Soldiers, Attendants, and Roman Captives. The Captains present POSTHUMUS LEONATUS to CYMBELINE, who delivers him over to a Gaoler: then exeunt omnes

CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, Soldiers, Attendants, and Roman Captives enter. The captains present POSTHUMUS LEONATUS to CYMBELINE, who hands him over to a JAILER. Then they all exit.

## Act 5, Scene 4

### Shakespeare

Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and two Gaolers

#### FIRST GAOLER

You shall not now be stol'n, you have locks upon you;  
So graze as you find pasture.

#### SECOND GAOLER

Ay, or a stomach.

*Exeunt Gaolers*

#### POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

- 5 Most welcome, bondage! for thou art a way,  
think, to liberty: yet am I better  
Than one that's sick o' the gout; since he had rather  
Groan so in perpetuity than be cured  
By the sure physician, death, who is the key  
10 To unbar these locks. My conscience, thou art fetter'd  
More than my shanks and wrists: you good gods, give me  
The penitent instrument to pick that bolt,  
Then, free for ever! Is't enough I am sorry?  
So children temporal fathers do appease;  
15 Gods are more full of mercy. Must I repent?  
I cannot do it better than in gyves,  
Desired more than constrain'd: to satisfy,  
If of my freedom 'tis the main part, take  
No stricter render of me than my all.  
20 I know you are more clement than vile men,  
Who of their broken debtors take a third,  
A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again  
On their abatement: that's not my desire:  
For Imogen's dear life take mine; and though  
25 'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life; you 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,  
30 And cancel these cold bonds. O Imogen!  
I'll speak to thee in silence.

*Sleeps*

*Solemn music. Enter, as in an apparition, SICILIUS LEONATUS, father to Posthumus Leonatus, an old man, attired like a warrior; leading in his hand an ancient matron, his wife, and mother to Posthumus Leonatus, with music before them: then, after other music, follow the two young Leonati, brothers to Posthumus Leonatus, with wounds as they died in the wars. They circle Posthumus Leonatus round, as he lies sleeping*

#### SICILIUS LEONATUS

- No more, thou thunder-master, show  
Thy spite on mortal flies:  
With Mars fall out, with Juno chide,  
35 That thy adulteries  
Rates and revenges.  
Hath my poor boy done aught but well,  
Whose face I never saw?  
I died whilst in the womb he stay'd  
40 Attending nature's law:

### Shakescleare Translation

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and two JAILERS enter.

#### FIRST JAILER

You won't be rescued, you're locked up. So you can eat  
whatever you find.

#### SECOND JAILER

Or whatever you're hungry for.

*The JAILERS exit.*

#### POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Welcome, slavery! You are a way to find freedom. I'm better off than someone sick with gout. He would prefer to suffer forever than to be cured by that talented doctor, death, the key to these locks. My consciousness, you're less free than my legs and arms. Good gods, give me the pick to pick that lock, then I'll be free forever! Is it enough that I'm sorry for what I did? That's how children get their fathers to forgive them. Gods are more merciful. Do I have to repent? I couldn't do it better than while tied up. And it's more that I want to than that I have to. As a punishment, just take everything I have from me and no more. I know you're kinder than disgusting humans, who take a third of what people in debt owe, or a sixth or a tenth, and leave them the rest so they can earn their money back. That's not what I want. In return for Imogen's precious life, take mine. Although it's not as precious, it's still a life. You created it. Humans don't weigh every coin we exchange. Even if they're lighter than they should be , we accept that they have a certain value because of the image stamped onto them. There's even more reason for you to take mine since I was created in your image. And so, gods, examine this financial record and cancel the loan. Oh Imogen! I'll speak to you by staying silent.

*He falls asleep.*

*Sad music plays. The ghost of SICILIUS LEONATUS, who is Posthumus Leonatus's father, enters, along with an old man dressed like a warrior. He leads an old woman, who is his wife and Posthumus Leonatus's mother, by the hand. Then, while different music plays, the two young sons of Leonatus, Posthumus's brothers, enter covered in wounds as though they died in battle. They surround Posthumus Leonatus as he sleeps.*

#### SICILIUS LEONATUS

You thunder-god , don't punish human flies anymore. Disagree with Mars and fight with Juno who gets angry and gets her revenge for your adultery. Has my poor boy, whose face I never got to see, done anything wrong? I died while he was still in his mother's womb, growing naturally. People say you're a father to orphans, and you should have been a father to him and protected him from this pain.

 It was common practice for forgers to lighten the weight of coins in order to conserve material.

 Sicilius is addressing Jove, the god of thunder, invoked often throughout the play.

Whose father then, as men report  
Thou orphans' father art,  
Thou shouldst have been, and shielded him  
From this earth-vexing smart.

**MOTHER**

- 45 Lucina lent not me her aid,  
But took me in my throes;  
That from me was Posthumus ript,  
Came crying 'mongst his foes,  
A thing of pity!

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

- 50 Great nature, like his ancestry,  
Moulded the stuff so fair,  
That he deserved the praise o' the world,  
As great Sicilius' heir.

**FIRST BROTHER**

- 55 When once he was mature for man,  
In Britain where was he  
That could stand up his parallel;  
Or fruitful object be  
In eye of Imogen, that best  
Could deem his dignity?

**MOTHER**

- 60 With marriage wherefore was he mock'd,  
To be exiled, and thrown  
From Leonati seat, and cast  
From her his dearest one,  
Sweet Imogen?

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

- 65 Why did you suffer Iachimo,  
Slight thing of Italy,  
To taint his nobler heart and brain  
With needless jealousy;  
And to become the geck and scorn  
70 O' th' other's villany?

**SECOND BROTHER**

- For this from stiller seats we came,  
Our parents and us twain,  
That striking in our country's cause  
Fell bravely and were slain,  
75 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,  
80 Why hast thou thus adjourn'd  
The graces for his merits due,  
Being all to dolours turn'd?

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

- Thy crystal window ope; look out;  
No longer exercise  
85 Upon a valiant race thy harsh  
And potent injuries.

**MOTHER**

Since, Jupiter, our son is good,  
Take off his miseries.

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

- Peep through thy marble mansion; help;  
90 Or we poor ghosts will cry  
To the shining synod of the rest  
Against thy deity.

**MOTHER**

Lucina didn't help me but killed me while I was in labor. So Posthumus was cut out of me and arrived crying surrounded by enemies, a pitiful little thing!

 Lucina was the Roman goddess of childbirth.

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

Nature and his genes made him so attractive that he deserved to be praised by the whole world as Sicilius's heir.

**FIRST BROTHER**

When he had grown into a man, who else in Britain was equal to him or who else could compete with him in Imogen's affection, she who more than anyone could see how virtuous he was?

**MOTHER**

Why was he punished for getting married, exiled and driven out of the Leonatus family home, and separated from his beloved, sweet Imogen?

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

Why did you let Iachimo, a worthless Italian, infect his noble heart and mind with pointless jealousy? And let him be duped by Iachimo's trickery?

**SECOND BROTHER**

We came from more peaceful places, our parents and the two of us. Fighting for our country, we fell bravely and died in battle, to show our loyalty and to win for Tenantius.

**FIRST BROTHER**

Posthumus did the same service for Cymbeline. So, Jupiter, king of the gods, why have you put off rewarding him as he deserves, now he's in so much trouble?

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

Open your window, look down, don't punish a brave people so harshly.

**MOTHER**

Jupiter, since our son is a good person, don't let him be miserable.

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

Look out of your marble palace! Help! Or we poor ghosts will complain about you to the assembly of the rest of the gods.

**SECOND BROTHER**

Help, Jupiter; or we appeal,  
And from thy justice fly.

95

*Jupiter descends in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle: he throws a thunderbolt. The Apparitions fall on their knees*

**JUPITER**

No more, you petty spirits of region low,  
Offend our hearing; hush! How dare you ghosts  
Accuse the thunderer, whose bolt, you know,  
Sky-planted batters all rebelling coasts?  
100 Poor shadows of Elysium, hence, and rest  
Upon your never-withering banks of flowers:  
Be not with mortal accidents oppress;  
No care of yours it is; you know 'tis ours.  
Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift,  
105 The more delay'd, delighted. Be content;  
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift:  
His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent.  
Our Jovial star reign'd at his birth, and in  
Our temple was he married. Rise, and fade.  
110 He shall be lord of lady Imogen,  
And happier much by his affliction made.  
This tablet lay upon his breast, wherein  
Our pleasure his full fortune doth confine:  
and so, away: no further with your din  
115 Express impatience, lest you stir up mine.  
Mount, eagle, to my palace crystalline.

*Ascends*

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

He came in thunder; his celestial breath  
Was sulphurous to smell: the holy eagle  
Stoop'd as to foot us: his ascension is  
120 More sweet than our blest fields: his royal bird  
Prunes the immortal wing and cloys his beak,  
As when his god is pleased.

**ALL**

Thanks, Jupiter!

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

The marble pavement closes, he is enter'd  
125 His radiant root. Away! and, to be blest,  
Let us with care perform his great behest.

*The Apparitions vanish*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

*[Waking]* Sleep, thou hast been a grandsire, and begot  
A father to me; and thou hast created  
130 A mother and two brothers: but, O scorn!  
Gone! they went hence so soon as they were born:  
And so I am awake. Poor wretches that depend  
On greatness' favour dream as I have done,  
Wake and find nothing. But, alas, I swerve:  
135 Many dream not to find, neither deserve,  
And yet are steep'd in favours: so am I,  
That have this golden chance and know not why.  
What fairies haunt this ground? A book? O rare one!  
Be not, as is our fangled world, a garment  
140 Nobler than that it covers: let thy effects  
So follow, to be most unlike our courtiers,  
As good as promise.

*Reads*

'When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown,  
without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of  
145 tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be  
lopped branches, which, being dead many years,

**SECOND BROTHER**

Help, Jupiter, or we will appeal to them and give up on your  
justice system.

*Jupiter descends with thunder and lightning, sitting on an eagle. He throws a thunderbolt and the Ghosts fall to their knees.*

**JUPITER**

Don't offend us by talking anymore, you minor spirits from below! Shh! How dare you ghosts accuse me of these things when you know my lightning bolts shoot from the sky at all rebelling countries? Poor ghosts from Elysium , go away, and rest on your hills covered in undying flowers. Don't worry about what happens on earth. It isn't any of your business, and you know it's mine. I make trouble for the people I love best, because postponing my help makes people appreciate it more. You can be sure, my power will save your son even though he's been laid low. Things that will comfort him are being taken care of, and the things he's going through are good for him. He was born under my star, and was married in my temple. Get up and fade away. He will be lady Imogen's husband, and this suffering will make him happier in the end. Set this tablet on his chest, where I've set down his destiny. So, go away. Don't make any more noise saying you're impatient, or I'll become impatient too. Fly up, eagle, to my crystal palace.

 "Elysium" is the part of the underworld for heroes.

*He flies away.*

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

He came surrounded by thunder. His holy breath smelled like sulphur. The holy eagle stooped as though it would kick us. Seeing him fly away is more beautiful than the blessed fields we live in. His royal bird is cleaning his immortal wing and keeping his beak shut, as he does when his god is pleased.

**ALL**

Thanks, Jupiter!

**SICILIUS LEONATUS**

The marble roof closes: he has gone back to the bright place where he lives. Let's go! And we should do exactly as he asked so he blesses us.

*The Ghosts disappear.*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

*[Waking up]* Sleep, you were like a grandfather: you gave birth to a father for me, and you created a mother and two brothers. But what a terrible joke! They're gone! They vanished as quickly as they appeared. So I'm awake now. Poor people who depend on the kindness of great men dream the same kinds of dreams as me, and wake up to find that they have nothing. But I'm wrong. Many don't dream about getting anything or deserve to get anything but are drowned in presents. That's true of me, since I had this wonderful dream and don't know why. What fairies haunt this place?  
*[Finding the tablet]* A book! Oh, it's a beautiful one! Don't be like this unpredictable world and have a cover that looks more noble than what it's covering. Don't be like courtiers and instead be as good as you appear to be.

*He reads.*

"When a lion's cub, not knowing himself, finds and is embraced by a piece of soft air without looking for it, and when branches are cut from a noble cedar tree and, after being dead many years, come back to life and are re-

shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.'

150 'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen  
Tongue and brain not; either both or nothing;  
Or senseless speaking or a speaking such  
As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,  
The action of my life is like it, which  
155 I'll keep, if but for sympathy.

*Re-enter First Gaoler*

**FIRST GAOLER**

Come, sir, are you ready for death?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Over-roasted rather; ready long ago.

**FIRST GAOLER**

Hanging is the word, sir: if you be ready for that, you are well cooked.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

160 So, if I prove a good repast to the  
spectators, the dish pays the shot.

**FIRST GAOLER**

A heavy reckoning for you, sir. But the comfort is, you shall be called to no more payments, fear no more tavern-bills; which are often the sadness of parting, as the procuring of mirth: you come in flint for want of meat, depart reeling with too much drink; sorry that you have paid too much, and sorry that you are paid too much; purse and brain both empty; the brain the heavier for being too light, the purse too light, being drawn of heaviness: of this contradiction you shall now be quit. O, the charity of a penny cord! It sums up thousands in a trice: you have no true debtor and creditor but it; of what's past, is, and to come, the discharge: your neck, sir, is pen, book and counters; so the acquittance follows.

170  
175

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I am merrier to die than thou art to live.

**FIRST GAOLER**

Indeed, sir, he that sleeps feels not the tooth-ache: but a man that were to sleep your sleep, and a hangman to help him to bed, I think he would change places with his officer; for, look you, sir, you know not which way you shall go.

180

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Yes, indeed do I, fellow.

**FIRST GAOLER**

Your death has eyes in 's head then; I have not seen him so pictured: you must either be directed by some that take upon them to know, or do take upon yourself that which I am sure you do not know, or jump the after inquiry on your own peril: and how you shall speed in your journey's end, I think you'll never return to tell one.

185  
190

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I tell thee, fellow, there are none want eyes to direct them the way I am going, but such as wink and will not use them.

attached to the old trunk and grow again, then Posthumus's sorrows will end, and Britain will be fortunate, prosperous, and peaceful." I'm still dreaming, or this is the sort of thing crazy people say without knowing what they mean. Either both those things, or nothing I can think of. It's either meaningless words or words that are impossible to understand. Whatever this writing is, my life is like it in that it's also difficult, so I'll keep it because we're alike.

*The FIRST JAILER enters.*

**FIRST JAILER**

Come on, sir, are you ready to die?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I was ready long ago. Now I'm overdone.

**FIRST JAILER**

You're going to be hanged, sir. If you're ready for that, you're well cooked.

 The Jailer picks up on Posthumus's use of "over-roasted" in the original text.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Well, if I give the spectators a good meal, it's worth the trouble of killing and cooking me.

**FIRST JAILER**

Bad luck for you, sir. But the good news is you won't have to pay any more bills or worry about the check in bars, which often makes you sad when you leave even though you're paying to be made happy by alcohol. You come in starving and leave staggering from drinking too much. You're sad you gave so much money, and sad that you took so much alcohol in. Your wallet and your head are both empty. Your head is worse off for feeling light and your wallet that used to be heavier is too light. You won't have to deal with this contradiction anymore. A rope you can buy for a penny is so kind! It can save you thousands of pounds at once. It's the only one who really owes you or lends you anything. It can discharge you from the past, the present and the future. Your neck is its pen, book, and and counter. It forgives you your debt immediately.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I'm happier to die than you are to live.

**FIRST JAILER**

Yes, sir, someone who's asleep doesn't feel his toothache, but I think that someone who sleeps the kind of sleep you're going to would gladly change places with the hangman helping him to bed. Because, you see, sir, you don't know which way you'r going to go, to hell or heaven.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Yes, I do.

**FIRST JAILER**

Then your grim reaper has eyes in his skull. I haven't seen him illustrated that way. You must either have been told that by people who pretend to know, or you've decided for yourself what I'm sure you don't know and chosen to skip the judgement after you die, which is risky. I think you'll never come back to tell me how that will go for you.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Believe me, fellow, there's no one who can't see where I'm going except those who keep their eyes closed and refuse to use them.

**FIRST GAOLER**

195 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 LEONATUS**

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

**FIRST GAOLER**

200 I'll be hang'd then.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

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

*Exeunt POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and Messenger*

**FIRST GAOLER**

205 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  
210 mind good; O, there were desolation of gaolers and  
gallowes! I speak against my present profit, but  
my wish hath a preferment in 't.

*Exeunt*

**FIRST JAILER**

What a joke that is, that a man would use his eyes to see  
what blindness looks like. I'm sure hanging is a way to shut  
your eyes.

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**MESSENGER**

Take off his handcuffs and bring your prisoner to the king.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

You bring good news. I'm being summoned to be set free.

**FIRST JAILER**

If that's true then I'll be hanged.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Then you will be freer than a jailor, because no locks can  
stop the dead.

*POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and the MESSENGER exit.*

**FIRST JAILER**

Unless a man married a noose and gave birth to young  
nooses, I never saw anyone so likely to be hanged. But I  
swear there are worse criminals who want to live, even  
though he's a Roman. And there are some of them who die  
against their wills. I would, if I were a criminal. I wish we all  
got along, and were all good people. Oh, then there would  
be no jobs for jailers and nooses! I'm arguing against my  
own profit, but I would also wish to be promoted to do  
something else.

*He exits.*

## Act 5, Scene 5

### Shakespeare

*Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO,  
Lords, Officers, and Attendants*

**CYMBELINE**

Stand by my side, you whom the gods have made  
Preservers of my throne. Woe is my heart  
That the poor soldier that so richly fought,  
Whose rags shamed gilded arms, whose naked breast  
5 Stepp'd before larges of proof, cannot be found:  
He shall be happy that can find him, if  
Our grace can make him so.

**BELARIUS**

I never saw  
Such noble fury in so poor a thing;  
10 Such precious deeds in one that promises nought  
But beggary and poor looks.

**CYMBELINE**

No tidings of him?

**PISANIO**

He hath been search'd among the dead and living,  
But no trace of him.

**CYMBELINE**

15 To my grief, I am  
The heir of his reward;

### Shakesclare Translation

*CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO,  
Lords, Officers, and Attendants enter.*

**CYMBELINE**

Stand next to me, you whom the gods aided to save my  
throne. I'm sad that the poor soldier who fought so well,  
whose ragged clothes made those wearing golden armor  
ashamed of themselves, who stepped up unprotected to  
fight nobles known for their skill, can't be found. Anyone  
who finds him will be made happy if that's within my  
power.

**BELARIUS**

I never saw such a poor man show such noble fierceness.  
He did such amazing things for someone who looked like a  
beggar.

**CYMBELINE**

There's no news of him?

**PISANIO**

He's been searched for among those who are dead and  
alive, but there's no trace of him.

**CYMBELINE**

Sadly, I'll have to keep his reward...

To BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

which I will add  
To you, the liver, heart and brain of Britain,  
20 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,  
25 Unless I add, we are honest.

**CYMBELINE**

Bow your knees.  
Arise my knights o' the battle: I create you  
Companions to our person and will fit you  
With dignities becoming your estates.

*Enter CORNELIUS and Ladies*

30 There's business in these faces. Why so sadly  
Greet you our victory? you look like Romans,  
And not o' the court of Britain.

**CORNELIUS**

Hail, great king!  
35 To sour your happiness, I must report  
The queen is dead.

**CYMBELINE**

Who worse than a physician  
Would this report become? But I consider,  
By medicine life may be prolong'd, yet death  
40 Will seize the doctor too. How ended she?

**CORNELIUS**

With horror, madly dying, like her life,  
Which, being cruel to the world, concluded  
Most cruel to herself. What she confess'd  
I will report, so please you: these her women  
45 Can trip me, if I err; who with wet cheeks  
Were present when she finish'd.

**CYMBELINE**

Prithce, say.

**CORNELIUS**

First, she confess'd she never loved you, only  
Affected greatness got by you, not you:  
50 Married your royalty, was wife to your place;  
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  
55 Ta'en off by poison.

**CYMBELINE**

60 O most delicate fiend!  
Who is 't can read a woman? Is there more?

**CORNELIUS**

More, sir, and worse. She did confess she had  
For you a mortal mineral; which, being took,  
Should by the minute feed on life and lingering  
65

To BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS.

To add to yours. You three are like Britain's liver, heart, and  
brain. Britain stays alive because of you. It's now time to ask  
you where you come from. Tell me.

**BELARIUS**

Sir, we were born in Cambria. We're gentlemen. I can't tell  
you anything else while telling the truth and being humble,  
except that we're honest.

**CYMBELINE**

Kneel down, and when you get up you will be knights. I  
make you my companions, and I will give you titles as  
honorable as you are.

*CORNELIUS and some Ladies enter.*

I can tell something has happened. Why do you look so sad  
after we won? You look like Romans, not British courtiers.

**CORNELIUS**

Hello, great king! I have to ruin your happiness by telling  
you the queen is dead.

**CYMBELINE**

It doesn't reflect well on a doctor to report that someone  
they were treating died. But I suppose that although life can  
be made longer with medicine, eventually even a doctor  
dies. How did she die?

**CORNELIUS**

Horribly, dying in a frenzy like she lived her life. In that life  
she was cruel to everyone else, and her life ended cruelly  
for her. I'll tell you what she confessed, if you don't mind.  
Her women here can cut me off if I get anything wrong.  
They were there, crying, when she died.

**CYMBELINE**

Please, tell me.

**CORNELIUS**

First, she confessed she never love you and only desired the  
power she got from you, not you. She married your royalty,  
was a wife to your social position, but hated you.

**CYMBELINE**

She was the only one who knew that. Except that she said it  
while she was dying, I wouldn't believe it even from her  
own mouth. Go on.

**CORNELIUS**

She pretended to love your daughter deeply, but confessed  
that she actually hated her. If Imogen hadn't run away, the  
queen would have poisoned her.

**CYMBELINE**

What a sneaky demon! Who can know what women are  
actually like? Is there more?

**CORNELIUS**

There's more, sir, and it's worse. She confessed she had a  
poison prepared for you that, when you swallowed it,  
would make you waste away and die slowly. She meant to

By inches waste you: in which time she purposed,  
By watching, weeping, tendance, kissing, to  
O'ercome you with her show, and in time,  
When she had fitted you with her craft, to work  
Her son into the adoption of the crown:

70 But, failing of her end by his strange absence,  
Grew shameless-desperate; open'd, in despite  
Of heaven and men, her purposes; repented  
The evils she hatch'd were not effected; so  
Despairing died.

**CYMBELINE**

75 Heard you all this, her women?

**FIRST LADY**

We did, so please your highness.

**CYMBELINE**

Mine eyes  
Were not in fault, for she was beautiful;  
Mine ears, that heard her flattery; nor my heart,  
80 That thought her like her seeming; it had  
been vicious  
To have mistrusted her: yet, O my daughter!  
That it was folly in me, thou mayst say,  
And prove it in thy feeling. Heaven mend all!

*Enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO, the Soothsayer, and other Roman Prisoners,  
guarded; POSTHUMUS LEONATUS behind, and IMOGEN*

85 Thou comest not, Caius, now for tribute that  
The Britons have razed out, though with the loss  
Of many a bold one; whose kinsmen have made suit  
That their good souls may be appeased with slaughter  
Of you their captives, which ourself have granted:  
90 So think of your estate.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Consider, sir, the chance of war: the day  
Was yours by accident; had it gone with us,  
We should not, when the blood was cool,  
have threaten'd

95 Our prisoners with the sword. But since the gods  
Will have it thus, that nothing but our lives  
May be call'd ransom, let it come: sufficeth  
A Roman with a Roman's heart can suffer:  
Augustus lives to think on't: and so much

100 For my peculiar care. This one thing only  
I will entreat; my boy, a Briton born,  
Let him be ransom'd: never master had  
A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,  
So tender over his occasions, true,

105 So feat, so nurse-like: let his virtue join  
With my request, which I make bold your highness  
Cannot deny; he hath done no Briton harm,  
Though he have served a Roman: save him, sir,  
And spare no blood beside.

**CYMBELINE**

110 I have surely seen him:  
His favour is familiar to me. Boy,  
Thou hast look'd thyself into my grace,  
And art mine own. I know not why, wherefore,  
To say 'live, boy:' ne'er thank thy master; live:  
115 And ask of Cymbeline what boon thou wilt,  
Fitting my bounty and thy state, I'll give it;  
Yea, though thou do demand a prisoner,  
The noblest ta'en.

**IMOGEN**

I humbly thank your highness.

stay up, cry, tend to you, kiss you, and to overcome you  
with her show of love. In time, when she had killed you with  
her poison, she would have gotten her son onto the throne.  
But when her plan failed after he disappeared so strangely,  
she grew desperately shameless and admitted her plots  
against the gods and people, regretted that she did not  
succeed in doing the evil things she had planned, and died  
in despair.

**CYMBELINE**

Did you, her women, hear all of this?

**FIRST LADY**

We did, your highness.

**CYMBELINE**

My eyes weren't wrong, she was beautiful. Or my ears, that  
heard the flattering things she said. Or my heart, that  
thought she was what she seemed to be. It would have  
been a sin to not trust her. But oh, my daughter! You can say  
I was foolish, and prove it by what you went through. May  
the gods save us all!

*LUCIUS, IACHIMO, the SOOTHSAYER, and other Roman  
Prisoners enter, with Guards. POSTHUMUS LEONATUS  
follows them. IMOGEN enters separately, still disguised as  
Fidele.*

Caius, you're not here now for the tribute that we Britons  
crossed out of the account books, although at the cost of  
losing many brave men. Their relatives have asked that the  
dead men's souls should be put at rest by killing you, their  
captives. I agreed, so think about your wills.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Sir, consider how much is up to chance in war. You won by  
accident. If we had won, we would not have threatened to  
kill our prisoners in cold blood. But since that's the way the  
gods want it and we can pay no ransom except our lives, let  
death come. A Roman can suffer with Roman strength.  
Augustus is still alive to think about this. And so much for  
me. I will only ask you one thing: my boy, born a Briton—let  
him be ransomed. No master ever had as kind, dutiful, and  
hardworking a page, so gentle in doing his job, so quick, and  
nurse-like. Don't deny my request because I'm sure you  
can't deny his virtue. He hasn't harmed any Britons,  
although he served a Roman. Save him and no one else, sir.

**CYMBELINE**

I'm sure I've seen him before. He looks familiar. Boy, you've  
attracted my attention and now work for me. I don't know  
why I'm saying "stay alive, boy." Don't thank your master for  
it. Stay alive, and ask Cymbeline whatever favor you want  
that is proper for me to give and for you to ask, and I'll grant  
it. Even if you ask for a prisoner, even the noblest one  
captured.

**IMOGEN**

Thank you, your highness.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

120 I do not bid thee beg my life, good lad;  
And yet I know thou wilt.

**IMOGEN**

No, no: alack,  
There's other work in hand: I see a thing  
Bitter to me as death: your life, good master,  
125 Must shuffle for itself.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

The boy disdains me,  
He leaves me, scorns me: briefly die their joys  
That place them on the truth of girls and boys.  
Why stands he so perplex'd?

**CYMBELINE**

130 What 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  
135 Than I to your highness; who, being born your vassal,  
Am something nearer.

**CYMBELINE**

Wherefore eyst him so?

**IMOGEN**

I'll tell you, sir, in private, if you please  
To give me hearing.

**CYMBELINE**

140 Ay, with all my heart,  
And lend my best attention. What's thy name?

**IMOGEN**

Fidele, sir.

**CYMBELINE**

Thou'rt my good youth, my page;  
I'll be thy master: walk with me; speak freely.  
145

*CYMBELINE and IMOGEN converse apart*

**BELARIUS**

Is not this boy revived from death?

**ARVIRAGUS**

One sand another  
Not more resembles that sweet rosy lad  
Who died, and was Fidele. What think you?

**GUIDERIUS**

150 The same dead thing alive.

**BELARIUS**

Peace, peace! see further; he eyes us not; forbear;  
Creatures may be alike: were't he, I am sure  
He would have spoke to us.

**GUIDERIUS**

But we saw him dead.

**BELARIUS**

155 Be silent; let's see further.

**PISANIO**

*[Aside]* It is my mistress:  
Since she is living, let the time run on

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

I'm not asking you to beg for my life, dear boy, but I know  
you will.

**IMOGEN**

No, no, I'm sorry. There's something else going on. I see  
something as terrible to me as death itself. Your life will  
have to take care of itself, good master.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

The boy disrespects me. He abandons me and sneers at me.  
People who trust in the honesty of girls and boys will be  
disappointed. Why is he standing there looking so amazed?

**CYMBELINE**

What do you want, boy? I love you more and more. Think  
more and more about what you should ask for. Do you  
know the man you're looking at? Tell me, do you want him  
to live? Is he a family member? A friend?

**IMOGEN**

He's a Roman. He's no closer a family member to me than I  
am to you, your highness. Even though I was born your  
subject, I am more closely related to you.

**CYMBELINE**

Why are you looking at him like that?

**IMOGEN**

I'll tell you privately, if you agree to listen to me.

**CYMBELINE**

Yes, with all my heart, and I'll pay close attention. What's  
your name?

**IMOGEN**

Fidele, sir.

**CYMBELINE**

You're my good young man, my page. I'll be your master.  
Walk with me. You can tell me anything.

*CYMBELINE and IMOGEN talk.*

**BELARIUS**

Isn't this the boy come back to life?

**ARVIRAGUS**

One grain of sand doesn't look more like another than that  
boy looks like the sweet attractive one who died and was  
Fidele. What do you think?

**GUIDERIUS**

It's the same dead person, come back to life.

**BELARIUS**

Wait! Let's keep watching. He doesn't see us. Wait.  
Sometimes people look alike. If it were him, I'm sure he  
would have talked to us.

**GUIDERIUS**

But we saw him dead.

**BELARIUS**

Be quiet. Let's keep watching.

**PISANIO**

*[To himself]* It's my mistress. Since she's alive, I don't care  
what happens.

To good or bad.

*CYMBELINE and IMOGEN come forward*

**CYMBELINE**

160 Come, stand thou by our side;  
Make thy demand aloud.

*To IACHIMO*

Sir, step you forth;  
Give answer to this boy, and do it freely;  
165 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 LEONATUS**

170 *[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**

175 How! me?

**IACHIMO**

I am glad to be constrain'd to utter that  
Which torments me to conceal. By villany  
I got this ring: 'twas Leonatus' jewel;  
Whom thou didst banish; and--which more may  
180 grieve thee,  
As it doth me--a nobler sir ne'er lived  
'Twi'x sky and ground. Wilt thou hear more, my lord?

**CYMBELINE**

All that belongs to this.

**IACHIMO**

That paragon, thy daughter,--  
185 For whom my heart drops blood, and my false spirits  
Quail to remember--Give me leave; I faint.

**CYMBELINE**

My daughter! what of her? Renew thy strength:  
I had rather thou shouldst live while nature will  
Than die ere I hear more: strive, man, and speak.

**IACHIMO**

190 Upon a time,--unhappy was the clock  
That struck the hour!--it was in Rome,--accursed  
The mansion where!--'twas at a feast,--O, would  
Our viands had been poison'd, or at least  
Those which I heaved to head!--the good Posthumus--  
195 What should I say? he was too good to be  
Where ill men were; and was the best of all  
Amongst the rarest of good ones,--sitting sadly,  
Hearing us praise our loves of Italy  
For beauty that made barren the swell'd boast  
200 Of him that best could speak, for feature, laming  
The shrine of Venus, or straight-pight Minerva.  
Postures beyond brief nature, for condition,  
A shop of all the qualities that man  
Loves woman for, besides that hook of wiving,  
205 Fairness which strikes the eye--

*CYMBELINE and IMOGEN come back.*

**CYMBELINE**

Come on, stand next to me and say what you want out loud.

*To IACHIMO*

Sir, step forward. Answer this boy, and do it honestly, or by  
my power and what makes it great, which is my honor,  
you'll be tortured horribly to separate truth from lies. Go  
on, talk to him.

**IMOGEN**

What I ask is, for this gentleman to tell me where he got this  
ring.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

*[To himself]* What does that have to do with him?

**CYMBELINE**

That diamond ring on your finger, how did you get it?

**IACHIMO**

You're threatening to torture me if I don't say something  
that, when I say it, will torture you.

**CYMBELINE**

What, me?

**IACHIMO**

I'm glad to be forced to reveal a secret that is so painful to  
keep. I got this ring dishonestly. It was Leonatus's ring,  
whom you banished, and--this may make you as sad as it  
makes me--who is the noblest man who ever lived. Do you  
want to hear more, sir?

**CYMBELINE**

Everything to do with this.

**IACHIMO**

That ideal woman, your daughter--mentioning her, my  
heart bleeds and my lying mind cringes--I'm sorry, I feel  
faint.

**CYMBELINE**

My daughter! What about her? Be strong. I would prefer you  
to live while you can than to die without telling me more.  
Try harder, and tell me.

**IACHIMO**

Once--and curse the clock that struck the hour!--it was in  
Rome--curse the house where this happened!--it was at a  
feast--oh, I wish our food had been poisoned, or at least the  
food I threw in my mouth!--the good Posthumus--What can  
I say? He was too good to be around bad men, and he was  
the best of all good men--sitting sadly, hearing us say that  
our Italian lovers were more beautiful than even the best  
speaker could boast, and were more beautiful than the  
goddesses Venus or tall Minerva. We were describing them  
as beyond anything nature could make, like they were  
shops filled with all the qualities that men love women for,  
outside the trap of marriage. Beauty that hits the eye--

**CYMBELINE**

I stand on fire:  
Come to the matter.

**IACHIMO**

All too soon I shall,  
Unless thou wouldst grieve quickly. This Posthumus,  
210 Most like a noble lord in love and one  
That had a royal lover, took his hint;  
And, not dispraising whom we praised,—therein  
He was as calm as virtue—he began  
His mistress' picture; which by his tongue  
215 being made,  
And then a mind put in't, either our brags  
Were crack'd of kitchen-trolls, or his description  
Proved us unspeaking sots.

**CYMBELINE**

Nay, nay, to the purpose.

**IACHIMO**

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  
225 Upon his honour'd finger, to attain  
In suit the place of's bed and win this ring  
By hers and mine adultery. He, true knight,  
No lesser of her honour confident  
Than I did truly find her, stakes this ring;  
230 And would so, had it been a carbuncle  
Of Phoebus' wheel, and might so safely, had it  
Been all the worth of's car. Away to Britain  
Post I in this design: well may you, sir,  
Remember me at court; where I was taught  
235 Of your chaste daughter the wide difference  
'Twixt amorous and villanous. Being thus quench'd  
Of hope, not longing, mine Italian brain  
'Gan in your duller Britain operate  
Most vilely; for my vantage, excellent:  
240 And, to be brief, my practise so prevail'd,  
That I return'd with similar proof enough  
To make the noble Leonatus mad,  
By wounding his belief in her renown  
With tokens thus, and thus; averting notes  
245 Of chamber-hanging, pictures, this her bracelet,—  
O cunning, how I got it!— nay, some marks  
Of secret on her person, that he could not  
But think her bond of chastity quite crack'd,  
I having ta'en the forfeit. Whereupon—  
250 Methinks, I see him now—

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

*[Advancing]* Ay, so thou dost,  
Italian fiend! Ay me, most credulous fool,  
Egregious murderer, thief, any thing  
That's due to all the villains past, in being,  
255 To come! O, give me cord, or knife, or poison,  
Some upright justicer! Thou, king, send out  
For torturers ingenious: it is I  
That all the abhorred things o' the earth amend  
By being worse than they. I am Posthumus,  
260 That kill'd thy daughter:—villain-like, I lie—  
That caused a lesser villain than myself,  
A sacrilegious thief, to do't: the temple  
Of virtue was she; yea, and she herself.  
Spit, and throw stone s, cast mire upon me, set  
265 The dogs o' the street to bay me: every villain  
Be call'd Posthumus Leonatus; and  
Be villany less than 'twas! O Imogen!  
My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,  
Imogen, Imogen!

**CYMBELINE**

I'm in suspense. Get to the point.

**IACHIMO**

I will all too soon, unless you're eager to be sad.  
Posthumus, like a noble lord in love, with a royal lover, took  
this opportunity. Not insulting the women we praised—he  
was as calm as virtue itself would be—he began to describe  
his wife. When he described what she looked like, and then  
added an excellent mind to the picture, we were left  
sounding like we were praising ugly kitchen servants or like  
we were silent idiots.

**CYMBELINE**

No, no, get to the point.

**IACHIMO**

Your daughter's faithfulness—that's where it begins. He  
spoke of her as if even the virgin goddess Diana had wet  
dreams, and only his wife felt nothing sexual. So I, criminal  
that I am, doubted what he said. And I bet him gold against  
this ring, which he wore on his honorable finger, that I  
would sleep with his wife and win this ring by committing  
adultery with her. He, a true noble, was confident that she  
was as honorable as I soon found out she was, and bet this  
ring. He would have done the same thing if it was a jewel  
from the wheel of the sun-god's chariot, and could have  
done it safely even if it had been worth the whole chariot.  
So I hurried off to Britain with this plan. You may well  
remember seeing me in court, where I was taught by your  
loyal daughter the huge difference between being in love  
and being wicked. Losing hope but not my desire, my  
Italian brain began to plot cleverly in your slower country of  
Britain. I took advantage of people's slowness. To cut to the  
point, my plot worked well enough that I returned with  
enough fake proof to make noble Leonatus go crazy by  
hurting his trust in her honor with certain details, throwing  
in descriptions of wall-hangings, paintings, her bracelet  
here—oh, I stole it so cleverly! Even some secret marks on  
her body, so that he had to believe that she had been  
unfaithful to him with me. So - It's like I can see him now—

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

*[Stepping forward]* Yes, you can, you Italian devil! Gullible  
fool, horrible murderer, doing anything any criminal ever  
did, is doing, will do! Give me a rope, or a knife, or poison,  
some honest way to get justice! You, king, send for clever  
torturers! I am the thing that makes all the disgusting  
things on earth seem better by being worse than they are. I  
am Posthumus, who killed your daughter—like a criminal,  
I'm lying—who made a lesser criminal, an unholy thief, do  
it. She was the temple of virtue, and she was herself. Spit,  
throw stones, throw mud on me, set the dogs in the street  
on me. May every criminal be called Posthumus Leonatus,  
and may evil itself seem less bad compared to me! Oh  
Imogen! My queen, my life, my wife! Oh Imogen, Imogen,  
Imogen!

**IMOGEN**

270 Peace, my lord; hear, hear--

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Shall's have a play of this? Thou scornful page,  
There lie thy part.

*Striking her: she falls*

**PISANIO**

O, gentlemen, help!  
275 Mine and your mistress! O, my lord Posthumus!  
You ne'er kill'd Imogen til now. Help, help!  
Mine honour'd lady!

**CYMBELINE**

Does the world go round?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

How come these staggers on me?

**PISANIO**

280 Wake, my mistress!

**CYMBELINE**

If this be so, the gods do mean to strike me  
To death with mortal joy.

**PISANIO**

How fares thy mistress?

**IMOGEN**

O, get thee from my sight;  
285 Thou gavest me poison: dangerous fellow, hence!  
Breathe not where princes are.

**CYMBELINE**

The tune of Imogen!

**PISANIO**

Lady,  
The gods throw stones of sulphur on me, if  
290 That box I gave you was not thought by me  
A precious thing: I had it from the queen.

**CYMBELINE**

New matter still?

**IMOGEN**

It poison'd me.

**CORNELIUS**

O gods!  
295 I left out one thing which the queen confess'd.  
Which must approve thee honest: 'If Pisanio  
Have,' said she, 'given his mistress that confection  
Which I gave him for cordial, she is served  
As I would serve a rat.'

**CYMBELINE**

300 What's this, Comelius?

**CORNELIUS**

The queen, sir, very oft importuned me  
To temper poisons for her, still pretending  
The satisfaction of her knowledge only  
In killing creatures vile, as cats and dogs,  
305 Of no esteem: I, dreading that her purpose  
Was of more danger, did compound for her  
A certain stuff, which, being ta'en, would cease  
The present power of life, but in short time  
All offices of nature should again  
310

**IMOGEN**

Wait, my lord. Listen, listen--

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Do you think this is a play? You mocking page, this is your  
part.

*He hits her and she falls down.*

**PISANIO**

Oh gentlemen, help! This is my mistress and your wife! Oh,  
my lord Posthumus! You never killed Imogen until now.  
Help, help! My dear lady!

**CYMBELINE**

Is the world spinning?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

What's happening to me?

**PISANIO**

Wake up, mistress!

**CYMBELINE**

If this is true, the gods are trying to kill me with happiness.

**PISANIO**

How is your wife?

**IMOGEN**

Get away from me. You gave me poison. You dangerous  
man, get out of here! Don't breathe in the same room as  
royalty.

**CYMBELINE**

Imogen's voice!

**PISANIO**

Ma'am, throw stinking rocks at me if I didn't think that box I  
gave you was powerful medicine. I got it from the queen.

**CYMBELINE**

More new information?

**IMOGEN**

It poisoned me.

**CORNELIUS**

Oh gods! I left out one thing the queen confessed, which  
proves you to be honest. She said, "If Pisanio has given his  
mistress that potion I told him was medicine, she's as dead  
as a rat drinking rat poison."

**CYMBELINE**

What does that mean, Cornelius?

**CORNELIUS**

Sir, the queen often begged me to make poison for her,  
always pretending she wanted to learn by killing low  
creatures, like cats and dogs, that no one cared about. I,  
worrying she actually meant to do something worse, made  
her a mixture that would make anyone who drank it seem  
dead but would after a short time make all the parts of their  
body work again. Did you drink any of it?

Do their due functions. Have you ta'en of it?

**IMOGEN**

Most like I did, for I was dead.

**BELARIUS**

My boys,  
There was our error.

**GUIDERIUS**

This is, sure, Fidele.

**IMOGEN**

315 Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?  
Think that you are upon a rock; and now  
Throw me again.

*Embracing him*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

320 Hang there like a fruit, my soul,  
Till the tree die!

**CYMBELINE**

How now, my flesh, my child!  
What, makest thou me a dullard in this act?  
Wilt thou not speak to me?

**IMOGEN**

*[Kneeling]* Your blessing, sir.

**BELARIUS**

325 *[To GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS]* Though you did love  
this youth, I blame ye not:  
You had a motive for't.

**CYMBELINE**

330 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 nought; and long of her it was  
That we meet here so strangely: but her son  
Is gone, we know not how nor where.

**PISANIO**

335 My lord,  
Now fear is from me, I'll speak troth. Lord Cloten,  
Upon my lady's missing, came to me  
With his sword drawn; foam'd at the mouth, and swore,  
If I discover'd not which way she was gone,  
340 It was my instant death. By accident,  
had a feigned letter of my master's  
Then in my pocket; which directed him  
To seek her on the mountains near to Milford;  
Where, in a frenzy, in my master's garments,  
345 Which he enforced from me, away he posts  
With unchaste purpose and with oath to violate  
My lady's honour: what became of him  
I further know not.

**GUIDERIUS**

350 Let me end the story:  
I slew him there.

**IMOGEN**

Probably, because I was dead.

**BELARIUS**

My boys, that's where we went wrong.

**GUIDERIUS**

This is definitely Fidele.

**IMOGEN**

Why did you push your wife away from you? Pretend you're  
on the side of a cliff, and see if you can push me away again.

*She hugs him.*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

My dear, you're like my soul. Hang there like you're fruit and  
I'm a tree until this tree dies!

**CYMBELINE**

My flesh and blood, my child! You're acting like I don't  
matter. Won't you speak to me?

**IMOGEN**

*[Kneeling]* Give me your blessing, sir.

**BELARIUS**

*[To GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS]* I don't blame you for  
loving this young man. You had a reason to.

**CYMBELINE**

May my tears falling on you act like holy water! Imogen,  
your mother's dead.

**IMOGEN**

I'm sorry, sir.

**CYMBELINE**

Oh, she was worthless. It's no thanks to her that we're  
meeting here so strangely. But her son is gone, and we  
don't know how or where.

**PISANIO**

My lord, now that I'm not afraid any more, I'll tell you the  
truth. When my mistress went missing, Lord Cloten came to  
me with his sword out, foamed at the mouth, and promised  
that I would die at once if I didn't tell him where she had  
gone. By chance, I had a lying letter from my master in my  
pocket, which told him to look for her in the mountains  
near Milford. In a frenzy, wearing my masters clothes which  
he forced me to give him, he rode away with a sinful plan,  
promising to rape my mistress. I don't know anything more  
about what happened.

**GUIDERIUS**

Let me end the story: I killed him there.

**CYMBELINE**

Marry, the gods forfend!  
I would not thy good deeds should from my lips  
Pluck a bard sentence: prithee, valiant youth,  
Deny't again.

**GUIDERIUS**

355 I have spoke it, and I did it.

**CYMBELINE**

He was a prince.

**GUIDERIUS**

A most incivil one: the wrongs he did me  
Were nothing prince-like; for he did provoke me  
With language that would make me spurn the sea,  
360 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  
365 Endure our law: thou'rt dead.

**IMOGEN**

That headless man  
I thought had been my lord.

**CYMBELINE**

Bind the offender,  
And take him from our presence.

**BELARIUS**

370 Stay, sir king:  
This man is better than the man he slew,  
As well descended as thyself; and hath  
More of thee merited than a band of Clotens  
Had ever scar for.

*To the Guard*

375 Let his arms alone;  
They were not born for bondage.

**CYMBELINE**

Why, old soldier,  
Wilt thou undo the worth thou art unpaid for,  
380 By tasting of our wrath? How of descent  
As good as we?

**ARVIRAGUS**

In that he spake too far.

**CYMBELINE**

And thou shalt die for't.

**BELARIUS**

We will die all three:  
385 But I will prove that two on's are as good  
As I have given out him. My sons, I must,  
For mine own part, unfold a dangerous speech,  
Though, haply, well for you.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Your danger's ours.

**GUIDERIUS**

390 And our good his.

**CYMBELINE**

Gods forbid! You've done good deeds—I don't want to have  
to order you thrown in jail. Please, brave young man, deny  
it.

**GUIDERIUS**

I said it, and I did it.

**CYMBELINE**

He was a prince.

**GUIDERIUS**

A very rude one. He didn't treat me like he was a prince. He  
provoked me with language that would make me mad  
enough to kick the sea if it roared at me like that. I cut off  
his head. And I am very happy he is not standing here  
instead of me to tell this story.

**CYMBELINE**

I'm sorry, but you've condemned yourself by saying this  
and have to face your punishment under our law. You're  
dead.

**IMOGEN**

I thought that headless man was my husband.

**CYMBELINE**

Tie up the criminal and take him out of my sight.

**BELARIUS**

Wait, sir king. This man is nobler than the man he killed,  
from as good a family as you, and has deserved more from  
you than a gang of Clotens could.

*To the GUARD.*

Leave his arms alone. They weren't born to be unfree.

**CYMBELINE**

You old soldier, do you want to undo all the good deeds I  
haven't paid you for yet, and make me angry? How is he  
from as good a family as me?

**ARVIRAGUS**

He didn't really mean that.

**CYMBELINE**

And you'll die for that.

**BELARIUS**

All three of us will die. But I will prove that two of us are as  
good as I said. My sons, I have to say something dangerous  
for me, but perhaps good for you.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Anything dangerous for you is dangerous for us.

**GUIDERIUS**

And anything good for us is good for you.

**BELARIUS**

Have at it then, by leave.  
Thou hadst, great king, a subject who  
Was call'd Belarius.

**CYMBELINE**

395 What of him? he is  
A banish'd traitor.

**BELARIUS**

He it is that hath  
Assumed this age; indeed a banish'd man;  
I know not how a traitor.

**CYMBELINE**

400 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 received it.

**CYMBELINE**

405 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  
410 And think they are my sons, are none of mine;  
They are the issue of your loins, my liege,  
And blood of your begetting.

**CYMBELINE**

How! my issue!

**BELARIUS**

So sure as you your father's. I, old Morgan,  
415 Am that Belarius whom you sometime banish'd:  
Your pleasure was my mere offence, my punishment  
Itself, and all my treason; that I suffer'd  
Was all the harm I did. These gentle princes--  
For such and so they are--these twenty years  
420 Have I train'd up: those arts they have as I  
Could put into them; my breeding was, sir, as  
Your highness knows. Their nurse, Euriphile,  
Whom for the theft I wedded, stole these children  
Upon my banishment: I moved her to't,  
425 Having received the punishment before,  
For that which I did then: beaten for loyalty  
Excited me to treason: their dear loss,  
The more of you 'twas felt, the more it shaped  
Unto my end of stealing them. But, gracious sir,  
430 Here are your sons again; and I must lose  
Two of the 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**

435 Thou weep'st, and speak'st.  
The service that you three have done is more  
Unlike than this thou tell'st. I lost my children:  
If these be they, I know not how to wish  
A pair of worthier sons.

**BELARIUS**

440 Be pleased awhile.  
This gentleman, whom I call Polydore,  
Most worthy prince, as yours, is true Guiderius:

**BELARIUS**

Well then, I'll say it. Great king, you had a subject called  
Belarius.

**CYMBELINE**

What about him? He is a banished traitor.

**BELARIUS**

I was him before I grew old. I was indeed banished, but I  
don't know what makes me a traitor.

**CYMBELINE**

Take him away. Nothing can save him.

**BELARIUS**

Wait. First pay me for bringing up your sons, and then you  
can take the reward away as soon as you give it to me.

**CYMBELINE**

Bringing up my sons!

**BELARIUS**

I am being too blunt and disrespectful. I'm kneeling before  
you. Before I get up, I will promote my sons. Then don't  
show their old father any mercy. Sir, these two young men  
who call me father and think they are my sons are not  
related to me. They are your children, sir, and your own  
flesh and blood.

**CYMBELINE**

What! My children!

**BELARIUS**

As certainly as you are your father's child. I, old Morgan, am  
the Belarius you banished. Your whim was my only crime,  
punishment, and treason. I never did anything wrong  
except suffer. These kind princes—because they are kind  
and they are princes—I brought up for twenty years. I  
taught them everything I could. Sir, you know what my  
education was. Their nurse, Euriphile, stole the children  
when I was banished, and I married her in return for this  
favor. I convinced her to do it, having already been  
punished for the crime I committed then. Having been  
punished for being loyal, I decided to be a traitor. I wanted  
to steal them to hurt you. But, dear sir, here are your sons  
back. I'm losing two of the best friends in the world. May  
the gods make blessings rain down on them like dew! They  
are virtuous enough that they should be made into  
constellations.

**CYMBELINE**

You're crying while you speak. The good deeds you did for  
me were more surprising than this story you're telling. I lost  
my children. If these are those children, I don't think it  
would be possible to have two better sons.

**BELARIUS**

Wait a moment. This man I call Polydore is really your  
Guiderius, worthy king. This man, my Cadwal, is your  
younger royal son Arviragus. He, sir, was wrapped in a

This gentleman, my Cadwal, Arviragus,  
Your younger princely son; he, sir, was lapp'd  
445 In a most curious mantle, wrought by the hand  
Of his queen mother, which for more probation  
I can with ease produce.

**CYMBELINE**

Guiderius had  
Upon his neck a mole, a sanguine star;  
450 It was a mark of wonder.

**BELARIUS**

This is he;  
Who hath upon him still that natural stamp:  
It was wise nature's end in the donation,  
To be his evidence now.

**CYMBELINE**

455 O, what, am I  
A mother to the birth of three? Ne'er mother  
Rejoiced deliverance more. Blest pray you be,  
That, after this strange starting from your orbs,  
may reign in them now! O Imogen,  
460 Thou hast lost by this a kingdom.

**IMOGEN**

No, my lord;  
I have got two worlds by 't. O my gentle brothers,  
Have we thus met? O, never say hereafter  
But I am truest speaker you call'd me brother,  
465 When I was but your sister; I you brothers,  
When ye were so indeed.

**CYMBELINE**

Did you e'er meet?

**ARVIRAGUS**

Ay, my good lord.

**GUIDERIUS**

And at first meeting loved;  
470 Continued so, until we thought he died.

**CORNELIUS**

By the queen's dram she swallow'd.

**CYMBELINE**

O rare instinct!  
When shall I hear all through? This fierce  
abridgement  
475 Hath to it circumstantial branches, which  
Distinction should be rich in. Where? how lived you?  
And when came you to serve our Roman captive?  
How parted with your brothers? how first met them?  
Why fled you from the court? and whither? These,  
480 And your three motives to the battle, with  
I know not how much more, should be demanded;  
And all the other by-dependencies,  
From chance to chance: but nor the time nor place  
Will serve our long inter'gatories. See,  
485 Posthumus anchors upon Imogen,  
And she, like harmless lightning, throws her eye  
On him, her brother, me, her master, hitting  
Each object with a joy: the counterchange  
Is severally in all. Let's quit this ground,  
490 And smoke the temple with our sacrifices.

*To BELARIUS*

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

beautifully woven blanket, made by his mother the queen,  
which I can easily show you for more proof.

**CYMBELINE**

Guiderius had a mole on his neck, a red star. It was an  
amazing thing.

**BELARIUS**

This is him, and he still has that mark. Nature was wise in  
giving it to him, since now it's evidence for him.

**CYMBELINE**

Am I a mother giving birth to three children? No mother was  
ever happier to deliver children. After strangely changing  
social classes, may you be blessed in the one you've come  
back to! Oh Imogen, you've lost a kingdom because of this.

**IMOGEN**

No, my lord, I have gained two whole worlds. Oh my dear  
brothers, have we met this way? Never say I don't tell the  
truth more than you do. You called me brother although I  
was only your sister, but I called you brothers and that was  
exactly you where.

**CYMBELINE**

Did you meet each other before?

**ARVIRAGUS**

Yes, sir.

**GUIDERIUS**

And loved each other from the first, and still did until we  
thought he died.

**CORNELIUS**

Because of the queen's potion she drank.

**CYMBELINE**

What an amazing instinct! When will I hear all the details?  
This rough abridged version has so many side stories that I  
should know more about. Where? How did you live? How  
did you come to be a servant to my Roman prisoner? How  
did you leave your brothers? How did you first meet them?  
Why did you run away from the court? And where? I should  
ask these things, and the reason you three joined the battle,  
and I don't know what else. And all the other  
circumstances, from the beginning. But this isn't the time or  
place to ask complicated questions. See, Posthumus is like  
a ship anchored to Imogen, and she's shooting glances like  
harmless lightning bolts at him, her brother, me, and her  
old master, hitting all of us with her joy. We all have  
different expressions. Let's leave, and fill the temple with  
smoke from our burnt offerings to the gods.

*To BELARIUS*

I'll always consider you my brother.

**IMOGEN**

You are my father too, and did relieve me,  
To see this gracious season.

**CYMBELINE**

495 All o'erjoy'd,  
Save these in bonds: let them be joyful too,  
For they shall taste our comfort.

**IMOGEN**

My good master,  
I will yet do you service.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

500 Happy be you!

**CYMBELINE**

The forlorn soldier, that so nobly fought,  
He would have well become this place, and graced  
The thankings of a king.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I am, sir,  
505 The soldier that did company these three  
In poor beseeching; 'twas a fitment for  
The purpose I then follow'd. That I was he,  
Speak, Iachimo: I had you down and might  
Have made you finish.

**IACHIMO**

510 *[Kneeling]* I am down again:  
But now my heavy conscience sinks my knee,  
As then your force did. Take that life, beseech you,  
Which I so often owe: but your ring first;  
And here the bracelet of the truest princess  
515 That ever swore her faith.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Kneel not to me:  
The power that I have on you is, to spare you;  
The malice towards you to forgive you: live,  
And deal with others better.

**CYMBELINE**

520 Nobly doom'd!  
We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law;  
Pardon's the word to all.

**ARVIRAGUS**

You help us, sir,  
As you did mean indeed to be our brother;  
525 Joy'd are we that you are.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Your servant, princes. Good my lord of Rome,  
Call forth your soothsayer: as I slept, methought  
Great Jupiter, upon his eagle back'd,  
Appear'd to me, with other spritely shows  
530 Of mine own kindred: when I waked, I found  
This label on my bosom; whose containing  
Is so from sense in hardness, that I can  
Make no collection of it: let him show  
His skill in the construction.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

535 Philarmonus!

**SOOTHSAYER**

Here, my good lord.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Read, and declare the meaning.

**IMOGEN**

You are like another father to me and helped me survive  
long enough to see all this.

**CYMBELINE**

Everyone is happy, except these people who are tied up. Let  
them be happy too—we'll share our joy with them.

**IMOGEN**

*[Untying CAIUS LUCIUS]* My good master, I'll do you one  
more service.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Bless you!

**CYMBELINE**

That last soldier who fought so nobly: he would have been  
a good addition and I would have been honored to thank  
him.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Sir, I am the soldier who kept these three company. I was  
dressed humbly in accordance with the plan I had then. Tell  
them that it was me, Iachimo. I knocked you to the ground  
and could have killed you.

**IACHIMO**

*[Kneeling]* And now I'm on the ground again. But now it's  
my bad conscience making me sink to my knee, while  
before it was your strength. Take that life, please, that I owe  
you. But take your ring first. And here's the bracelet of the  
most honest princess who ever swore to be faithful.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Don't kneel to me. I'll show my power over you by letting  
you live, and punish you by forgiving you. Live, and treat  
other people more honestly

**CYMBELINE**

That was a noble judgement! I'll learn forgiveness from my  
son-in-law. Everyone is pardoned.

**ARVIRAGUS**

You helped us, sir, as if you were our brother. We're happy  
that you really are.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I'm your servant, princes. My good Roman lord, call for your  
soothsayer. As I slept, I thought great Jupiter appeared to  
me on his eagle, along with the ghosts of my own family  
members. When I woke, I found this document on my chest.  
What it says is so hard to understand that I don't have any  
idea what it means. He should test his skill by figuring it out.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Philarmonus!

**SOOTHSAYER**

Here, my good lord.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Read this, and tell us what it means.

**SOOTHSAYER**

*[Reads]* "When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embraced by a  
 540 piece of tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be lopped branches, which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty!"  
 545 Thou, Leonatus, art the lion's whelp;  
 The fit and apt construction of thy name,  
 Being Leonatus, doth import so much.

To CYMBELINE

The piece of tender air, thy virtuous daughter,  
 550 Which we call 'mollis aer;' and 'mollis aer'  
 We term it 'mulier:' which 'mulier' I divine  
 Is this most constant wife; who, even now,  
 Answering the letter of the oracle,  
 Unknown to you, unsought, were clipp'd about  
 555 With this most tender air.

**CYMBELINE**

This hath some seeming.

**SOOTHSAYER**

The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,  
 Personates thee: and thy lopp'd branches point  
 Thy two sons forth; who, by Belarius stol'n,  
 560 For many years thought dead, are now revived,  
 To the majestic cedar join'd, whose issue  
 Promises Britain peace and plenty.

**CYMBELINE**

Well  
 My peace we will begin. And, Caius Lucius,  
 565 Although the victor, we submit to Caesar,  
 And to the Roman empire; promising  
 To pay our wonted tribute, from the which  
 We were dissuaded by our wicked queen;  
 Whom heavens, in justice, both on her and hers,  
 570 Have laid most heavy hand.

**SOOTHSAYER**

The fingers of the powers above do tune  
 The harmony of this peace. The vision  
 Which I made known to Lucius, ere the stroke  
 Of this yet scarce-cold battle, at this instant  
 575 Is full accomplish'd; for the Roman eagle,  
 From south to west on wing soaring aloft,  
 Lessen'd herself, and in the beams o' the sun  
 So vanish'd: which foreshow'd our princely eagle,  
 The imperial Caesar, should again unite  
 580 His favour with the radiant Cymbeline,  
 Which shines here in the west.

**CYMBELINE**

Laud we the gods;  
 And let our crooked smokes climb to their nostrils  
 From our blest altars. Publish we this peace  
 To all our subjects. Set we forward: let  
 585 A Roman and a British ensign wave  
 Friendly together: so through Lud's-town march:  
 And in the temple of great Jupiter  
 Our peace we'll ratify; seal it with feasts.  
 590 Set on there! Never was a war did cease,  
 Ere bloody hands were wash'd, with such a peace.

*Exeunt*

**SOOTHSAYER**

*[Reads]* "When a lion's cub, not knowing himself, finds a piece of soft air and is hugged by it without looking for it, and when branches are cut from a noble cedar tree and, after being dead many years, come back to life and are re-attached to the old trunk and grow again, then Posthumus's sorrows will end, and Britain will be fortunate, prosperous, and peaceful." You, Leonatus, are the lion's cub. That's what your name, Leonatus, means.

To CYMBELINE

The piece of soft air is your virtuous daughter. The word for "woman" in Latin, "mulier," comes from "mollis aer," soft air. The "mulier" is, I think, this faithful wife. Just now, as the prophecy says, you didn't recognize her and didn't think you would find her, but you were hugged by this soft air.

**CYMBELINE**

That makes sense.

**SOOTHSAYER**

The tall cedar, royal Cymbeline, stands for you. And your cut branches are your two sons who, stolen by Belarius and for many years thought to be dead, are now brought back to life and attached to the old cedar, whose children are a sign of coming peace and prosperity for Britain.

**CYMBELINE**

Well, that peace will begin now. And, Caius Lucius, although we won, we submit to Caesar and the Roman empire and promise to pay our usual tribute. I was convinced not to by my evil queen, who, along with her son, has been punished terribly by the gods.

**SOOTHSAYER**

The gods are tuning the music of this peace. The vision I told Lucius about before this recent battle has now come true. The Roman eagle, flying from south to west, has completely vanished into the sun. This showed that our royal eagle, the emperor Caesar, would again unite with bright Cymbeline who shines here in the west.

**CYMBELINE**

Let us praise the gods, and burn offerings at our blessed altars until the smoke reaches their noses. Announce this peace to all our subjects. Let's set out together. A Roman and a British flag will wave together like friends. March through Lud's-town and we'll make our peace official in the temple of great Jupiter, then celebrate with feasts. Let's go! A war was never ended with such a peace, before the blood was even washed off the soldiers' hands.

*They exit.*

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