

PERICLES

A line-by-line translation

Act 1, Chorus

Shakespeare



*Enter GOWER***Gower**

To sing a song that old was sung,
 From ashes ancient Gower is come;
 Assuming man's infirmities,
 To glad your ear, and please your eyes.
 5 It hath been sung at festivals,
 On ember-eves and holy-ales;
 And lords and ladies in their lives
 Have read it for restoratives:
 The purchase is to make men glorious;
 10 Et bonum quo antiquius, eo melius.
 If you, born in these latter times,
 When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes.
 And that to hear an old man sing
 May to your wishes pleasure bring
 15 I life would wish, and that I might
 Waste it for you, like taper-light.
 This Antioch, then, Antiochus the Great
 Built up, this city, for his chiefest seat:
 The fairest in all Syria,
 20 I tell you what mine authors say:
 This king unto him took a fere,
 Who died and left a female heir,
 So buxom, blithe, and full of face,
 As heaven had lent her all his grace;
 25 With whom the father liking took,
 And her to incest did provoke:
 Bad child; worse father! to entice his own
 To evil should be done by none:
 But custom what they did begin
 30 Was with long use account no sin.
 The beauty of this sinful dame
 Made many princes thither frame,
 To seek her as a bed-fellow,
 In marriage-pleasures play-fellow:
 35 Which to prevent he made a law,
 To keep her still, and men in awe,
 That whoso ask'd her for his wife,
 His riddle told not, lost his life:
 So for her many a wight did die,
 40 As yon grim looks do testify.
 What now ensues, to the judgment of your eye
 I give, my cause who best can justify.


Exit


Shakesclare Translation

*GOWER enters in front of the palace of Antioch.***Gower**

I'm John Gower , and I've come back to life (taking on the form of my weak body once again) to tell you an old story that never fails to please the ear and the eye. It's been told at parties, around the fire, over beers, and in storybooks for generations; men and women have read it to make themselves feel better. The point is to teach you how to be a better person. You know what they say: "the older and better the story, the better it makes you." And if you modern people (who are more clever than we used to be) will bear with my old-fashioned way of rhyming, you might enjoy what I, an old man, will bring to life on this stage by candlelight . This is Antioch, a city built by the great King Antiochus to be the most beautiful in Syria, and his capital. According to my sources, the king got married, but his wife died young, leaving him a beautiful, obedient daughter, blessed by the gods. The king took a liking to her, and forced her to commit incest. Bad girl! Evil father! No one should do such a thing to their own child. Of course, by the time our story begins, they'd been up to it for so long that they forgot it was wrong. Princes came from miles around to seek the princess's hand in marriage, hoping to make her their lifelong bedfellow. To prevent losing his daughter, the king made a law: whoever wanted to marry the princess would have to answer a riddle, and a wrong answer meant sudden death. Many poor men lost their lives that way, in pursuit of her, as you can see by the serious looks on their faces. What comes next I'll let you see for yourself; you can be the judge of why.

GOWER exits.

 *John Gower was a medieval poet whose masterwork, *Confessio Amantis*, contains the story, "Apollonius of Tyre," upon which *Pericles* is based. The actor playing Gower speaks in iambic tetrameter, the meter preferred by most 14th-century poets, like Chaucer. This all gives the play a sense of antiquity.*

 *Here, Gower refers to the Blackfriars Playhouse, an indoor theater illuminated by candlelight, where *Pericles* was first performed.*

Act 1, Scene 1

Shakespeare

*Enter ANTIOCHUS, Prince PERICLES, and followers***ANTIOCHUS**

Young prince of Tyre, you have at large received
 The danger of the task you undertake.

Shakesclare Translation

*ANTIOCHUS, PERICLES, and followers enter.***ANTIOCHUS**

So, Prince of Tyre: you understand how dangerous the task
 you're about to attempt is?

PERICLES

I have, Antiochus, and, with a soul
Embolden'd with the glory of her praise,
5 Think death no hazard in this enterprise.

ANTIOCHUS

Bring in our daughter, clothed like a bride,
For the embracements even of Jove himself;
At whose conception, till Lucina reign'd,
Nature this dowry gave, to glad her presence,
10 The senate-house of planets all did sit,
To knit in her their best perfections.

Music. Enter the Daughter of ANTIOCHUS

PERICLES

See where she comes, apparell'd like the spring,
Graces her subjects, and her thoughts the king
Of every virtue gives renown to men!
15 Her face the book of praises, where is read
Nothing but curious pleasures, as from thence
Sorrow were ever razed and testy wrath
Could never be her mild companion.
You gods that made me man, and sway in love,
20 That have inflamed desire in my breast
To taste the fruit of yon celestial tree,
Or die in the adventure, be my helps,
As I am son and servant to your will,
To compass such a boundless happiness!

ANTIOCHUS

25 Prince Pericles,—

PERICLES

That would be son to great Antiochus.

ANTIOCHUS

Before thee stands this fair Hesperides,
With golden fruit, but dangerous to be touch'd;
For death-like dragons here affright thee hard:
30 Her face, like heaven, enticeth thee to view
Her countless glory, which desert must gain;
And which, without desert, because thine eye
Presumes to reach, all thy whole heap must die.
Yon sometimes famous princes, like thyself,
35 Drawn by report, adventurous by desire,
Tell thee, with speechless tongues and semblance pale,
That without covering, save yon field of stars,
Here they stand martyrs, slain in Cupid's wars;
And with dead cheeks advise thee to desist
40 For going on death's net, whom none resist.

PERICLES

Antiochus, I thank thee, who hath taught
My frail mortality to know itself,
And by those fearful objects to prepare
This body, like to them, to what I must;
45

PERICLES

I do, Antiochus. But your daughter is so beautiful that I
wouldn't mind if I died trying to win the right to marry her.

ANTIOCHUS

Bring in my daughter. Put her in a wedding dress good
enough for the king ¹ of the gods himself. From the time
she was conceived to the time she was born, ² Nature ³
worked to make her beautiful specifically for this moment
of marriage ⁴, and the whole universe decided to make
her as perfect as possible.

¹ The original text mentions Jove, king of the gods in ancient Roman mythology. The references to the gods match this play's ancient setting, and emphasize themes like divine luck and fate.

² Antiochus says that from the time of conception to the time of birth (when Lucina, ancient Roman goddess of midwives, reigned), the planets aligned (symbolizing good fortune).

³ He claims that Mother Nature and all the planets (symbolizing Greco-Roman gods and the zodiac) assembled the baby in utero.

⁴ In the original text, a dowry is a gift given by a bride's family to her husband (or his family) on the occasion of marriage. Ironically, Antiochus says his daughter's beauty is a gift for her husband—but Antiochus is sleeping with his own daughter.

Music plays as ANTIOCHUS's DAUGHTER enters.

PERICLES

Here she comes! She's as young and beautiful as the spring. She's kind to her subjects, and her noble, virtuous thoughts are well-regarded by all. Just the sight of her face makes me happy—it's like all sadness and anger evaporate in her presence. The gods that created me gave me the uncontrollable desire ⁵ to either be with her or die trying. Since I'm obedient to the gods, I pray they'll help me secure my future happiness!

⁵ Both Pericles and Antiochus compare Antiochus's daughter to a tempting fruit, like that in the biblical Book of Genesis. The "fruit" of incest, represented by Antiochus's daughter, is men's downfall.

ANTIOCHUS

Prince Pericles—

PERICLES

—who has every intention of being your son-in-law—

ANTIOCHUS

—you see before you a beautiful woman ⁶. You can look, but don't touch! She's dangerous. Her beauty might lure you in, but if you're not deserving, you'll be killed just for trying to get a closer look.

[He points to a pile of skeletons] Those former princes, like you, were drawn here by the rumors. They were looking for adventure, too. As you can see by their silence (and their bare bones), they're all casualties of love with no grave to speak of, except the stars above. Take a hint from their corpses and turn back now before it's too late.

⁶ The "Hesperides" of the original text were a group of beautiful girls given to Hera by Gaia in Greek myth. The fruit imagery extends to the "fruit of eternal youth" symbolized here.

PERICLES

Thanks, Antiochus, for reminding me of my own mortality. Those frightening things are preparing my body, like theirs, for the worst that could happen: death. ⁷ When we remember death, it should act like a mirror, reflecting back

⁷ Pericles participates in the early modern "memento mori" tradition,

For death remember'd should be like a mirror,
Who tells us life's but breath, to trust it error.
I'll make my will then, and, as sick men do
Who know the world, see heaven, but, feeling woe,
Gripe not at earthly joys as erst they did;

50 So I bequeath a happy peace to you
And all good men, as every prince should do;
My riches to the earth from whence they came;
[To the Daughter of ANTIOCHUS]

55 But my unspotted fire of love to you.
Thus ready for the way of life or death,
I wait the sharpest blow, Antiochus.

ANTIOCHUS

Scorning advice, read the conclusion then:

60 Which read and not expounded, 'tis decreed,
As these before thee thou thyself shalt bleed.

DAUGHTER

Of all say'd yet, mayst thou prove prosperous!
Of all say'd yet, I wish thee happiness!

PERICLES

Like a bold champion, I assume the lists,
65 Nor ask advice of any other thought
But faithfulness and courage.
I am no viper, yet I feed
On mother's flesh which did me breed.
70 I sought a husband, in which labour
I found that kindness in a father:
He's father, son, and husband mild;
I mother, wife, and yet his child.
How they may be, and yet in two,
75 As you will live, resolve it you.
Sharp physic is the last: but, O you powers
That give heaven countless eyes to view men's acts,
Why cloud they not their sights perpetually,
80 If this be true, which makes me pale to read it?
Fair glass of light, I loved you, and could still,
Were not this glorious casket stored with ill:
But I must tell you, now my thoughts revolt
For he's no man on whom perfections wait
85 That, knowing sin within, will touch the gate.
You are a fair viol, and your sense the strings;
Who, finger'd to make man his lawful music,
Would draw heaven down, and all the gods, to hearken:
90 Hell only danceth at so harsh a chime.
Good sooth, I care not for you.

ANTIOCHUS

Prince Pericles, touch not, upon thy life.

For that's an article within our law,

As dangerous as the rest. Your time's expired:

95 Either expound now, or receive your sentence.

to us the truth that life is short, and that it's a mistake to put our faith in it. I'll make my will, then, like sick men do when they've experienced the world and, near death, are both sad and resigned to give up the joys experienced on earth. I wish the best to you and to all good men (as every prince should do), and give away all my belongings.

[To ANTIOCHUS's DAUGHTER] Except the pure fire of my love, which I give to you.

[To ANTIOCHUS] I'm ready. Whether I live or die, I can take it, Antiochus.

ANTIOCHUS

Since you won't listen to my advice, you'll have to face the consequences: if you read the riddle and can't answer it, you'll be killed like the others before you.

DAUGHTER

Of all the men who've tried, I hope you succeed! I hope this ends well for you!

PERICLES

Like a knight going into a tournament, the only advice or help I need is faithfulness and courage.

[Reading the riddle from a scroll]

I'm not a snake, but I eat

My own mother's flesh.⁸

When I looked for a husband,

I found him in a father.

He's father, son, and husband;

I'm mother, wife, and child.

How is this possible?

I leave it up to you.

[Looking back up] Oh, that last part is a bitter pill to swallow. Oh, you gods that see everything we do on earth, how can you look down on such a horrible thing (if what I'm reading is true)? *[He grabs ANTIOCHUS's DAUGHTER's hand]* Beautiful princess, I did love you, and would still love you, but now I know the dark secret behind that pretty face. I have to tell you: all my plans are unravelling, because a good man could hardly marry into such a depraved situation once he knows what's in store. You're gorgeous⁹ and your character makes you even more desirable; under normal circumstances, anyone would be lucky to marry you, and the gods would smile down on it. But you've been violated so young; it's a crime¹⁰ worthy of hell. I'm not interested in you at all.¹¹

where an object (here, the skeletons) serves as a reminder of mortality.

⁸ According to Christian doctrine, a man and woman who are married are "one flesh" (two parts of one person). The riddle discusses snakes, who proverbially eat their way out of their mother's wombs. In Antiochus's incestuous relationship, his daughter "feeds" (or sexually engages with) the other half of her mother's "flesh" (her father).

⁹ Pericles uses a conventional Renaissance metaphor, comparing Antiochus's daughter to an instrument, which objectifies women and eliminates their sexual agency. Her beautiful body is like the instrument's frame, and her "sense" (virginity) is the strings upon which men "play." With a suggestive pun on "fingered," Pericles explains that this instrument has been played prematurely (by her father's rape) and that Pericles is no longer interested in playing it (marrying and having sex with her).

¹⁰ Pericles contrasts the heavenly pleasures of sex in marriage with the hellish punishment for the sin of incest.

¹¹ In Shakespeare's time, women on the marriage market were often seen as mere objects of exchange between men. It's telling that Pericles is quick to drop her, and that Antiochus's daughter doesn't even have a name.

ANTIOCHUS

Don't touch her, Prince Pericles, if you value your life. That's

the law, and it's as dangerous as the rest. Your time is up!

Tell us the answer now, or prepare to die.

PERICLES

Great king,
 Few love to hear the sins they love to act;
 'Twould braid yourself too near for me to tell it.
 Who has a book of all that monarchs do,
 100 He's more secure to keep it shut than shown:
 For vice repeated is like the wandering wind.
 Blows dust in other's eyes, to spread itself;
 And yet the end of all is bought thus dear,
 The breath is gone, and the sore eyes see clear:
 105 To stop the air would hurt them. The blind mole casts
 Copp'd hills towards heaven, to tell the earth is
 throng'd
 By man's oppression; and the poor worm doth die for't.
 Kings are earth's gods; in vice their law's their will;
 110 And if Jove stray, who dares say Jove doth ill?
 It is enough you know; and it is fit,
 What being more known grows worse, to smother it.
 All love the womb that their first being bred,
 Then give my tongue like leave to love my head.

ANTIOCHUS

115 *[Aside]* Heaven, that I had thy head! he has found
 the meaning:
 But I will gloze with him. — Young prince of Tyre,
 Though by the tenor of our strict edict,
 Your exposition misinterpreting,
 120 We might proceed to cancel of your days;
 Yet hope, succeeding from so fair a tree
 As your fair self, doth tune us otherwise:
 Forty days longer we do respite you;
 If by which time our secret be undone,
 125 This mercy shows we'll joy in such a son:
 And until then your entertain shall be
 As doth befit our honour and your worth.

Exeunt all but PERICLES

PERICLES

How courtesy would seem to cover sin,
 When what is done is like an hypocrite,
 130 The which is good in nothing but in sight!
 If it be true that I interpret false,
 Then were it certain you were not so bad
 As with foul incest to abuse your soul;
 Where now you're both a father and a son,
 135 By your untimely clasplings with your child,
 Which pleasure fits an husband, not a father;
 And she an eater of her mother's flesh,
 By the defiling of her parent's bed;
 And both like serpents are, who though they feed
 140 On sweetest flowers, yet they poison breed.
 Antioch, farewell! for wisdom sees, those men
 Blush not in actions blacker than the night,
 Will shun no course to keep them from the light.
 One sin, I know, another doth provoke;
 145 Murder's as near to lust as flame to smoke:
 Poison and treason are the hands of sin,
 Ay, and the targets, to put off the shame:
 Then, lest my lie be cropp'd to keep you clear,
 By flight I'll shun the danger which I fear.

Exit

Re-enter ANTIOCHUS

ANTIOCHUS

150 He hath found the meaning, for which we mean
 To have his head.
 He must not live to trumpet forth my infamy,
 Nor tell the world Antiochus doth sin
 In such a loathed manner;
 155 And therefore instantly this prince must die:
 For by his fall my honour must keep high.
 Who attends us there?

PERICLES

Sir, no one likes to hear their sins repeated back to them—it would offend you to hear me say it. Anyone who found out about this before probably kept their mouth shut rather than telling. Evil spreads as quickly as dust on the wind. As the dust surrounds us and blinds us, we can no longer tell it's there; we start to think it's normal. The blind mole throws his hills of dirt toward heaven, to tell the gods the earth is filled with man's evil, and the worm dies because of it ¹². The world is full of evil men like you, but kings are supposed to be gods on earth! When kings are corrupt, they can twist the law to conform to their evil desires (and when a god makes a mistake, who would dare to tell him?). You know your actions are wrong, and the fact that you know and still keep on doing it makes it even worse. By the love everyone has for their own mother, ¹³ please don't kill me for what I've said!

ANTIOCHUS

[To himself] I wish I had a mind like yours! He's figured out the meaning, but I'll talk him out of it.

[To PERICLES] Prince of Tyre: though, according to our law, I could kill you for not giving me a correct answer, I'll give you some more time on account of your noble blood and your way with words. If, in forty days' time, you reveal the secret, I'll welcome you as my son-in-law with a celebratory feast worthy of myself as a king and you as a prince.

PERICLES

You're trying to hide your evil with a show of hospitality, but it's hypocrisy; it only looks good from the outside! If I'd really gotten the answer wrong, then that would mean you weren't dirtying your soul by committing disgusting incest. But now, by sleeping with your daughter, you're both father and son, acting more like a husband than a father . . . and she's filling the role her mother should, taking her mother's place in your bed. They're both like snakes ¹⁴ who eat pretty flowers but produce deadly poison.

Goodbye, Antioch! I'm smart enough to know that a guy who's comfortable doing one evil thing won't hesitate to do another one if it'll keep him from being found out. One sin leads to another; murder is as close to lust as fire is to smoke. If I stick around, I'll be poisoned, or accused of treason, anything to keep me from exposing him. So, to save myself and not expose him, I'll leave here and escape the danger I'm afraid of.

PERICLES exits.

ANTIOCHUS comes back in.

ANTIOCHUS

[To himself] He's figured out the riddle, which means I'll have to kill him. He can't survive another day to ruin my reputation, or to tell the world the hateful sin I've committed. The prince must die instantly for my honor's sake.

[To an unknown person] Who's there?

¹² Moles make small "hills" of dirt when they tunnel in the ground. In Pericles's metaphor, he worries for himself (the mole) and his people (the worms). If he reveals the meaning of the riddle, he will die and his people will be without a ruler.

¹³ Here, Pericles makes a veiled allusion to incest (based on the image of snakes eating their own mothers in the riddle).

¹⁴ The "serpent" imagery in this section again ties Antiochus's situation to the Garden of Eden in Genesis. Pericles says that although something good (beauty; sex) is being consumed, what comes out is evil (sin; incest).

*Enter THALIARD***THALIARD**

Doth your highness call?

ANTIOCHUS

Thaliard,

160 You are of our chamber, and our mind partakes
Her private actions to your secrecy;
And for your faithfulness we will advance you.
Thaliard, behold, here's poison, and here's gold;
We hate the prince of Tyre, and thou must kill him:
165 It fits thee not to ask the reason why,
Because we bid it. Say, is it done?

THALIARD

My lord,
'Tis done.

ANTIOCHUS

Enough.

170

*Enter a Messenger***ANTIOCHUS**

Let your breath cool yourself, telling your haste.

MESSENGER

My lord, prince Pericles is fled.

*Exit***ANTIOCHUS**

175 As thou
Wilt live, fly after: and like an arrow shot
From a well-experienced archer hits the mark
His eye doth level at, so thou ne'er return
Unless thou say 'Prince Pericles is dead.'

THALIARD

180 My lord,
If I can get him within my pistol's length,
I'll make him sure enough: so, farewell to your
highness.

ANTIOCHUS

Thaliard, adieu!

185

*Exit THALIARD***ANTIOCHUS**

Till Pericles be dead,
My heart can lend no succor to my head.

*Exit**THALIARD enters.***THALIARD**

Did you call, sir?

ANTIOCHUS

Thaliard, you're my trusted servant, and I need you to do something for me under the utmost secrecy. You'll be rewarded for your service.

[He pulls out a bottle of poison and a bag of gold] Look, Thaliard, here's poison, and here's gold. I hate Pericles, Prince of Tyre, and I want you to kill him. Don't ask me why—it's because I said so. Understand?

THALIARD

Sir, I understand.

ANTIOCHUS

Good.

*A MESSENGER enters.***ANTIOCHUS**

Catch your breath, please. We can tell you've come in a rush.

MESSENGER

Sir, Prince Pericles is gone.

*The MESSENGER exits.***ANTIOCHUS**

If you want to live, go after him! Be like an arrow shot by an experienced archer—hit the target I've got my sights on, and don't come back here until you can tell me that Pericles is dead.

THALIARD

Sir, if I can get within gunshot, I'll take him out. Goodbye, sir.

ANTIOCHUS

Goodbye, Thaliard!

*THALIARD exits.***ANTIOCHUS**

I won't rest until Pericles is dead.

ANTIOCHUS exits.

Act 1, Scene 2

Shakespeare*Enter PERICLES***Shakescleare Translation***PERICLES enters.*

PERICLES

[To Lords without] Let none disturb us.— Why should this change of thoughts,
 The sad companion, dull-eyed melancholy,
 Be my so used a guest as not an hour,
 5 In the day's glorious walk, or peaceful night,
 The tomb where grief should sleep, can breed me quiet?
 Here pleasures court mine eyes, and mine eyes shun them,
 And danger, which I fear'd, is at Antioch,
 10 Whose aim seems far too short to hit me here:
 Yet neither pleasure's art can joy my spirits,
 Nor yet the other's distance comfort me.
 Then it is thus: the passions of the mind,
 That have their first conception by mis-dread,
 15 Have after-nourishment and life by care;
 And what was first but fear what might be done,
 Grows elder now and cares it be not done.
 And so with me: the great Antiochus,
 'Gainst whom I am too little to contend,
 20 Since he's so great can make his will his act,
 Will think me speaking, though I swear to silence;
 Nor boots it me to say I honour him.
 If he suspect I may dishonour him:
 And what may make him blush in being known,
 25 He'll stop the course by which it might be known;
 With hostile forces he'll o'erspread the land,
 And with the ostent of war will look so huge,
 Amazement shall drive courage from the state;
 Our men be vanquish'd ere they do resist,
 30 And subjects punish'd that ne'er thought offence:
 Which care of them, not pity of myself,
 Who am no more but as the tops of trees,
 Which fence the roots they grow by and defend them,
 Makes both my body pine and soul to languish,
 35 And punish that before that he would punish.

Enter HELICANUS, with other Lords

FIRST LORD

Joy and all comfort in your sacred breast!

SECOND LORD

And keep your mind, till you return to us,
 Peaceful and comfortable!

HELICANUS

Peace, peace, and give experience tongue.
 40 They do abuse the king that flatter him:
 For flattery is the bellows blows up sin;
 The thing which is flatter'd, but a spark,
 To which that blast gives heat and stronger glowing;
 Whereas reproof, obedient and in order,
 45 Fits kings, as they are men, for they may err.
 When Signior Sooth here does proclaim a peace,
 He flatters you, makes war upon your life.
 Prince, pardon me, or strike me, if you please;
 I cannot be much lower than my knees.

PERICLES

50 All leave us else; but let your cares o'erlook
 What shipping and what lading's in our haven,
 And then return to us.
[Exeunt Lords]
 55 Helicanus, thou
 Hast moved us: what seest thou in our looks?

HELICANUS

An angry brow, dread lord.


PERICLES

60 If there be such a dart in princes' frowns,
 How durst thy tongue move anger to our face?

PERICLES

[Speaking to Lords outside] Don't let anyone come in here.

[To himself] Why am I so changed? Why am I sad, downcast, and melancholy every hour of every day? Neither a beautiful day nor a quiet night (which should be where I put my worries to rest) can give me peace. Even when I'm surrounded by things I should enjoy, I can't get rid of this fear of danger waiting for me at Antioch—but there's no way the king could reach me here! And yet, nothing can cheer me up, not even the reality of distance. That's the way the mind works: once we start worrying about something, it only gets worse and worse, until we convince ourselves that the danger is real. Just like that, my fear of Antiochus, who is a much more powerful king than I am—and can put his desires into action—has been blown out of proportion. Even though I haven't said a word, he'll assume I've told his secret. And it won't help for me to say I'm loyal to him, if he's already decided I'm not. If he's determined to keep his secret under wraps, all he has to do is kill me. He'll infiltrate my country with his armies, wage war, and overthrow the government. He'll punish my subjects, too, even though they never did anything to hurt him. I'm more worried about them than I am about myself; I'm just the treetops that protect the roots by which the people grow, and help defend them. It's concern for them that makes my body sick and my soul tired with wanting to punish Antiochus before he punishes us.

 Pericles puns on "pine," both a type of tree and a verb meaning "to long for."

HELICANUS and other LORDS enter.

FIRST LORD

God bless you, sir!

SECOND LORD

And good luck on your journey!

HELICANUS

Quiet, please. Let someone who knows what he's talking about speak up. These men are just flattering you, sir, and flattery only fans the fire of sin. When a king's fault is just a spark, flattery is the blast that gives it heat and makes it glow stronger. On the other hand, wise advice is the best tool a king can make use of, since even kings make mistakes sometimes. When Mr. Yes-man over here wishes you good luck, he's flattering you and, really, threatening your life.

[He kneels] Forgive me, sir. Hit me if you want. I can't get much lower than here, on my knees.

PERICLES

Everyone else leave. But take care to see what ships are coming in and out of the harbor and report back to me.

[The LORDS leave]

Helicanus, you've got my attention. How do I look?

HELICANUS

You look angry, sir.

PERICLES

You know that kings' moods can have serious consequences, right? How dare you make me angry?

HELICANUS

How dare the plants look up to heaven, from whence
They have their nourishment?

PERICLES

Thou know'st I have power
To take thy life from thee.

HELICANUS

65 *[Kneeling]*
I have ground the axe myself;
Do you but strike the blow.

PERICLES

Rise, prithee, rise.
Sit down: thou art no flatterer:
70 I thank thee for it; and heaven forbid
That kings should let their ears hear their
faults hid!
Fit counsellor and servant for a prince,
Who by thy wisdom makest a prince thy servant,
75 What wouldst thou have me do?

HELICANUS

To bear with patience
Such griefs as you yourself do lay upon yourself.

PERICLES

Thou speak'st like a physician, Helicanus,
That minister'st a potion unto me
80 That thou wouldst tremble to receive thyself.
Attend me, then: I went to Antioch,
Where as thou know'st, against the face of death,
I sought the purchase of a glorious beauty,
From whence an issue I might propagate,
85 Are arms to princes, and bring joys to subjects.
Her face was to mine eye beyond all wonder;
The rest— hark in thine ear— as black as incest:
Which by my knowledge found, the sinful father
Seem'd not to strike, but smooth: but thou
90 know'st this,
'Tis time to fear when tyrants seem to kiss.
Such fear so grew in me, I hither fled,
Under the covering of a careful night,
Who seem'd my good protector; and, being here,
95 Bethought me what was past, what might succeed.
I knew him tyrannous; and tyrants' fears
Decrease not, but grow faster than the years:
And should he doubt it, as no doubt he doth,
That I should open to the listening air
100 How many worthy princes' bloods were shed,
To keep his bed of blackness unlaid ope,
To lop that doubt, he'll fill this land with arms,
And make pretence of wrong that I have done him:
When all, for mine, if I may call offence,
105 Must feel war's blow, who spares not innocence:
Which love to all, of which thyself art one,
Who now reproveth me for it,—

HELICANUS

Alas, sir!

PERICLES

Drew sleep out of mine eyes, blood from my cheeks,
110 Musings into my mind, with thousand doubts
How I might stop this tempest ere it came;
And finding little comfort to relieve them,
I thought it princely charity to grieve them.

HELICANUS

How dare plants grow up toward the sky, from which they
receive rain and sun?

PERICLES

You know I have the power to kill you.

HELICANUS

[Kneeling and exposing his neck] I sharpened the axe
myself. Just strike the blow.

PERICLES

Get up, please. Get up. Sit down. I'm glad you're not a
flatterer. Kings shouldn't be surrounded by men who make
excuses for their faults! You're a wise counsellor and
servant fit for a prince; by your wisdom, you've made me
your servant, ready to do your will. What should I do?

HELICANUS

Be patient, and don't be so hard on yourself.

PERICLES


You sound like a doctor, Helicanus, but what you're
prescribing me is something you'd hardly do yourself. You
see, I went to Antioch where, as you know, I faced death for
the chance to win a famously beautiful woman. I had hoped
we would get married and have children together, heirs for
my throne that would strengthen my rule in this country
and delight my subjects. I thought she was beautiful in
person, but listen: they were committing incest. Once I
figured it out, her sinful father didn't lash out; he suddenly
became very smooth. As you well know, it's time to be
afraid when tyrants kiss you [2](#). I ran away in the dark of
night and, once I got here, thought I was safe. I know
Antiochus is a tyrant, and that he's probably getting
increasingly paranoid about what I know. And if he suspects
that I've told the world how he killed all of those princes,
and slept with his own daughter, then there's no doubt that
he'll invade our country on the pretense of me having
offended him. Then the country will be plunged into war for
my so-called offense, and many innocent people will die,
and everyone I love, yourself included, will blame me for
it—

HELICANUS

Oh, sir!

PERICLES

I can't sleep. I'm pale and sick. I can't stop thinking about it,
can't stop trying to come up with ways to stop this storm
before it happens. And since there's no solution, I'm just
letting myself be sad about it.

 Pericles cites the biblical traitor
Judas's "kiss"—a sign used to betray
Jesus. He claims an enemy's
friendliness indicates imminent harm.

HELICANUS

Well, my lord, since you have given me leave to speak.

115 Freely will I speak. Antiochus you fear,
And justly too, I think, you fear the tyrant,
Who either by public war or private treason
Will take away your life.

120 Therefore, my lord, go travel for a while,
Till that his rage and anger be forgot,
Or till the Destinies do cut his thread of life.
Your rule direct to any; if to me.
Day serves not light more faithful than I'll be.

PERICLES

I do not doubt thy faith;

125 But should he wrong my liberties in my absence?

HELICANUS

We'll mingle our bloods together in the earth,
From whence we had our being and our birth.


PERICLES


Tyre, I now look from thee then, and to Tarsus
Intend my travel, where I'll hear from thee;

130 And by whose letters I'll dispose myself.
The care I had and have of subjects' good
On thee I lay whose wisdom's strength can bear it.
I'll take thy word for faith, not ask thine oath:
Who shuns not to break one will sure crack both:
135 But in our orbs we'll live so round and safe,
That time of both this truth shall ne'er convince,
Thou show'dst a subject's shine, I a true prince.

Exeunt

HELICANUS


Well, sir, since you've given me permission to speak, I will.
You're right to be afraid of Antiochus, since he'll either wage
a public war or kill you privately. So, I recommend that you
get away and don't come back until he either gets over his
anger or dies . You can trust me to rule the country while
you're gone; I'll be as faithful as day is to the sun.


 *Helicanus refers to the "Destinies" or Fates—three figures in Greco-Roman mythology said to spin a thread to represent human life, and to "cut" the thread when a life was over.*

PERICLES

I do trust you, but what if Antiochus attacks while I'm gone?

HELICANUS

We'll shed each other's blood into the earth from which we
came .

 *In the biblical creation story, God makes Adam out of dirt or dust. Helicanus states a variation of "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," to show that they'll fight to the death, and he doesn't value his life at all.*

PERICLES

Well, then, I'll leave Tyre and head to Tarsus. I'll wait for a
letter from you there. Take care of my subjects while I'm
gone; I leave it up to the strength of your wisdom. I'll take
whatever you say as truth; I won't ask you to swear, since
you either mean what you say or you don't. We'll each do
our jobs, safe and surrounded in our own spheres. Time will
tell how you'll be the best subject you can be, and how I'll
be the best prince.

They both exit.

Act 1, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter THALIARD

THALIARD

So, this is Tyre, and this the court. Here must I
kill King Pericles; and if I do it not, I am sure to
be hanged at home: 'tis dangerous. Well, I perceive
he was a wise fellow, and had good discretion, that,
5 being bid to ask what he would of the king, desired
he might know none of his secrets: now do I see he
had some reason for't; for if a king bid a man be a
villain, he's bound by the indenture of his oath to
be one! Hush! here come the lords of Tyre.

Enter HELICANUS and ESCANES, with other Lords of Tyre

HELICANUS

10 You shall not need, my fellow peers of Tyre,
Further to question me of your king's departure:
His seal'd commission, left in trust with me,
Doth speak sufficiently he's gone to travel.

THALIARD

[Aside] How! the king gone!

HELICANUS

15 If further yet you will be satisfied,
Why, as it were unlicensed of your loves,
He would depart, I'll give some light unto you.

Shakescleare Translation

THALIARD enters.

THALIARD

So, this is Tyre, and this is the court. I'm supposed to kill
King Pericles here and, if I don't do it, I'll be hanged back
home. It's dangerous. Well, now I see that a man would be
wise if, being told to ask for whatever he wanted from the
king, said he didn't want to know any of the king's secrets.
Now I see his reason for it: I mean, if a king tells you to be a
villain, you're bound by your promise to him to be one.
Quiet! Here come the lords of Tyre.

HELICANUS, ESCANES, and other LORDS of Tyre enter.

HELICANUS

Fellow lords of Tyre, there's no need to question me
anymore about the king's departure. He left his sealed
letter of approval with me; that's enough proof for my role
while he's traveling.

THALIARD

[To himself] What? The king's gone?

HELICANUS

If you're still not satisfied—since he didn't go with your
permission—I'll tell you why he left. When he was at
Antioch—

Being at Antioch—

THALIARD

[Aside] What from Antioch?

HELICANUS

- 20 Royal Antiochus—on what cause I know not—
Took some displeasure at him; at least he judged so:
And doubting lest that he had err'd or sinn'd,
To show his sorrow, he'd correct himself;
So puts himself unto the shipman's toil,
25 With whom each minute threatens life or death.

THALIARD

[Aside] Well, I perceive
I shall not be hang'd now, although I would;
But since he's gone, the king's seas must please:
He 'scaped the land, to perish at the sea.
30 I'll present myself. Peace to the lords of Tyre!

HELICANUS

Lord Thaliard from Antiochus is welcome.

THALIARD

- From him I come
With message unto princely Pericles;
But since my landing I have understood
35 Your lord has betook himself to unknown travels,
My message must return from whence it came.

HELICANUS

- We have no reason to desire it,
Commended to our master, not to us:
Yet, ere you shall depart, this we desire,
40 As friends to Antioch, we may feast in Tyre.

Exeunt

THALIARD

[To himself] What about Antioch?

HELICANUS

For reasons unknown to me, King Antiochus got angry at him (or at least Pericles thought so). Pericles, worried that he had offended the king, to show his remorse until he could rectify the situation, decided to sail away, despite it being dangerous on the seas.

THALIARD

[To himself] Well, I guess I won't be hanged now (though I almost was). He's gone, but the king should be happy anyway, since Pericles will probably die at sea. I'll come out of hiding.

[To HELICANUS and the LORDS] Greetings, lords of Tyre!

HELICANUS

Welcome, Lord Thaliard of Antioch.

THALIARD

I have a message from Antiochus for Prince Pericles but, since I got here I've heard that the prince is out on some unknown travels. I guess I'll have to take my message back to where it came from.

HELICANUS

We certainly wouldn't ask you to read it to us if it's addressed to Pericles. But please, before you leave, let's celebrate our friendship with a feast here in Tyre.

They all exit.

Act 1, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter CLEON, the governor of Tarsus, with DIONYZA, and others

CLEON

My Dionyza, shall we rest us here,
And by relating tales of others' griefs,
See if 'twill teach us to forget our own?

DIONYZA

- That were to blow at fire in hope to quench it;
5 For who digs hills because they do aspire
Throws down one mountain to cast up a higher.
O my distressed lord, even such our griefs are;
Here they're but felt, and seen with mischief's eyes,
But like to groves, being topp'd, they higher rise.

CLEON

- 10 O Dionyza,
Who wanteth food, and will not say he wants it,
Or can conceal his hunger till he famish?


Shakescleare Translation


CLEON (the governor of Tarsus), DIONYZA, and others enter.

CLEON

Dionyza, should we sit down here and tell each other sad stories? Maybe that way we'll forget our own sad lives.

DIONYZA

That's like blowing on a fire to try to put it out. It's like digging up a hill to stop it growing tall; you'll build a higher mountain in the process. My dear, as bad as our suffering is, at least it's only felt. If someone up to no good were to take notice, they might make things even worse. 

 Dionyza's metaphors in the original text all suggest that talking about sadness makes it worse; finally, she suggests that the situation could become more dire if an enemy power took advantage of them in their weakness. In the last instance, she compares their current situation to a forest chopped down (by the violence of the invading army) and replaced by taller trees (that is, greater suffering in the form of foreign domination).

CLEON

Oh, Dionyza, how can someone who's starving not beg for food? Can he pretend he's not hungry until he dies? We should proclaim our grief loudly, cry out, weep, then shout

Our tongues and sorrows do sound deep
 Our woes into the air; our eyes do weep,
 15 Till tongues fetch breath that may proclaim them
 louder;
 That, if heaven slumber while their creatures want,
 They may awake their helps to comfort them.
 I'll then discourse our woes, felt several years,
 20 And wanting breath to speak help me with tears.

DIONYZA

I'll do my best, sir.

CLEON

This Tarsus, o'er which I have the government,
 A city on whom plenty held full hand,
 For riches strew'd herself even in the streets;
 25 Whose towers bore heads so high they kiss'd the clouds,
 And strangers ne'er beheld but wondered at;
 Whose men and dames so jetted and adorn'd,
 Like one another's glass to trim them by:
 Their tables were stored full, to glad the sight,
 30 And not so much to feed on as delight;
 All poverty was scorn'd, and pride so great,
 The name of help grew odious to repeat.

DIONYZA

O, 'tis too true.

CLEON

But see what heaven can do! By this our change,
 35 These mouths, who but of late, earth, sea, and air,
 Were all too little to content and please,
 Although they gave their creatures in abundance,
 As houses are defiled for want of use,
 They are now starved for want of exercise:
 40 Those palates who, not yet two summers younger,
 Must have inventions to delight the taste,
 Would now be glad of bread, and beg for it:
 Those mothers who, to nouse up their babes,
 Thought nought too curious, are ready now
 45 To eat those little darlings whom they loved.
 So sharp are hunger's teeth, that man and wife
 Draw lots who first shall die to lengthen life:
 Here stands a lord, and there a lady weeping;
 Here many sink, yet those which see them fall
 50 Have scarce strength left to give them burial.
 Is not this true?

DIONYZA

Our cheeks and hollow eyes do witness it.

CLEON

O, let those cities that of plenty's cup
 And her prosperities so largely taste,
 55 With their superfluous riots, hear these tears!
 The misery of Tarsus may be theirs.

Enter a Lord

LORD

Where's the lord governor?

CLEON

Here.
 Speak out thy sorrows which thou bring'st in haste,
 60 For comfort is too far for us to expect.

LORD

We have descried, upon our neighbouring shore,
 A portly sail of ships make hitherward.

even louder. Then maybe the gods will wake up from their
 sleep, take notice of how their creatures are suffering, and
 help us. I'll start by telling our sad story of the last few
 years, and you can help me by crying during the pauses.

DIONYZA

I'll do my best, sir.

CLEON

Tarsus, which I rule, was once wealthy. We had everything
 we wanted: the streets were strewn with riches, we built
 towers up to the skies, and every visitor who came here was
 amazed. Our men and women wore fine clothes and
 jewelry; they were like mirrors to each other's own riches.
 They had more than enough food on their tables. No one
 was poor. We were proud; we couldn't imagine needing
 help from anyone.

DIONYZA

Oh, it's too true.

CLEON

But look what heaven can do! At one time, the earth, sea,
 and air were hardly enough to content and please our
 mouths, though they gave us all the food we needed to
 survive. Just as houses become run-down from lack of use,
 our mouths are now starved for lack of exercise. Two years
 ago we looked for the best recipes to please our palates;
 now we'd be happy to get a crust a bread, and beg for it.
 Women who once happily nursed their babies would hardly
 think it strange that they would now want to eat them.
 Hunger is such a grim reality that husbands and wives take
 bets on which of them will die first. Look, there's a man,
 and there's a woman crying. Here so many are sick that,
 even when someone dies, no one has the strength to bury
 them. Isn't this true?

DIONYZA

You can tell by our sunken cheeks and hollow eyes.

CLEON

Oh, if only the cities that have enough, who enjoy the tastes
 of prosperity, with their superfluous riots, would hear these
 tears! One day, they could be as miserable as Tarsus.

A LORD enters.

LORD

Where's the governor?

CLEON

Here. Tell me the bad news that you hurried to bring us; I
 can't imagine it's good news you bring.

LORD

We can make out, on the opposite shore, a large group of
 ships sailing this way.

CLEON

I thought as much.

One sorrow never comes but brings an heir,
 65 That may succeed as his inheritor;
 And so in ours: some neighbouring nation,
 Taking advantage of our misery,
 Hath stuff'd these hollow vessels with their power,
 To beat us down, the which are down already;
 70 And make a conquest of unhappy me,
 Whereas no glory's got to overcome.

LORD

That's the least fear; for, by the semblance
 Of their white flags display'd, they bring us peace,
 And come to us as favourers, not as foes.

CLEON

75 Thou speak'st like him's untutor'd to repeat:
 Who makes the fairest show means most deceit.
 But bring they what they will and what they can,
 What need we fear?
 The ground's the lowest, and we are half way there.
 80 Go tell their general we attend him here,
 To know for what he comes, and whence he comes,
 And what he craves.

LORD

I go, my lord.

Exit

CLEON

85 Welcome is peace, if he on peace consist;
 If wars, we are unable to resist.

Enter PERICLES with Attendants

PERICLES

Lord governor, for so we hear you are,
 Let not our ships and number of our men
 90 Be like a beacon fired to amaze your eyes.
 We have heard your miseries as far as Tyre,
 And seen the desolation of your streets:
 Nor come we to add sorrow to your tears,
 But to relieve them of their heavy load;
 95 And these our ships, you happily may think
 Are like the Trojan horse was stuff'd within
 With bloody veins, expecting overthrow,
 Are stored with corn to make your needy bread,
 And give them life whom hunger starved half dead.

ALL

100 The gods of Greece protect you!
 And we'll pray for you.

PERICLES

Arise, I pray you, rise:
 We do not look for reverence, but to love,
 And harbourage for ourself, our ships, and men.

CLEON

105 The which when any shall not gratify,
 Or pay you with unthankfulness in thought,
 Be it our wives, our children, or ourselves,
 The curse of heaven and men succeed their evils!
 Till when,—the which I hope shall ne'er be seen,—
 110 Your grace is welcome to our town and us.

PERICLES

Which welcome we'll accept; feast here awhile,
 Until our stars that frown lend us a smile.

Exeunt

CLEON

I figured. It never rains but it pours; one struggle gives way
 to another. It's that way with us. Some nearby country is
 going to take advantage of our weakness. They've sent all
 these ships to kick us while we're down, and conquer us in
 our misery, though it'll hardly be difficult for them to
 overcome us.

LORD

I don't think so. They're flying white flags to show they
 come in peace. They're coming as friends rather than as
 foes.

CLEON

You idiot, that doesn't mean anything! Those that seem to
 be the most kind are the most deceitful. But let them do
 what they will and what they can, why should we be afraid?
 Our lives couldn't be more miserable than they are now;
 we're halfway to the ground. Go, tell their general he can
 meet us here to announce why and from where he comes,
 and what he wants.

LORD

On my way, sir.


The LORD exits.


CLEON

Peace would be great, if that's what he's here for. If it's war
 he wants, there's nothing we can do about it.

PERICLES enters with his servants.

PERICLES

So we hear you're the governor? Don't be so surprised by all
 our ships and men. We've heard about your suffering all the
 way in Tyre, and we've seen the destruction in your streets.
 We came to help, not to make things worse. These ships
 might look like the Trojan horse  (which had Greek
 soldiers hidden inside, bloodthirsty and ready to attack),
 but they're filled with grain to make bread, to bring all your
 starving people back to life.

 The "Trojan horse" is from
 Homer's *Iliad*, an epic poem about the
 Trojan War. To infiltrate Troy, a group
 of Greek soldiers hides inside a giant
 wooden horse left as a gift. When the
 Trojans bring the horse inside the city,
 the Greeks attack.

ALL

[*CLEON, DIONYZA, and the others kneel to PERICLES*] May
 the gods of Greece protect you! And we'll pray for you.

PERICLES

Get up, please. I didn't come to be worshipped. All I ask is a
 place for myself, my ships, and my men to stay.

CLEON

If anyone fails to thank you, or think grateful thoughts
 toward you—whether it's our wives, children, or
 ourselves—may they be cursed by heaven and punished by
 men! Until the day someone denies you (which day we
 hope will never come) you're very welcome here in our
 town and with us.

PERICLES

We'll accept your welcome and feast here a while, until our
 fortunes turn again from bad to good.

They all exit.

Act 2, Chorus

Shakespeare

*Enter GOWER***GOWER**

Here have you seen a mighty king
 His child, I wis, to incest bring;
 A better prince and benign lord,
 That will prove awful both in deed and word.
 5 Be quiet then as men should be,
 Till he hath pass'd necessity.
 I'll show you those in troubles reign,
 Losing a mite, a mountain gain.
 The good in conversation,
 10 To whom I give my benison,
 Is still at Tarsus, where each man
 Thinks all is writ he speken can;
 And, to remember what he does,
 Build his statue to make him glorious:
 15 But tidings to the contrary
 Are brought your eyes; what need speak I?

DUMB SHOW Enter at one door PERICLES talking with CLEON; all the train with them. Enter at another door a Gentleman, with a letter to PERICLES; PERICLES shows the letter to CLEON; gives the Messenger a reward, and knights him. Exit PERICLES at one door, and CLEON at another

GOWER


Good Helicanus, that stay'd at home,
 Not to eat honey like a drone
 From others' labours; for though he strive
 20 To killen bad, keep good alive;
 And to fulfil his prince' desire,
 Sends word of all that haps in Tyre:
 How Thaliard came full bent with sin
 And had intent to murder him;
 25 And that in Tarsus was not best
 Longer for him to make his rest.
 He, doing so, put forth to seas,
 Where when men been, there's seldom ease;
 For now the wind begins to blow;
 30 Thunder above and deeps below
 Make such unquiet, that the ship
 Should house him safe is wreck'd and split;
 And he, good prince, having all lost,
 By waves from coast to coast is tost:
 35 All perishen of man, of pelf,
 Ne aught escapen but himself;
 Till fortune, tired with doing bad,
 Threw him ashore, to give him glad:
 And here he comes. What shall be next,
 40 Pardon old Gower,—this longs the text.


Exit

Shakescleare Translation


*GOWER enters.***GOWER**


Here you've seen a king commit incest with his daughter. Pericles will turn out to be a much more powerful prince and a better ruler, strong in both word and deed. But now he has to keep his mouth shut, until enough time has passed. I'll show you how much trouble he had to deal with; once he got over the molehill, he ran into a mountain. That good man whom I bless, Pericles, is still at Tarsus, where everyone is singing his praises and the city is erecting a statue of him to remember him by—everything *seems* happy. But what you're about to see contradicts that, so what can I say?

In a dumb show , PERICLES comes in on one side of the stage talking with CLEON, their servants and lords following them. At the opposite side, a MESSENGER enters with a letter, which he gives to PERICLES. PERICLES shows the letter to CLEON, gives the MESSENGER a reward, and touches both his shoulders with his sword. PERICLES leaves in one direction, CLEON in the other.

 "Dumb shows"—usually silent sequences of action—were a common dramatic tool in Shakespeare's day. They were incorporated into the play to abridge parts of the plot, or used allegorically to explain a moral. Presenters (like Gower) would narrate the dumb show. Loosely based on medieval forms of dramatic entertainment, the dumb show adds to the sense of history that Gower began to build in his first speech.

GOWER

Back at home, Helicanus has hardly been a lazy worker bee  : he's done everything the prince asked him to, and has sent news of everything happening in Tyre. He told Pericles how Thaliard came to murder him, and advised him not to stay in Tarsus much longer. Pericles sailed away on the sea, where men can never rest easy, and was quickly caught up in a storm. The winds blew, loud thunder was heard, and the ship that should have kept him safe was wrecked. Having lost everything, Pericles was tossed by waves from coast to coast. He had nothing and no one to keep him company, since no one else escaped alive. Finally, fortune got tired of ruining his life, and threw him on shore to make him happy. Here he comes. What happens next—actually, I'll shut up now.

 Gower indicates Helicanus isn't greedy or lazy. He hasn't tried to usurp the queen bee's place (Pericles's kingship), but has worked as hard as a "drone" making honey.

GOWER exits.

Act 2, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter PERICLES, wet

Shakescleare Translation

PERICLES enters, wet.

PERICLES

Yet cease your ire, you angry stars of heaven!
Wind, rain, and thunder, remember, earthly man
Is but a substance that must yield to you;
And I, as fits my nature, do obey you:
5 Alas, the sea hath cast me on the rocks,
Wash'd me from shore to shore, and left me breath
Nothing to think on but ensuing death:
Let it suffice the greatness of your powers
To have bereft a prince of all his fortunes;
10 And having thrown him from your watery grave,
Here to have death in peace is all he'll crave.

Enter three FISHERMEN

FIRST FISHERMAN

What, ho, Pilch!

SECOND FISHERMAN

Ha, come and bring away the nets!

FIRST FISHERMAN

What, Patch-breech, I say!

THIRD FISHERMAN

15 What say you, master?

FIRST FISHERMAN

Look how thou stirrest now! come away, or I'll
fetch thee with a wanion.

THIRD FISHERMAN

Faith, master, I am thinking of the poor men that
were cast away before us even now.

FIRST FISHERMAN

20 Alas, poor souls, it grieved my heart to hear what
pitiful cries they made to us to help them, when,
well-a-day, we could scarce help ourselves.

THIRD FISHERMAN

Nay, master, said not I as much when I saw the
porpus how he bounced and tumbled? they say
they're half fish, half flesh: a plague on them,
25 they ne'er come but I look to be washed. Master, I
marvel how the fishes live in the sea.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Why, as men do a-land; the great ones eat up the
little ones: I can compare our rich misers to
nothing so fitly as to a whale; a' plays and
tumbles, driving the poor fry before him, and at
last devours them all at a mouthful: such whales
have I heard on o' the land, who never leave gaping
till they've swallowed the whole parish, church,
35 steeple, bells, and all.

PERICLES

[Aside] A pretty moral.

THIRD FISHERMAN

But, master, if I had been the sexton, I would have
been that day in the belfry.

SECOND FISHERMAN

Why, man?

THIRD FISHERMAN

40 Because he should have swallowed me too: and when I
had been in his belly, I would have kept such a

PERICLES

Please, heaven, stop your wrath! Wind, rain and thunder:
remember that earthly men can only yield to you and
recognize that I, as an earthly man, do obey you. The sea
has tossed me onto the rocks, washed me from shore to
shore, and left me sure of nothing but that my end is near.
Please, let it be enough for your great powers that I, a
prince, have lost everything. Since you've thrown me out of
your watery grave, all I ask is to die here in peace.

Three FISHERMEN enter.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Come on, buddy!

SECOND FISHERMAN

Hey, come bring the nets in!

FIRST FISHERMAN

What'd you say, dummy?

THIRD FISHERMAN

What did you say, master?

FIRST FISHERMAN

Oh, look how fast you're moving now! Come on, then, or I'll
come after you with a vengeance.

THIRD FISHERMAN

Master, I'm thinking of the poor men that were shipwrecked
before us even now.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Poor souls. It was heart-wrenching to hear them crying out
for help when, truth be told, we could barely help
ourselves.

THIRD FISHERMAN

I told you this was coming when I saw the dolphin jumping
in the waves. They say dolphins are part fish, part human . .
. curse them, every time I see one I end up in a storm.
Master, how do fish live in the sea?

FIRST FISHERMAN

The same way men do on land: the big ones eat the little
ones. [Whales are like rich men 1](#), they play and tumble,
pushing all the little fish in front of them, then eat them up
all in one gulp. I've heard of whales like that on land, who
won't stop until they've swallowed the whole parish,
church, steeple, bells, and everything else.

PERICLES

[To himself] That's a nice moral.

THIRD FISHERMAN

But master, if I [worked 2](#) in a church, I'd want to be there
for that.

SECOND FISHERMAN

Why, man?

THIRD FISHERMAN

Because, when he swallowed me, I would have made a
bunch of noise in his belly. I would have jangled all the bells

[1](#) The next few speeches provide an extended comparison of the newly-emerging Jacobean middle class of landowners to whales.

[2](#) In the original text, a "sexton" is a church employee who, among other things, rings church bells. A "belfry" is a part of the steeple that houses the bells.

45 jangling of the bells, that he should never have left, till he cast bells, steeple, church, and parish up again. But if the good King Simonides were of my mind,—

PERICLES

[Aside] Simonides!

THIRD FISHERMAN

We would purge the land of these drones, that rob the bee of her honey.

PERICLES

50 *[Aside]* How from the finny subject of the sea These fishers tell the infirmities of men; And from their watery empire recollect All that may men approve or men detect! Peace be at your labour, honest fishermen.

SECOND FISHERMAN

55 Honest! good fellow, what's that? If it be a day fits you, search out of the calendar, and nobody look after it.

PERICLES

May see the sea hath cast upon your coast.

SECOND FISHERMAN

What a drunken knave was the sea to cast thee in our way!

PERICLES

60 A man whom both the waters and the wind, In that vast tennis-court, have made the ball For them to play upon, entreats you pity him: He asks of you, that never used to beg.

FIRST FISHERMAN

65 No, friend, cannot you beg? Here's them in our country Greece gets more with begging than we can do with working.

SECOND FISHERMAN

Canst thou catch any fishes, then?

PERICLES

I never practised it.

SECOND FISHERMAN

70 Nay, then thou wilt starve, sure; for here's nothing to be got now-a-days, unless thou canst fish for't.

PERICLES

75 What I have been I have forgot to know; But what I am, want teaches me to think on: A man throng'd up with cold: my veins are chill, And have no more of life than may suffice To give my tongue that heat to ask your help; Which if you shall refuse, when I am dead, For that I am a man, pray see me buried.

FIRST FISHERMAN

80 Die quoth-a? Now gods forbid! I have a gown here; come, put it on; keep thee warm. Now, afore me, a handsome fellow! Come, thou shalt go home, and we'll have flesh for holidays, fish for fasting-days, and more'er puddings and flap-jacks, and thou shalt be welcome.

so much that he wouldn't have left until he vomited up all the bells, steeple, church, and parish again. If King Simonides agreed with me—

PERICLES

[To himself] Simonides!

THIRD FISHERMAN

—then we could get rid of all the [men](#) that are robbing the king of his wealth.

PERICLES

[To himself] It's amazing how these fishermen have gone from talking about fish in the sea to explaining the men's weaknesses, and how, from their watery corner of the world, they've come to understand everything that men could think of or discover.

[To the FISHERMEN] Hello there, honest fishermen.

SECOND FISHERMAN

Honest? What's that mean? If you pointed to any old day on the calendar, we wouldn't know what it meant.

PERICLES

As you can see, I've been shipwrecked here.

SECOND FISHERMAN

The sea must have been drunk if it dropped you here.

PERICLES

I'm a man whom the waves and the wind have hit around like a tennis ball all day in gigantic tennis court of the sea. Please, have pity on me. I'm asking you, and I don't usually beg.

FIRST FISHERMAN

You don't beg? There's a lot of people in our country, Greece, that get more from begging than we do from working.

SECOND FISHERMAN

Do you know how to catch fish?

PERICLES

I've never tried it.

SECOND FISHERMAN

Well, you'll starve then. There's nothing to be had these days unless you fish for it.

PERICLES

I can't think about what I was before; I can only think about what I am now, which is cold. I'm freezing down to my veins and barely have enough life left in me to warm my tongue up to ask you for help. Please help me, or at least, when I'm dead, make sure I get a proper burial.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Did you say "die"? May the gods forbid! I have a coat here, come on, put it on, get warm. Now come with me, handsome man! You can come home with me. We'll have [meat on holidays](#), fish on fasting days, and plenty of desserts and pancakes, and you're welcome to it all.

The fisherman uses the metaphor of an unnatural bee hive, in which male worker bees steal from the queen bee instead of gathering honey for her.

The fisherman describes typical Christian dietary rules. Fish substituted for meat during fasting periods like Lent. Meat was allowed

during feasting periods like the Christmas season.

PERICLES

I thank you, sir.

SECOND FISHERMAN

85 Hark you, my friend; you said you could not beg.

PERICLES

I did but crave.

SECOND FISHERMAN

But crave! Then I'll turn craver too, and so I shall 'scape whipping.

PERICLES

Why, are all your beggars whipped, then?

SECOND FISHERMAN

90 O, not all, my friend, not all; for if all your beggars were whipped, I would wish no better office than to be beadle. But, master, I'll go draw up the net.

Exit with Third Fisherman

PERICLES

95 *[Aside]* How well this honest mirth becomes their labour!

FIRST FISHERMAN

Hark you, sir, do you know where ye are?

PERICLES

Not well.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Why, I'll tell you: this is called Pentapolis, and our king the good Simonides.

PERICLES

100 The good King Simonides, do you call him.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Ay, sir; and he deserves so to be called for his peaceable reign and good government.

PERICLES

105 He is a happy king, since he gains from his subjects the name of good by his government. How far is his court distant from this shore?

FIRST FISHERMAN

110 Marry, sir, half a day's journey: and I'll tell you, he hath a fair daughter, and to-morrow is her birth-day; and there are princes and knights come from all parts of the world to just and tourney for her love.

PERICLES

Were my fortunes equal to my desires, I could wish to make one there.

PERICLES

Thank you, sir.

SECOND FISHERMAN

Hey, man, you said you wouldn't beg!

PERICLES

I only asked.

SECOND FISHERMAN

Only asked! Maybe I'll become a beggar too, and talk my way out of a whipping.

PERICLES

Why? Are all beggars whipped in this country, then?

SECOND FISHERMAN

Oh, not all of them, my friend, not all. If all beggars were whipped, I would want no better job than to be a beadle. But master, I'll go pull the nets in.

"Beadles" were minor church officials in charge of punishing petty offenders. If all beggars were punishable by whipping, the fishermen would like to be a beadle-- he'd have plenty of work and be paid well.

The Second and Third FISHERMEN exit.

PERICLES

[To himself] Joking makes their work fun!

FIRST FISHERMAN

Listen, sir, do you know where you are?

PERICLES

Not really.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Well, I'll tell you. This is Pentapolis, and our king is the good Simonides.

PERICLES

The good King Simonides, huh?

FIRST FISHERMAN

Yes, sir, and he deserves it. He rules with peace and good government.

PERICLES

He's fortunate to have his subjects speak so highly of his government. How far is the court from where we are now?

FIRST FISHERMAN

Well, sir, it's half a day's journey. And, by the way, he has a beautiful daughter and tomorrow is her birthday. Princes and knights from all over the world have come to fight in a tournament for her love.

PERICLES

If my luck matched my desires, I'd try my hand at that.

FIRST FISHERMAN

O, sir, things must be as they may; and what a man cannot get, he may lawfully deal for—his wife's soul.

Re-enter Second and Third Fishermen, drawing up a net

SECOND FISHERMAN

115 Help, master, help! here's a fish hangs in the net,
like a poor man's right in the law; 'twill hardly
come out. Ha! bots on't, 'tis come at last, and
'tis turned to a rusty armour.

PERICLES

An armour, friends! I pray you, let me see it.
120 Thanks, fortune, yet, that, after all my crosses,
Thou givest me somewhat to repair myself;
And though it was mine own, part of my heritage,
Which my dead father did bequeath to me.
With this strict charge, even as he left his life,
125 'Keep it, my Pericles; it hath been a shield
Twixt me and death;'— and pointed to this brace;—
'For that it saved me, keep it; in like necessity—
The which the gods protect thee from!— may
defend thee.'
130 It kept where I kept, I so dearly loved it;
Till the rough seas, that spare not any man,
Took it in rage, though calm'd have given't again:
I thank thee for't: my shipwreck now's no ill,
Since I have here my father's gift in's will.

FIRST FISHERMAN

135 What mean you, sir?

PERICLES

To beg of you, kind friends, this coat of worth,
For it was sometime target to a king;
I know it by this mark. He loved me dearly,
And for his sake I wish the having of it;
140 And that you'd guide me to your sovereign's court,
Where with it I may appear a gentleman;
And if that ever my low fortune's better,
I'll pay your bounties; till then rest your debtor.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Why, wilt thou tourney for the lady?

PERICLES

145 I'll show the virtue I have borne in arms.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Why, do 'e take it, and the gods give thee good on't!

SECOND FISHERMAN

Ay, but hark you, my friend; 'twas we that made up
this garment through the rough seams of the waters:
there are certain condolences, certain veils. I
150 hope, sir, if you thrive, you'll remember from
whence you had it.

PERICLES

Believe 't, I will.
By your furtherance I am clothed in steel;
And, spite of all the rapture of the sea,
155 This jewel holds his building on my arm:
Unto thy value I will mount myself
Upon a courser, whose delightful steps
Shall make the gazer joy to see him tread.
Only, my friend, I yet am unprovided
160 Of a pair of bases.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Oh, Sir, things are what they are. What a man can't get, he can trade for (like his wife's soul).

The Second and Third FISHERMEN come back in, pulling a net behind them.

SECOND FISHERMAN

Help, master, help! There's a heavy fish stuck in the net!
He's as stuck as a poor man in a prison! We can't get it out.
Hey! Here we go! We got it out at last, and it turned into a
suit of rusty armor.

PERICLES

Armor? Let me see that. After all the **bad luck** I've had, finally, something to help me fix myself, though it is my own, and part of my heritage: this is my armor, given to me by my dead father. Just before he died he told me, "Keep it, Pericles. It's kept me safe all my life," and he pointed to this brace, "It saved me. Keep it. When you need it, though I hope the gods will protect you from such a situation, it will defend you." I've always had it with me and have always loved it. I'd never been separated from it until the storm, which doesn't spare anyone, took it in its rage. Now that it's calmed, it's given it back again. I thank you for it. I didn't lose much after all in the shipwreck, since I have my father's gift now.

FIRST FISHERMAN

What do you mean, sir?

PERICLES

Friends, can I beg for you to give me this armor? I recognize the marks; it belongs to a king who loved me, and I want to have it for his sake. Can I also ask you to lead me to the king's court? With this armor, I'll dress up like a gentleman and, if I win and improve my bad luck, I'll pay you back for kindness. Until then, I owe you.

FIRST FISHERMAN

What, you're going to enter the tournament for the lady?

PERICLES

I'll show how skilled I am in battle.

FIRST FISHERMAN

Well, take it, then, and may the gods bless you!

SECOND FISHERMAN

But listen, sir: we're the ones that pulled this armor out of the rough sea, so there are certain conditions, certain respects to paid. I hope, sir, if you're successful, that you'll remember where you got it from.

PERICLES

Believe me, I will. With your help, I have a suit of armor. In spite of what the sea did to me, I still have this valuable ring, which I'll sell to buy a horse so beautiful everyone will love to see me riding him. And yet, my friends, I still need some jousting equipment.

5 In the original text, Pericles calls his misfortunes "crosses"—alluding to the cross that Jesus had to carry through Jerusalem up to the hill where he was killed. "Crosses" is shorthand for unfair physical and spiritual trials suffered patiently.

SECOND FISHERMAN

We'll sure provide: thou shalt have my best gown to make thee a pair; and I'll bring thee to the court myself.

PERICLES

165 Then honour be but a goal to my will,
This day I'll rise, or else add ill to ill.

Exeunt

SECOND FISHERMAN

We can help you with that. We'll make sure you get a pair, and I'll bring you to court myself.

PERICLES

All I want is honor. It can only get better from here.

They all exit.

Act 2, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter SIMONIDES, THAISA, Lords, and Attendants

SIMONIDES

Are the knights ready to begin the triumph?

FIRST LORD

They are, my liege;
And stay your coming to present themselves.

SIMONIDES

5 Return them, we are ready; and our daughter,
In honour of whose birth these triumphs are,
Sits here, like beauty's child, whom nature gat
For men to see, and seeing wonder at.

Exit a Lord

THAISA

It pleaseth you, my royal father, to express
My commendations great, whose merit's less.

SIMONIDES

10 It's fit it should be so; for princes are
A model which heaven makes like to itself:
As jewels lose their glory if neglected,
So princes their renowns if not respected.
'Tis now your honour, daughter, to explain
15 The labour of each knight in his device.

THAISA

Which, to preserve mine honour, I'll perform.

Enter a Knight; he passes over, and his Squire presents his shield to the Princess

SIMONIDES

Who is the first that doth prefer himself?

THAISA

20 A knight of Sparta, my renowned father;
And the device he bears upon his shield
Is a black Ethiopie reaching at the sun
The word, 'Lux tua vita mihi.'

SIMONIDES

He loves you well that holds his life of you.

The Second Knight passes over

Shakescleare Translation

SIMONIDES, THAISA, LORDS, and servants enter.

SIMONIDES

Are the knights ready to begin the contest?

FIRST LORD

They are, sir, and are waiting to present themselves to you.

SIMONIDES

Bring them in; I'm ready. Since this whole thing is in honor of her birthday, my beautiful daughter, whom Nature made for men to see ¹, will sit here, where everyone can marvel at her.

FIRST LORD exits.

THAISA ²

Father, you like bragging about me even when I don't deserve it.

SIMONIDES

I have to—princes are as vain as the gods. Just like jewels lose their shine if they're not polished, princes lose their reputations if they're not respected. Now, daughter, it's your job to explain what each knight's emblem ³ means.

THAISA

I'll do my best.

FIRST KNIGHT marches in front of them as his squire presents the knight's shield (which has an emblem painted on it) to THAISA.

SIMONIDES

Who's this first knight?

THAISA

A knight from Sparta, sir. The design on his shield shows an African man reaching toward the sun, with the motto "Your light is my life."

SIMONIDES

Sounds like he loves you a lot, if you're his whole life.

The SECOND KNIGHT marches by.

¹ Simonides's description of Thaisa is similar to Antiochus's description of his daughter.

² Thaisa's name is pronounced "Ty-EE-suh," according to Shakespeare's metrical pattern—the stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry.

³ In the Renaissance, most aristocratic men had a personal emblem accompanied by a Latin motto—a "device." A device on clothes, tapestries, rings, and shields would identify its owner.

SIMONIDES

25 Who is the second that presents himself?

THAISA

A prince of Macedon, my royal father;
And the device he bears upon his shield
Is an arm'd knight that's conquer'd by a lady;

30 The motto thus, in Spanish, 'Piu por dulzura que por fuerza.'

The Third Knight passes over

SIMONIDES

And what's the third?

THAISA

The third of Antioch;
And his device, a wreath of chivalry;

35 The word, 'Me pompae provexit apex.'

The Fourth Knight passes over

SIMONIDES

What is the fourth?

THAISA

A burning torch that's turned upside down;
The word, 'Quod me alit, me extinguit.'

SIMONIDES

40 Which shows that beauty hath his power and will,
Which can as well inflame as it can kill.

The Fifth Knight passes over

THAISA

The fifth, an hand environed with clouds,
Holding out gold that's by the touchstone tried;

45 The motto thus, 'Sic spectanda fides.'

The Sixth Knight, PERICLES, passes over

SIMONIDES

And what's
The sixth and last, the which the knight himself
With such a graceful courtesy deliver'd?

THAISA

50 He seems to be a stranger; but his present is
A wither'd branch, that's only green at top;
The motto, 'In hac spe vivo.'

SIMONIDES

A pretty moral;
From the dejected state wherein he is,
55 He hopes by you his fortunes yet may flourish.

FIRST LORD

He had need mean better than his outward show
Can any way speak in his just commend;
For by his rusty outside he appears
To have practised more the whipstock than the lance.

SECOND LORD

60 He well may be a stranger, for he comes
To an honour'd triumph strangely furnished.

THIRD LORD

And on set purpose let his armour rust
Until this day, to scour it in the dust.

SIMONIDES

Who's the second knight?

THAISA

A prince of Macedon, sir. His design shows a knight being
conquered by a lady. The motto, in Spanish, is "Better by
sweetness than by force."

The THIRD KNIGHT marches by.

SIMONIDES

And the third?

THAISA

The third is from Antioch. His shield shows a green wreath,
with the motto, "I'll fight my way to the top."

The fourth knight marches by.

SIMONIDES

And the fourth?

THAISA

A burning torch turned upside down, with the motto, "That
which lights me snuffs me out."

SIMONIDES

Which symbolizes that his love of beauty could as easily
lead him to do great things as evil ones.

The fifth knight marches by.

THAISA

The fifth knight's shield shows a hand emerging from
clouds, holding pure gold. His motto is, "Faith should be
valued this way."

The sixth knight, PERICLES, marches by.

SIMONIDES

And what about the sixth and the last? It's very polite to go
last, you know.

THAISA

I think he's a stranger. His shield design is a dead tree
branch with only a little green at the top. The motto is, "This
hope keeps me alive."

SIMONIDES

That's a nice moral. It means that he's currently down and
out but hopes that, by marrying you, he'll be on his way to a
better fortune.

FIRST LORD

He'll have to do better than this to prove himself. His rusty
armor looks less like a knight's and more like it came from a
junk shop.

SECOND LORD

He must be a stranger, since he showed up with such a
strange outfit.

THIRD LORD

And let his armor rust until today on purpose, before he
wears it in the tournament.

SIMONIDES

Opinion's but a fool, that makes us scan
 65 The outward habit by the inward man.
 But stay, the knights are coming: we will withdraw
 Into the gallery.

*Exeunt***SIMONIDES**

It's foolish to judge a book by its cover. Wait, the knights are
 coming—let's go into the stadium.

*They all exit.***Act 2, Scene 3****Shakespeare**

*Great shouts within and all cry, "The mean knight!" Enter SIMONIDES,
 THAISA, Lords, Attendants, and Knights, from tilting*

SIMONIDES

Knights,
 To say you're welcome were superfluous.
 To place upon the volume of your deeds,
 As in a title-page, your worth in arms,
 5 Were more than you expect, or more than's fit,
 Since every worth in show commends itself.
 Prepare for mirth, for mirth becomes a feast:
 You are princes and my guests.

THAISA

But you, my knight and guest;
 10 To whom this wreath of victory I give,
 And crown you king of this day's happiness.

PERICLES

'Tis more by fortune, lady, than by merit.

SIMONIDES

Call it by what you will, the day is yours;
 And here, I hope, is none that envies it.
 15 In framing an artist, art hath thus decreed,
 To make some good, but others to exceed;
 And you are her labour'd scholar. Come, queen o'
 the feast,—
 For, daughter, so you are,— here take your place:
 20 Marshal the rest, as they deserve their grace.

KNIGHTS

We are honour'd much by good Simonides.

SIMONIDES

Your presence glads our days: honour we love;
 For who hates honour hates the gods above.

MARSHAL

Sir, yonder is your place.

PERICLES

25 Some other is more fit.

FIRST KNIGHT

Contend not, sir; for we are gentlemen
 That neither in our hearts nor outward eyes
 Envy the great nor do the low despise.

PERICLES

You are right courteous knights.

SIMONIDES

30 Sit, sir, sit.

Shakescleare Translation

*From offstage, everyone cheers for PERICLES. SIMONIDES,
 THAISA, LORDS, attendants, and KNIGHTS come in from the
 stadium, where the tournament has just happened.*

SIMONIDES

Knights, I hardly need to say how welcome you are. To write
 an endorsement of the book of your good deeds, like on a
 title page, would be more than is needed, since you've
 already showed your worth by doing the deeds themselves.
 So, get ready to laugh, since feasts are best enjoyed with
 laughter. All of you princes are my guests.

THAISA

[To PERICLES] Except for you; you're my guest. Here's a
 victory crown so everyone know's you're the king of the
 feast.

PERICLES

It was more by good luck, ma'am, than by skill.

SIMONIDES

Call it whatever you want; the day is yours. And I hope no
 one here is jealous of you. Some artists are good, but
 according to the standards of art, some are excellent; you're
 clearly the best that art has to offer.

[To THAISA] Come, daughter, queen of the feast (since that's
 what you are), take your place. Direct everyone to do what
 they're supposed to.

[He seats THAISA at the high table]

KNIGHTS

You've honored us with this feast, Simonides.

SIMONIDES

I'm glad you're all here. I love honor; anyone who hates
 honor hates the gods above.

MARSHAL

[Gesturing toward the high table] Sir, there's your place.

PERICLES

Some other place would be better.

FIRST KNIGHT

Don't argue, sir. We gentlemen don't get jealous of others
 with our eyes or our hearts. We neither envy the powerful
 nor hate the weak.

PERICLES

You're all very kind, polite knights.

SIMONIDES

Sit, sir, sit.

PERICLES

By Jove, I wonder, that is king of thoughts,
These cates resist me, she but thought upon.

THAISA

By Juno, that is queen of marriage,
All viands that I eat do seem unsavoury.

35 Wishing him my meat. Sure, he's a gallant gentleman.

SIMONIDES

He's but a country gentleman;
Has done no more than other knights have done;
Has broken a staff or so; so let it pass.

THAISA

To me he seems like diamond to glass.

PERICLES

40 Yon king's to me like to my father's picture,
Which tells me in that glory once he was;
Had princes sit, like stars, about his throne,
And he the sun, for them to reverence;
None that beheld him, but, like lesser lights,
45 Did veil their crowns to his supremacy:
Where now his son's like a glow-worm in the night,
The which hath fire in darkness, none in light:
Whereby I see that Time's the king of men,
He's both their parent, and he is their grave,
50 And gives them what he will, not what they crave.

SIMONIDES

What, are you merry, knights?

KNIGHTS

Who can be other in this royal presence?

SIMONIDES

Here, with a cup that's stored unto the brim,—
As you do love, fill to your mistress' lips,—
55 We drink this health to you.

KNIGHTS

We thank your grace.

SIMONIDES

Yet pause awhile:
Yon knight doth sit too melancholy,
As if the entertainment in our court
60 Had not a show might countervail his worth.
Note it not you, Thaisa?

THAISA

What is it
To me, my father?

SIMONIDES

O, attend, my daughter:
65 Princes in this should live like gods above,
Who freely give to every one that comes
To honour them:
And princes not doing so are like to gnats,
Which make a sound, but kill'd are wonder'd at.
70 Therefore to make his entrance more sweet,
Here, say we drink this standing-bowl of wine to him.

THAISA

Alas, my father, it befits not me
Unto a stranger knight to be so bold:
He may my proffer take for an offence,
75

PERICLES

[*To herself*] By Jove ¹, king of thoughts: I can hardly eat
this delicious food; I can't stop thinking about a certain girl.

¹ Again, Jove was the king of the Greco-Roman gods.

THAISA

[*To herself*] By Juno ², queen of marriage: everything I eat
tastes bland; I only want to taste him.

² Juno was Jove's wife, and goddess of marriage.

[*To SIMONIDES*] He's definitely an rich gentleman.

SIMONIDES

He's just a country gentleman. He's done no more than any
other knight would do, he's broken a lance or two, so let it
go.

THAISA

To me he's one in a million ³.

³ In the original text, Thaisa compares Pericles to a "diamond" and the other knights to "glass" to indicate Pericles's higher value.

PERICLES

That king is like a picture of my own father; looking at him
reminds me of how glorious he once was. He used to have
princes sit around his throne like stars, looking up to him
like the sun ⁴. No one who saw him could hold a candle to
his greatness; those smaller lights were outshone by his
supremacy. I, his, son, am just a little firefly. You can see me
at night, but I'm invisible in the day. From this, I can say
that Time rules men. He raises men up and he puts them in
their graves, and doesn't always give them what they want.

⁴ In Pericles's extended metaphor, light symbolizes power and individual greatness. Pericles's father and Simonides are represented as bright. By contrast, Antiochus and Cleon are associated with darkness to emphasize their bad morals.

SIMONIDES

What are you all laughing at?

KNIGHTS

How could we do anything else in your royal presence?

SIMONIDES

Here, fill your cup up to the brim. Here's a toast to your love
for Thaisa and to all your health.

KNIGHTS

We thank you, sir.

SIMONIDES

[*Pointing to PERICLES*] But wait: that knight looks sad, like
our party isn't good enough for him. Haven't you noticed,
Thaisa?

THAISA

What is it to me, father?

SIMONIDES

Listen, daughter: princes, like the gods, should be generous
to anyone who comes before them. Stingy princes are like
gnats; they buzz around and everyone's glad when they're
killed. So, to make Pericles's stay more enjoyable, what do
you say we drink a toast of this wine to him to help cheer
him up?

THAISA

Father, I can't be that forward with a strange knight. He
might be offended by the offer, since some men take
women's gifts as disrespect.

Since men take women's gifts for impudence.

SIMONIDES

How!
Do as I bid you, or you'll move me else.

THAISA

[Aside] Now, by the gods, he could not please me better.

SIMONIDES

80 And furthermore tell him, we desire to know of him,
Of whence he is, his name and parentage.

THAISA

The king my father, sir, has drunk to you.

PERICLES

I thank him.

THAISA

Wishing it so much blood unto your life.

PERICLES

85 I thank both him and you, and pledge him freely.

THAISA

And further he desires to know of you,
Of whence you are, your name and parentage.

PERICLES

A gentleman of Tyre; my name, Pericles;
My education been in arts and arms;
90 Who, looking for adventures in the world,
Was by the rough seas reft of ships and men,
And after shipwreck driven upon this shore.

THAISA

He thanks your grace; names himself Pericles,
A gentleman of Tyre,
95 Who only by misfortune of the seas
Bereft of ships and men, cast on this shore.

SIMONIDES

Now, by the gods, I pity his misfortune,
And will awake him from his melancholy.
Come, gentlemen, we sit too long on trifles,
100 And waste the time, which looks for other revels.
Even in your armours, as you are address'd,
Will very well become a soldier's dance.
I will not have excuse, with saying this
Loud music is too harsh for ladies' heads,
105 Since they love men in arms as well as beds.

The Knights dance

SIMONIDES

So, this was well ask'd, 'twas so well perform'd.
Come, sir;
Here is a lady that wants breathing too:
And I have heard, you knights of Tyre
110 Are excellent in making ladies trip;
And that their measures are as excellent.

PERICLES

In those that practise them they are, my lord.

SIMONIDES

O, that's as much as you would be denied
Of your fair courtesy.
115

SIMONIDES

What? Do what I say, or else.

THAISA

[To herself] Now, by the gods, there's nothing that would make me happier.

SIMONIDES

And also tell him we want to know where he came from and who his parents are.

THAISA

[To PERICLES] Sir, the king, my father, just drank a toast to you.

PERICLES

Tell him I said thanks.

THAISA

He wished you good health.

PERICLES

Thanks to him and to you. I'm honored.

THAISA

And he also wants to know where you came from, what your name is, and who your parents are.

PERICLES

I'm from Tyre. My name is Pericles. I've been schooled in arts and in arms. I was looking for adventure in the world when I was shipwrecked by storms, lost my men, and landed on your shore.

THAISA

[Returning to SIMONIDES] He said thank you, and that his name is Pericles, that he's from Tyre, and was only shipwrecked here by chance.

SIMONIDES

Now, by the gods, I feel sorry for him and will cheer him up. Come on, gentlemen, we're spending too much time on little things. Let's not waste time any longer; let's find another pastime. Even in your armor, as you're dressed, you'll look great dancing a soldier's dance. No excuses; no one say the music is too loud for the ladies. We all know that ladies love to dance with soldiers as much as they like to get in bed with them!

The KNIGHTS dance.

SIMONIDES

Well, I'm glad I asked; that was a good dance.

[To PERICLES] Here, sir, this lady needs a partner, too. I've heard you knights of Tyre are excellent dancers, and that you have a way of dancing with women, and that your rhythm is excellent.

PERICLES

Those that dance might, sir.

SIMONIDES

Well, you might miss your chance if you keep talking.

*The Knights and Ladies dance***SIMONIDES**

Unclasp, unclasp:
Thanks, gentlemen, to all; all have done well.
[To PERICLES]

120 But you the best. Pages and lights, to conduct
These knights unto their several lodgings!
Yours, sir,
We have given order to be next our own.

PERICLES

125 I am at your grace's pleasure.

SIMONIDES

Princes, it is too late to talk of love;
And that's the mark I know you level at:
Therefore each one betake him to his rest;
To-morrow all for speeding do their best.

Exeunt

*The KNIGHTS and ladies dance.***SIMONIDES**

All right, break it up. Thanks, gentleman, and everyone. You all did well.

[To PERICLES] But you were the best.

[To ALL] Servants, bring lamps and take these knights to their rooms!

[To PERICLES] We've asked for you to have the best room, right next to mine.

PERICLES

Thank you, sir.

SIMONIDES

It's too late now to talk about love (though I know that's what you're all aiming for). Everyone go to bed; we'll get to it tomorrow.

They all exit.

Act 2, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter HELICANUS and ESCANES

HELICANUS

No, Escanes, know this of me,
Antiochus from incest lived not free:
For which, the most high gods not minding longer
To withhold the vengeance that they had in store,
5 Due to this heinous capital offence,
Even in the height and pride of all his glory,
When he was seated in a chariot
Of an inestimable value, and his daughter with him,
A fire from heaven came and shrivell'd up
10 Their bodies, even to loathing; for they so stunk,
That all those eyes adored them ere their fall
Scorn now their hand should give them burial.

ESCANES

'Twas very strange.

HELICANUS

And yet but justice; for though
15 This king were great, his greatness was no guard
To bar heaven's shaft, but sin had his reward.

ESCANES

'Tis very true.

Enter two or three Lords

FIRST LORD

See, not a man in private conference
20 Or council has respect with him but he.

SECOND LORD

It shall no longer grieve without reproof.

THIRD LORD

And cursed be he that will not second it.

Shakescleare Translation

HELICANUS and ESCANES enter.

HELICANUS

Listen, Escanes: Antiochus was committing incest, and the most high gods couldn't contain their vengeance any longer against this most horrible of crimes. He was at the height of his glory, riding in his expensive chariot with his daughter when lightning struck from heaven, shriveling up their bodies to a disgusting, stinking mess. It was so horrible that no one who formerly adored them would stoop low enough to bury them.

ESCANES

It was very strange.

HELICANUS

It was just, though. Even though he was a great king, his greatness couldn't shield him from heaven's wrath. His sin got its reward.

ESCANES

It's very true.

Two or three LORDS enter.

FIRST LORD

See, no one has private access to Pericles except for Helicanus.

SECOND LORD

We can't let this go on any longer without challenging it.

THIRD LORD

Anyone who's not with us is against us.

FIRST LORD

Follow me, then. Lord Helicane, a word.

HELICANUS

With me? and welcome: happy day, my lords.

FIRST LORD

25 Know that our griefs are risen to the top,
And now at length they overflow their banks.

HELICANUS

Your griefs! for what? wrong not your prince you love.

FIRST LORD

Wrong not yourself, then, noble Helicane;
But if the prince do live, let us salute him,
30 Or know what ground's made happy by his breath.
If in the world he live, we'll seek him out;
If in his grave he rest, we'll find him there;
And be resolved he lives to govern us,
Or dead, give's cause to mourn his funeral,
35 And leave us to our free election.

SECOND LORD

Whose death indeed's the strongest in our censure:
And knowing this kingdom is without a head,—
Like goodly buildings left without a roof
Soon fall to ruin,— your noble self,
40 That best know how to rule and how to reign,
We thus submit unto,— our sovereign.

ALL

Live, noble Helicane!

HELICANUS

For honour's cause, forbear your suffrages:
If that you love Prince Pericles, forbear.
45 Take I your wish, I leap into the seas,
Where's hourly trouble for a minute's ease.
A twelvemonth longer, let me entreat you to
Forbear the absence of your king:
If in which time expired, he not return,
50 I shall with aged patience bear your yoke.
But if I cannot win you to this love,
Go search like nobles, like noble subjects,
And in your search spend your adventurous worth;
Whom if you find, and win unto return,
55 You shall like diamonds sit about his crown.

FIRST LORD

To wisdom he's a fool that will not yield;
And since Lord Helicane enjoineth us,
We with our travels will endeavour us.

HELICANUS

Then you love us, we you, and we'll clasp hands:
60 When peers thus knit, a kingdom ever stands.

Exeunt

FIRST LORD

Follow me, then.

[To HELICANUS] Helicanus, can we have a word?

HELICANUS

With me? Of course. Hello, gentlemen.

FIRST LORD

You have to understand that our grievances have piled up
to the point of overflowing.

HELICANUS

Your grievances! Why? Don't say anything against the prince
you love.

FIRST LORD

Then don't say anything against yourself, Helicanus: if the
prince is alive, let us see him. Otherwise just tell us where
he's buried. If he's alive somewhere in the world, we'll find
him; if he's in his grave, we'll find him there. Give us the
right to know if he's still our rightful ruler or, if he's dead, let
us mourn him with a funeral and then have an open
election.

SECOND LORD

If he is dead, and we don't have a ruler, then we would
hardly want the kingdom to continue this way, like a
building without a roof, a country without a king is quickly
ruined. With all your experience, we would look to you, and
would appoint you to be our next king.

ALL

Long live Helicanus!

HELICANUS

Please, for honor's sake, no more. If you love Prince
Pericles, you'll stop. I'll do as you wish: I'll set sail to find
him, as dangerous as it is out there on the seas. Let me ask
you to stand the absence of the king for another year. If I
can't find the Prince within that time, I'll patiently accept
your appointment. If you can't wait, go and look for him;
show how loyal you are by your diligent searching. Then, if
you find him and bring him back, he will reward you
generously.

FIRST LORD

We'd be foolish not to give in to your wisdom. Since you
told us so, we'll go about our travels like you said.

HELICANUS

We're all friends here; let's shake hands. Our kingdom is
strong because we're all united.

They all exit.

Act 2, Scene 5

Shakespeare

Enter SIMONIDES, reading a letter, at one door: the Knights meet him

Shakescleare Translation

SIMONIDES comes in on one side of the stage reading a letter; the KNIGHTS come up to him.

FIRST KNIGHT

Good morrow to the good Simonides.

SIMONIDES

Knights, from my daughter this I let you know,
That for this twelvemonth she'll not undertake
A married life.

- 5 Her reason to herself is only known,
Which yet from her by no means can I get.

SECOND KNIGHT

May we not get access to her, my lord?

SIMONIDES

'Faith, by no means; she has so strictly tied
Her to her chamber, that 'tis impossible.

- 10 One twelve moons more she'll wear Diana's livery;
This by the eye of Cynthia hath she vow'd
And on her virgin honour will not break it.

THIRD KNIGHT

Loath to bid farewell, we take our leaves.

Exeunt Knights

SIMONIDES

- 15 So,
They are well dispatch'd; now to my daughter's letter:
She tells me here, she'd wed the stranger knight,
Or never more to view nor day nor light.
'Tis well, mistress; your choice agrees with mine;
- 20 I like that well: nay, how absolute she's in't,
Not minding whether I dislike or no!
Well, I do commend her choice;
And will no longer have it be delay'd.
Soft! here he comes: I must dissemble it.

Enter PERICLES

PERICLES

- 25 All fortune to the good Simonides!

SIMONIDES

To you as much, sir! I am beholding to you
For your sweet music this last night: I do
Protest my ears were never better fed
With such delightful pleasing harmony.

PERICLES

- 30 It is your grace's pleasure to commend;
Not my desert.

SIMONIDES

Sir, you are music's master.

PERICLES

The worst of all her scholars, my good lord.

SIMONIDES

- Let me ask you one thing:
35 What do you think of my daughter, sir?

PERICLES

A most virtuous princess.

SIMONIDES

And she is fair too, is she not?

PERICLES

As a fair day in summer, wondrous fair.

FIRST KNIGHT

Good morning, Simonides.


SIMONIDES

Gentlemen, I have to tell you that my daughter has decided
not to marry for another year. Only she knows why; she
won't tell me.

SECOND KNIGHT

Can't we see her, sir?

SIMONIDES


Absolutely not; she's locked in her room and it's impossible
to get her out. She's sworn to remain a virgin  for another
year, and swears on her honor she won't go back on her
promise.

THIRD KNIGHT

We're sad to leave, but we'll go now.

The KNIGHTS exit.

SIMONIDES

Well, they're gone. Now about my daughter's letter . . . *[He looks at a letter]* She says here that she wants to marry the
stranger knight, or she'll never see the light of day again.
That's fine, missy; your choice is the same as mine. I really
like that. It's funny how set she is in it; she doesn't care
whether or not I dislike it! Well, I'm happy with her choice,
but I'll pretend I'm not.  Shh! Here he comes! I'll have to
pretend it.

PERICLES enters.

PERICLES

All blessings to you, good Simonides!

SIMONIDES

The same to you, sir! I owe you for that lovely singing last
night. I swear I've never heard such a great voice.

PERICLES

Thanks for the compliment, but I hardly deserve it.

SIMONIDES

You're a master of music.

PERICLES

I'm the worst of all music's students, sir.

SIMONIDES

Let me ask you a question: what do you think of my
daughter, sir?

PERICLES


She's a virtuous princess.


SIMONIDES

And she's pretty, too, right?

PERICLES

As beautiful as a summer day; extremely beautiful.

 "Diana," in the original text, was the Roman goddess of the hunt, associated with the moon and with virginity. Vowing oneself to Diana was equivalent to promising not to have sex.

 Early modern comedies often involved lovers who wanted to marry without their parents' consent. Simonides plays the part of the obstructing father, even though he supports the couple.

SIMONIDES

Sir, my daughter thinks very well of you;
 40 Ay, so well, that you must be her master,
 And she will be your scholar: therefore look to it.

PERICLES

I am unworthy for her schoolmaster.

SIMONIDES

She thinks not so; peruse this writing else.

PERICLES

[Aside] What's here?

45 A letter, that she loves the knight of Tyre!
 'Tis the king's subtlety to have my life.
 O, seek not to entrap me, gracious lord,
 A stranger and distressed gentleman,
 That never aim'd so high to love your daughter,
 50 But bent all offices to honour her.

SIMONIDES

Thou hast bewitch'd my daughter, and thou art
 A villain.

PERICLES

By the gods, I have not:
 Never did thought of mine levy offence;
 55 Nor never did my actions yet commence
 A deed might gain her love or your displeasure.

SIMONIDES

Traitor, thou liest.

PERICLES

Traitor!

SIMONIDES

Ay, traitor.

PERICLES

60 Even in his throat—unless it be the king—
 That calls me traitor, I return the lie.

SIMONIDES

[Aside] Now, by the gods, I do applaud his courage.

PERICLES

My actions are as noble as my thoughts,
 That never relish'd of a base descent.
 65 I came unto your court for honour's cause,
 And not to be a rebel to her state;
 And he that otherwise accounts of me,
 This sword shall prove he's honour's enemy.

SIMONIDES

No?
 70 Here comes my daughter, she can witness it.


Enter THAISA

PERICLES

Then, as you are as virtuous as fair,
 Resolve your angry father, if my tongue
 Did ere solicit, or my hand subscribe
 75 To any syllable that made love to you.

SIMONIDES

Sir, my daughter likes you. She likes you so much that she
 wants you to be her master, and she'll be your student.
 What do you think?

 *In speaking of a "master" and a "scholar" in the original text, Simonides is playing off of the earlier conversation about music. He now positions Pericles as a teacher of music and Thaisa as a student (in which music is a metaphor, perhaps, for love).*

PERICLES

I'm not worthy to be her teacher.

SIMONIDES

She doesn't think so; look at this letter.

PERICLES

[To himself, reading the letter] What does this say? She says
 in this letter that she loves me! Maybe this is the king's plot
 to kill me?

[To SIMONIDES] Oh, please don't try to trap me, sir. I'm just
 an unlucky stranger and a gentleman in distress. I never
 wanted to marry your daughter; I just wanted to do my best
 to honor her.

SIMONIDES

You've tricked my daughter into loving you, you crook.

PERICLES

I swear I haven't. I never did anything to hurt you. I never
 wanted to win her over and never wanted to offend you.

SIMONIDES

Traitor, you lie!

PERICLES

Traitor?

SIMONIDES

Yes, traitor.

PERICLES

Anyone who calls me a traitor (unless he's a king, of course)
 is a liar.

SIMONIDES

[To himself] Now, by the gods, I have to applaud his
 bravery.

PERICLES

I've only tried to do the right thing; I haven't thought or
 done a single wrong thing. I came here to compete in the
 tournament for honor's sake, not to commit treason.
 Anyone who says otherwise will have to fight me for honor.

SIMONIDES

Really? Here comes my daughter; she can prove it.

THAISA enters.

PERICLES

Please, since you're as honest as you are beautiful, tell the
 truth: tell your angry father that I never said or wrote
 anything proclaiming my feelings to you.

THAISA

Why, sir, say if you had,
Who takes offence at that would make me glad?

SIMONIDES

Yea, mistress, are you so peremptory?

80 *[Aside]*

I am glad on't with all my heart.—
I'll tame you; I'll bring you in subjection.
Will you, not having my consent,

85 Bestow your love and your affections
Upon a stranger? who, for aught I know,
May be, nor can I think the contrary,
As great in blood as I myself.—

Therefore hear you, mistress; either frame
90 Your will to mine,— and you, sir, hear you,
Either be ruled by me, or I will make you—
Man and wife:

Nay, come, your hands and lips must seal it too:
And being join'd, I'll thus your hopes destroy;

95 And for a further grief,—God give you joy!—
What, are you both pleased?

THAISA

Yes, if you love me, sir.

PERICLES

Even as my life, or blood that fosters it.

SIMONIDES

What, are you both agreed?

BOTH

100 Yes, if it please your majesty.

SIMONIDES

It pleaseth me so well, that I will see you wed;
And then with what haste you can get you to bed.

Exeunt

Enter GOWER

GOWER

Now sleep y-slaked hath the rout;
105 No din but snores the house about,
Made louder by the o'er-fed breast
Of this most pompous marriage-feast.
The cat, with eyne of burning coal,
Now crouches fore the mouse's hole;
110 And crickets sing at the oven's mouth,
E'er the blither for their drouth.
Hymen hath brought the bride to bed.
Where, by the loss of maidenhead,
A babe is moulded. Be attent,
115 And time that is so briefly spent
With your fine fancies quaintly eche:
What's dumb in show I'll plain with speech.

DUMB SHOW. Enter, PERICLES and SIMONIDES at one door, with Attendants; a Messenger meets them, kneels, and gives PERICLES a letter: PERICLES shows it SIMONIDES; the Lords kneel to him. Then enter THAISA with child, with LYCHORIDA a nurse. The KING shows her the letter; she rejoices: she and PERICLES take leave of her father, and depart with LYCHORIDA and their Attendants. Then exeunt SIMONIDES and the rest

THAISA

Well, if you did, I wouldn't be offended; I'd be glad.

SIMONIDES

Hey, missy, aren't you getting a little hasty?

[To himself] I'm happy about this, with all my heart.

[To PERICLES and THAISA] You'll have to listen to me; I'll make you do what I want. Would you really agree to marry a stranger without my permission? He could be anybody, we don't even know if he's a prince. So, listen, missy: You'll either obey me (and you, too, sir, listen to me) or I'll make you . . . man and wife! Come on, then, hold each other's hands, kiss, and seal the deal! And, now that you're together, I'll disappoint you again, with the further condition . . . God bless you! Are you happy?

THAISA

Of course, if you love me, sir!

PERICLES

I swear on my life, with all my heart!

SIMONIDES

You both feel the same way?

BOTH

Yes, if you approve.


SIMONIDES


I approve so wholeheartedly that I'd like to have the wedding immediately and get you off to bed!

They all exit.

GOWER enters.

GOWER

Now it's night and everyone is asleep; the only sound in the house is snoring, all the louder after being overfed at this marriage feast. Cats' eyes shine like burning coals as they hunt for mice, crickets chirp in the empty kitchen, and everything goes on as usual. Meanwhile, Pericles and Thaisa go to their marriage bed , where, by the loss of virginity, a baby is conceived. Pay attention: we'll bridge a lot of action into a short amount of time with the help of your imagination. It'll be silent, but I'll explain it afterward.

 "Hymen," in the original text, was the Roman goddess of marriage and virgins, associated with Juno. Classical poets often invoked Hymen for a blessing on wedding nights.

In a dumb show, PERICLES and SIMONIDES come in on one side of the stage followed by other lords and servants. A

MESSENGER comes in to meet them, kneels, and gives PERICLES a letter. PERICLES shows the letter to SIMONIDES; he reads it aloud and the lords all kneel to PERICLES. Then THAISA comes in, pregnant, accompanied by LYCHORIDA, a nurse. The KING shows the letter to THAISA, and she rejoices. THAISA and PERICLES says goodbye to SIMONIDES and leave with LYCHORIDA and their servants. Then SIMONIDES and the others leave.

Act 3, Chorus

Shakespeare

GOWER

By many a dorn and painful perch
Of Pericles the careful search,
By the four opposing coigns
Which the world together joins,
5 Is made with all due diligence
That horse and sail and high expense
Can stead the quest. At last from Tyre,
Fame answering the most strange inquire,
To the court of King Simonides
10 Are letters brought, the tenor these:
Antiochus and his daughter dead;
The men of Tyrus on the head
Of Helicanus would set on
The crown of Tyre, but he will none:
15 The mutiny he there hastes t' oppress;
Says to 'em, if King Pericles
Come not home in twice six moons,
He, obedient to their dooms,
Will take the crown. The sum of this,
20 Brought hither to Pentapolis,
Y-ravished the regions round,
And every one with claps can sound,
'Our heir-apparent is a king!
Who dream'd, who thought of such a thing?'
25 Brief, he must hence depart to Tyre:
His queen with child makes her desire—
Which who shall cross?— along to go:
Omit we all their dole and woe:
Lychorida, her nurse, she takes,
30 And so to sea. Their vessel shakes
On Neptune's billow; half the flood
Hath their keel cut: but fortune's mood
Varies again; the grisly north
Disgorges such a tempest forth,
35 That, as a duck for life that dives,
So up and down the poor ship drives:
The lady shrieks, and well-a-near
Does fall in travail with her fear:
And what ensues in this fell storm
40 Shall for itself itself perform.
I nill relate, action may
Conveniently the rest convey;
Which might not what by me is told.
In your imagination hold
45 This stage the ship, upon whose deck
The sea-tost Pericles appears to speak.

Exit

Shakescleare Translation

GOWER

The search for Pericles was long and difficult, and covered all four corners of the world. It was made with all the careful and determined effort that horses, boats, and money could make possible. At last, news came all the way from Tyre to answer the strange inquiries, and reached the court of King Simonides. Here is what the letters said: that Antiochus and his daughter are dead, and that the people of Tyre want to crown Helicanus king, but he refused. Helicanus is trying to contain a mutiny, but if Pericles doesn't return within a year, he'll give in to their wishes and take the crown. Hearing this, everyone in Pentapolis rejoiced and clapped their hands, saying, "our princess's husband is a king! who would have thought?" So he has to return to Tyre, and his pregnant queen demands to go with him (and who could say no to that?). We'll skip over their argument. She takes her nurse, Lychorida, with her to sea. Their ship shakes on the waves and they cross half the sea. ¹ But then fortune's mood ² changes, and a powerful storm comes from the north. It tosses the ship in the waves like a duck diving for its life. The poor queen goes into labor early, partly out of fear. The rest of what happened during the storm, you'll have to see for yourself; I can't explain it as well as action can show it. Now imagine the stage is a ship, and that Pericles speaks from the deck.

¹ The original text refers to this halfway point with imagery of a keel—the large beam under the ship's hull, placed in the middle and running from front to back.

² "Fortune," or luck, is often personified as a Lady who has the power to make or break humans' destinies as she likes.

GOWER exits.

Act 3, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter PERICLES, on shipboard

PERICLES

Thou god of this great vast, rebuke these surges,
Which wash both heaven and hell; and thou, that hast
Upon the winds command, bind them in brass,
Having call'd them from the deep! O, still
5 Thy deafening, dreadful thunders; gently quench
Thy nimble, sulphurous flashes! O, how, Lychorida,
How does my queen? Thou stormest venomously;
Wilt thou spit all thyself? The seaman's whistle

Shakescleare Translation

PERICLES enters, onboard his ship.

PERICLES

God of the sea ¹, please stop this horrible storm, which washes over both heaven and hell. You can control the wind; settle them down, since you're the one who called them up. Stop the deafening, terrifying thunder and halt the quick, bright lightning! Oh, Lychorida, how is the queen doing? This storm is absolutely crazy! From what the sailors are saying, we're due to die any minute now.

¹ In the original text, Pericles prays to "Neptune," the Roman god of the sea. His prayer, though, resonates with the story of Jesus calming the storm in the New Testament—familiar to early modern audiences.

Is as a whisper in the ears of death,
 10 Unheard. Lychorida!— Lucina, O
 Divinest patroness, and midwife gentle
 To those that cry by night, convey thy deity
 Aboard our dancing boat; make swift the pangs
 Of my queen's travails!

Enter LYCHORIDA, with an Infant

PERICLES

15 Now, Lychorida!

LYCHORIDA

Here is a thing too young for such a place,
 Who, if it had conceit, would die, as I
 Am like to do: take in your arms this piece
 20 Of your dead queen.

PERICLES

How, how, Lychorida!

LYCHORIDA

Patience, good sir; do not assist the storm.
 Here's all that is left living of your queen,
 A little daughter: for the sake of it,
 25 Be manly, and take comfort.

PERICLES

O you gods!
 Why do you make us love your goodly gifts,
 And snatch them straight away? We here below
 Recall not what we give, and therein may
 30 Use honour with you.

LYCHORIDA

Patience, good sir,
 Even for this charge.

PERICLES

Now, mild may be thy life!
 For a more blustrous birth had never babe:
 35 Quiet and gentle thy conditions! for
 Thou art the rudeliest welcome to this world
 That ever was prince's child. Happy what follows!
 Thou hast as chiding a nativity
 As fire, air, water, earth, and heaven can make,
 40 To herald thee from the womb: even at the first
 Thy loss is more than can thy portage quit,
 With all thou canst find here. Now, the good gods
 Throw their best eyes upon't!

Enter two Sailors

FIRST SAILOR

What courage, sir? God save you!

PERICLES

45 Courage enough: I do not fear the flaw;
 It hath done to me the worst. Yet, for the love
 Of this poor infant, this fresh-new sea-farer,
 I would it would be quiet.

FIRST SAILOR

Slack the bolins there! Thou wilt not, wilt thou?
 50 Blow, and split thyself.

SECOND SAILOR

But sea-room, an the brine and cloudy billow kiss
 the moon, I care not.

Lychorida—oh, Lucina, goddess of midwives and childbirth,
 come aboard our boat and make my wife's labor go quickly!

LYCHORIDA enters, holding a baby.

PERICLES

Now, Lychorida!

LYCHORIDA

Here's a baby far too young to be on board this ship. If she
 were smart, she'd die, just like I'm about to do. Here's all
 that's left of your dead queen.

PERICLES

What, what, Lychorida!

LYCHORIDA

Don't cry, sir, we've got enough wailing with the storm
 going on. Here's all that's left alive of your queen: a little
 daughter. For her sake, be a man and be strong.

PERICLES

Oh, you gods! Why do you give us good things that we love
 and then take them away? Those of us on earth hardly
 know what to do.

LYCHORIDA

Calm down, sir—as bad as this is.

PERICLES

[To the baby] May you have an easy life! No baby has ever
 had such a chaotic birth, but you seem to be quiet and
 gentle! This is the worst welcome to the world that any
 princess has ever had. It can only go up from here! This is
 the roughest start for a newborn that fire, water, earth, and
 heaven could put together as you came out of the
 womb—you've lost everything before you had anything at
 all. May the gods take note of this and bless your future!

Two SAILORS enter.

FIRST SAILOR

Have courage, sir! God bless you!

PERICLES

I have enough courage; I've never been afraid in my life (to
 my own injury). But for this baby's sake, this brand-new
 sailor, I wish the storm would quiet down.

FIRST SAILOR

Let the sails go slack there! Do it, why don't you! Hurry up!

SECOND SAILOR

The waves are coming in over the sides of the ship, and the
 clouds have covered the moon so it's completely dark! I
 can't do anything!

FIRST SAILOR

55 Sir, your queen must overboard: the sea works high,
the wind is loud, and will not lie till the ship be
cleared of the dead.

PERICLES

That's your superstition.

FIRST SAILOR

Pardon us, sir; with us at sea it hath been still
observed: and we are strong in custom. Therefore
briefly yield her; for she must overboard straight.

PERICLES

60 As you think meet. Most wretched queen!

LYCHORIDA

Here she lies, sir.

PERICLES

A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear;
No light, no fire: the unfriendly elements
Forgot thee utterly: nor have I time
65 To give thee hallow'd to thy grave, but straight
Must cast thee, scarcely coffin'd, in the ooze;
Where, for a monument upon thy bones,
And e'er-remaining lamps, the belching whale
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse,
70 Lying with simple shells. O Lychorida,
Bid Nestor bring me spices, ink and paper,
My casket and my jewels; and bid Nicander
Bring me the satin coffer: lay the babe
Upon the pillow: hie thee, whiles I say
75 A priestly farewell to her: suddenly, woman.

Exit LYCHORIDA

SECOND SAILOR

Sir, we have a chest beneath the hatches, caulked
and bitumed ready.

PERICLES

I thank thee. Mariner, say what coast is this?

SECOND SAILOR

We are near Tarsus.

PERICLES

80 Thither, gentle mariner.
Alter thy course for Tyre. When canst thou reach it?

SECOND SAILOR

By break of day, if the wind cease.

PERICLES

O, make for Tarsus!
There will I visit Cleon, for the babe
Cannot hold out to Tyrus: there I'll leave it
85 At careful nursing. Go thy ways, good mariner:
I'll bring the body presently.

Exeunt

FIRST SAILOR

Sir, we have to throw the queen overboard. The waves are
high, the wind is loud, and this storm won't stop until the
ship is cleared of the dead.

PERICLES

That's your superstition.

FIRST SAILOR

Sorry, sir, it's the way things are done at sea, and we're true
to tradition. Give her up quickly, because we have to throw
her overboard now.

PERICLES

If you think it's best. Poor queen!

LYCHORIDA

Here she is, sir.

PERICLES

You've had a terrible experience giving birth, my dear. No
light, no warmth, and a storm. And I don't even have time
to bury you; I have to throw you into the sea without a
coffin, straight into the depths. Instead of a tombstone and
lighted lamps, you'll have whales, flowing water, and
simple shells.

[To LYCHORIDA] Lychorida, have Nestor bring in some
spices, ink, and paper, a casket, and my jewels. And ask
Nicander to bring me that fancy box. Lay the baby on that
pillow, there, and go, while I say goodbye to my wife. Hurry!

LYCHORIDA exits.

SECOND SAILOR

Sir, we have a chest ready, waterproofed and sealed.

PERICLES

Thank you. Sailor, where are we?

SECOND SAILOR

We're near Tarsus.

PERICLES

Let's go there, and then change course for Tyre. How soon
can we get there?

SECOND SAILOR

By morning, if the wind stops.

PERICLES

Let's go to Tarsus! I'll visit Cleon, since the baby can't make
it to Tyre. I'll leave her there for them to take care of. Go
85 about your business, sailors. I'll bring you the body now.

They all exit.

Act 3, Scene 2

Shakespeare

*Enter CERIMON, with a Servant, and some Persons who have been
shipwrecked*

Shakescleare Translation

*CERIMON enters with a servant and some people who have
been shipwrecked.*

CERIMON

Philemon, ho!

Enter PHILEMON

PHILEMON

Doth my lord call?

CERIMON

Get fire and meat for these poor men:

5 'T has been a turbulent and stormy night.

SERVANT

I have been in many; but such a night as this,
Till now, I ne'er endured.

CERIMON

Your master will be dead ere you return;
There's nothing can be minister'd to nature

10 That can recover him.

[TO PHILEMON]

Give this to the 'pothecary,

15 And tell me how it works.

Exeunt all but CERIMON

Enter two Gentlemen

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Good morrow.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Good morrow to your lordship.

CERIMON

Gentlemen,
Why do you stir so early?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

20 Sir,
Our lodgings, standing bleak upon the sea,
Shook as the earth did quake;
The very principals did seem to rend,
And all-to topple: pure surprise and fear

25 Made me to quit the house.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

That is the cause we trouble you so early;
'Tis not our husbandry.

CERIMON

O, you say well.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

But I much marvel that your lordship, having
30 Rich tire about you, should at these early hours
Shake off the golden slumber of repose.

'Tis most strange,
Nature should be so conversant with pain,
Being thereto not compell'd.

CERIMON

35 I hold it ever,
Virtue and cunning were endowments greater
Than nobleness and riches: careless heirs
May the two latter darken and expend;
But immortality attends the former.

40 Making a man a god. 'Tis known, I ever
Have studied phisic, through which secret art,
By turning o'er authorities, I have,
Together with my practise, made familiar
To me and to my aid the blest infusions

45 That dwell in vegetives, in metals, stones;

CERIMON

Hey, Philemon!

PHILEMON enters.

PHILEMON

Did you call me, sir?


CERIMON

Start a fire and get some food for these poor men. It's been
a rough and stormy night.

SERVANT

I've been in many storms, but, until now, I've never seen a
night as bad as this.

CERIMON

Your master will be dead before you get back; there's no
way on earth  to help him now.

[To PHILEMON] Give this to the doctor, and tell me how it
works.

Everyone but CERIMON exits.

Two GENTLEMEN enter.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Good morning.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Good morning, sir.

CERIMON

Gentleman, what are you doing up so early?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Sir, our house, which overlooks the sea, shook in the
earthquake. It seemed like the foundation itself was
breaking and that the whole building would split in two! It
scared us enough that we left quickly.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

That's why we're bothering you so early—it's not our fault.


CERIMON


Fair enough.


FIRST GENTLEMAN

But I'm surprised that someone as rich and well-provided
as you is awake at this hour. It's odd that you'd want to
sacrifice sleep when you don't have to.

CERIMON

I truly believe that virtue and wisdom are more important
to have than status and wealth. Careless children can ruin
and waste the latter, but the former last forever, making
humans like gods. As everyone knows, I've studied
medicine for a long time, the secrets of which I've
discovered through reading old experts and through my
own experience. I'm now familiar with the powerful potions
to be found in plants, metals, and stones. And I can talk
about the good and bad that Nature is capable of , all of
which I enjoy this a lot more than I would trying to earn

 Cerimon emphasizes that his means of healing are natural; that is, he is not a magician. Because witch hunts were common in Shakespeare's day, distinctions between medicine and magic, religion and the occult were important to make.

 Cerimon understands the best and worst of Nature—its storms which might turn a prince into a beggar (like Pericles) and its miracles which might

And I can speak of the disturbances
That nature works, and of her cures; which doth give me
A more content in course of true delight
Than to be thirsty after tottering honour,
50 Or tie my treasure up in silken bags,
To please the fool and death.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Your honour has through Ephesus pour'd forth
Your charity, and hundreds call themselves
Your creatures, who by you have been restored:
55 And not your knowledge, your personal pain, but even
Your purse, still open, hath built Lord Cerimon
Such strong renown as time shall ne'er decay.

Enter two or three Servants with a chest

FIRST SERVANT

So; lift there.

CERIMON

What is that?

FIRST SERVANT

60 Sir, even now
Did the sea toss upon our shore this chest:
'Tis of some wreck.

CERIMON

Set 't down, let's look upon't.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

'Tis like a coffin, sir.

CERIMON

65 Whate'er it be,
'Tis wondrous heavy. Wrench it open straight:
If the sea's stomach be o'ercharged with gold,
'Tis a good constraint of fortune it belches upon us.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

'Tis so, my lord.

CERIMON

70 How close 'tis caulk'd and bitumed!
Did the sea cast it up?

FIRST SERVANT

I never saw so huge a billow, sir,
As toss'd it upon shore.

CERIMON

75 Wrench it open;
Soft! it smells most sweetly in my sense.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

A delicate odour.

CERIMON

As ever hit my nostril. So, up with it.
O you most potent gods! what's here? a corpse!

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Most strange!

money or win other people's approval; that's totally
worthless.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Sir, you've been generous here in Ephesus. Thousands of
people have been cured by you and are loyal to you. Not
only your knowledge and your personal effort, but also
your charity, Lord Cerimon, have built a reputation that will
last forever.

Two or three SERVANTS come in carrying a chest.

FIRST SERVANT

Put it up there.

CERIMON

What is that?

FIRST SERVANT

Sir, this chest washed up on the shore from a shipwreck.


CERIMON


Set it down; let's look at it.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

It looks like a coffin, sir.

CERIMON

Whatever it is, it's very heavy. Open it up quick! If there's
too much gold laying on the ocean floor , it's good luck
that the sea has thrown it up to us.

 In the original text, Cerimon
compares the ocean floor to a
stomach and the tide to a burp.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Of course, sir.

CERIMON

It's really sealed up tight! Did it come out of the sea?

FIRST SERVANT

The biggest wave I've ever seen washed it up on the shore.

CERIMON

Open it! *[They succeed in loosening the lid of the chest]*
Shh! I smell something sweet.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

A delicate odor.

CERIMON

The most delicate I've ever smelled. Lift up the lid! Oh, you
powerful gods! What's in here?

[He looks in] A body!

FIRST GENTLEMAN

How strange!

CERIMON

80 Shrouded in cloth of state; balm'd and entreaured
 With full bags of spices! A passport too!
 Apollo, perfect me in the characters!
[Reading from a scroll]
 85 'Here I give to understand,
 If e'er this coffin drive a-land,
 I, King Pericles, have lost
 This queen, worth all our mundane cost.
 90 Who finds her, give her burying;
 She was the daughter of a king:
 Besides this treasure for a fee,
 The gods requite his charity!
 If thou livest, Pericles, thou hast a heart
 95 That even cracks for woe! This chanced tonight.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Most likely, sir.

CERIMON

Nay, certainly to-night;
 For look how fresh she looks! They were too rough
 That threw her in the sea. Make a fire within:
 100 Fetch hither all my boxes in my closet.

Exit a Servant

CERIMON

Death may usurp on nature many hours,
 And yet the fire of life kindle again
 The o'erpress'd spirits. I heard of an Egyptian
 That had nine hours lien dead,
 105 Who was by good appliance recovered.

Re-enter a Servant, with boxes, napkins, and fire

CERIMON

Well said, well said; the fire and cloths.
 The rough and woeful music that we have,
 Cause it to sound, beseech you.
 The viol once more: how thou stirr'st, thou block!
 110 The music there!— I pray you, give her air.
 Gentlemen.
 This queen will live: nature awakes; a warmth
 Breathes out of her: she hath not been entranced
 Above five hours: see how she gins to blow
 115 Into life's flower again!

FIRST GENTLEMAN

The heavens,
 Through you, increase our wonder and set up
 Your fame forever.

CERIMON

She is alive; behold,
 120 Her eyelids, cases to those heavenly jewels
 Which Pericles hath lost,
 Begin to part their fringes of bright gold;
 The diamonds of a most praised water
 Do appear, to make the world twice rich. Live,
 125 And make us weep to hear your fate, fair creature,
 Rare as you seem to be.

She moves

THAISA

O dear Diana,
 Where am I? Where's my lord? What world is this?

CERIMON

Wearing royal clothes, scented with perfumes and spices!
 With a passport, too! [Apollo](#), help me read what this
 says.

[1](#) *Apollo was the Greco-Roman god of music, poetry, and scribes.*

[He picks up a scroll and reads from it] "To whoever's reading this, if this coffin ever comes to land: I, King Pericles, have lost my beloved wife. If you've found her, please give her a proper burial. She was the daughter of the king. Take this gold as payment for your service. May the gods bless you!"

[To the absent Pericles] Pericles, if you're alive, I feel sorry for you. She must have died tonight.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Most likely, sir.

CERIMON

No, definitely tonight, look how fresh she looks! They shouldn't have thrown her in the sea. Build a fire inside, and bring all the boxes from my closet.

The SERVANT exits.

CERIMON

It may look like someone is dead for hours, but then they revive and come back to life. I heard of an Egyptian who was dead for nine hours and then, with some help, recovered.

The SERVANT comes back in with boxes, clothes, and fire.

CERIMON

[To the servants] Perfect, perfect. Give me the fire and the clothes. Play some sad music, please! Play that violin, you lazy man! Music, please, give her some music.

[The servants begin to play while Cerimon uses various medicines and potions on THAISA]

[To the GENTLEMEN] Gentlemen. The queen will live. Look, she's waking up! She's warm! She's been asleep for about five hours, but look how she [comes back to life](#)!

[2](#) *The cold, pale look of death contrasts with the "flower," or flushed looks, of life.*

FIRST GENTLEMAN

The gods, through you, amaze us. You've secured your fame forever.

CERIMON

She's alive! Look, her eyelids, which cover the [beautiful eyes](#) which Pericles has lost, are just beginning to separate their eyelashes. Now her sparkling eyes are appearing—and what a treasure they are.

[3](#) *Using the common Renaissance metaphor of eyes as "jewels," Cerimon likens Thaisa's material wealth to her beauty (and virtue).*

[To THAISA] Live, and bring tears to our eyes with your sad story, beautiful lady. We can tell how special you are.

THAISA moves.

THAISA

Oh, [Diana](#), where am I? Where's my husband? What is this place?

[4](#) *We recall that Diana was the Roman goddess of virginity and hunting. Thaisa later becomes a priestess in Diana's temple, devoting herself to chastity—the opposite extreme from Antiochus's incestuous relationship with his daughter.*

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Is not this strange?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

130 Most rare.

CERIMON

Hush, my gentle neighbours!
Lend me your hands; to the next chamber bear her.
Get linen: now this matter must be look'd to,
For her relapse is mortal. Come, come;

135 And AEsculapius guide us!

Exeunt, carrying her away

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Isn't this strange?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Very odd.

CERIMON

Quiet, gentlemen! Please, pick her up and take her into the next room. Get some sheets; we need to hurry, since a relapse could kill her. Come, come, and [Aesculapius](#)⁸ help us!

⁸ Aesculapius was the Greco-Roman god of medicine.

They all exit, carrying THAISA away.

Act 3, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter PERICLES, CLEON, DIONYZA, and LYCHORIDA with MARINA in her arms

PERICLES

Most honour'd Cleon, I must needs be gone;
My twelve months are expired, and Tyrus stands
In a litigious peace. You, and your lady,
Take from my heart all thankfulness! The gods
5 Make up the rest upon you!

CLEON

Your shafts of fortune, though they hurt you mortally,
Yet glance full wanderingly on us.

DIONYZA

O your sweet queen!
That the strict fates had pleased you had brought her
10 hither,
To have bless'd mine eyes with her!

PERICLES

We cannot but obey
The powers above us. Could I rage and roar
As doth the sea she lies in, yet the end
15 Must be as 'tis. My gentle babe Marina, whom,
For she was born at sea, I have named so, here
I charge your charity withal, leaving her
The infant of your care; beseeching you
To give her princely training, that she may be
20 Manner'd as she is born.

CLEON

Fear not, my lord, but think
Your grace, that fed my country with your corn,
For which the people's prayers still fall upon you,
Must in your child be thought on. If neglection
25 Should therein make me vile, the common body,
By you relieved, would force me to my duty:
But if to that my nature need a spur,
The gods revenge it upon me and mine,
To the end of generation!

PERICLES

I believe you;
Your honour and your goodness teach me to't,
Without your vows. Till she be married, madam,
By bright Diana, whom we honour, all
Unscissor'd shall this hair of mine remain,
35

Shakesclare Translation

PERICLES, CLEON, DIONYZA, and LYCHORIDA (with baby MARINA in her arms) enter.

PERICLES

Dear Cleon, I have to go. My year is up and the state of peace in Tyre is fragile. Thanks for everything you and your wife have done for me. May the gods bless you.

CLEON

Though the bad luck¹ you've experienced has hurt you the most, we feel your pain, too.

¹ In the original text, Cleon compares Pericles's bad luck to the "shafts" of arrows, which strike him "mortally" (to the death) and "glance" (or injure) too.

DIONYZA

Your poor queen! [If only](#)² you could have brought her here, so that I could have met her.

² "Strict fates," in the original text, is another reference to the Fates, the three sisters said to control the lives and deaths of humankind.

PERICLES

We have to obey the gods above. I can rage as loud as the sea and it won't bring Thaisa back. I named our daughter Marina because she was born at sea. Please, I'm asking a favor: I'm leaving the baby in your care. Make sure she has an education fit for a princess, so she grows up to be as cultivated as her pedigree.

CLEON

Don't worry, sir. You provided corn for my country when we were starving. My people still pray for you, and we'll take care of your child, too. If I neglected my duty, the common people (whom you saved) would force me to do my duty. But if I need any punishment, may the gods take revenge on me and my descendants of the next generation!

PERICLES

I believe. Your actions speak louder than your words; you don't have to swear. I won't cut my hair again until she gets married, though it might look strange. Goodbye.

[To DIONYZA] Ma'am, please take good care of my child.

Though I show ill in't. So I take my leave.
Good madam, make me blessed in your care
In bringing up my child.

DIONYZA

I have one myself,
Who shall not be more dear to my respect
40 Than yours, my lord.

PERICLES

Madam, my thanks and prayers.

CLEON

We'll bring your grace e'en to the edge o' the shore,
Then give you up to the mask'd Neptune and
The gentlest winds of heaven.

PERICLES

45 I will embrace
Your offer. Come, dearest madam. O, no tears,
Lychorida, no tears:
Look to your little mistress, on whose grace
You may depend hereafter. Come, my lord.

Exeunt


DIONYZA


I have a daughter, too. I'll love yours like my own.

PERICLES

You have my thanks and prayers, ma'am.

CLEON

We'll walk you up to the shore, then we'll give you up to
Neptune  and pray for the gentlest winds from the skies.

 Neptune was the Roman god of the sea.

PERICLES

I'll accept that offer.

[To MARINA] Come here, sweetheart. *[He holds the baby]*
Don't cry, Lychorida. Take care of your little mistress; she'll
be in charge of you when I'm gone.

[To CLEON] Let's go, sir.

They all exit.

Act 3, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter CERIMON and THAISA

CERIMON

Madam, this letter, and some certain jewels,
Lay with you in your coffer: which are now
At your command. Know you the character?

THAISA

It is my lord's.
5 That I was shipp'd at sea, I well remember,
Even on my eaning time; but whether there
Deliver'd, by the holy gods,
I cannot rightly say. But since King Pericles,
My wedded lord, I ne'er shall see again,
10 A vestal livery will I take me to,
And never more have joy.

CERIMON

Madam, if this you purpose as ye speak,
Diana's temple is not distant far,
Where you may abide till your date expire.
15 Moreover, if you please, a niece of mine
Shall there attend you.

THAISA

My recompense is thanks, that's all;
Yet my good will is great, though the gift small.

Exeunt

Shakesclore Translation

CERIMON and THAISA enter.

CERIMON

Ma'am, this letter and some jewelry were in your coffin with
you. Here they are; they're yours. Do you recognize the
handwriting?

THAISA

It's my husband's. I remember being set in the sea right
after I gave birth, but don't know how I washed up here.
Since I'll never see my husband, King Pericles, again, I'll
become a nun and will never be happy again.

CERIMON

If you mean it, ma'am, Diana's temple is nearby. You can
stay there for the rest of your life. Furthermore, my niece
can take you there if you like.

THAISA

Thank you. I wish I had more to repay your kindness.

They all exit.

Act 4, Chorus

Shakespeare

Shakesclore Translation

*Enter GOWER***GOWER**

Imagine Pericles arrived at Tyre,
 Welcomed and settled to his own desire.
 His woeful queen we leave at Ephesus,
 Unto Diana there a votaress.

5 Now to Marina bend your mind,
 Whom our fast-growing scene must find
 At Tarsus, and by Cleon train'd
 In music, letters; who hath gain'd
 Of education all the grace,

10 Which makes her both the heart and place
 Of general wonder. But, alack,
 That monster envy, oft the wrack
 Of earned praise, Marina's life
 Seeks to take off by treason's knife.

15 And in this kind hath our Cleon
 One daughter, and a wench full grown,
 Even ripe for marriage-rite; this maid
 Hight Philoten: and it is said
 For certain in our story, she

20 Would ever with Marina be:
 Be't when she weaved the sleided silk
 With fingers long, small, white as milk;
 Or when she would with sharp needle wound
 The cambric, which she made more sound

25 By hurting it; or when to the lute
 She sung, and made the night-bird mute,
 That still records with moan; or when
 She would with rich and constant pen
 Vail to her mistress Dian; still

30 This Philoten contends in skill
 With absolute Marina: so
 With the dove of Paphos might the crow
 Vie feathers white. Marina gets
 All praises, which are paid as debts,

35 And not as given. This so darks
 In Philoten all graceful marks,
 That Cleon's wife, with envy rare,
 A present murderer does prepare
 For good Marina, that her daughter

40 Might stand peerless by this slaughter.
 The sooner her vile thoughts to stead,
 Lychorida, our nurse, is dead:
 And cursed Dionyza hath
 The pregnant instrument of wrath

45 Prest for this blow. The unborn event
 I do commend to your content:
 Only I carry winged time
 Post on the lame feet of my rhyme;
 Which never could I so convey,

50 Unless your thoughts went on my way.
 Dionyza does appear,
 With Leonine, a murderer.

*Exit**GOWER enters.***GOWER**

Imagine Pericles gets back to Tyre, where he's welcomed back and settles down quickly. We'll leave his poor queen here at Ephesus, where she becomes a priestess of Diana. Now back to Marina, whom our quickly-moving scene will find in Tarsus. Cleon educates her in music and literature until she's the most accomplished girl around, and is admired by everyone. Unfortunately, as often happens to those who deserve praise, a jealous person threatens to take Marina's life. Cleon has a grown daughter, Philoten, who's the right age for getting married. According to our story, she and Marina were always together. Whenever Marina wove silk with long, thin, white fingers, or drew her sharp needle through the fabric, making it stronger with each stitch, or sang like a bird while playing the lute (which people still talk about), or when she would write prayerful letters to her goddess, Diana, Philoten couldn't compete with the supreme Marina. A crow could just as well compete with a dove for whiteness. Marina got all the praises; everyone felt less like they were giving compliments, and more like they owed them to her! This hurt Philoten's reputation so much that Cleon's wife, Dionyza, hires a murderer to get Marina out of the way so that Philoten could shine. As soon as she thinks up this vile plan, Lychorida, the nurse, dies. Wicked Dionyza has the murderer all prepped now for his job. I leave what's about to happen up to you. Time with its winged feet flies away while I make my rhyming speeches (which are stuck firmly on the ground). I could never make you understand unless your own imagination helps. That's where I bring you now: to Dionyza meeting with a murderer named Leonine.

GOWER exits.

Act 4, Scene 1

Shakespeare*Enter DIONYZA and LEONINE***DIONYZA**

Thy oath remember; thou hast sworn to do't:
 'Tis but a blow, which never shall be known.
 Thou canst not do a thing in the world so soon,
 To yield thee so much profit. Let not conscience,

5 Which is but cold, inflaming love i' thy bosom,
 Inflame too nicely; nor let pity, which

Shakescleare Translation*DIONYZA and LEONINE enter.***DIONYZA**

Remember your promise: you've sworn to do it. It's just a little thing which no one will ever find out about. And you can count on being rewarded. Don't let your icy conscience thaw out with the heat of love. And don't let pity, which even women have nothing to do with, get the best of you—do just what I've told you to do.

Even women have cast off, melt thee, but be
A soldier to thy purpose.

LEONINE

I will do't; but yet she is a goodly creature.

DIONYZA

- 10 The fitter, then, the gods should have her. Here
she comes weeping for her only mistress' death.
Thou art resolved?

LEONINE

I am resolved.

Enter MARINA, with a basket of flowers

MARINA

- 15 No, I will rob Tellus of her weed,
To strew thy green with flowers: the yellows, blues,
The purple violets, and marigolds,
Shall as a carpet hang upon thy grave,
While summer-days do last. Ay me! poor maid,
20 Born in a tempest, when my mother died,
This world to me is like a lasting storm,
Whirring me from my friends.

DIONYZA

- How now, Marina! why do you keep alone?
How chance my daughter is not with you? Do not
25 Consume your blood with sorrowing; you have
A nurse of me. Lord, how your favour's changed
With this unprofitable woe!
Come, give me your flowers, ere the sea mar it.
Walk with Leonine; the air is quick there,
30 And it pierces and sharpens the stomach. Come,
Leonine, take her by the arm, walk with her.

MARINA

No, I pray you;
I'll not bereave you of your servant.

DIONYZA

- Come, come;
35 I love the king your father, and yourself,
With more than foreign heart. We every day
Expect him here: when he shall come and find
Our paragon to all reports thus blasted,
He will repent the breadth of his great voyage;
40 Blame both my lord and me, that we have taken
No care to your best courses. Go, I pray you,
Walk, and be cheerful once again; reserve
That excellent complexion, which did steal
The eyes of young and old. Care not for me
45 I can go home alone.

MARINA

Well, I will go;
But yet I have no desire to it.

DIONYZA

- Come, come, I know 'tis good for you.
Walk half an hour, Leonine, at the least:
50 Remember what I have said.

LEONINE

I warrant you, madam.

DIONYZA

I'll leave you, my sweet lady, for a while:
Pray, walk softly, do not heat your blood:
What! I must have a care of you.

LEONINE

I'll do it, but she is an innocent girl.

DIONYZA


It's better, then, that the gods should have her. Here she
comes, crying over Lychorida's death. Are you ready?


LEONINE

I'm ready.

MARINA comes in carrying a basket of flowers.

MARINA

I'll take every flower Mother Earth  has to offer, to
decorate your grave with yellows, blues, purple violets,
marigolds—all these will cover you as long as summer lasts.
Poor me! When I was born (in a storm), my mother died; my
whole life has been a continuous storm blowing me away
from my friends.

 "Tellus," in the original text, was a
classical name for Mother Earth.
Tellus's "weeds," or clothes, are
flowers.

DIONYZA

Hello, Marina! Why are you alone? Why isn't my daughter
with you? Don't make yourself sick with being so upset; I'll
be your nurse now. Look how your situation has changed
with this unfortunate loss! Come on, give me your flowers
before the sea air wilts them. Walk with Leonine down by
the shore. The air will do you some good; the wind is
refreshing and makes your stomach strong. Come on,
Leonine; take her by the arm, walk with her.

MARINA

No, please. I won't take your servant from you.

DIONYZA

Come, come! I love you and your father as if I were his own
subject rather than a foreigner. We expect him to visit any
day now, and when he does, what will he say when he finds
our little princess in poor health? He'll wish he hadn't come
so far, and he'll blame my husband and me for not taking
care of you like we promised to do. Go, please. Walk, be
happy, bring back those rosy cheeks we all love so much!
Don't worry about me; I can go home alone.

MARINA

Well, I'll go even though I don't want to.

DIONYZA

Come, come! I know it's best for you. Walk half an hour,
Leonine, at least. Remember what I said.

LEONINE

Of course, ma'am.

DIONYZA

I'll leave you for a while, dear. Mind you, walk slowly and
don't get too worked up! What? I have to take care of you!

MARINA

55 My thanks, sweet madam.

Exit DIONYZA

MARINA

Is this wind westerly that blows?

LEONINE

South-west.

MARINA

60 When I was born, the wind was north.

LEONINE

Was't so?

MARINA

My father, as nurse said, did never fear,
But cried 'Good seaman!' to the sailors, galling
His kingly hands, haling ropes;
65 And, clasping to the mast, endured a sea
That almost burst the deck.

LEONINE

When was this?

MARINA

When I was born:
Never was waves nor wind more violent;
70 And from the ladder-tackle washes off
A canvas-climber. 'Ha!' says one, 'wilt out?'
And with a dropping industry they skip
From stem to stern: the boatswain whistles, and
The master calls, and trebles their confusion.

LEONINE

75 Come, say your prayers.

MARINA

What mean you?

LEONINE

If you require a little space for prayer,
I grant it: pray; but be not tedious,
For the gods are quick of ear, and I am sworn
80 To do my work with haste.

MARINA

Why will you kill me?

LEONINE

To satisfy my lady.

MARINA

Why would she have me kill'd?
Now, as I can remember, by my troth,
85 I never did her hurt in all my life:
I never spake bad word, nor did ill turn
To any living creature: believe me, la,
I never kill'd a mouse, nor hurt a fly:
I trod upon a worm against my will,
90 But I wept for it. How have I offended,
Wherein my death might yield her any profit,
Or my life imply her any danger?

LEONINE

My commission
Is not to reason of the deed, but do it.

MARINA

Thanks, ma'am.

DIONYZA exits.

MARINA

Is that a west wind blowing?

LEONINE

South-west.

MARINA

When I was born, the wind was from the north.

LEONINE

Was it?


MARINA


According to my nurse, my father wasn't afraid. He just called out to the sailors, "Good seamen!" and helped them, pulling the ropes with his own hands, and holding onto the mast to ride out the waves that almost broke the ship.

LEONINE

When was this?

MARINA

When I was born. The waves and wind were incredibly violent, washing a sailor straight out of the crew's nest. Another sailor said, "Ha! Will this ever end?" and they kept running around from the front to the back of the boat, the boatswain  whistling, the master calling, and everything in complete chaos.

 A "boatswain" is the officer in charge of a ship's equipment and crew.

LEONINE

Say your prayers, now.

MARINA

What do you mean?

LEONINE

If you need a little room to pray, I'll allow it, but don't take too long. The gods might listen, you know, and I swore I'd do my job quickly.

MARINA

Why would you want to kill me?

LEONINE

To satisfy Dionyza.

MARINA

Why would she want me killed? As far as I can remember, I've never done anything to hurt her in my life. I've never said a mean word or done a bad thing to a single living creature. Believe me, I never killed a mouse or even hurt a fly! Once I stepped on a worm on accident, and I cried. How have I offended her enough that she would want to kill me? How would she gain from my death? How is she threatened by my life?

LEONINE

My job isn't to debate the reason. It's just to do it.

MARINA

95 You will not do't for all the world, I hope.
You are well favour'd, and your looks foreshow
You have a gentle heart. I saw you lately,
When you caught hurt in parting two that fought:
Good sooth, it show'd well in you: do so now:
100 Your lady seeks my life; come you between,
And save poor me, the weaker.

LEONINE

I am sworn,
And will dispatch.
105 *[He seizes her]*

Enter Pirates

FIRST PIRATE

Hold, villain!

LEONINE runs away

SECOND PIRATE

A prize! a prize!

THIRD PIRATE

Half-part, mates, half-part.
110 Come, let's have her aboard suddenly.

Exeunt Pirates with MARINA

Re-enter LEONINE

LEONINE

These roguing thieves serve the great pirate Valdes;
And they have seized Marina. Let her go:
There's no hope she will return. I'll swear
115 she's dead,
And thrown into the sea. But I'll see further:
Perhaps they will but please themselves upon her,
Not carry her aboard. If she remain,
Whom they have ravish'd must by me be slain.

Exit

MARINA

You won't do it for anything in the world, I hope. You're handsome; I can tell by your looks that you have a gentle heart. I saw you recently when you got hurt breaking up a fight, and really, it said a lot about your character. Do the right thing now! Your lady wants me dead; don't do it. Save poor me, the weaker one.

LEONINE

I swore I would, so here we go . . . *[He grabs MARINA]*

PIRATES enter.

FIRST PIRATE

Stop right there, you scoundrel!

LEONINE runs away.

SECOND PIRATE

Some booty! Some booty!

THIRD PIRATE

Let's split it equally, mates, equally. Come on, get her onboard.

The PIRATES leave, carrying MARINA.

LEONINE comes back in.

LEONINE

Those terrible thieves who've taken Marina serve the great pirate, Valdes. Let her go—there's not a chance of her coming back. I'll swear she's dead and that I threw her into the sea . . . actually, I'll follow along and see what happens. They might just have their way with her and not take her onboard. If she survives the assault, I'll have to kill her.

LEONINE exits.

Act 4, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter Pandar, Bawd, and BOULT

PANDAR

Boult!


BOULT

Sir?

PANDAR

Search the market narrowly; Mytilene is full of gallants. We lost too much money this mart by being
5 too wenchless.

Shakescleare Translation

The PANDAR , BAWD, and BOULT enter.

PANDAR


Boult!

BOULT

Sir?

PANDAR

Search the market carefully. Mytilene is full of young men. We lost too much money this season because we didn't have enough girls.

 "Pandar" is a generic name for a go-between (particularly for sexual affairs). A "bawd" is a woman who owns a brothel.

BAWD

We were never so much out of creatures. We have but poor three, and they can do no more than they can do; and they with continual action are even as good as rotten.

PANDAR

10 Therefore let's have fresh ones, whate'er we pay for them. If there be not a conscience to be used in every trade, we shall never prosper.

BAWD

Thou sayest true: 'tis not our bringing up of poor bastards,—as, I think, I have brought up some eleven—

BOULT

15 Ay, to eleven; and brought them down again. But shall I search the market?

BAWD

What else, man? The stuff we have, a strong wind will blow it to pieces, they are so pitifully sodden.

PANDAR

20 Thou sayest true; they're too unwholesome, o' conscience. The poor Transylvanian is dead, that lay with the little baggage.

BOULT

Ay, she quickly pooped him; she made him roast-meat for worms. But I'll go search the market.

Exit

PANDAR

25 Three or four thousand chequins were as pretty a proportion to live quietly, and so give over.

BAWD

Why to give over, I pray you? is it a shame to get when we are old?

PANDAR

30 O, our credit comes not in like the commodity, nor the commodity wages not with the danger: therefore, if in our youths we could pick up some pretty estate, 'twere not amiss to keep our door hatched. Besides, the sore terms we stand upon with the gods will be strong with us for giving over.

BAWD

35 Come, other sorts offend as well as we.

PANDAR

As well as we! ay, and better too; we offend worse. Neither is our profession any trade; it's no calling. But here comes Boulton.

Re-enter BOULT, with the Pirates and MARINA

BOULT

40 *[To MARINA]* Come your ways. My masters, you say she's a virgin?

BAWD

We've never had such a shortage of creatures. We only have three, and they can only do what they can do. And they've worked so much they're as good as rotten.

PANDAR

So, let's get some fresh ones, no matter what we have to pay for them. If we don't put any heart into this business we'll never succeed.

BAWD

You're right. Of course, we've brought up some bastards . . . I've brought up at least eleven, I think—

BOULT

Yeah, it was eleven, and we brought them down again! But should I search the market?

BAWD

What else can we do? The girls we have are so pitiful, a strong wind would blow them all to pieces.

PANDAR

You're right; they're a mess, truth be told. The poor Transylvanian girl is dead—the one that slept with that guy with the tiny junk.

BOULT

Yeah, and she gave him whatever she had; he's food for worms now! But I'll go search the market.

BOULT exits.

PANDAR

Three or four thousand gold coins is all we need to retire quietly and give up the business.

BAWD

Why would we give it up? Is there anything wrong with working while we're old?

PANDAR

Our credit's not as good as our property, and our property hasn't held up well. When we were young we could pick up lots of young girls, and it was easy to keep a roof over our heads. Besides, the fact that we're in the gods' bad books is reason enough to retire.

BAWD

Oh, come on. Loads of people do as much evil as we do.

PANDAR

As much as we do? But our evil is worse. And our profession isn't really a "trade" or a "calling." But here comes Boulton.

BOULT comes back in with the PIRATES and MARINA.

BOULT

[To MARINA] Hurry up, now.

[To the PIRATES] So, guys, you say she's a virgin?

2 In the original text, the Bawd mentions the "poor three"—the three remaining prostitutes at her brothel, who suffer from venereal disease. This scene is full of crass imagery and innuendo.

3 A "bastard" is a child born out of wedlock.

4 Here, Boulton jokes that, although the trio of prostitutes have raised the fatherless children, they also corrupted them once they grew up—a reference to begging, theft, or prostitution in the next generation.

5 In the original text, "roast-meat for worms" means "dead."

FIRST PIRATE

O, sir, we doubt it not.

BOULT

Master, I have gone through for this piece, you see: if you like her, so; if not, I have lost my earnest.

BAWD

Boult, has she any qualities?

BOULT

45 She has a good face, speaks well, and has excellent good clothes: there's no further necessity of qualities can make her be refused.

BAWD

What's her price, Boult?

BOULT

I cannot be bated one doit of a thousand pieces.

PANDAR

50 Well, follow me, my masters, you shall have your money presently. Wife, take her in; instruct her what she has to do, that she may not be raw in her entertainment.

Exeunt Pandar and Pirates

BAWD

55 Boult, take you the marks of her, the colour of her hair, complexion, height, age, with warrant of her virginity; and cry 'He that will give most shall have her first.' Such a maidenhead were no cheap thing, if men were as they have been. Get this done as I command you.

BOULT

60 Performance shall follow.

Exit

MARINA

Alack that Leonine was so slack, so slow! He should have struck, not spoke; or that these pirates,

65 Not enough barbarous, had not o'erboard thrown me For to seek my mother!

BAWD

Why lament you, pretty one?

MARINA

That I am pretty.

BAWD

Come, the gods have done their part in you.

MARINA

70 I accuse them not.

BAWD

You are light into my hands, where you are like to live.

MARINA

The more my fault
To scape his hands where I was like to die.

BAWD

75 Ay, and you shall live in pleasure.

FIRST PIRATE

Oh, sir, we have no doubt.

BOULT

Master, I've paid through the nose for this one. If you like her, good. If not, I've lost my bet.

BAWD

Boult, what are her assets?

BOULT

She has a good face, speaks well, and has really nice clothes. There's nothing about her that would make you dislike her.

BAWD

What's her price, Boult?

BOULT

I can't get her for a cent less than a thousand gold coins.

PANDAR

Well, follow me, guys. You'll get your money shortly.

[To BAWD] Wife, take her in. Teach her what she has to do so she's not caught unawares her first time.

The PANDAR and the PIRATES exit.

BAWD

Boult, write a full report of her: the color of her hair, complexion, height, age, with a guarantee of her virginity, and cry, "Whoever pays the most can have her first." If I know men, a virginity like this won't go cheap. Do exactly as I say.

BOULT

I'll take care of it.

BOULT exits.

MARINA

If only Leonine hadn't been so slow! He should have killed me instead of talking so much. Or if only the pirates (as if they weren't barbarous enough) had thrown me overboard, to go after my mother!

BAWD

Why are you crying, pretty girl?

MARINA

Because I'm pretty.

BAWD

Come on, the gods have blessed you.

MARINA

I'm not accusing them.

BAWD

You've come into my hands now, where you're likely to live.

MARINA

Which makes it even worse that I escaped Leonine's hands, where I might have died.

BAWD

Oh, but you'll live in pleasure.

MARINA

No.

BAWD

Yes, indeed shall you, and taste gentlemen of all fashions: you shall fare well; you shall have the difference of all complexions. What! do you stop your ears?

MARINA

Are you a woman?

BAWD

What would you have me be, an I be not a woman?

MARINA

An honest woman, or not a woman.

BAWD

Marry, whip thee, gosling: I think I shall have something to do with you. Come, you're a young foolish sapling, and must be bowed as I would have you.

MARINA

The gods defend me!

BAWD

If it please the gods to defend you by men, then men must comfort you, men must feed you, men must stir you up. Boul't's returned.

*Re-enter BOULT***BAWD**

Now, sir, hast thou cried her through the market?

BOULT

I have cried her almost to the number of her hairs; I have drawn her picture with my voice.

BAWD

And I prithee tell me, how dost thou find the inclination of the people, especially of the younger sort?

BOULT

'Faith, they listened to me as they would have hearkened to their father's testament. There was a Spaniard's mouth so watered, that he went to bed to her very description.

BAWD

We shall have him here to-morrow with his best ruff on.

BOULT

To-night, to-night. But, mistress, do you know the French knight that cowers i' the hams?

BAWD

Who, Monsieur Veroles?

BOULT

Ay, he: he offered to cut a caper at the proclamation; but he made a groan at it, and swore he would see her to-morrow.

MARINA

No.

BAWD

Yes, you will, and you'll taste all different kinds of gentlemen. You'll do well! You'll have all sorts. What? Why are you covering your ears?

MARINA

Are you a woman?

BAWD

What would you rather me be, if not a woman?

MARINA

A good woman, or not a woman at all.

BAWD

Shut your mouth, girl. I think I'll have to do something about you. You're young ⁶ and naive and you'll have to be broken as I would have you.

⁶ In the original text, the Bawd compares Marina to a "sapling" or young tree which needs to be "bowed" or bent to her will.

MARINA

May the gods protect me!

BAWD

If it pleases the gods to protect you through men, then men will ⁷ comfort you, feed you, sleep with you. Boul't's back.

⁷ Bawd's short speech here is a pun, referring to the men who will come to Marina as customers when she is a prostitute.

*BOULT comes back in.***BAWD**

Have you spread the word about her all over the market?

BOULT

I've described her down to every last hair. I've drawn a picture of her with my voice.

BAWD

And please, tell me: how do people seem to be reacting, especially the younger ones?

BOULT

Well, they listened to me as closely as they would to their own father's will being read. There was a Spanish guy whose mouth watered so much, he went to masturbate off just the description of her.

BAWD

I'm sure he'll be here tomorrow in his best clothes.

BOULT

Tonight, tonight. But, mistress, do you know the French guy who works as a butcher?

BAWDWho, Mr. Syphilis ⁸?

⁸ "Veroles" was the early modern English word for syphilis--a venereal disease nicknamed the "French pox" ("vérole" means "pox" in French).

BOULT

Yeah, him. He wanted to do it ⁹ as soon as he heard the proclamation, but then groaned and swore he would see her tomorrow.

⁹ Boul't uses the word "caper" as in action. He possibly puns on its similarity to "capon" (chicken), as this character seems to be a butcher.

BAWD

Well, well; as for him, he brought his disease hither: here he does but repair it. I know he will come in our shadow, to scatter his crowns in the sun.

BOULT

115 Well, if we had of every nation a traveller, we should lodge them with this sign.

BAWD

[To MARINA] Pray you, come hither awhile. You have fortunes coming upon you. Mark me: you must seem to do that fearfully which you commit willingly, despise profit where you have most gain. 120 To weep that you live as ye do makes pity in your lovers: seldom but that pity begets you a good opinion, and that opinion a mere profit.

MARINA

I understand you not.

BOULT

125 O, take her home, mistress, take her home: these blushes of hers must be quenched with some present practise.

BAWD

130 Thou sayest true, I' faith, so they must; for your bride goes to that with shame which is her way to go with warrant.

BOULT

'Faith, some do, and some do not. But, mistress, if I have bargained for the joint,—

BAWD

Thou mayst cut a morsel off the spit.

BOULT

I may so.

BAWD

135 Who should deny it? Come, young one, I like the manner of your garments well.

BOULT

Ay, by my faith, they shall not be changed yet.

BAWD

140 Boulton, spend thou that in the town: report what a sojourner we have; you'll lose nothing by custom. When nature flamed this piece, she meant thee a good turn; therefore say what a paragon she is, and thou hast the harvest out of thine own report.

BOULT

145 I warrant you, mistress, thunder shall not so awake the beds of eels as my giving out her beauty stir up the lewdly-inclined. I'll bring home some to-night.

BAWD

Come your ways; follow me.

MARINA

If fires be hot, knives sharp, or waters deep,

BAWD

Well, well, as for him—he brought his disease here, and he just keeps it up. I know he'll come here soon and that he'll spend plenty of money.

BOULT

Well, if we had customers from every country in the world, we'd welcome them in, since they either have syphilis or will do soon.

BAWD

[To MARINA] Come here for a minute. Good things are coming your way. Mark my words: you need to pretend you're afraid of having sex even though you're perfectly willing, and you need to seem like you don't want the money, even though you'll make a fortune. If you cry about having to work as a prostitute, your customers will take pity on you; pity equals good reviews, and good reviews equals a huge profit.

MARINA

I don't understand you.

BOULT

Oh, take her home, mistress, take her home. We'll get rid of all this shyness with a little practice.

BAWD

You're right, darn it, we will. Even brides are afraid of the wedding night, though they have no reason to be.

BOULT

Well, some do, some don't. But, mistress, since it's me that bought her—

BAWD

—you can have a little taste ¹⁰.

BOULT

I may?

BAWD

Who's stopping you?

[To MARINA] Cheer up, missy. I like your clothes.

BOULT

Ah, don't change them yet.

BAWD

[She gives BOULT a coin] Boulton, spread the news in town about our new guest, and don't leave out a single detail. When Mother Nature put together this girl, she meant to do you a favor. If you tell everyone how beautiful she is, you'll get money and you'll get to sleep with her, too.

BOULT

I promise I'll excite those dirty-minded men as much as I can. I'll bring some home tonight.

BAWD

Come on, then, follow me.

MARINA

I swear I'll stay a virgin! Diana, help me!

¹⁰ Marina is again compared to a piece of meat, this time to one roasted on a "spit," a metal rod that is pushed through meat so that it can be turned and roasted over a fire.

Untied I still my virgin knot will keep.
Diana, aid my purpose!


BAWD

150 What have we to do with Diana? Pray you, will you go with us?

Exeunt

BAWD

What do we have to do with [Diana](#) ? Now will you come with us?

 We recall that Diana is the Roman goddess of virginity, and the patron goddess of the temple where Thaisa now lives.

They all exit.

Act 4, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter CLEON and DIONYZA

DIONYZA

Why, are you foolish? Can it be undone?

CLEON

O Dionyza, such a piece of slaughter
The sun and moon ne'er look'd upon!

DIONYZA

I think
5 You'll turn a child again.

CLEON

Were I chief lord of all this spacious world,
I'd give it to undo the deed. O lady,
Much less in blood than virtue, yet a princess
To equal any single crown o' the earth
10 I' the justice of compare! O villain Leonine!
Whom thou hast poison'd too:
If thou hadst drunk to him, 't had been a kindness
Becoming well thy fact: what canst thou say
When noble Pericles shall demand his child?

DIONYZA

15 That she is dead. Nurses are not the fates,
To foster it, nor ever to preserve.
She died at night; I'll say so. Who can cross it?
Unless you play the pious innocent,
And for an honest attribute cry out
20 'She died by foul play.'

CLEON

O, go to. Well, well,
Of all the faults beneath the heavens, the gods
Do like this worst.

DIONYZA

25 Be one of those that think
The petty wrens of Tarsus will fly hence,
And open this to Pericles. I do shame
To think of what a noble strain you are,
And of how coward a spirit.

CLEON

30 To such proceeding
Who ever but his approbation added,
Though not his prime consent, he did not flow
From honourable sources.

DIONYZA

35 Be it so, then:
Yet none does know, but you, how she came dead,
Nor none can know, Leonine being gone.
She did disdain my child, and stood between

Shakescleare Translation

CLEON and DIONYZA enter.

DIONYZA

You idiot, why would you ask if I can "undo it?"

CLEON

Dionyza, there's never been such a horrible murder
committed on the earth.

DIONYZA

I think you're about to turn back into a baby!

CLEON

Were I the king of the whole world, I would do anything to
undo this. Poor Marina! She was not only a princess by
blood, she was a virtuous person, the equal of any single
princess on the earth by comparison! Curse you, Leonine.
And you've poisoned him, too, haven't you? If you'd
poisoned yourself, it would have been the punishment you
deserved. What are you going to say to Pericles when he
comes looking for his child?

DIONYZA

That she's dead. The Fates aren't nurses; they don't protect
our lives forever or even for a while. She died at night; I'll
say so. Who would dare to contradict me? Unless you try to
play Mr. Innocent and, in a display of honesty, blurt out,
"She was murdered!"

CLEON

Oh, quit it. Well, well, of all the evil things that go on on
earth, the gods will be the least happy about this.

DIONYZA

You're one of those who thinks a little birdie is going to fly
to Tarsus and tell Pericles what happened! I'm ashamed to
think of what a coward you are, and a king, too.

CLEON

Anyone who would have said "yes" to this, even if he didn't
do it himself, is a bad person.

DIONYZA

So be it. But no one besides you knows how she died—and
no one else will know, since Leonine is dead. She made my
daughter look bad, and stood between her and a good
marriage. No one would look at her when Marina was

Her and her fortunes: none would look on her,
 But cast their gazes on Marina's face;
 Whilst ours was blurted at and held a malkin
 40 Not worth the time of day. It pierced me through;
 And though you call my course unnatural,
 You not your child well loving, yet I find
 It greets me as an enterprise of kindness
 Perform'd to your sole daughter.

CLEON

45 Heavens forgive it!

DIONYZA

And as for Pericles,
 What should he say? We wept after her hearse,
 And yet we mourn: her monument
 Is almost finish'd, and her epitaphs
 50 In glittering golden characters express
 A general praise to her, and care in us
 At whose expense 'tis done.

CLEON

Thou art like the harpy,
 Which, to betray, dost, with thine angel's face,
 55 Seize with thine eagle's talons.

DIONYZA

You are like one that superstitiously
 Doth swear to the gods that winter kills the flies:
 But yet I know you'll do as I advise.

Exeunt

nearby; they looked at her face, while our daughter's was criticized and treated as though she wasn't worth the time of day. It hurt me to see that and, though you may criticize me, it strikes me as what a loving parent ought to do for your only daughter.


CLEON


May the gods forgive you!

DIONYZA

And as for Pericles, what can he say? We cried at her funeral, and we mourn now. The monument to her is almost finished. The epitaph on it proclaims how great she was in gold letters. We've done all the right things, and have spared no expense.

CLEON

You harpy!  You use your beautiful face to get away with evil.

 "Harpies" were mythological monsters: half woman, half bird, hungry, and mean.

DIONYZA

You're like a person who superstitiously swears by the gods, but I know you'll do as I say.

They both exit.

Act 4, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter GOWER, before the monument of MARINA at Tarsus

GOWER

Thus time we waste, and longest leagues make short;
 Sail seas in cockles, have an wish but for't;
 Making, to take your imagination,
 From bourn to bourn, region to region.
 5 By you being pardon'd, we commit no crime
 To use one language in each several clime
 Where our scenes seem to live. I do beseech you
 To learn of me, who stand i' the gaps to teach you,
 The stages of our story. Pericles
 10 Is now again thwarting the wayward seas,
 Attended on by many a lord and knight.
 To see his daughter, all his life's delight.
 Old Escanes, whom Helicanus late
 Advanced in time to great and high estate,
 15 Is left to govern. Bear you it in mind,
 Old Helicanus goes along behind.
 Well-sailing ships and bounteous winds have brought
 This king to Tarsus,— think his pilot thought;
 So with his steerage shall your thoughts grow on,—
 20 To fetch his daughter home, who first is gone.
 Like motes and shadows see them move awhile;
 Your ears unto your eyes I'll reconcile.

DUMB SHOW: Enter PERICLES, at one door, with all his train; CLEON and DIONYZA, at the other. CLEON shows PERICLES the tomb; whereat PERICLES makes lamentation, puts on sackcloth, and in a mighty passion departs. Then exeunt CLEON and DIONYZA

Shakescleare Translation

GOWER comes in, standing in front of MARINA's monument in Tarsus.

GOWER


Again, we'll sail over miles of miles of ocean as if it were nothing, hopping from country to country and region to region, by the power of your imagination. Forgive us for using the same language in all these different places where our scenes are set for the sake of simplicity. Now let me fill you in on what happens next, in the gaps between the parts of our story: Pericles takes to the unruly sea once again, along with many courtiers. He's coming to see his daughter, the light of his life. Old Escanes, Helicanus's friend whom he left in charge, is governing while he's gone. Keep that in mind, since Helicanus is going along with Pericles. With a sturdy ship and a good wind at his back, Pericles arrives in Tarsus. Just imagine his ship and all its cargo, arriving here to take Marina home, who's gone. Watch them move like ghosts and shadows for a while, and then I'll explain in words what you've just seen.

In a dumb show, PERICLES comes in on one side of the stage with his servants. CLEON and DIONYZA come in on the other side. CLEON shows PERICLES MARINA's tomb, where PERICLES cries, puts on mourning clothes, and leaves, upset. Then CLEON and DIONYZA leave.


GOWER

See how belief may suffer by foul show!
 This borrow'd passion stands for true old woe;
 25 And Pericles, in sorrow all devour'd,
 With sighs shot through, and biggest tears
 o'ershower'd,
 Leaves Tarsus and again embarks.
 He swears
 30 Never to wash his face, nor cut his hairs:
 He puts on sackcloth, and to sea. He bears
 A tempest, which his mortal vessel tears,
 And yet he rides it out. Now please you wit.
 The epitaph is for Marina writ By wicked Dionyza.
 35 *[Reads the inscription on MARINA's monument]*
 'The fairest, sweet'st, and best lies here,
 Who wither'd in her spring of year.
 40 She was of Tyrus the king's daughter,
 On whom foul death hath made this slaughter;
 Marina was she call'd; and at her birth,
 Thetis, being proud, swallow'd some part o' the earth:
 Therefore the earth, fearing to be o'erflow'd,
 45 Hath Thetis' birth-child on the heavens bestow'd:
 Wherefore she does, and swears she'll never stint,
 Make raging battery upon shores of flint.'
 No visor does become black villany
 So well as soft and tender flattery.
 50 Let Pericles believe his daughter's dead,
 And bear his courses to be ordered
 By Lady Fortune; while our scene must play
 His daughter's woe and heavy well-a-day in her unholy
 service.
 55 Patience, then,
 And think you now are all in Mytilene.

*Exit***GOWER**


Poor Pericles believed that fake performance! He's really grieving, though, as if she were gone. Pericles leaves Tarsus wrecked by grief, overcome with sighs and shedding constant tears. He swears never to wash his face or cut his hair or wear anything but black , and sets out to sea. Another storm comes and damages the boat, but he rides it out. Now listen to the epitaph the wicked Dionyza wrote for Marina:


[He reads the inscription on MARINA's monument]

The sweetest, most beautiful girl lies here. She died too young, in the spring of her life. She was the daughter of the king of Tyre; death has taken her away from us. Her name was Marina. At her birth, Thetis was jealous of her and swallowed a piece of the earth; the earth, afraid of being flooded, gave this watery girl back to heaven . That's why the sea continues to storm, barraging our shores with waves.

No shady presentation could be more fitting for evil deeds than such soft, tender flattery. Let Pericles believe his daughter's dead; he's in Fortune's hands for now. Our next scene will have to do with his daughter's misfortune and trials in an ungodly occupation. Patience, then, and imagine you're all in Mytilene.

GOWER exits.

 "Sackcloth" was a rough material, associated in the Bible and in classical literature with mourning or self-punishment.

 In Greek mythology, the sea-nymph "Thetis" was the mother of the hero Achilles. Playing on Marina's name (which means "of the sea"), the epitaph suggests that Marina was also the daughter of the sea-nymph and that she died because, if she reached maturity, the earth would have been flooded by her watery powers.

Act 4, Scene 5**Shakespeare***Enter, from the brothel, two Gentlemen***FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Did you ever hear the like?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

No, nor never shall do in such a place as this, she being once gone.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

But to have divinity preached there! did you ever
 5 dream of such a thing?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

No, no. Come, I am for no more bawdy-houses: shall's go hear the vestals sing?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

I'll do any thing now that is virtuous; but I
 10 am out of the road of rutting for ever.

*Exeunt***Shakescleare Translation***Two GENTLEMEN enter from the brothel.***FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Have you ever heard anything like it?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

No. I'll never set foot in a place like this again, if she's not there.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Isn't it strange to hear such godly preaching there? Did you
 ever dream of such a thing?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

No, no. Listen; I'm not interested in brothels anymore. Should we go hear the nuns sing?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

I'll do anything now, as long as it's virtuous. I'm done with
 prostitutes forever.

*They exit.***Act 4, Scene 6****Shakespeare****Shakescleare Translation**

Enter PANDAR, BAWD, and BOULT

PANDAR

Well, I had rather than twice the worth of her she had ne'er come here.

BAWD

5 Fie, fie upon her! she's able to freeze the god Priapus, and undo a whole generation. We must either get her ravished, or be rid of her. When she should do for clients her fitment, and do me the kindness of our profession, she has me her quirks, her reasons, her master reasons, her prayers, her knees; that she would make a puritan of the devil,
10 if he should cheapen a kiss of her.

BOULT

'Faith, I must ravish her, or she'll disfigure us of all our cavaliers, and make our swearers priests.

PANDAR

Now, the pox upon her green-sickness for me!

BAWD

15 'Faith, there's no way to be rid on't but by the way to the pox. Here comes the Lord Lysimachus disguised.

BOULT

We should have both lord and low, if the peevish baggage would but give way to customers.

Enter LYSIMACHUS

LYSIMACHUS

20 How now! How a dozen of virginities?

BAWD

Now, the gods to-bless your honour!

BOULT

I am glad to see your honour in good health.

LYSIMACHUS

You may so; 'tis the better for you that your resorters stand upon sound legs. How now!
25 wholesome iniquity have you that a man may deal withal, and defy the surgeon?

BAWD

We have here one, sir, if she would—but there never came her like in Mytilene.

LYSIMACHUS

If she'd do the deed of darkness, thou wouldst say.

BAWD

30 Your honour knows what 'tis to say well enough.

LYSIMACHUS

Well, call forth, call forth.

The PANDAR, the BAWD, and BOULT enter.

PANDAR

I don't care what she's worth; I wish she had never come here.

BAWD

Shame, shame on her! She could convince even the most hot-blooded man ¹ not to have sex. We either need to have someone sleep with her or get rid of her. When she's supposed to be fulfilling her customers' desires (and giving me the profit), instead she's up to all her shenanigans: her excuses, her better excuses, her prayers, begging on her knees. She could turn the devil himself into a born-again Christian ² if he so much as tried to kiss her.

BOULT

Well, I'll have to rape her, or she'll ruin all our customers, converting the evil-doers to good.

PANDAR

Damn ³ her inexperience!

BAWD

Well, there's no way for her to get experience except by getting experience. ⁴ Here comes Lord Lysimachus in a disguise.

BOULT

We could win him and his money over if the girl would just give in to customers.

LYSIMACHUS enters.

LYSIMACHUS

Hello! How much for a dozen virginities?

BAWD

God bless you, sir.

BOULT

I'm glad to see you're healthy, sir.

LYSIMACHUS

I'm sure you are—it's better for your business when your clients keep from getting sick! What new stock do you have here that might allow a man to enjoy his whores and keep the sexually-transmitted diseases at bay?

BAWD

We have one here, sir, if she would . . . but we've never had anyone like her in Mytilene.

LYSIMACHUS

If she would do the dirty, you mean.

BAWD

You're exactly right, sir.

LYSIMACHUS

Well, bring her in, then!

¹ "Priapus" was a minor classical deity associated with the harvest, fertility, and penises.

² "Puritans," in the original text, were radical reformers who dissented from the mainline Church of England. In general, they were more socially and theologically conservative, adhering to the Bible as literal truth, living modestly, and worshipping simply.

³ Pandar's casual curse in the original text, "the pox upon her," refers a general name for diseases in Shakespeare's day. Here, the pox specifically applied to the sexually-transmitted disease, syphilis.

⁴ The Bawd jokes that the only way to cure Marina's "green-sickness" (inexperience) is by "the way to the pox" (having sex, since syphilis is a sexually-transmitted disease).

BOULT

For flesh and blood, sir, white and red, you shall see a rose; and she were a rose indeed, if she had but—

LYSIMACHUS

What, prithee?

BOULT

35 O, sir, I can be modest.

LYSIMACHUS

That dignifies the renown of a bawd, no less than it gives a good report to a number to be chaste.

Exit BOULT

BAWD

40 Here comes that which grows to the stalk; never plucked yet, I can assure you.

Re-enter BOULT with MARINA

BAWD

Is she not a fair creature?

LYSIMACHUS

45 'Faith, she would serve after a long voyage at sea. Well, there's for you: leave us.

BAWD

I beseech your honour, give me leave: a word, and I'll have done presently.

LYSIMACHUS

I beseech you, do.

BAWD

50 *[To MARINA]* First, I would have you note, this is an honourable man.

MARINA

I desire to find him so, that I may worthily note him.

BAWD

Next, he's the governor of this country, and a man whom I am bound to.

MARINA

55 If he govern the country, you are bound to him indeed; but how honourable he is in that, I know not.

BAWD

Pray you, without any more virginal fencing, will you use him kindly? He will line your apron with gold.

MARINA

What he will do graciously, I will thankfully receive.

LYSIMACHUS

Ha' you done?

BAWD

60 My lord, she's not paced yet: you must take some pains to work her to your manage. Come, we will

BOULT

Sir ⁵, it might be better if someone else popped the cherry before you—

⁵ In these lines, Boulton, who was been promised multiple times the right to have sex with Marina, is trying to deter Lysimachus from doing so before he can.

LYSIMACHUS

What did you say?

BOULT

Oh, sir, I can be quiet.

LYSIMACHUS

Silence ⁶ is as useful to a bawd as a reputation is to a virgin.

⁶ Lysimachus's speech here is an oxymoron: owners of whorehouses should be loud self-promoters to get business, and virgins should have no reputation at all, if they are truly chaste.

BOULT leaves.

BAWD

Here comes a fresh flower. Never been picked, I can assure you.

BOULT comes back in with MARINA.

BAWD

Isn't she pretty?

LYSIMACHUS

She's just what you want after a long voyage at sea.

[He gives the BAWD a coin] Well, there you go. Leave us.

BAWD

Please, sir, let me speak with her first and then I'll leave you.

LYSIMACHUS

Please, do.

BAWD

[To MARINA] First, please note that he is an honorable man.

MARINA

I hope he proves himself so; then I can respect him.

BAWD

Second: he's the governor of this country, and I'm bound to serve him.

MARINA

If he governs the country, you are definitely bound to serve him. It's unclear how honorable he is in the act of governing, though.

BAWD

Please stop arguing with me. Will you do him well? He'll give you a lot of money.

MARINA

Whatever he gives courteously, I accept gratefully.

LYSIMACHUS

Are you done?

BAWD

Sir, she hasn't been broken in yet ⁷; you'll need to work hard to make her obey.

⁷ In saying that Marina has not been "paced yet," the Bawd compares

leave his honour and her together. Go thy ways.

Exeunt Bawd, Pandar, and BOULT

LYSIMACHUS

Now, pretty one, how long have you been at this trade?

MARINA

65 What trade, sir?

LYSIMACHUS

Why, I cannot name't but I shall offend.

MARINA

I cannot be offended with my trade. Please you to name it.

LYSIMACHUS

How long have you been of this profession?

MARINA

70 E'er since I can remember.

LYSIMACHUS

Did you go to 't so young? Were you a gamester at five or at seven?

MARINA

Earlier too, sir, if now I be one.

LYSIMACHUS

75 Why, the house you dwell in proclaims you to be a creature of sale.

MARINA

Do you know this house to be a place of such resort, and will come into 't? I hear say you are of honourable parts, and are the governor of this place.

LYSIMACHUS

Why, hath your principal made known unto you who I am?

MARINA

80 Who is my principal?

LYSIMACHUS

Why, your herb-woman; she that sets seeds and roots of shame and iniquity. O, you have heard something of my power, and so stand aloof for more serious wooing. But I protest to thee, pretty one, my authority shall not see thee, or else look friendly upon thee. Come, bring me to some private place: come, come.

MARINA

90 If you were born to honour, show it now;
If put upon you, make the judgment good
That thought you worthy of it.

[To BOULT and PANDAR] Come on, we'll leave the two of them together. Go on, now.

Marina to a horse who must be trained.

The BAWD, the PANDAR, and BOULT leave.

LYSIMACHUS

So, pretty girl, how long have you been working in this business?

MARINA

What [business](#) ⁸, sir?

⁸ To maintain her innocence, Marina refuses to accept the "trade" (in the original text) of being a prostitute that Lysimachus assumes she is a part of.

LYSIMACHUS

I can't say the name, or I'll offend you.

MARINA

I can't be offended by the name of my business. Please say it.

LYSIMACHUS

How long have you been in this profession?

MARINA

[Ever since I can remember.](#) ⁹

⁹ Marina, who of course believes her "profession" to be that of a princess, is answering honestly, but Lysimachus takes her answers to refer to the profession of prostitution.

LYSIMACHUS

Did you start that young? Were you a prostitute at the age of five or seven?

MARINA

Earlier that that, sir, if that's what I am now.

LYSIMACHUS

The place where you live proclaims you to be a prostitute.

MARINA

If you know this place is a brothel, [why did you come in](#) ¹⁰? I've heard that you're honorable, and that you're the governor of this place.

¹⁰ Here, Marina asks Lysimachus to assess his abilities as a ruler along the same lines that Pericles, Antiochus, Simonides, and Cleon have been assessed: according to their individual virtue, represented by their sexual conduct.

LYSIMACHUS

Did your boss tell you who I am?

MARINA

Who is my boss?

LYSIMACHUS

The Bawd ¹¹, the one that teaches you and facilitates your shame and wickedness. All right, you've heard I'm powerful and rich so you're playing hard to get. I'll have you know, pretty girl, that once I see you, I'll pay you very well. Come on, bring me to a private room. Come, come.

¹¹ An "herb-woman" is simply a woman who sells herbs; Lysimachus is using the plant metaphor as a euphemism to describe the Bawd, who runs the brothel and in doing so "sets seeds and roots" that lead to her employees' shame.

MARINA

If you were born to power, sir, prove how honorable you are now. If you rose to power later, prove that those who thought you were honorable then made a good choice.

LYSIMACHUS

How's this? how's this? Some more; be sage.

MARINA

For me,
That am a maid, though most ungentle fortune
Have placed me in this sty, where, since I came,
95 Diseases have been sold dearer than physic,
O, that the gods
Would set me free from this unhallow'd place,
Though they did change me to the meanest bird
That flies i' the purer air!

LYSIMACHUS

100 I did not think
Thou couldst have spoke so well; ne'er dream'd thou
couldst.
Had I brought hither a corrupted mind,
Thy speech had alter'd it. Hold, here's gold for thee:
105 Persever in that clear way thou goest,
And the gods strengthen thee!

MARINA

The good gods preserve you!

LYSIMACHUS

For me, be you thoughten
That I came with no ill intent; for to me
110 The very doors and windows savour vilely.
Fare thee well. Thou art a piece of virtue, and
I doubt not but thy training hath been noble.
Hold, here's more gold for thee.
A curse upon him, die he like a thief,
115 That robs thee of thy goodness! If thou dost
Hear from me, it shall be for thy good.

Re-enter BOULT

BOULT

I beseech your honour, one piece for me.

LYSIMACHUS

Avaunt, thou damned door-keeper!
Your house, but for this virgin that doth prop it,
120 Would sink and overwhelm you. Away!

Exit

BOULT

How's this? We must take another course with you.
If your peevish chastity, which is not worth a
breakfast in the cheapest country under the cope,
125 shall undo a whole household, let me be gelded like
a spaniel. Come your ways.

MARINA

Whither would you have me?

BOULT

I must have your maidenhead taken off, or the common
hangman shall execute it. Come your ways. We'll
130 have no more gentlemen driven away. Come your ways, I
say.

Re-enter Bawd

BAWD

How now! what's the matter?

BOULT

Worse and worse, mistress; she has here spoken holy
words to the Lord Lysimachus.

LYSIMACHUS

What? What? Say more, be clear.

MARINA

I'm a virgin, although bad luck has landed me in this dump
where, since I came people have paid more to get diseases
than they would for medicine. Oh, may the gods set me free
from this hellish place, even if it means changing me into a
bird that flies through the pure air!

LYSIMACHUS

I couldn't have imagined you could speak so well; I couldn't
have dreamed it. If I had had a dirty mind, your speech
would have changed it. Here, take this coin. Keep going on
this virtuous path, and may the gods bless you!

MARINA

May the gods protect you!

LYSIMACHUS

As for me: rest assured I had no bad intentions. Actually,
this whole place is disgusting. Goodbye. You are virtuous,
and I have no doubt that you've had an aristocratic
education. Here, here's more gold for you. Curse anyone
who tries to force himself on you, may he die like a thief! If
you ever hear from me again, it'll be for your benefit.

BOULT comes back in.

BOULT

Please, sir, a coin for me?

LYSIMACHUS

Get out, you damned doorman! Without this virgin keeping
it up, this whole house would collapse and bury you! Away!

LYSIMACHUS leaves.

BOULT

What now? We'll have to try a different tactic with you. Your
worthless virginity—which isn't worth a cheap breakfast
eaten in the night—isn't about to ruin this place; I'd rather
be neutered like a dog than see that happen. Come with
me.

MARINA

Where are you taking me?

BOULT

I have to deflower you; otherwise you'll have to be killed.
Come with me. We can't have any more gentleman driven
away. Come with me, I said!

The BAWD comes back in.

BAWD

Hey, what's going on here?

BOULT

Worse and worse, ma'am. She's preached some sermon to
Lord Lysimachus.

BAWD

135 O abominable!

BOULT

She makes our profession as it were to stink afore the face of the gods.

BAWD

Marry, hang her up for ever!

BOULT

140 The nobleman would have dealt with her like a nobleman, and she sent him away as cold as a snowball; saying his prayers too.

BAWD

Boult, take her away; use her at thy pleasure: crack the glass of her virginity, and make the rest malleable.

BOULT

145 An if she were a thornier piece of ground than she is, she shall be ploughed.

MARINA

Hark, hark, you gods!

BAWD

150 She conjures: away with her! Would she had never come within my doors! Marry, hang you! She's born to undo us. Will you not go the way of women-kind? Marry, come up, my dish of chastity with rosemary and bays!

Exit

BOULT

Come, mistress; come your ways with me.

MARINA

Whither wilt thou have me?

BOULT

155 To take from you the jewel you hold so dear.

MARINA

Prithee, tell me one thing first.

BOULT

Come now, your one thing.

MARINA

What canst thou wish thine enemy to be?

BOULT

160 Why, I could wish him to be my master, or rather, my mistress.

MARINA

165 Neither of these are so bad as thou art, Since they do better thee in their command. Thou hold'st a place, for which the pained'st fiend Of hell would not in reputation change: Thou art the damned doorkeeper to every Coistrel that comes inquiring for his Tib; To the choleric fisting of every rogue Thy ear is liable; thy food is such As hath been belch'd on by infected lungs.

BAWD

It's unthinkable!

BOULT

She's ruining the name of our profession.

BAWD

For goodness' sake, have her hanged!

BOULT

The nobleman would have done with her what a nobleman does, but she sent him away as cold as a snowball, and saying his prayers, too.

BAWD

Boult, take her away. Do whatever you like with her. Smash her virginity into pieces so we can mold the rest into whatever shape we want.

BOULT

Even if she were uglier than she is, she'd have to be screwed.

MARINA

Gods, listen, help me!

BAWD

She's praying; take her away! I wish she had never set foot in this house. Damn her! She's going to ruin us. Don't you want to do what women do? Come up, my little virgin pie with rosemary and bay leaves!

¹² The Bawd describes Marina as a "dish" to eat, implying that her virginity is something to be consumed; rosemary and bay leaves are herbs used for flavoring.

The BAWD exits.

BOULT

Come on, missy, come with me.

MARINA

What are you going to do to me?

BOULT

Take away your most prized possession.

MARINA

Please, tell me one thing first.

BOULT

All right, what's your one thing?

MARINA

Who's the worst person you know?

BOULT

Probably the Pandar. Or the Bawd.

MARINA

Neither of them is as bad as you; their jobs are better than yours. The worst demon in hell wouldn't trade places with you. You're the damned doorman who lets in every vagabond that comes looking for his slut; every diseased person owes his misery to you. The very food you eat has been burped on by infected lungs.

BOULT

170 What would you have me do? go to the wars, would you? where a man may serve seven years for the loss of a leg, and have not money enough in the end to buy him a wooden one?

MARINA

Do any thing but this thou doest. Empty
175 Old receptacles, or common shores, of filth;
Serve by indenture to the common hangman:
Any of these ways are yet better than this;
For what thou professest, a baboon, could he speak,
Would own a name too dear. O, that the gods
180 Would safely deliver me from this place!
Here, here's gold for thee.
If that thy master would gain by thee,
Proclaim that I can sing, weave, sew, and dance,
With other virtues, which I'll keep from boast:
185 And I will undertake all these to teach.
I doubt not but this populous city will
Yield many scholars.

BOULT

But can you teach all this you speak of?

MARINA

190 Prove that I cannot, take me home again,
And prostitute me to the basest groom
That doth frequent your house.

BOULT

Well, I will see what I can do for thee: if I can place thee, I will.

MARINA

But amongst honest women.

BOULT

195 'Faith, my acquaintance lies little amongst them.
But since my master and mistress have bought you,
there's no going but by their consent: therefore I
will make them acquainted with your purpose, and I
doubt not but I shall find them tractable enough.
200 Come, I'll do for thee what I can; come your ways.

Exeunt

BOULT

What do you want me to do? Fight in the war, huh? Where a man might serve seven years before he loses a leg, and then not have enough money to buy a wooden one?

MARINA

Do anything but this. Empty trash cans, or clean up the beaches. Work as an apprentice in the prison. Anything is better than this. What you do? If a baboon could speak, he would say your job is beneath him. I wish the gods would take me out of here safely! Here, take this gold coin. If your master is intent to make a profit from me, let him know I can sing, weave, sew, and dance, and more which I won't brag about. I'll hire myself out to teach all these. I have no doubt that I'll find plenty of students in the city.

BOULT

Can you teach all those things?

MARINA

If it turns out that I can't, you can take me home and prostitute me to the lowest peasant that's a regular at your house.

BOULT

Well, I'll see what I can do for you. If I can help you, I will.

MARINA

I want to work among honest women.

BOULT

I don't know many of them, I'll tell you. But since my master and mistress have bought you, there's no way of going unless they consent. So I'll explain your plan to them; I'm sure they'll be willing. Come on, I'll do what I can for you. Come with me.

They both exit.

Act 5, Chorus

Shakespeare

Enter GOWER


GOWER


Marina thus the brothel 'scapes, and chances
Into an honest house, our story says.
She sings like one immortal, and she dances
As goddess-like to her admired lays;
5 Deep clerks she dumbs; and with her needle composes
Nature's own shape, of bud, bird, branch, or berry,
That even her art sisters the natural roses;
Her inkle, silk, twin with the rubied cherry:
That pupils lacks she none of noble race,
10 Who pour their bounty on her; and her gain
She gives the cursed bawd. Here we her place;
And to her father turn our thoughts again,
Where we left him, on the sea. We there him lost;
Whence, driven before the winds, he is arrived
15 Here where his daughter dwells; and on this coast
Suppose him now at anchor. The city strived

Shakescleare Translation

GOWER enters.

GOWER

So Marina escapes the brothel and, according to our story, finds some decent work. She sings beautifully, dances to her songs like a goddess, amazes scholars with her wisdom, and can sew anything (a bud, a bird, a branch, or a berry) perfectly realistically. Her embroidered roses are twins to those that grow in the earth; the cherries she sews with silk and inkle  look just like the real thing. She teaches children of the local nobility and, when their parents pay her, she's forced to give her earnings to the Bawd, that awful woman. We'll leave Marina here and go back to her father at sea. We lost him there, but now the winds have driven him here, where his daughter is; he just docked. From the middle of a festival celebrating Neptune, Lysimachus sees the ship approach with fancy black sails, and rows out in his own boat to check it out. Think back to

 "Inkle" is a kind of linen thread or yarn.

God Neptune's annual feast to keep: from whence
Lysimachus our Tyrian ship espies,
His banners sable, trimm'd with rich expense;
20 And to him in his barge with fervor hies.
In your supposing once more put your sight
Of heavy Pericles; think this his bark:
Where what is done in action, more, if might,
Shall be discover'd; please you, sit and hark.

Exit

poor Pericles and imagine this is his ship. You'll like what
happens next; sit and listen.

GOWER exits.

Act 5, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter two Sailors, one belonging to the Tyrian vessel, the other to the barge; to them HELICANUS

TYRIAN SAILOR

[To the Sailor of Mytilene] Where is lord Helicanus?
he can resolve you.

O, here he is.

Sir, there's a barge put off from Mytilene,

5 And in it is Lysimachus the governor,
Who craves to come aboard. What is your will?

HELICANUS

That he have his. Call up some gentlemen.

TYRIAN SAILOR

Ho, gentlemen! my lord calls.

Enter two or three Gentlemen

FIRST GENTLEMAN

10 Doth your lordship call?

HELICANUS

Gentlemen, there's some of worth would come aboard;
I pray ye, greet them fairly.

The Gentlemen and the two Sailors descend, and go on board the barge

Enter, from thence, LYSIMACHUS and Lords; with the Gentlemen and the two Sailors

TYRIAN SAILOR

Sir,

15 This is the man that can, in aught you would,
Resolve you.

LYSIMACHUS

Hail, reverend sir! the gods preserve you!

HELICANUS

And you, sir, to outlive the age I am,
And die as I would do.

LYSIMACHUS

20 You wish me well.
Being on shore, honouring of Neptune's triumphs,
Seeing this goodly vessel ride before us,
I made to it, to know of whence you are.

HELICANUS

First, what is your place?

Shakesclare Translation

HELICANUS comes in, along with one TYRIAN SAILOR and one sailor of Mytilene.

TYRIAN SAILOR

[To the Mytilene Sailor] Where is Lord Helicanus? He can answer your questions. Oh, here he is.

[To HELICANUS] Sir, there's a boat that just came from Mytilene and Lysimachus, the governor, is in it, asking to come onboard. What should we do?

HELICANUS

Bring him aboard. And bring some gentlemen with you.

TYRIAN SAILOR

Hey, gentlemen! Helicanus is calling.

Two or three GENTLEMEN enter.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Did you call, sir?

HELICANUS

Gentlemen, there's some powerful people who want to come aboard. Please greet them warmly.

The GENTLEMEN and the two SAILORS go down to go onboard PERICLES's boat.

LYSIMACHUS, his Lords, the GENTLEMEN and two SAILORS come in from the boat.

TYRIAN SAILOR

Sir, this is the man who can answer whatever questions you may have.

LYSIMACHUS


Greetings, sir! May the gods bless you!

HELICANUS

And you, sir. May you live longer than me and die an old man.

LYSIMACHUS

Thanks. I was on the shore, admiring Neptune's domain, when I saw your impressive ship sail toward us. I came out in my ship to find out where you've come from.

 "Neptune" was the ancient Roman god of the sea.

HELICANUS

First, who are you?

LYSIMACHUS

25 I am the governor of this place you lie before.

HELICANUS

Sir,
Our vessel is of Tyre, in it the king;
A man who for this three months hath not spoken
To any one, nor taken sustenance
30 But to prorogue his grief.

LYSIMACHUS

Upon what ground is his distemperature?

HELICANUS

'Twould be too tedious to repeat;
But the main grief springs from the loss
Of a beloved daughter and a wife.

LYSIMACHUS

35 May we not see him?

HELICANUS

You may;
But bootless is your sight: he will not speak To any.

LYSIMACHUS

Yet let me obtain my wish.

HELICANUS

Behold him.

40

PERICLES discovered

HELICANUS

This was a goodly person,
Till the disaster that, one mortal night,
Drove him to this.

LYSIMACHUS

45 Sir king, all hail! the gods preserve you!
Hail, royal sir!

HELICANUS

It is in vain; he will not speak to you.

FIRST LORD

Sir,
We have a maid in Mytilene, I durst wager,
50 Would win some words of him.

LYSIMACHUS

'Tis well bethought.
She questionless with her sweet harmony
And other chosen attractions, would allure,
And make a battery through his deafen'd parts,
55 Which now are midway stopp'd:
She is all happy as the fairest of all,
And, with her fellow maids is now upon
The leafy shelter that abuts against
The island's side.

Whispers a Lord, who goes off in the barge of LYSIMACHUS

HELICANUS

60 Sure, all's effectless; yet nothing we'll omit
That bears recovery's name. But, since your kindness
We have stretch'd thus far, let us beseech you
That for our gold we may provision have,
Wherein we are not destitute for want,
65 But weary for the staleness.

LYSIMACHUS

I am the governor of the country you are now in.

HELICANUS

Sir, our ship has come from Tyre, and the king is onboard.
For the past three months he hasn't spoken to anyone and
he's refused to eat anything more than what he needs to
prolong his grieving.

LYSIMACHUS

How did he get this way?

HELICANUS

The story is too long to repeat, but the short version is that
he lost his beloved daughter and his wife.

LYSIMACHUS

Can we see him?

HELICANUS

You may, but it won't help. He won't speak to anyone.

LYSIMACHUS

Let me see him anyway.

HELICANUS

Here he is.

He draws back a curtain, revealing PERICLES.

HELICANUS

He was a good man until the disaster that destroyed him in
a single night.

LYSIMACHUS

Greetings, king! May the gods protect you. Greetings, sir!

HELICANUS

It's no use; he won't speak to you.

FIRST LORD

Sir, there's a girl in Mytilene who could probably make him
speak.

LYSIMACHUS

That's a good idea. Most likely, her beautiful voice and
many other attractive qualities will allure him and get
through to his deaf ears, though they're stopped up now.
She's the most beautiful girl there is. She's with her
students now in the building surrounded by trees on the
other side of the island.

*LYSIMACHUS whispers directions to a Lord, who leaves and
enters LYSIMACHUS's boat.*

HELICANUS

It's probably useless, but we won't overlook anything that
might help. And since we've taken advantage of your
kindness so far, can I ask you if we could exchange our gold
for food? We have some, but it's gone stale.

LYSIMACHUS

O, sir, a courtesy
Which if we should deny, the most just gods
For every graff would send a caterpillar,
And so afflict our province. Yet once more
70 Let me entreat to know at large the cause
Of your king's sorrow.

HELICANUS

Sit, sir, I will recount it to you:
But, see, I am prevented.

Re-enter, from the barge, Lord, with MARINA

LYSIMACHUS

75 O, here is
The lady that I sent for. Welcome, fair one!
Is't not a goodly presence?

HELICANUS

She's a gallant lady.

LYSIMACHUS

80 She's such a one, that, were I well assured
Came of a gentle kind and noble stock,
I'd wish no better choice, and think me rarely wed.
Fair one, all goodness that consists in bounty
Expect even here, where is a kingly patient:
If that thy prosperous and artificial feat
85 Can draw him but to answer thee in aught,
Thy sacred physic shall receive such pay
As thy desires can wish.

MARINA

Sir, I will use
My utmost skill in his recovery, provided
90 That none but I and my companion maid
Be suffer'd to come near him.

LYSIMACHUS

Come, let us leave her;
And the gods make her prosperous!

MARINA sings

LYSIMACHUS

95 Mark'd he your music?

MARINA

No, nor look'd on us.

LYSIMACHUS

See, she will speak to him.

MARINA

Hail, sir! my lord, lend ear.

PERICLES

Hum, ha!

MARINA

100 I am a maid,
My lord, that ne'er before invited eyes,
But have been gazed on like a comet: she speaks,
My lord, that, may be, hath endured a grief
Might equal yours, if both were justly weigh'd.
105 Though wayward fortune did malign my state,
My derivation was from ancestors
Who stood equivalent with mighty kings:
But time hath rooted out my parentage,
And to the world and awkward casualties
110 Bound me in servitude.

LYSIMACHUS

Oh, sir, if I were to deny you that service, the most just gods
would send a plague of caterpillars, one for every grain we
didn't give, to afflict our country. But let me ask again: can I
hear the story of how your king came to be so sad?

HELICANUS

Sit, sir, and I'll tell you. But, as you can see, I'll be
interrupted...

The Lord comes back in with MARINA.

LYSIMACHUS

Oh, here's the lady that I sent for. Hello, beautiful! Isn't she
pretty?

HELICANUS

She's a noble lady.

LYSIMACHUS

She's so beautiful that, if I could only be assured she came
from an aristocratic family and noble blood, I couldn't find
a better choice, and would marry her. Beautiful girl, you can
expect to be rewarded generously for helping the sick king
here. If your artistic talents are successful in getting him to
respond to you in anything, we'll pay you anything you
want for the healing.

MARINA

Sir, I'll use all the skills I have to help him, as long as no one
but me and my maid are allowed to come near him.

LYSIMACHUS

Come, let's leave her. May the gods help her!

*MARINA sings. PERICLES does not look up. She returns to
LYSIMACHUS.*

LYSIMACHUS

Did he listen to your music?

MARINA

No, and he didn't look at us.

LYSIMACHUS

See, she's going to speak to him.

MARINA

Hello, sir! Sir, will you listen to me?

PERICLES

Hmm, ha! [*PERICLES hits MARINA*]

MARINA

I'm a virgin, sir, and though I've never asked for anyone's
attention, I've had a lot of people stare at me (as though I
were a shooting star)! I'm speaking to you, sir, because I
think I may have experienced grief that, if we compared,
might equal yours. Though I've been unlucky to end up
where I am now, I'm descended from ancestors who were
the equivalent of powerful kings. I've been robbed of my
inheritance from my parents, and over the course of time
have been forced to serve the world and its uncomfortable
institutions.

[Aside]

I will desist;

115 But there is something glows upon my cheek,
And whispers in mine ear, 'Go not till he speak.'

PERICLES

My fortunes—parentage—good parentage—
To equal mine!—was it not thus? what say you?

MARINA

120 I said, my lord, if you did know my parentage,
You would not do me violence.

PERICLES

I do think so. Pray you, turn your eyes upon me.
You are like something that—What country-woman?
Here of these shores?

MARINA

125 No, nor of any shores:
Yet I was mortally brought forth, and am
No other than I appear.

PERICLES

I am great with woe, and shall deliver weeping.
My dearest wife was like this maid, and such a one
My daughter might have been: my queen's square brows;
130 Her stature to an inch; as wand-like straight;
As silver-voiced; her eyes as jewel-like
And cased as richly; in pace another Juno;
Who starves the ears she feeds, and makes them hungry,
The more she gives them speech. Where do you live?

MARINA

135 Where I am but a stranger: from the deck
You may discern the place.

PERICLES

Where were you bred?
And how achieved you these endowments, which
You make more rich to owe?

MARINA

140 If I should tell my history, it would seem
Like lies disdain'd in the reporting.

PERICLES

Prithee, speak:
Falseness cannot come from thee; for thou look'st
Modest as Justice, and thou seem'st a palace
145 For the crown'd Truth to dwell in: I will
believe thee,
And make my senses credit thy relation
To points that seem impossible; for thou look'st
Like one I loved indeed. What were thy friends?
150 Didst thou not say, when I did push thee back—
Which was when I perceived thee— that thou camest
From good descending?

MARINA

So indeed I did.

PERICLES

155 Report thy parentage. I think thou said'st
Thou hadst been toss'd from wrong to injury,
And that thou thought'st thy griefs might equal mine,
If both were open'd.

MARINA

160 Some such thing
I said, and said no more but what my thoughts

[To herself] I should stop. But there's something that warms
my cheek, a little voice inside me telling me, "Keep going
until he says something."

PERICLES

My luck . . . parents . . . good parents . . . like me! Was it
really? What did you say?

MARINA

I said, sir, that if you knew who my parents were, you
wouldn't hurt me.

PERICLES

I believe you. Please, look at me. You remind me of
someone . . . where are you from? From this country?

MARINA

No, I wasn't born in any country. And yet I was born, and am
exactly what I seem.

PERICLES

I'm so upset; ² I'm about to start crying. My wife looked
just like this girl, and my daughter might have looked like
her if she had survived: she has my wife's thick eyebrows,
her exact height, her straight posture, her beautiful voice,
her sparkling eyes framed in rich eyelashes ³, with a walk
as graceful as Juno's ⁴, and a voice that makes people
hungry to hear her speak. Where do you live?

² Pericles's uses the language of pregnancy. He is "great with woe" (pregnant with sadness) and will "deliver" (give birth to) weeping.

³ This description of Marina echoes Cerimon's description of Thaisa's eyes, eyelids, and eyelashes in Act 2.

⁴ In ancient Roman mythology, Juno was Jove's wife, and queen of the gods.

MARINA

I'm just a stranger here: you can see where I live from the
deck of this boat.

PERICLES

Where were you born? And how did you achieve all these
accomplishments?

MARINA

If I told you my story, you would think I was lying.

PERICLES

Please, speak. You can't tell a lie; you look like the
embodiment of Justice, like the queen of Truth. I will
believe you, even if you say things that seem impossible,
because you look like someone I used to love. Who was
your family? Didn't you say, when I pushed you back, when
I first looked at you, that you came from a good family?

MARINA

Yes, I did.

PERICLES

Tell me who your parents were. I think you said you'd been
wronged and hurt in the past, and that you thought you had
suffered as much as I had (if the stories were both told).

MARINA

I said something like that, but I only said what I thought
might be true.

Did warrant me was likely.

PERICLES

Tell thy story;
If thine consider'd prove the thousandth part
Of my endurance, thou art a man, and I
Have suffer'd like a girl: yet thou dost look
165 Like Patience gazing on kings' graves, and smiling
Extremity out of act. What were thy friends?
How lost thou them? Thy name, my most kind virgin?
Recount, I do beseech thee: come, sit by me.

MARINA

My name is Marina.

PERICLES

170 O, I am mock'd,
And thou by some incensed god sent hither
To make the world to laugh at me.

MARINA

Patience, good sir,
Or here I'll cease.

PERICLES

175 Nay, I'll be patient.
Thou little know'st how thou dost startle me,
To call thyself Marina.

MARINA

The name
Was given me by one that had some power,
180 My father, and a king.

PERICLES

How! a king's daughter?
And call'd Marina?

MARINA

You said you would believe me;
But, not to be a troubler of your peace,
185 I will end here.

PERICLES

But are you flesh and blood?
Have you a working pulse? and are no fairy?
Motion! Well; speak on. Where were you born?
And wherefore call'd Marina?

MARINA

190 Call'd Marina
For I was born at sea.

PERICLES

At sea! what mother?

MARINA

My mother was the daughter of a king;
Who died the minute I was born,
195 As my good nurse Lychorida hath oft
Deliver'd weeping.

PERICLES

O, stop there a little!
[Aside]
200 This is the rarest dream that e'er dull sleep
Did mock sad fools withal: this cannot be:
My daughter's buried. Well: where were you bred?
I'll hear you more, to the bottom of your story,
205 And never interrupt you.

MARINA

You scorn: believe me, 'twere best I did give o'er.

PERICLES

Tell your story; if you've experienced one thousandth of what I have, you're a man and I've suffered like a girl. You look patient in the face of death ⁵; you're smiling as if nothing had happened! Who was your family? How did you lose them? What is your name, friendly virgin? Please, tell me, I'm begging you. Come sit by me.

⁵ In the original text, "kings' graves" (that is, death) has significance in this scene about Pericles's spiritual death and rebirth through Marina.

MARINA

My name is Marina.

PERICLES

This is a joke. Some angry god has sent you here to make the world laugh at me.

MARINA

Sir, please listen, or I'll stop here.

PERICLES

I'll listen. You have no idea how much you've startled me by calling yourself "Marina."

MARINA

The name was given to me by a powerful person: my father, who was a king.

PERICLES

What? You're a king's daughter named Marina?

MARINA

You said you would believe me. I won't bother you anymore; I'll stop there.

PERICLES

Are you flesh and blood? Is your heart beating? You're not a ghost? You're alive! Well, keep talking. Where were you born? And why were you called Marina?

MARINA

I was called Marina because I was born at sea.

PERICLES

At sea! Who was your mother?

MARINA

My mother was the daughter of a king, and she died as soon as I was born. My nurse, Lychorida, told me the story many times, crying.

PERICLES

Oh, wait a minute!

[To himself] This is the strangest dream that a poor idiot ever had. This can't be true; my daughter is dead.

[To MARINA] Well, where were you born? I'll listen to you again, to the whole story, and won't interrupt you anymore.

MARINA

You're making fun of me. Believe me; it's best if I stop.

PERICLES

I will believe you by the syllable
Of what you shall deliver. Yet, give me leave:
How came you in these parts? where were you bred?

MARINA

- 210 The king my father did in Tarsus leave me;
Till cruel Cleon, with his wicked wife,
Did seek to murder me: and having woo'd
A villain to attempt it, who having drawn to do't,
A crew of pirates came and rescued me;
215 Brought me to Mytilene. But, good sir,
Whither will you have me? Why do you weep?
It may be,
You think me an impostor: no, good faith;
I am the daughter to King Pericles,
220 If good King Pericles be.

PERICLES

Ho, Helicanus!

HELICANUS

Calls my lord?

PERICLES

- Thou art a grave and noble counsellor,
Most wise in general: tell me, if thou canst,
225 What this maid is, or what is like to be,
That thus hath made me weep?

HELICANUS

I know not; but
Here is the regent, sir, of Mytilene
Speaks nobly of her.

LYSIMACHUS

- 230 She would never tell
Her parentage; being demanded that,
She would sit still and weep.

PERICLES

- O Helicanus, strike me, honour'd sir;
Give me a gash, put me to present pain;
235 Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me
O'erbear the shores of my mortality,
And drown me with their sweetness. O, come hither,
Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget;
Thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tarsus,
240 And found at sea again! O Helicanus,
Down on thy knees, thank the holy gods as loud
As thunder threatens us: this is Marina.
What was thy mother's name? tell me but that,
For truth can never be confirm'd enough,
245 Though doubts did ever sleep.

MARINA

First, sir, I pray,
What is your title?

PERICLES

- I am Pericles of Tyre: but tell me now
My drown'd queen's name, as in the rest you said
250 Thou hast been godlike perfect,
The heir of kingdoms and another like
To Pericles thy father.

MARINA

- Is it no more to be your daughter than
To say my mother's name was Thaisa?
255 Thaisa was my mother, who did end
The minute I began.

PERICLES

I'll believe every word you say. But let me ask: how did you
get here? Where were you born?

MARINA

My father, the king, left me in Tarsus until the king, Cleon,
and his evil wife tried to murder me. They had even hired a
criminal to do it, but right as he was about to, a group of
pirates came and rescued me and brought me to Mytilene.

[PERICLES begins to cry] Sir, did I say something wrong?
Why are you crying? Maybe you think I'm a fake, but I'm not:
I'm good King Pericles's daughter, if good King Pericles is
still alive.

PERICLES

Hey, Helicanus!

HELICANUS

Did you call, sir?

PERICLES

You're a serious, noble advisor, and wise about many
different things: tell me, if you can, what this girl is, or is
supposed to be, that she's made me cry so much?

HELICANUS

I don't know, but here's the governor of Mytilene, sir, and he
speaks highly of her.

LYSIMACHUS

She would never tell me who her parents were. Whenever I
asked, she would sit still and weep.

PERICLES

Oh, Helicanus, pinch me! Hit me, make me feel some pain,
or this [great sea](#) of happiness will overwhelm me and
kill me!

[To MARINA] Oh come here; I gave birth to you, but finding
you makes me feel like I'm reborn. You were born at sea,
buried in Tarsus, and found at sea again!

[To HELICANUS] Oh, Helicanus, kneel and thank the gods in
a voice louder than the storm: this is Marina.

[To MARINA] What was your mother's name? Tell me that.
The truth can never be confirmed enough, even if I have no
doubts.

MARINA

First, sir, please: who are you?

PERICLES

I am Pericles of Tyre, but tell me my drowned wife's name.
Everything you've said has been completely perfect. If you
get this right, you're the heir to two kingdoms and to me,
your father, Pericles.

MARINA

Will it prove I'm your daughter if I say my mother's name
was Thaisa? Thaisa was my mother, and she died as soon as
I was born.

⁶ The "great sea," a symbol of
misfortune, destruction, and
alienation thus far, is (through Marina)
now associated with joy.

⁷ The language of pregnancy in this
scene reprises the scene of Marina's
birth—here, Pericles plays Marina, and
Marina plays Thaisa. Pericles imagines
he was lost at sea (in his depression
and despair) and was saved (in his
metaphor, born) by Marina.

PERICLES

Now, blessing on thee! rise; thou art my child.
Give me fresh garments. Mine own, Helicanus;
She is not dead at Tarsus, as she should have been,
260 By savage Cleon: she shall tell thee all;
When thou shalt kneel, and justify in knowledge
She is thy very princess. Who is this?

HELICANUS

Sir, 'tis the governor of Mytilene,
Who, hearing of your melancholy state,
265 Did come to see you.

PERICLES

I embrace you.
Give me my robes. I am wild in my beholding.
O heavens bless my girl! But, hark, what music?
Tell Helicanus, my Marina, tell him
270 O'er, point by point, for yet he seems to doubt,
How sure you are my daughter. But, what music?

HELICANUS

My lord, I hear none.

PERICLES

None!
The music of the spheres! List, my Marina.

LYSIMACHUS

275 It is not good to cross him; give him way.

PERICLES

Rarest sounds! Do ye not hear?

LYSIMACHUS

My lord, I hear.

Music

PERICLES

Most heavenly music!
280 It nips me unto listening, and thick slumber
Hangs upon mine eyes: let me rest.

Sleeps

LYSIMACHUS

A pillow for his head:
So, leave him all. Well, my companion friends,
285 If this but answer to my just belief,
I'll well remember you.

Exeunt all but PERICLES

DIANA appears to PERICLES as in a vision

DIANA

My temple stands in Ephesus: hie thee thither,
And do upon mine altar sacrifice.
There, when my maiden priests are met together,
290 Before the people all,
Reveal how thou at sea didst lose thy wife:
To mourn thy crosses, with thy daughter's, call
And give them repetition to the life.
Or perform my bidding, or thou livest in woe;
295 Do it, and happy; by my silver bow!
Awake, and tell thy dream.

PERICLES

Now bless you! Get up; you are my child. Bring me fresh
clothes. She's my daughter, Helicanus. She's wasn't killed
by Cleon back in Tarsus like she should have been. She can
tell you everything, but first kneel and acknowledge her as
your princess. Who is this?

HELICANUS

Sir, it's the governor of Mytilene. He heard how melancholy
you were and came to see you.

PERICLES


I'll give you a hug. Give me my clothes. I'm overwhelmed
with what I've seen. May the heavens bless my girl! But
listen: what's that music? Tell Helicanus, my Marina, tell
him the whole thing, point by point, because he still seems
unsure—tell him that you're my daughter. But what's that
music?

HELICANUS

Sir, I can't hear anything.

PERICLES

Nothing? It's the [music of the spheres](#)! Listen, my
Marina.

 The "music of the spheres" is a philosophical and astronomical concept going back to Aristotle—a state of harmony in the natural world which humans can access. Pericles's ability to hear the music of the spheres is a shorthand for his heightened philosophical and spiritual state after recovering Marina.

LYSIMACHUS

It's not good to contradict him; let him go on.

PERICLES

Strange sounds! Can't you hear?

LYSIMACHUS

Sir, I hear.

Music begins to play.

PERICLES

The most heavenly music! I can't stop listening; and it's
making me sleepy. Let me rest.

PERICLES falls asleep.

LYSIMACHUS

Get a pillow for his head. Let's all leave him.

Well, friends, if all this is true, I'll never forget you.

Everyone except PERICLES exits.

DIANA appears to PERICLES, as if in a dream.

DIANA

My temple is in Ephesus. Go there and make a sacrifice at
my altar. In front of the virgin nuns and people there, reveal
the story of how you lost your wife at sea. Weep for your
grief, and your daughter's. Bring the stories to life by
repeating them. Do what I say, or you'll live a cursed life. If
you do it, you'll be happy, I'll make sure of it! Now wake up
and tell about your dream.

*Disappears***PERICLES**

Celestial Dian, goddess argentine,
I will obey thee. Helicanus!

*Re-enter HELICANUS, LYSIMACHUS, and MARINA***HELICANUS**

300 Sir?

PERICLES

My purpose was for Tarsus, there to strike
The inhospitable Cleon; but I am
For other service first: toward Ephesus
Turn our blown sails; eftsoons I'll tell thee why.

305 *[To LYSIMACHUS]*

Shall we refresh us, sir, upon your shore,
And give you gold for such provision

310 As our intents will need?

LYSIMACHUS

Sir,
With all my heart; and, when you come ashore,
I have another suit.

PERICLES

315 You shall prevail,
Were it to woo my daughter; for it seems
You have been noble towards her.

LYSIMACHUS

Sir, lend me your arm.

PERICLES

Come, my Marina.

*Exeunt**DIANA disappears.***PERICLES**

Heavenly Diana, silver goddess, I will obey you. Helicanus!

*HELICANUS, LYSIMACHUS, and MARINA come back in.***HELICANUS**

Sir?

PERICLES

I had planned to go to Tarsus and wage war on Cleon, but I
have to do something else first. Turn the sails toward
Ephesus. I'll tell you why soon.

[To LYSIMACHUS] Can we rest and get provisions, sir, in
Mytilene? We can pay you in gold for everything that we
need.

LYSIMACHUS

Sir, with all my heart. And when you come on shore, I have
another request.

PERICLES

The answer is "yes" if you're asking to marry my daughter.
It seems you've been kind to her.

LYSIMACHUS

Sir, give me your arm.

PERICLES

Come, my Marina.

They all leave.

Act 5, Scene 2

Shakespeare

*Enter GOWER, before the temple of DIANA at Ephesus***GOWER**

Now our sands are almost run;
More a little, and then dumb.
This, my last boon, give me,
For such kindness must relieve me,
5 That you aptly will suppose
What pageantry, what feats, what shows,
What minstrelsy, and pretty din,
The regent made in Mytilene
To greet the king. So he thrived,
10 That he is promised to be wived
To fair Marina; but in no wise
Till he had done his sacrifice,
As Dian bade: whereto being bound,
The interim, pray you, all confound.
15 In feather'd briefness sails are fill'd,
And wishes fall out as they're will'd.
At Ephesus, the temple see,
Our king and all his company.
That he can hither come so soon,
20 Is by your fancy's thankful doom.

Exit

Shakescleare Translation

*GOWER comes in, standing in front of the temple of DIANA in Ephesus.***GOWER**

Now our time is almost up; there's only a little bit left before
we shut up. Here's the last favor I'll ask of you: that you'll
envision all the parades, performances, shows, songs, and
fanfare that the governor put on in Mytilene to greet the
king. He succeeded in getting engaged to Marina, but they
won't be married until Pericles performs the sacrifice that
Diana ordered. They're headed there now; picture them
going in the meantime. The sails fill with wind, the ship
goes quickly, and everyone's wishes are fulfilled. Now see
the temple in Ephesus where the king and his group are.
They got there so quickly only by the power of your
imagination.

GOWER exits.

Act 5, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter PERICLES, with his train; LYSIMACHUS, HELICANUS, MARINA, and a Lady

PERICLES

Hail, Dian! to perform thy just command,
I here confess myself the king of Tyre;
Who, frighted from my country, did wed
At Pentapolis the fair Thaisa.

- 5 At sea in childbed died she, but brought forth
A maid-child call'd Marina; who, O goddess,
Wears yet thy silver livery. She at Tarsus
Was nursed with Cleon; who at fourteen years
He sought to murder: but her better stars
10 Brought her to Mytilene; 'gainst whose shore
Riding, her fortunes brought the maid aboard us,
Where, by her own most clear remembrance, she
Made known herself my daughter.

THAISA

Voice and favour!

- 15 You are, you are—O royal Pericles!

Faints

PERICLES

What means the nun? she dies! help, gentlemen!

CERIMON

Noble sir,
If you have told Diana's altar true,
This is your wife.

PERICLES

- 20 Reverend appearer, no;
I threw her overboard with these very arms.

CERIMON

Upon this coast, I warrant you.

PERICLES

'Tis most certain.

CERIMON

- Look to the lady; O, she's but o'erjoy'd.
25 Early in blustering morn this lady was
Thrown upon this shore. I oped the coffin,
Found there rich jewels; recover'd her, and placed her
Here in Diana's temple.

PERICLES

May we see them?

CERIMON

- 30 Great sir, they shall be brought you to my house,
Whither I invite you. Look, Thaisa is recovered.

THAISA

- O, let me look!
If he be none of mine, my sanctity
Will to my sense bend no licentious ear,
35 But curb it, spite of seeing. O, my lord,
Are you not Pericles? Like him you spake,
Like him you are: did you not name a tempest,
A birth, and death?

Shakescleare Translation

PERICLES, LYSIMACHUS, HELICANUS, MARINA, and a lady enter with others. THAISA, CERIMON, and others stand by the altar.

PERICLES

Praise Diana! I'm doing what you asked: I'll tell the whole story here. I'm the king of Tyre. I left my country because I was afraid for my life, and married Thaisa in Pentapolis. She died giving birth to our daughter, Marina, at sea. Marina is still a virgin like you, Diana! Cleon took care of her in Tarsus, but when she was fourteen years old he tried to murder her. Luckily, she came to Mytilene, where, when I arrived, by good fortune she was brought aboard my ship and, by recounting her story, she made it clear she was my daughter.

THAISA

I recognize that voice! You're, you're—oh, Pericles!

THAISA faints.

PERICLES

What did that nun say? Is she dead? Help her, gentlemen!

CERIMON

Sir, if you've told the truth just now at Diana's altar, this is your wife.

PERICLES

Sir, it can't be. I threw her overboard with my own hands.

CERIMON

Near this coast, I bet.

PERICLES

Exactly.

CERIMON

[To the nuns] Take care of the lady, she's just overexcited.

[To PERICLES] Early one morning, this woman washed up on shore. I opened the coffin, found some expensive jewels inside, revived her, and made her a nun here in Diana's temple.

PERICLES

Can we see the jewels?

CERIMON

Of course, come to my house and I'll bring them to you. Look, Thaisa woke up.

THAISA

Let me look! If he's not my husband, my religious spirit won't let me get excited just by hearing; I'm inclined not to believe, having not seen.

[She comes face to face with PERICLES] Oh, sir, are you Pericles? You spoke just like him, and you look just like him. . . did you mention a storm, a birth, and a death?

PERICLES

The voice of dead Thaisa!

THAISA

40 That Thaisa am I, supposed dead
And drown'd.

PERICLES

Immortal Dian!

THAISA

Now I know you better.
When we with tears parted Pentapolis,
45 The king my father gave you such a ring.

Shows a ring

PERICLES

This, this: no more, you gods! your present kindness
Makes my past miseries sports: you shall do well,
That on the touching of her lips I may
50 Melt and no more be seen. O, come, be buried
A second time within these arms.

MARINA

My heart
Leaps to be gone into my mother's bosom.

Kneels to THAISA

PERICLES

55 Look, who kneels here! Flesh of thy flesh, Thaisa;
Thy burden at the sea, and call'd Marina
For she was yielded there.

THAISA

Blest, and mine own!

HELICANUS

Hail, madam, and my queen!

THAISA

60 I know you not.

PERICLES

You have heard me say, when I did fly from Tyre,
I left behind an ancient substitute:
Can you remember what I call'd the man?
I have named him oft.

THAISA

65 'Twas Helicanus then.

PERICLES

Still confirmation:
Embrace him, dear Thaisa; this is he.
Now do I long to hear how you were found;
How possibly preserved; and who to thank,
70 Besides the gods, for this great miracle.

THAISA

Lord Cerimon, my lord; this man,
Through whom the gods have shown their power; that can
From first to last resolve you.

PERICLES

The voice of Thaisa, who's dead!

THAISA

I am Thaisa, who you thought was dead and drowned.

PERICLES


Immortal Diana!


THAISA

Now I recognize you. When we left Pentapolis, my father,
the king, gave you this ring.

THAISA shows him a ring.

PERICLES

This, this—no more, gods! All this goodness makes the past
pain seem like nothing. You'll do well if, when I kiss her, I
melt and am never seen again! Oh, come and let me hold
you . [*PERICLES and THAISA embrace*]


 *The language of birth and death pervade this scene as in the previous one. Thaisa was "buried" in the sea and is "buried" again in Pericles's arms. Though he finds her miraculously come back to life, his invitation to hug uses the metaphor of a grave.*


MARINA

My heart jumps at the thought of being able to hug my own mother.

MARINA kneels to THAISA.

PERICLES

Look who kneels here! This is your daughter , Thaisa,
called "Marina" for the sea because that's where she was
born.

 *In the original text, Pericles adapts Adam's declaration to identify Eve ("flesh of my flesh") in the Book of Genesis. Pericles and his family's rebirth is figured as a sort of new Creation story.*

THAISA

Bless you, daughter!

HELICANUS

I salute you, my queen!

THAISA

I don't know you.

PERICLES

Do you remember me saying that, when I left Tyre, I left an
old friend behind? Do you remember his name? I've
mentioned it many times.

THAISA

It was Helicanus back then.

PERICLES

More confirmation! Give him a hug, Thaisa, this is
Helicanus. Now I want to know how you were found, how
you survived, and who I should thank (besides the gods) for
this miracle.

THAISA

Thank Lord Cerimon, dear, this man through whom the
gods have shown their power. He can tell you everything
from beginning to end.

PERICLES

Reverend sir,

75 The gods can have no mortal officer
More like a god than you. Will you deliver
How this dead queen re-lives?

CERIMON

I will, my lord.

80 Beseech you, first go with me to my house,
Where shall be shown you all was found with her;
How she came placed here in the temple;
No needful thing omitted.

PERICLES

Pure Dian, bless thee for thy vision! I

Will offer night-oblations to thee. Thaisa,
85 This prince, the fair-betrothed of your daughter,
Shall marry her at Pentapolis. And now,
This ornament
Makes me look dismal will I clip to form;
And what this fourteen years no razor touch'd,
90 To grace thy marriage-day, I'll beautify.

THAISA

Lord Cerimon hath letters of good credit, sir,
My father's dead.

PERICLES

Heavens make a star of him! Yet there, my queen,

We'll celebrate their nuptials, and ourselves
95 Will in that kingdom spend our following days:
Our son and daughter shall in Tyros reign.
Lord Cerimon, we do our longing stay
To hear the rest untold: sir, lead's the way.

Exeunt

PERICLES

Sir, you're the nearest thing to a god that a man can be. Can you explain how my queen came back to life?

CERIMON

I can, sir. But first, let's go into my house, where I can show you everything we found with her. We'll explain how she came here to the temple, and we won't leave anything out.

PERICLES

Diana, bless your perfect plan! I will make a sacrifice to you tonight. Thaisa, this is Lysimachus, who's engaged to your daughter and is about to marry her in Pentapolis. And now, I'll shave off this long beard that I've grown for the last fourteen years. I'll look young again for your wedding day, Marina.

THAISA

Lord Cerimon has received trustworthy letters saying my father's dead.

PERICLES

May the gods bless his soul. We'll go to Pentapolis to celebrate their wedding, and we'll stay there to rule that kingdom for the rest of our lives. Marina and Lysimachus will rule in Tyre.

[To CERIMON] Lord Cerimon, we'll stay here until we hear the rest of the story! Sir, lead the way.

They all exit.

Act 5, Epilogue

Shakespeare

Enter GOWER

GOWER

In Antiochus and his daughter you have heard
Of monstrous lust the due and just reward:

In Pericles, his queen and daughter, seen,
Although assail'd with fortune fierce and keen,
5 Virtue preserved from fell destruction's blast,
Led on by heaven, and crown'd with joy at last:
In Helicanus may you well descry
A figure of truth, of faith, of loyalty:
In reverend Cerimon there well appears
10 The worth that learned charity aye wears:
For wicked Cleon and his wife, when fame
Had spread their cursed deed, and honour'd name
Of Pericles, to rage the city turn,
That him and his they in his palace burn;
15 The gods for murder seemed so content
To punish them; although not done, but meant.
So, on your patience evermore attending,
New joy wait on you! Here our play has ending.

Exit

Shakescleare Translation

GOWER enters.

GOWER

You heard about the just deserts that Antiochus and his daughter got for their monstrous actions. And you've seen how Pericles, his queen, and his daughter—despite the bad fortune life threw at them—kept their virtue safe from misfortune's attacks, trusted the gods, and are happy at last. You can see that Helicanus is an example of truth, faith, and loyalty; Cerimon displays how wisdom and generosity can do good in the world. Once the word got out about what Cleon and his wife had done, the city of Tarsus (which loved Pericles) reacted in a rage, burning them to death in their own palace. The gods punished them that way for their attempted murder—though they didn't do it, they meant it. So, thanks again for your patience, and may you be blessed! This is the end of our play.

GOWER exits.

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