

CYMBELINE : A Tale of innocence, guile, courage, and evil stepmothers; the call of family and the Heart.

Narrator: Introduction

All actors/chorus on stage

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

First Gentleman

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

Second Gentleman

But what's the matter?

First Gentleman

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

Second Gentleman

None but the king?

First Gentleman

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

Second Gentleman

And why so?

First Gentleman

He that hath miss'd the princess is a thing
Too bad for bad report: and he that hath her--
I mean, that married her, alack, good man!
And therefore banish'd--is a creature such
As, to seek through the regions of the earth
For one his like, there would be something failing
In him that should compare.



Second Gentleman

What's his name and birth?

First Gentleman

I cannot delve him to the root: his father
Was call'd Sicilius, who did join his honour
Against the Romans with Cassibelan,
And had, besides this gentleman in question,
Two other sons, who in the wars o' the time
Died with their swords in hand; for which
their father,
Then old and fond of issue, took such sorrow
That he quit being, and his gentle lady,
Big of this gentleman our theme, deceased
As he was born. The king he takes the babe
To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,
Breeds him and makes him of his bed-chamber,
Puts to him all the learnings that his time
Could make him the receiver of;
And in's spring became a harvest, lived in court--
Which rare it is to do--most praised, most loved.
His mistress,
For whom he now is banish'd, her own price
Proclaims how she esteem'd him and his virtue.

Second Gentleman

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

First Gentleman

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

Second Gentleman

How long is this ago?

First Gentleman

Some twenty years.

Second Gentleman

That a king's children should be so convey'd,
So slackly guarded, and the search so slow,



That could not trace them!

First Gentleman

Yet is it true, sir.

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

Exeunt

Enter the QUEEN, POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and IMOGEN

QUEEN

No, be assured you shall not find me, daughter,
After the slander of most stepmothers,
Evil-eyed unto you: you're my prisoner, but
Your gaoler shall deliver you the keys
That lock up your restraint. For you, Posthumus,
So soon as I can win the offended king,
I will be known your advocate:

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

QUEEN

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

Aside

Yet I'll move him

*To walk this way: I never do him wrong,
But he does buy my injuries, to be friends;
Pays dear for my offences.*

Exit

IMOGEN

O

Dissembling courtesy! How fine this tyrant
Can tickle where she wounds! My dearest husband,
I something fear my father's wrath; but nothing--
--what

His rage can do on me: you must be gone;
And I shall here abide the hourly shot
Of angry eyes, not comforted to live,
But that there is this jewel in the world

That I may see again.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

My queen! my mistress!

O lady, weep no more; I will remain

The loyal'st husband that did e'er plight troth:

My residence in Rome at one Philario's,

Who to my father was a friend, to me

Known but by letter: thither write, my queen,

And with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send,

Though ink be made of gall. Adieu!

IMOGEN

Nay, stay a little:

Were you but riding forth to air yourself,

Such parting were too petty. Look here, love;

This diamond was my mother's: take it, heart;

But keep it till you woo another wife,

When Imogen is dead.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

How, how! another?

You gentle gods, give me but this I have,

And sear up my embracements from a next

With bonds of death!

(Putting on the ring)

Remain, remain thou here

While sense can keep it on. And, sweetest, fairest,

As I my poor self did exchange for you,

To your so infinite loss, so in our trifles

I still win of you: for my sake wear this;

It is a manacle of love; I'll place it

Upon this fairest prisoner.

(Putting a bracelet upon her arm)

IMOGEN

O the gods!

When shall we see again?

Enter CYMBELINE and Lords

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Alack, the king!



CYMBELINE

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

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

Exit

CYMBELINE

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

IMOGEN

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

CYMBELINE

Past grace? obedience?

IMOGEN

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

CYMBELINE

That mightst have had the sole son of my queen!

IMOGEN

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

CYMBELINE

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

IMOGEN

No; I rather added
A lustre to it.

CYMBELINE

O thou vile one!

IMOGEN



Sir,

It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus:
You bred him as my playfellow: Would I were
A neat-herd's daughter, and my Leonatus
Our neighbour shepherd's son!

CYMBELINE

Thou foolish thing!

Re-enter QUEEN

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

QUEEN

Beseech your patience. Peace,
Dear lady daughter, peace! Sweet sovereign,
Leave us to ourselves;

CYMBELINE

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

QUEEN

Fie! you must give way.

Enter PISANIO

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

PISANIO

My lord your son drew on my master.

QUEEN

Ha!

No harm, I trust, is done?

PISANIO

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



Exeunt CYMBELINE and Lords

QUEEN

I am very glad on't.

IMOGEN

Your son's my father's friend; he takes his part.

To draw upon an exile! O brave sir!

Why came you from your master?

PISANIO

On his command: he would not suffer me

To bring him to the haven; left these notes

Of what commands I should be subject to,

When 't pleased you to employ me.

IMOGEN

You shall at least

Go see my lord aboard: for this time leave me.

Exeunt Pisanio

QUEEN

This hath been

Your faithful servant: I dare lay mine honour

He will remain so.

Exeunt Queen and Imogen

SCENE 2 . Britain : A public place.

Enter CLOTEN and two Lords

First Lord

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

CLOTEN

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

Second Lord

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

First Lord

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

CLOTEN

I would they had not come between us.

Second Lord

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

CLOTEN

And that she should love this fellow and refuse me!

First Lord

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

Second Lord

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

Exeunt

NARRATOR : Forced to leave Imogen to deal with the advances of this queen's son Cloten, Posthumus travels to Rome where he is welcomed at the house of his late father's friend Philario. There he meets with men from Europe, amongst them one Iachimo, an Italian , a betting man.....

SCENE 3. Rome. Philario's house.

Frenchman (entering)

.....each of us fell in praise of our
country mistresses; this gentleman at that time
vouching--and upon warrant of bloody
affirmation--his to be more fair, virtuous, wise,
chaste, constant-qualified and less attemptable
than any the rarest of our ladies in France.

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IACHIMO

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

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

She holds her virtue still and I my mind.

IACHIMO

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

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

IACHIMO

As fair and as good--a kind of hand-in-hand
comparison--had been something too fair and too good

for any lady in Britain. If she went before others
I have seen, as that diamond of yours outlustres
many I have beheld. I could not but believe she
excelled many: but I have not seen the most
precious diamond that is, nor you the lady.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

IACHIMO

What do you esteem it at?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

More than the world enjoys.

IACHIMO

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

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

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PHILARIO

Let us leave here, gentlemen.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Sir, with all my heart. This worthy signior, I
thank him, makes no stranger of me.

IACHIMO

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

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

No, no.

IACHIMO

I dare thereupon pawn the moiety of my estate to

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

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

What lady would you choose to assail?

IACHIMO

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

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I will wage against your gold, gold to it: my ring I hold dear as my finger; 'tis part of it. I shall but lend my diamond till your return: let there be covenants drawn between's: my mistress exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your unworthy thinking: I dare you to this match: here's my ring.

PHILARIO

Gentlemen, enough of this: it came in too suddenly; let it die as it was born, and, I pray you, be better acquainted. I will have it no lay.

IACHIMO

By the gods, it is one.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

IACHIMO

Your hand; a covenant: we will have these things set

down by lawful counsel, and straight away for
Britain.

Exeunt POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and IACHIMO

Frenchman
Will this hold, think you?

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

Exeunt

NARRATOR : Meanwhile back in Britain – the Queen lays her plots.....

SCENE 4. Britain. A room in Cymbeline's palace.

Enter QUEEN, Ladies, and CORNELIUS
QUEEN

Now, master doctor, have you brought those drugs?

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

Presenting a small box

But I beseech your grace, without offence,--
My conscience bids me ask--wherefore you have
Commanded of me those most poisonous compounds,
Which are the movers of a languishing death;
But though slow, deadly?

QUEEN
I wonder, doctor,
Thou ask'st me such a question. Have I not been
Thy pupil long? I will try the forces
Of these thy compounds on such creatures as
We count not worth the hanging, but none human,
To try the vigour of them and apply
Allayments to their act, and by them gather
Their several virtues and effects.

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

QUEEN
O, content thee.

Enter PISANIO
(Aside)

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

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

Exit Doctor

QUEEN
Weeps she still, say'st thou? Dost thou think in time
She will not quench and let instructions enter
Where folly now possesses? Do thou work:
When thou shalt bring me word she loves my son,
I'll tell thee on the instant thou art then
As great as is thy master, greater, for
His fortunes all lie speechless and his name
Is at last gasp:

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The QUEEN drops the box: PISANIO takes it up

Thou takest up
Thou know'st not what; but take it for thy labour:
It is a thing I made, which hath the king
Five times redeem'd from death:
Nay, I prethee, take it;
Tell thy mistress how
The case stands with her; do't as from thyself.
Fare thee well, Pisanio;
Think on my words.

Exeunt QUEEN and Ladies

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

Exit

SCENE V. The same. Another room in the palace.

Narrator : Iachimo arrives at the English court with letters from Posthumus to recommend him to Imogen. The attempt on her honour begins

IMOGEN

Continues well my lord? His health, beseech you?

IACHIMO

Well, madam.

IMOGEN

Is he disposed to mirth? I hope he is.

IACHIMO

Exceeding pleasant; none a stranger there
So merry and so gamesome: he is call'd
The Briton reveller.
There is a Frenchman his companion, one
An eminent monsieur, that, it seems, much loves
A Gallian girl at home;
It is a recreation to be by
And hear him mock the Frenchman. But, heavens know,
Some men are much to blame.

IMOGEN

Not he, I hope.

IACHIMO

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

IMOGEN

What do you pity, sir?

IACHIMO

Two creatures heartily.

IMOGEN

Am I one, sir?

You look on me: what wreck discern you in me
Deserves your pity?



IACHIMO
Lamentable!

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

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

IMOGEN
You do seem to know
Something of me, or what concerns me: pray you,--
--discover to me
What both you spur and stop.

IACHIMO
Had I this cheek
To bathe my lips upon; this hand, whose touch,
Whose every touch, would force the feeler's soul
To the oath of loyalty; should I, damn'd then,
Slaver with lips as common as the stairs
That mount the Capitol; join gripes with hands
Made hard with hourly falsehood--falsehood, as
With labour; then by-peeping in an eye
Base and unlustrous as the smoky light
That's fed with stinking tallow; The cloyed will,
That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub
Both fill'd and running, ravening first the lamb
Longs after for the garbage.

IMOGEN
My lord, I fear,
Has forgot Britain.

IACHIMO
And himself

IMOGEN
Let me hear no more.



IACHIMO

O dearest soul! your cause doth strike my heart
With pity, that doth make me sick. A lady
So fair, and fasten'd to an empery,
Would make the great'st king double,--to be partner'd
With tomboys hired with that self-exhibition
Which your own coffers yield! Be revenged;
Or she that bore you was no queen, and you
Recoil from your great stock.

IMOGEN

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

IACHIMO

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

IMOGEN

What, ho, Pisanio!

IACHIMO

Let me my service tender on your lips.

IMOGEN

Away! I do condemn mine ears that have
So long attended thee. If thou wert honourable,
Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue, not
For such an end thou seek'st,--as base as strange.
Thou wrong'st a gentleman, who is as far
From thy report as thou from honour, and
Solicit'st here a lady that disdains
Thee and the devil alike. What ho, Pisanio!

PISANIO enters

IACHIMO

O happy Leonatus! I may say
The credit that thy lady hath of thee

Deserves thy trust, and thy most perfect goodness
Her assured credit. Blessed live you long!
Give me your pardon.
I have spoke this, to know if your affiance
Were deeply rooted; and shall make your lord,
That which he is, new o'er: and he is one
The truest manner'd; such a holy witch
That he enchants societies into him;
Half all men's hearts are his.
IMOGEN
You make amends.

NARRATOR: And so the hunter is denied his game. Iachimo ,yet determined not to lose his wager asks one last favour of his hostess – to guard a chest of precious jewels bought as a present for Caesar by several lords – her husband amongst them - Could she keep them safe for just one night? Willingly, Imogen replies...they will be safe.... in my bedchamber.....

Scene 6 : Imogen's Bedchamber

IMOGEN Sleeps. IACHIMO comes from the trunk

IACHIMO . Cytherea,
How bravely thou becomest thy bed, fresh lily,
And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!
But kiss; one kiss! Rubies unparagon'd,
How dearly they do't! 'Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus: But my design
To note the chamber: I will write all down:
Ah, but some natural notes about her body,
Above ten thousand meaner moveables
Would testify, to enrich mine inventory.
O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her!
Come off, come off:
Taking off her bracelet
As slippery as the Gordian knot was hard!
'Tis mine; and this will witness outwardly,
To the madding of her lord.I have enough:
To the trunk again, and shut the spring of it.
I lodge in fear;
Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here.

Clock strikes : Goes into the trunk. The scene closes

NARRATOR : Next morning it is evil of another sort which greets Imogen's day.....

Scene 7 : An ante-chamber adjoining Imogen's apartments.

Enter CLOTEN and Lords

CLOTEN

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

Second Lord

[Aside] To have smelt like a fool.

CLOTEN

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

First Lord

You are most hot and furious when you win.

CLOTEN

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

First Lord

Day, my lord.

CLOTEN

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

Enter Musicians

Come on; tune: if you can penetrate her with your
fingering, so; we'll try with tongue too: if none
will do, let her remain; but I'll never give o'er.

SONG

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

*My lady sweet, arise:
Arise, arise.*

CLOTEN

*So, get you gone. If this penetrate, I will
consider your music the better:*

Exeunt Musicians

CLOTEN

Knocks

By your leave, ho!
I know her women are about her: what
if I do line one of their hands? 'Tis gold
which buys admittance;
Knocks

By your leave.

Enter a Lady

Lady
What's your lordship's pleasure?

CLOTEN

Your lady's person: is she ready?

Lady

Ay,
To keep her chamber.
--The princess!

Enter IMOGEN

CLOTEN

Good morrow, fairest: sister, your sweet hand.

Exit Lady

IMOGEN

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

CLOTEN

Still, I swear I love you.

IMOGEN

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

CLOTEN

This is no answer.

IMOGEN

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

CLOTEN

You sin against
Obedience, which you owe your father. For
The contract you pretend with that base wretch,
One bred of alms and foster'd with cold dishes,
With scraps o' the court, it is no contract, none:

IMOGEN

His meanest garment,
That ever hath but clipp'd his body, is dearer
In my respect than all the hairs above thee,
Were they all made such men. How now, Pisanio!

Enter PISANIO

CLOTEN

The south-fog rot him!
'His garment!' Now the devil--

IMOGEN

I am sprited with a fool.
Frighted, and anger'd worse: go bid my woman
Search for a jewel that too casually
Hath left mine arm: I hope it be not gone to tell my lord
That I kiss aught but he.

PISANIO

'Twill not be lost.



Exit PISANIO and IMOGEN

CLOTEN

I'll be revenged:

'His meanest garment!' Well.

Exit

SCENE 8 . Rome. Philario's house.

NARRATOR: As the Roman ambassador arrives at the British court to demand the tribute due to Caesar, Iachimo makes his return to Rome - to boast of his success with Imogen and claim his prize...

IACHIMO

Your lady

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

Here are letters for you.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

Too dull for your good wearing?

IACHIMO

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

A second night of such sweet shortness which

Was mine in Britain, for the ring is won.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

The stone's too hard to come by.

IACHIMO

Not a whit,

Your lady being so easy.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Make not, sir,

Your loss your sport: If you can make't apparent

That you have tasted her in bed, my hand

And ring is yours -

IACHIMO

First, her bedchamber,-- Where, I confess, I slept not.....

but profess

Had that was well worth watching--it was hang'd

With tapestry of silk and silver; the story

Proud Cleopatra, when she met her Roman:

a piece of work

So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive



In workmanship and value;

NARRATOR: Posthumus confidence in his lady's loyalty , withstands the first articles of Iachimo's proof - descriptions of Imogen's bedchamber –

*Then, if you can,
(Showing the bracelet)*

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

but is weakened by the sight of the bracelet he himself gave Imogen. Iachimo delights in yet more incriminating detail

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

IACHIMO

She stripp'd it from her arm:
she gave it me, and said
She prized it once.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

IACHIMO

She writes so to you, doth she?

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

Gives the ring

It is a basilisk unto mine eye,
Kills me to look on't. Let there be no honour
Where there is beauty; truth, where semblance; love,
Where there's another man:

PHILARIO

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

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

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

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

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

IACHIMO
Will you hear more?

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

Exit

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

IACHIMO
With an my heart.

Exit Philario and Iachimo

SCENE 9. Another room in Philario's house.

Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS
POSTHUMUS LEONATUS
Is there no way for men to be but women
Must be half-workers? O, vengeance, vengeance!
Me of my lawful pleasure she restrain'd
And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with
A pudency so rosy the sweet view on't
Might well have warm'd old Saturn; that I thought her



As chaste as unsunn'd snow. O, all the devils!
This yellow Iachimo, in an hour,--wast not?--
Or less,--at first?--perchance he spoke not, but,
Like a full-acorn'd boar, a German one,
Cried 'O!' and mounted; Could I find out
The woman's part in me! For there's no motion
That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
It is the woman's part: *I'll write against them,
Detest them, curse them: yet 'tis greater skill
In a true hate, to pray they have their will:
The very devils cannot plague them better.*

Exit

Act TWO : Scene One

NARRATOR : (while Pisanio reads letter) Overwhelmed by shock and betrayal Posthumus writes to Pisanio with a dour command – to kill Imogen .

PISANIO

How? of adultery? Wherefore write you not
What monster's her accuser? Leonatus,
O master! what a strange infection
Is fall'n into thy ear! What false Italian,
As poisonous-tongued as handed, hath prevail'd
On thy too ready hearing? Disloyal! No. O my master!
Thy mind to her is now as low as were
Thy fortunes. How! that I should murder her?
Upon the love and truth and vows which I
Have made to thy command? I, her? her blood?

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NARRATOR: He writes also to Imogen to ask her to meet him in Wales, at Milford Haven - On the road the poor servant must do the deed that has been asked of him....

Enter PISANIO and IMOGEN

IMOGEN

Thou told'st me, when we came from horse, the place
Was near at hand: Pisanio! man!
Where is Posthumus? What is in thy mind,
That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that sigh
From the inward of thee? What's the matter?
Why tender'st thou that paper to me, with
A look untender? My husband's hand!
That drug-damn'd Italy hath out-craftied him,
And he's at some hard point. Speak, man!

PISANIO

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

IMOGEN

[Reads] 'Thy mistress, Pisanio, hath played the strumpet in my bed; the testimonies whereof lie bleeding in me.....Let thine own hands take away her life: I shall give thee opportunity at Milford-Haven.

PISANIO

What shall I need to draw my sword? the paper Hath cut her throat already. What cheer, madam?

IMOGEN

False to his bed! What is it to be false?
To lie in watch there and to think on him?

PISANIO

Alas, good lady!

IMOGEN

I false! Thy conscience witness: Iachimo,
Thou didst accuse him of incontinency;
Some jay of Italy
Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him:
Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;
I must be ripp'd:--to pieces with me!--O,
Men's vows are women's traitors!

PISANIO

Good madam, hear me.

IMOGEN

Come, fellow, be thou honest:
Do thou thy master's bidding: look!
I draw the sword myself: take it, and hit
The innocent mansion of my love, my heart;
Fear not; 'tis empty of all things but grief;
Thy master is not there, who was indeed
The riches of it: do his bidding;

PISANIO

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

IMOGEN

Why, I must die;
And if I do not by thy hand, thou art
No servant of thy master's. Against self-slaughter
There is a prohibition so divine
That cravens my weak hand. Come, here's my heart.
Something's afore't. Soft, soft! we'll no defence;



Obedient as the scabbard. What is here?
The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus,
All turn'd to heresy? Away, away,
Corrupters of my faith! you shall no more
Be stomachers to my heart.
And thou, Posthumus, I grieve myself
To think, when thou shalt be disedged by her
That now thou tirst on, how thy memory
Will then be pang'd by me. Prithee, dispatch:
The lamb entreats the butcher: where's thy knife?
Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding,
When I desire it too.

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

IMOGEN
Do't, and to bed then.

PISANIO
I'll wake mine eye-balls blind first.

NARRATOR : And so the loyal servant lays out his plan; First - that he send Posthumus a bloody sign as proof of Imogen's death .Then Imogen is to disguise herself as a man, in clothes furnished by the faithful servant, with the goal of seeking employment with Lucius the Roman ambassador to the British court - due at Milford Haven any day. Lucius is returning to Caesar with the news that for the first time in recent history, Britain, under Cymbeline is refusing to pay a tribute to Rome. War is imminent.

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

NARRATOR: So Imogen is left, dressed as a young page, to find her own way to Milford Haven. Little does she know she is about to meet some good friends.....

SCENE TWO : Wales. Before the cave of Belarius.

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS
You, Polydote, have proved best woodman and
Are master of the feast: Cadwal and I
Will play the cook and servant; 'tis our match:

Now peace be here,
Poor house, that keep'st thyself!

GUIDERIUS
I am thoroughly weary.

ARVIRAGUS
I am weak with toil, yet strong in appetite.

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

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

GUIDERIUS
What's the matter, sir?

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

Re-enter IMOGEN

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

GUIDERIUS
Money, youth?

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

BELARIUS
Whither bound?



IMOGEN
To Milford-Haven.

ARVIRAGUS
What's your name?

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

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

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

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

IMOGEN
'Mongst friends,
If brothers.
(Aside)
Would it had been so, that they
Had been my father's sons!
Great men,
That had a court no bigger than this cave,
Could not out-peer these twain. Pardon me, gods!
I'd change my sex to be companion with them,
Since Leonatus's false.

ARVIRAGUS
I pray, draw near.

Exeunt

NARRATOR: Back at Court Imogen has been missed . Cloten threatens Pisanio with death; he reveals that she is on her way to Milford Haven to meet with Posthumus. Still angry over Imogen's disregard Cloten determines to disguise himself in those very clothes of Posthumus and arrives at Milford Haven, his heart full of revenge.....

The logo for Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand (SGCNZ) features the acronym 'SGCNZ' in large, bold, pink capital letters. Below it, the full name 'Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand' is written in a smaller, lighter pink font. The logo is partially overlaid by a large, faint, pink circular graphic that resembles a globe or a stylized letter 'O'.

CLOTEN

I am near to the place where they should meet, if
Pisanio have mapped it truly.
Posthumus, thy head, which now is growing
upon thy shoulders, shall within this hour be off;
How fit his garments
serve me! -With this suit upon my
back, will I ravish her: first kill him, and in her
eyes; He on the ground, my
speech of insultment ended on his dead body, and
when my lust hath dined,--which, as I say, to vex
her I will execute in the clothes that she so
praised,--to the court I'll knock her back, spurn her home to her
father; who may haply be a little angry for my so
rough usage; but my mother, having power of his
testiness, shall turn all into my commendations.
This mistress hath despised me rejoicingly,
and I'll be merry in my revenge.

Exit

SCENE II. Before the cave of Belarius.

NARRATOR: Next morning a surprising turn of events turns everything upside down....

Enter, from the cave, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, and IMOGEN

BELARIUS

[To IMOGEN] You are not well: remain here in the cave;
We'll come to you after hunting.

GUIDERIUS

Go you to hunting; I'll abide with him.

IMOGEN

Please you, leave me;
I am ill, but your being by me
Cannot amend me; society is no comfort
To one not sociable.

ARVIRAGUS

Brother, farewell.

IMOGEN

[Aside] These are kind creatures. Gods, what lies
I have heard!
Our courtiers say all's savage but at court:
Experience, O, thou disprovest report!
I am sick still; heart-sick. Pisanio,
I'll now taste of thy drug.

Swallows some

ARVIRAGUS
We'll not be long away.

Exit IMOGEN, to the cave
BELARIUS
This youth, how'er distress'd, appears he hath had
Good ancestors.

ARVIRAGUS
How angel-like he sings!

GUIDERIUS
But his neat cookery! he cut our roots
In characters,
And sauced our broths, as Juno had been sick
And he her dieter.

Exit Guiderius , Arviragus

It is great morning. Come, away!--
Who's there?

Enter CLOTEN

CLOTEN
I cannot find those runagates; that villain
Hath mock'd me. I am faint.

BELARIUS
'Those runagates!'
Means he not us? I partly know him: 'tis
Cloten, the son o' the queen. I fear some ambush.
I saw him not these many years, and yet
I know 'tis he. We are held as outlaws: hence!

NARRATOR : Belarius recognizing the queen's son assumes he has come to find him – an old soldier exiled from the court . His impulse is to run - but not so his brave sons who do not appreciate being talked down to...

GUIDERIUS
He is but one: you and my brother search
What companies are near: pray you, away;
Let me alone with him.

CLOTEN
Thou art a robber,
A law-breaker, a villain: yield thee, thief.

GUIDERIUS
To who? to thee? What art thou? Have not I
An arm as big as thine? a heart as big?
Say what thou art,
Why I should yield to thee?

CLOTEN
Hear but my name, and tremble.

GUIDERIUS
What's thy name?

CLOTEN
Cloten, thou villain.
To thy further fear,
Nay, to thy mere confusion, thou shalt know
I am son to the queen.

GUIDERIUS
I am sorry for 't; not seeming
So worthy as thy birth.

CLOTEN
Die the death:
Yield, rustic mountaineer.

Exeunt, fighting

NARRATOR: It is not Posthumus who was due to lose his head that day.....

Re-enter Belarius, Arviragus

ARVIRAGUS : But, see, thy brother.

Re-enter GUIDERIUS, *with CLOTEN'S head*

BELARIUS
What hast thou done?

GUIDERIUS
I am perfect what: cut off one Cloten's head,
Son to the queen, after his own report;

BELARIUS
We are all undone.

GUIDERIUS
With his own sword,
Which he did wave against my throat, I have ta'en
His head from him: I'll throw't into the creek
Behind our rock; and let it to the sea,
And tell the fishes he's the queen's son, Cloten:
That's all I reck.

ARVIRAGUS
Let ordinance
Come as the gods foresay it: howsoe'er,
My brother hath done well.

Exit

BELARIUS

O thou goddess,
Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st
In these two princely boys!
How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature!
These boys know little they are sons to the king;
Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.
They think they are mine; and though train'd
up thus meanly
I' the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit
The roofs of palaces, and nature prompts them
In simple and low things to prince it much
Beyond the trick of others. They are as gentle
As zephyrs blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,
Their royal blood enchafed, as the rudest wind,
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And make him stoop to the vale. 'Tis wonder
That an invisible instinct should frame them
To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,
Civility not seen from other, valour
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop
As if it had been sow'd. O Cymbeline!
heaven and my conscience knows
Thou didst unjustly banish me: whereon,
At three and two years old, I stole these babes;
Thinking to bar thee of succession, as
Thou reft'st me of my lands. Euriphile,
Thou wast their nurse; they took thee for
their mother,
And every day do honour to her grave:
This Polydore is Guiderius,
The heir of Cymbeline and Britain, who
The younger brother, Cadwal,
Once Arviragus. Myself, Belarius, that am Morgan call'd,
They take for natural father.

Solemn music

Enter Guiderius

BELARIUS

My ingenious instrument! But what occasion
Hath Cadwal now to give it motion? Hark!

GUIDERIUS

Is he at home?

BELARIUS

He went hence even now.



GUIDERIUS

What does he mean? since death of my dear'st mother
it did not speak before.

BELARIUS

Look, here he comes,
And brings the dire occasion in his arms
Of what we blame him for.

ARVIRAGUS

The bird is dead
That we have made so much on. *I had rather
Have skipp'd from sixteen years of age to sixty,
To have turn'd my leaping-time into a crutch,
Than have seen this.*
With fairest flowers
Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave

GUIDERIUS

Prithee, have done;
And do not play in wench-like words with that
Which is so serious. Let us bury him,
And not protract with admiration what
Is now due debt. To the grave!

Narrator: The queen's poison has done its work on Imogen and thinking they have lost their beloved friend their hearts are heavy

GUIDERIUS

Cadwal,
I cannot sing: I'll weep, and word it with thee.

BELARIUS

Great griefs, I see, medicine the less; for Cloten
Is quite forgot. He was a queen's son, boys;
Our foe was princely
And though you took his life, as being our foe,
Yet bury him as a prince.

GUIDERIUS

Pray You, fetch him hither.

ARVIRAGUS

We'll say our song the whilst. Brother, begin.

SONG

GUIDERIUS

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;

Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

ARVIRAGUS

*Fear no more the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.*

GUIDERIUS

Fear no more the lightning flash,

ARVIRAGUS

Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;

GUIDERIUS

Fear not slander, censure rash;

ARVIRAGUS

Thou hast finish'd joy and moan:

GUIDERIUS ARVIRAGUS

*All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.*

Re-enter BELARIUS, with the body of CLOTEN

GUIDERIUS

We have done our obsequies: come, lay him down.

BELARIUS

Come on, away: apart upon our knees.

The ground that gave them first has them again:

Their pleasures here are past, so is their pain.

Exeunt BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

Narrator : But Imogen is not dead only drugged by the medicine she believes given to her by Pisanio. Awaking she finds herself alive - buried with a headless body who she assumes to be Posthumus - dressed as it is in her husband's clothes. It can only be Pisanio to blame....

IMOGEN

[Awaking] Yes, sir, to Milford-Haven; which is
the way?--

I thank you.-- Pray, how far thither?

'Ods pittikins! can it be six mile yet?--

I have gone all night. 'Faith, I'll lie down and sleep.

But, soft! no bedfellow!--O god s and goddesses!

Seeing the body of CLOTEN

These flowers are like the pleasures of the world;
This bloody man, the care on't.

A headless man! The garments of Posthumus!
I know the shape of's leg: this is his hand;
but his Jovial face

Murder in heaven?--How!--'Tis gone. Pisanio,
All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks,
And mine to boot, be darted on thee! Thou,
Conspired with that irregulous devil, Cloten,
Hast here cut off my lord.

*The drug he gave me, which he said was precious
And cordial to me, have I not found it
Murderous to the senses? That confirms it home:
This is Pisanio's deed, and Cloten's: O!
O, my lord, my lord!*

NARRATOR: Weeping over the body she is discovered by the very Lucius she has been seeking .General of the Roman troops and an honorable statesman Lucius adopts Imogen as his page, although a Briton, and they prepare for battle as the Italian troops led by Iachimo join the Roman army to engage with the British.

(Enter LUCIUS, a Captain and other Officers who bury/ remove the headless body as Narrator speaks)

SCENE THREE . Wales: before the cave of Belarius.

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS.

GUIDERIUS

The noise is round about us.

BELARIUS

Let us from it.

ARVIRAGUS

What pleasure, sir, find we in life, to lock it
From action and adventure?

What should we speak of
When we are old as you? We have seen nothing;

BELARIUS

Sons,
We'll higher to the mountains; there secure us.

GUIDERIUS

Pray, sir, to the army:
I and my brother are not known; yourself
So out of thought, and thereto so o'ergrown,
Cannot be question'd.

ARVIRAGUS

By this sun that shines,

I'll thither: what thing is it that I never
Did see man die! Never bestrid a horse, save one that had
A rider like myself, who ne'er wore rowel
Nor iron on his heel! I am ashamed
To look upon the holy sun, to have
The benefit of his blest beams, remaining
So long a poor unknown.

BELARIUS

Have with you, boys!
If in your country wars you chance to die,
That is my bed too, lads, an there I'll lie:
Lead, lead.

Exeunt

SCENE FOUR: Britain. The Roman camp.

NARRATOR : Posthumus, having at last received the bloody handkerchief, proof of Imogen's death, arrives in England filled with remorse and guilt. Having come to the battle with the Italian Gentry he decides to dress as a Briton peasant and fight for his lady's country.

Enter POSTHUMUS, with a bloody handkerchief

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

'Tis enough
That, Britain, I have kill'd thy mistress; peace!
I'll give no wound to thee: so I'll fight
Against the part I come with; so I'll die
For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life
Is every breath a death;

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Exit

SCENE 5. Field of battle between the British and Roman camps.

(Battle sequence – music underneath)

Enter, from one side, LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and the Roman Army: from the other side, the British Army; POSTHUMUS LEONATUS following, like a poor soldier. They march over and go out. Then enter again, in skirmish, IACHIMO and POSTHUMUS LEONATUS he vanquisheth and disarmeth IACHIMO, and then leaves him. The battle continues; the Britons fly; CYMBELINE is taken: then enter, to his rescue, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

BELARIUS

Stand, stand! We have the advantage of the ground;
The lane is guarded: nothing routs us but
The villany of our fears.

GUIDERIUS ARVIRAGUS

Stand, stand, and fight!

'Our Britains harts die flying, not our men:
To darkness fleet souls that fly backwards. Stand;
Or we are Romans and will give you that
Like beasts which you shun beastly, and may save,
But to look back in frown: stand, stand.'

Re-enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and seconds the Britons: they rescue CYMBELINE, and exeunt. Then re-enter LUCIUS, and IACHIMO, with IMOGEN

CAIUS LUCIUS

Away, boy, from the troops, and save thyself;
For friends kill friends, and the disorder's such
As war were hoodwink'd.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Another part of the field.

POSTHUMUS

I, in mine own woe charm'd,
Could not find death where I did hear him groan,
Nor feel him where he struck. Well, I will find him
For being now a favourer to the Briton,
No more a Briton, I have resumed again
The part I came in....

Enter two British Captains and Soldiers

First Captain

Great Jupiter be praised! Lucius is taken.
'Tis thought the old man and his sons were angels.

Second Captain

There was a fourth man, in a silly habit,
That gave the affront with them.

First Captain

So 'tis reported:
But none of 'em can be found. Stand! who's there?

NARRATOR: Imprisoned as a Roman, Posthumus is locked in the English prison, where desiring nothing but death he sleeps and dreamsof his family; his father and brothers, his mother who died giving birth to him. They call to the Thunder-God Jupiter on his behalf

Solemn music. Enter, as in an apparition, SICILIUS LEONATUS, father to Posthumus Leonatus, an old man, attired like a warrior; leading in his hand an ancient matron, his wife, and mother to Posthumus Leonatus, with music before them: then, after other music, follow the two young Leonati, brothers to Posthumus Leonatus, with wounds as they died in the wars. They circle Posthumus Leonatus round, as he lies sleeping. Jupiter descends in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle: he throws a thunderbolt.

Jupiter

Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift,
The more delay'd, delighted. Be content;
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift
His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent.

Ascends

NARRATOR: Posthumus awakes to a new day.....

Posthumus Leonatus
[Waking] Sleep, thou hast been a grandsire, and begot
A father to me; and thou hast created
A mother and two brothers: but, O scorn!
Gone! they went hence so soon as they were born:
And so I am awake.
Many dream not to find, neither deserve,
And yet are steep'd in favours: so am I,
That have this golden chance and know not why.

SCENE V. Cymbeline's tent.

Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, Lords, Officers, and Attendants

CYMBELINE

Stand by my side, you whom the gods have made
Preservers of my throne. Woe is my heart
That the poor soldier that so richly fought,
Whose rags shamed gilded arms, whose naked breast
Stepp'd before larges of proof, cannot be found:

CYMBELINE

No tidings of him?

PISANIO

He hath been search'd among the dead and living,
But no trace of him.

CYMBELINE

To my grief, I am
The heir of his reward;

To BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS

which I will add
To you, the liver, heart and brain of Britain,
By whom I grant she lives. 'Tis now the time
To ask of whence you are. Report it.

Enter CORNELIUS and Ladies

There's business in these faces. Why so sadly
Greet you our victory? you look like Romans,
And not o' the court of Britain.

CORNELIUS

Hail, great king!
To sour your happiness, I must report
The queen is dead.



CYMBELINE
How ended she?

CORNELIUS
With horror, madly dying, like her life,
Which, being cruel to the world, concluded
Most cruel to herself.

NARRATOR: And so the king learned the truth of his wife's heart: her loathing of him and his daughter, her attempt to poison him and her ruthless determination to put her son on the throne.

CYMBELINE
O my daughter!
That it was folly in me, thou mayst say,
And prove it in thy feeling. Heaven mend all!

Enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and other Roman Prisoners, guarded; POSTHUMUS LEONATUS behind, and IMOGEN

NARRATOR: The battle ended and victors crowned it remains only for Cymbeline to dispose of the Roman captives. Caius Lucius, being told he is about to die, begs one favour – that his Briton-born page, a boy of pure heart, be saved.

CYMBELINE
Boy,
Thou hast look'd thyself into my grace,
And art mine own. And ask of Cymbeline what boon thou wilt,
Fitting my bounty and thy state, I'll give it;

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IMOGEN
I humbly thank your highness.

CYMBELINE
What wouldst thou, boy?
I love thee more and more: Know'st him thou look'st on? speak,
Wilt have him live? Is he thy kin? thy friend?

IMOGEN
He is a Roman; no more kin to me
Than I to your highness;

CYMBELINE
Wherefore eyst him so?

IMOGEN
I'll tell you, sir, in private, if you please
To give me hearing.

CYMBELINE
Ay, with all my heart,

BELARIUS

Is not this boy revived from death?

PISANIO

[Aside] It is my mistress:
Since she is living, let the time run on
To good or bad.

CYMBELINE and IMOGEN come forward

To IACHIMO

IMOGEN

My boon is, that this gentleman may render
Of whom he had this ring.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

[Aside] What's that to him?

CYMBELINE

That diamond upon your finger, say
How came it yours?

IACHIMO

I am glad to be constrain'd to utter that
Which torments me to conceal. By villany
I got this ring: 'twas Leonatus' jewel;
Whom thou didst banish; and--which more may
grieve thee,
As it doth me--a nobler sir ne'er lived
'Twixt sky and ground. Wilt thou hear more, my lord?



CYMBELINE

All that belongs to this.

IACHIMO

That paragon, thy daughter,--
-Give me leave; I faint.

CYMBELINE

My daughter! what of her? Renew thy strength:
: strive, man, and speak.

IACHIMO

Your daughter's chastity--there it begins.
He spake of her, as Dian had hot dreams,
And she alone were cold: whereat I, wretch,
Made scruple of his praise.....

NARRATOR: And there in the presence of his father-in-law and unbeknownst to him his wife, Posthumus heard for the first time the truth of his wife's loyalty and the deceit played out by the Italian....

*And, to be brief, my practise so prevail'd,
That I return'd with simular proof enough
To make the noble Leonatus mad,
By wounding his belief in her renown
With tokens thus, and thus
that he could not
But think her bond of chastity quite crack'd,
I having ta'en the forfeit. Whereupon--
Methinks, I see him now--*

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

[Advancing] Ay, so thou dost,
Italian fiend! Ay me, most credulous fool,
Thou, king, send out
For torturers ingenious: I am Posthumus,
That kill'd thy daughter:--*villain-like, I lie--
That caused a lesser villain than myself,
A sacrilegious thief, to do't: the temple
Of virtue was she; yea, and she herself! O Imogen!
My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,
Imogen, Imogen!*

IMOGEN

Peace, my lord; hear, hear--

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Shall's have a play of this? Thou scornful page,
There lie thy part.

Striking her: she falls

PISANIO

O, gentlemen, help!
O, my lord Posthumus!
You ne'er kill'd Imogen til now. Help, help!
Mine honour'd lady!

CYMBELINE

If this be so, the gods do mean to strike me
To death with mortal joy.

PISANIO

How fares thy mistress?

IMOGEN

O, get thee from my sight;
Thou gavest me poison: dangerous fellow, hence!
Breathe not where princes are.

PISANIO

Lady,
The gods throw stones of sulphur on me, if



That box I gave you was not thought by me
A precious thing: I had it from the queen.

CYMBELINE
New matter still?

IMOGEN
It poison'd me.

CORNELIUS
O gods!
I left out one thing which the queen confess'd.
Have you ta'en of it?

IMOGEN
Most like I did, for I was dead.

BELARIUS
My boys,
There was our error.

GUIDERIUS
This is, sure, Fidele.

IMOGEN
Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?
Think that you are upon a rock; and now
Throw me again.

Embracing him

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS
Hang there like a fruit, my soul,
Till the tree die!

CYMBELINE
How now, my flesh, my child!
What, makest thou me a dullard in this act?
Wilt thou not speak to me?

IMOGEN
[Kneeling] Your blessing, sir.

BELARIUS
[To GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS] Though you did love
this youth, I blame ye not:
You had a motive for't.

CYMBELINE
My tears that fall
Prove holy water on thee! Imogen,
Thy mother's dead.



IMOGEN

I am sorry for't, my lord.

CYMBELINE

O, she was nought; and long of her it was
That we meet here so strangely: but her son
Is gone, we know not how nor where.

PISANIO

My lord,
Now fear is from me, I'll speak troth. Lord Cloten,
Upon my lady's missing, came to me
With his sword drawn; I directed him
To seek her on the mountains near to Milford;

GUIDERIUS

Let me end the story:
I slew him there.

CYMBELINE

Marry, the gods forfend!
prithee, valiant youth,
Deny't again.

GUIDERIUS

I have spoke it, and I did it.

CYMBELINE

He was a prince.

GUIDERIUS

A most incivil one: the wrongs he did me
Were nothing prince-like; I cut off's head;
And am right glad he is not standing here
To tell this tale of mine.

CYMBELINE

I am sorry for thee:
By thine own tongue thou art condemn'd, and must
Endure our law: thou'rt dead.

BELARIUS

Stay, sir king:
This man is better than the man he slew,
As well descended as thyself; and hath
More of thee merited than a band of Clotens
Had ever scar for.

CYMBELINE

Why, old soldier,
Wilt thou undo the worth thou art unpaid for,
By tasting of our wrath? How of descent



As good as we?

BELARIUS

Thou hadst, great king, a subject who
Was call'd Belarius.

CYMBELINE

What of him? he is
A banish'd traitor.

BELARIUS

He it is that hath
Assumed this age; indeed a banish'd man;
I know not how a traitor.

CYMBELINE

Take him hence:
The whole world shall not save him.

BELARIUS

Not too hot:
First pay me for the nursing of thy sons;

CYMBELINE

Nursing of my sons!

BELARIUS

Mighty sir,
These two young gentlemen, that call me father
And think they are my sons, are none of mine;
They are the issue of your loins, my liege,
And blood of your begetting.

CYMBELINE

How! my issue!

BELARIUS

So sure as you your father's. Their nurse, Euriphile,
Whom for the theft I wedded, stole these children
Upon my banishment: But, gracious sir,
Here are your sons again; and I must lose
Two of the sweet'st companions in the world.

CYMBELINE

Thou weep'st, and speak'st.
The service that you three have done is more
Unlike than this thou tell'st. I lost my children:
If these be they, I know not how to wish
A pair of worthier sons.
O Imogen,
Thou hast lost by this a kingdom.

IMOGEN



No, my lord;
I have got two worlds by 't. O my gentle brothers,
Have we thus met?

CYMBELINE
Did you e'er meet?

ARVIRAGUS
Ay, my good lord.

GUIDERIUS
And at first meeting loved;
Continued so, until we thought he died.

CORNELIUS
By the queen's dram she swallow'd.

CYMBELINE
O rare instinct! See,
Posthumus anchors upon Imogen,
And she, like harmless lightning, throws her eye
On him, her brother, me, her master, hitting
Each object with a joy: the counterchange
Is severally in all. *Let's quit this ground,
And smoke the temple with our sacrifices.*

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

IMOGEN
My good master,
I will yet do you service.

CAIUS LUCIUS
Happy be you!

CYMBELINE
The forlorn soldier, that so nobly fought,
He would have well becomeed this place, and graced
The thankings of a king.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS
I am, sir,
The soldier that did company these three
In poor beseeming; That I was he,
Speak, Iachimo: I had you down and might
Have made you finish.

IACHIMO
[Kneeling] I am down again:



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But now my heavy conscience sinks my knee,
As then your force did.

POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Kneel not to me:
The power that I have on you is, to spare you;
The malice towards you to forgive you: live,
And deal with others better.

CYMBELINE

Nobly doom'd!
We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law;
Pardon's the word to all.
Well
My peace we will begin. *And, Caius Lucius,
Although the victor, we submit to Caesar,
And to the Roman empire; promising
To pay our wonted tribute, from the which
We were dissuaded by our wicked queen;
The harmony of this peace.*
Laud we the gods;
And let our crooked smokes climb to their nostrils
From our blest altars. Publish we this peace
To all our subjects.
And in the temple of great Jupiter
Our peace we'll ratify; seal it with feasts.
Set on there! Never was a war did cease,
Ere bloody hands were wash'd, with such a peace.

Exeunt

