

# Cymbeline

## 1.4

*[A table brought out, with a banquet upon it.] Enter  
Filario, Giacomo, a Frenchman, a Dutchman, and a  
Spaniard*

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

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

**FRENCHMAN** I have seen him in France. We had very 10  
many there could behold the sun with as firm eyes as  
he.

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

**FRENCHMAN** And then his banishment.

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

**FILARIO** His father and I were soldiers together, to whom  
I have been often bound for no less than my life. 25

*Enter Posthumus*

Here comes the Briton. Let him be so entertained  
amongst you as suits with gentlemen of your knowing  
to a stranger of his quality. I beseech you all, be better  
known to this gentleman, whom I commend to you as  
a noble friend of mine. How worthy he is I will leave 30  
to appear hereafter rather than story him in his own  
hearing.

**FRENCHMAN** (*to Posthumus*) Sir, we have known together  
in Orleans.

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

**FRENCHMAN** Sir, you o'er-rate my poor kindness. I was  
glad I did atone my countryman and you. It had been  
pity you should have been put together with so mortal  
a purpose as then each bore, upon importance of so 40  
slight and trivial a nature.

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

**FRENCHMAN** Faith, yes, to be put to the arbitrement of  
swords, and by such two that would by all likelihood  
have confounded one the other, or have fallen both. 50

**GIACOMO** Can we with manners ask what was the  
difference?

**FRENCHMAN** Safely, I think. 'Twas a contention in public,  
which may without contradiction suffer the report. It  
was much like an argument that fell out last night, 55  
where each of us fell in praise of our country mistresses,  
this gentleman at that time vouching±±and upon  
warrant of bloody affirmation±±his to be more fair,  
virtuous, wise, chaste, constant, qualified, and less  
attemptable than any the rarest of our ladies in France. 60

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

**POSTHUMUS** She holds her virtue still, and I my mind.

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

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

**GIACOMO** 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 70  
seen±±as that diamond of yours outlustres many I have  
beheld±±I could not but believe she excelled many; but

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

**POSTHUMUS** I praised her as I rated her; so do I my stone. 75

**GIACOMO** What do you esteem it at?

**POSTHUMUS** More than the world enjoys.

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

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

**GIACOMO** Which the gods have given you?

**POSTHUMUS** Which, by their graces, I will keep. 85

**GIACOMO** 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 90  
would hazard the winning both of first and last.

**POSTHUMUS** 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; not- 95  
withstanding, I fear not my ring.

**FILARIO** Let us leave here, gentlemen.

**POSTHUMUS** Sir, with all my heart. This worthy signor, I  
thank him, makes no stranger of me. We are familiar  
at first. 100

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

**POSTHUMUS** No, no. 105

**GIACOMO** 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 110  
world.

**POSTHUMUS** You are a great deal abused in too bold a

persuasion, and I doubt not you sustain what you're worthy of by your attempt.

**GIACOMO** What's that? 115

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

**FILARIO** Gentlemen, enough of this. It came in too suddenly. Let it die as it was born; and, I pray you, be better acquainted. 120

**GIACOMO** Would I had put my estate and my neighbour's on th'approbation of what I have spoke.

**POSTHUMUS** What lady would you choose to assail?

**GIACOMO** Yours, whom in constancy you think stands so safe. I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring 125 that, commend me to the court where your lady is, with no more advantage than the opportunity of a second conference, and I will bring from thence that honour of hers which you imagine so reserved.

**POSTHUMUS** I will wage against your gold, gold to it; my 130 ring I hold dear as my finger, 'tis part of it.

**GIACOMO** You are a friend, and therein the wiser. If you buy ladies' flesh at a million a dram, you cannot preserve it from tainting. But I see you have some religion in you, that you fear. 135

**POSTHUMUS** This is but a custom in your tongue. You bear a graver purpose, I hope.

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

**POSTHUMUS** Will you? I shall but lend my diamond till 140 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.

**FILARIO** I will have it no lay. 145

**GIACOMO** By the gods, it is one. If I bring you no sufficient testimony that I have enjoyed the dearest bodily part of your mistress, my ten thousand ducats are yours; so is your diamond too. If I come off and leave her in such honour as you have trust in, she your jewel, this your jewel, and my gold are yours, provided I have your commendation for my more free entertainment. 150

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

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

**POSTHUMUS** Agreed.  
*[Exit with Giacomo]*

**FRENCHMAN** Will this hold, think you?

**FILARIO** Signor Giacomo will not from it. Pray let us  
follow 'em.

*Exeunt. [Table is removed]*