

Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Sc.8

Enter Helicanus and Aeschines

HELICANUS

No, Aeschines, know this of me:
Antiochus from incest lived not free,
For which the most high gods, not minding longer
To hold the vengeance that they had in store
Due to this heinous capital offence, 5
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, both apparelled all in jewels,
A fire from heaven came and shrivelled up 10
Their bodies e'en to loathing, for they so stunk
That all those eyes adored them ere their fall
Scorn now their hands should give them burial.

AESCHINES

'Twas very strange.

HELICANUS

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

AESCHINES

'Tis very true.

Enter three Lords, and stand aside

FIRST LORD

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

SECOND LORD

It shall no longer grieve without reproof. 20

THIRD LORD

And cursed be he that will not second it.

FIRST LORD

Follow me, then. ±± Lord Helicane, a word.

HELICANUS

With me? And welcome. Happy day, my lords.

FIRST LORD

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

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
Or know what ground's made happy by his step,
And be resolved he lives to govern us, 30
Or dead, give 's cause to mourn his funeral
And leave us to our free election.

SECOND LORD

Whose death indeed's the strongest in our censure,
And knowing this±±kingdoms without a head,
Like goodly buildings left without a roof, 35
Soon fall to utter ruin±±your noble self,
That best know how to rule and how to reign,
We thus submit unto as sovereign.

ALL *[kneeling]* Live, noble Helicane!

HELICANUS

By honour's cause, forbear your suffrages. 40
If that you love Prince Pericles, forbear.

[The lords rise]

Take I your wish I leap into the seas
Where's hourly trouble for a minute's ease,
But if I cannot win you to this love,
A twelvemonth longer then let me entreat you 45
Further to bear the absence of your king;
If in which time expired he not return,
I shall with ageÁd patience bear your yoke.
Go, seek your noble prince like noble subjects,
And in your search spend your adventurous worth, 50
Whom if you find and win unto return,
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. 55
If in the world he live we'll seek him out;
If in his grave he rest, we'll find him there.

HELICANUS

Then you love us, we you, and we'll clasp hands.

When peers thus knit, a kingdom ever stands.
Exeunt