

*Posthumous laments after hearing his wife, Imogen, has  
been unfaithful.*

**POSTHUMUS**

Is there no way for men to be, but women  
Must be half-workers? We are all bastards,  
And that most venerable man which I  
Did call my father was I know not where  
When I was stamped. Some coiner with his tools  
Made me a counterfeit; yet my mother seemed  
The Dian of that time; so doth my wife  
The nonpareil of this. O, vengeance, vengeance!  
Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained  
And prayed me oft forbearance; did it with  
A pudency so rosy the sweet view on 't  
Might well have warmed old Saturn, that I thought  
her  
As chaste as unsunned snow. O, all the devils!

*Imogen, disguised as Fidele, is lost on the road.*

**IMOGEN**

I see a man's life is a tedious one  
I have tired myself, and for two nights together  
Have made the ground my bed. I should be sick  
But that my resolution helps me. Milford,  
When from the mountain top Pisanio showed thee,  
Thou wast within a ken. O Jove, I think  
Foundations fly the wretched—such, I mean,  
Where they should be relieved. Two beggars told me  
I could not miss my way. Will poor folks lie,  
That have afflictions on them, knowing 'tis  
A punishment or trial? Yes. No wonder,  
When rich ones scarce tell true. To lapse in fullness  
Is sorer than to lie for need, and falsehood  
Is worse in kings than beggars.

*Jupiter appears to Posthumus in his ghostly vision.*

**JUPITER**

No more, you petty spirits of region low,  
Offend our hearing! Hush. How dare you ghosts  
Accuse the Thunderer, whose bolt, you know,  
Sky-planted, batters all rebelling coasts.  
Poor shadows of Elysium, hence, and rest  
Upon your never-withering banks of flowers.  
Be not with mortal accidents oppressed.  
No care of yours it is; you know 'tis ours.  
Whom best I love I cross, to make my gift,  
The more delayed, delighted. Be content.  
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift.  
His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent.  
Our Jovial star reigned at his birth, and in  
Our temple was he married. Rise, and fade.  
He shall be lord of Lady Imogen,  
And happier much by his affliction made.

*Iachimo attempts to woo Imogen.*

**IACHIMO** Had I this cheek

To bathe my lips upon; this hand, whose touch,  
Whose every touch, would force the feeler's soul  
To th' oath of loyalty; this object which  
Takes prisoner the wild motion of mine eye,  
Fixing it only here; should I, damned 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 labor; then by-peeping in an eye  
Base and illustrious as the smoky light  
That's fed with stinking tallow; it were fit  
That all the plagues of hell should at one time  
Encounter such revolt.

*Cloten compares himself to Posthumus, scheming  
while dressed in his clothes.*

**CLOTEN**

I am near to th' place where they should meet,  
if Pisanio have mapped it truly. How fit his garments  
serve me! Why should his mistress, who  
was made by him that made the tailor, not be fit  
too? The rather, saving reverence of the word, for  
'tis said a woman's fitness comes by fits. Therein I  
must play the workman. I dare speak it to myself,  
for it is not vainglory for a man and his glass to  
confer in his own chamber. I mean, the lines of my  
body are as well drawn as his, no less young, more  
strong; not beneath him in fortunes, beyond him  
in the advantage of the time, above him in birth,  
alike conversant in general services, and more  
remarkable  
in single oppositions. Yet this imperceivable  
thing loves him in my despite. What  
mortality is!

*The Queen pretends to mollify the young lovers after they learn that Posthumus is banished.*

**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 jailer shall deliver you the keys  
That lock up your restraint.—For you, Posthumus,  
So soon as I can win th' offended king,  
I will be known your advocate. Marry, yet  
The fire of rage is in him, and 'twere good  
You leaned unto his sentence with what patience  
Your wisdom may inform you.

**POSTHUMUS** Please your Highness,  
I will from hence today.

**QUEEN** You know the peril.

I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying  
The pangs of barred affections, though the King  
Hath charged you should not speak together.

*She exits.*

**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—  
Always reserved my holy duty—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.

*She weeps.*

**POSTHUMUS** My queen, my mistress!  
O lady, weep no more, lest I give cause  
To be suspected of more tenderness  
Than doth become a man. I will remain  
The loyal'st husband that did e'er plight troth.  
My residence in Rome at one Philario's,  
Who to my father was a friend, to me  
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.