

Cymbeline Simplified

or

The Queen's Cookies

by

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Dramatis Personae

- Pisanio.....an attendant (male, any age)
- Iachomo.....gentleman-in-waiting to Cloten (male, 20s)
- Janella.....a temple slave and potion maker (female, any age)
- Cymbeline.....King of Britain (male, 50s)
- Magunna.....Cymbeline's queen (female, 40s)
- Imogen.....Cymbeline's daughter and heir (female, 20s)
- Leonatus.....son of the banished Belarius, Imogen's chosen husband (male, 20s)
- Cloten.....the Queen's son (male, early 20s)
- Caius Lucius.....Ambassador from Caesar in Rome (male, 40s)
- Belarius.....Banished general from Cymbeline's court (male, 50s)
- Cadwal.....Belarius's foster son, Cymbeline's son (male, 20s)
- Jupiter.....Father of the gods (male)

Pisanio plays “Attendant” to whomever needs attending. In the second act, dead characters play Roman soldiers. Jupiter can be played by the dead Cloten. (I have put in the genders and ages, but these are only suggestions.)

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**Act I
Scene 1**

(The throne room of Cymbeline's palace in Londinium, with one throne. Pisanio and Iachomo enter.)

PISANIO

I'll stand at this door. You stand at that door.

IACHOMO

What does it matter?

PISANIO

If we're going to do it, it should be done right.

IACHOMO

There's a right way to stand by a door?

PISANIO

We're attendants. We attend.

IACHOMO

You're an attendant. I am a gentleman-in-waiting.

PISANIO

Waiting. That's attending.

IACHOMO

Not if I don't attend.

(Enter Janella.)

JANELLA

News! Have you heard the news?

IACHOMO

Stuck in here? We haven't heard anything.

JANELLA

Your master, Lord Cloten is going to be furious.

Wait, you can't do this.

PISANIO

Do what?

JANELLA

Come into an empty room and announce what's happening out there.

PISANIO

This is not an empty room.

IACHOMO

Look, this is not the way to start a play. We are not principal characters.

PISANIO

Speak for yourself.

IACHOMO

We're attendants. We aren't part of the main action. For us to talk among ourselves about offstage events happening to more important people is just not dramatic.

PISANIO

It is when I do it.

JANELLA

No, really, and the audience is going to think they should invest in us, when we're not important.

PISANIO

Look, we're here now. Do you want to hear the news or not? Pisanio, you're going to want to get packing. There's going to be hell to pay.

JANELLA

What's the news?

IACHOMO

The princess Imogen has gone to the Temple of Jupiter, and there she has married your master, Leonatus.

JANELLA
(To Pisanio)

No way.

PISANIO

I just came from there. I saw them coming out with the priestesses, hand in hand.

JANELLA

Lord Cloten is not going to like this.

IACHOMO

JANELLA

That's what I said! The queen is going to be furious.

PISANIO

You're right. I'd better go pack Leonatus's things. They're probably going to kill him.

IACHOMO

There's going to be stamping of feet, waving of hands, and braggadocio.

JANELLA

There's going to be blood.

PISANIO

I should go.

JANELLA

Right now!

PISANIO

We're supposed to wait here upon the ambassador from Rome.

JANELLA

No one is going to care about that now.

(To Iachomo)

Are you going to tell Lord Cloten?

IACHOMO

I just may. From a safe distance.

JANELLA

I came to ask you, should I tell the queen?

IACHOMO

What do you think she'll do?

JANELLA

Ulp.

IACHOMO

Well that's your answer. I think I will tell Cloten. It will be the best show in town.

PISANIO

Should I go? I should go.

JANELLA

Too late. Here comes the King.

(Enter King Cymbeline, Queen Magunna, Princess

Imogen and Leonatus.)

CYMBELINE

Let good Caius Lucius, the honorable ambassador from great Caesar in Rome, attend upon us here.

MAGUNNA

Where is my son? Cloten should be here for this. Go and fetch him.

IACHOMO

At once, your majesty.

(Iachomo goes. Exit.)

IMOGEN

Leonatus, come and stand here.

CYMBELINE

What's this?

IMOGEN

My father and my king, I know well that it is my step-mother's wish that I should marry her son, the lord Cloten.

MAGUNNA

It is both our wishes. Tell her, dear heart.

CYMBELINE

This is not the time . . .

IMOGEN

As your heir, it is my duty to consider not only my own feelings, but the good of all of Britain when choosing a husband.

MAGUNNA

That is your father's duty, child. We have planned it together. Your feelings don't come into it.

IMOGEN

Father, I have told you I will not marry Cloten.

MAGUNNA

What's this?

CYMBELINE

Just some little talk we had.

IMOGEN

I would not marry him if he brought with him a kingdom, a fortune, an army, and a fleet. But he brings nothing but himself. And I know him.

MAGUNNA

Yes, he is a sweet boy. I know you'll grow to love one another in time. Didn't I tell you, my king?

CYMBELINE

I think you did.

IMOGEN

Today I have taken for my lawful husband my dear lord Leonatus. In the Temple of Jupiter, before the gods, we have made our vows.

CYMBELINE

What?

MAGUNNA

But that's impossible. You cannot flout your father's will. It must be illegal.

IMOGEN

It is binding. By Jupiter, we are married.

CYMBELINE

No. No no. I forbid it. The traitor's son to be my daughter's lord? Twice a traitor, to steal from me my daughter, when I bred you under my own roof. This will not be.

IMOGEN

Father –

CYMBELINE

No. I will not hear you.

LEONATUS

My lord and king, I pray you pardon me, and pardon too the princess Imogen, my dear lady and my wife.

CYMBELINE

Pardon I will not.

LEONATUS

Then let your anger fall on me alone. The princess Imogen is blameless. I will bear all.

CYMBELINE

Do you tell me that you stole her fast away, all unknowing, and bore her to the temple, and there you forced her to become your bride?

IMOGEN

I summoned Leonatus. I asked him to escort me to the temple. I know his love for me, and I have long returned his dear regard. I took his hands before the altar of Jupiter and bade him deny his love for me, if he dared.

MAGUNNA

This is idiotic. Thrones don't marry for love.

IMOGEN

Thrones don't marry at all. But hearts do, and my heart is bound by sacred oaths to Leonatus. Father, you have long regarded Leonatus as a son. As a son, I give him to you.

MAGUNNA

No, no. I feel faint. My heart is pounding. My hands . . .

JANELLA

Look to the queen!

(Cymbeline guides her to sit on the throne.)

CYMBELINE

Sit here. Are you all right?

MAGUNNA

Oh. I'll be all right. Only tell me it isn't true. How can a daughter defy her parent's wishes so?

CYMBELINE

Now you've upset your mother. This is not settled. I will not bear this disobedience. Send to the temple. We will delve into this so-called marriage.

MAGUNNA

We will scotch it.

CYMBELINE

Without my countenance it cannot stand. You are not my son. All these afflictions, betrayals, losses. How is a man to bear them, already weighted by a heavy crown. If my son were here, my own dear son, so long lost, all would be well. Your marriage, Imogen, would not then matter so much. But you, my daughter, who have been my solace since that dire hour, and my dear delight –

MAGUNNA

Am I not your solace and delight?

CYMBELINE

For you to betray me –

IMOGEN

I have not betrayed you. To marry me to Cloten when I am heir to your throne would betray all of Britain, that we both love and serve.

MAGUNNA

Oh!

CYMBELINE

No more! You, Leonatus, out of my sight. You are not my son, and Imogen is not your wife. You will leave this land upon pain of death, yes, that's the quickest way to end this marriage. Don't think I won't! I pronounce upon you the sentence of banishment.

MAGUNNA

Ay, that's the way.

CYMBELINE

Go!

(Leonatus goes to exit. Enter Cloten followed by Iachomo, blocking his way.)

CLOTEN

Are you the one? Have you stolen my beloved, my bride? Say it's not so!

IACHOMO

There's the hand waving.

MAGUNNA

My son, be patient. Your father is going to fix this.

CLOTEN

How dare you, that one of your birth and degree should ever look so high!

IACHOMO

And the foot stamping.

CLOTEN

I'll fix it myself.

IACHOMO

And here comes the braggadocio.

CLOTEN

You are a thief, you have stolen the king's treasure, and I will be your executioner.

(He draws his sword)

IACHOMO

No! My lord, you can't draw before the king.

CLOTEN

I can if I draw *for* the king. This traitor needs putting down. I serve the crown in this.

(He charges at Leonatus, who pulls his sheathed sword out of his belt and defends himself without

drawing steel.)

Cloten, stop it.

LEONATUS

Afraid? You should be afraid. I'll kill you for this.

CLOTEN

Stop. I don't want to hurt you.

LEONATUS

Cloten! Be careful!

MAGUNNA

Cloten, stop this now.

IMOGEN

(Imogen steps in and knocks Cloten's arm aside.
Leonatus grabs him and puts the sheathed sword
across his throat)

Agh! No fair! Two against one!

CLOTEN

Don't hurt him!

MAGUNNA

Cloten, drop the sword.

LEONATUS

You're all right?

(Cloten drops it. To Imogen)

Yes. You?

IMOGEN

Good team work.

LEONATUS

(Pushes Cloten aside, to Iachomo. To Cymbeline)

My king, I have served you all my life, at court and in the wars. Forgive my importunity. I love your daughter.

CYMBELINE

I loved your father. But when he betrayed me I banished him. I kept you, bred you, loved you as a son. But you have shown that traitor's blood runs true. Follow your father. On pain of death, go, and never return.

(Leonatus goes. Exit.)

Leonatus –

IMOGEN

(She goes after him. Exit.)

He can't have her. She's mine. Mother, you told me she was mine.

CLOTEN

Yes, dear. She will be your bride.

MAGUNNA

We must take council. We must consider what to do.

CYMBELINE

Lord King, Caius Lucius, Ambassador from Rome asks to be received.

PISANIO

Not now. Maybe later.

CYMBELINE

Let him be admitted.

MAGUNNA

Oh, very well.

CYMBELINE

(Enter Caius Lucius, attended by Pisanio)

Attendant One. That's me. I attend. Now I'm a Roman.

PISANIO

Caius Lucius, you are welcome to our court. Word of your deeds, and the love great Caesar bears you, has gone before you like a fair wind from across the seas. What embassy do you bear to us from Caesar?

CYMBELINE

King Cymbeline, I thank you for this welcome. Less welcome will you find the word I bring from Caesar. When Julius Caesar conquered this happy isle, he set a tribute to be paid in silver, every year to Rome. Of late, Augustus Caesar has found that since his glorious reign began, no tribute has been sent to him from Britain. Now Augustus holds out to you his hand, in friendship if the tribute's to be paid, but if no silver's sent to Rome with me, then horrid war will follow, and tribute will be paid by you in blood.

CAIUS LUCIUS

CYMBELINE

You spoke truly, Caius Lucius. These are not welcome words. But happily this kingdom's management was held at the beginning of my reign, by Belarius, who was a brother to me, before he was a traitor. Each year, silver has been put up in the strong room of our palace, against some future need.

MAGUNNA

You need not reveal our store of silver. Britain owes no tribute to great Caesar.

(To Caius Lucius)

Your soldiers left. Your governors departed. Your forts are rubble and your villas fallen down.

CYMBELINE

We keep the roads up.

MAGUNNA

But without Rome's help. For what should we pay tribute? The memory of a conqueror? That we will not.

CYMBELINE

But if Augustus Caesar needs our help, a loan of silver we will gladly offer.

MAGUNNA

That's foolish. Great Rome doesn't need anything from us.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Caesar conquered a barbarian land. We left behind us civilized Roman ways. For that you will pay tribute, or admit that you are still barbarians.

CLOTEN

We are not barbarians. We are Britons, and if any Roman soldier pokes his nose in here, we'll show him just how barbaric we can be.

MAGUNNA

We will not be paying any tribute, will we, my dear?

CYMBELINE

We must take council.

MAGUNNA

My dear?

CYMBELINE

For now, Britain pays no tribute to Rome.

CAIUS LUCIUS

I am sorry to hear it. Know, King of Britain, that Caesar's soldiers are on maneuvers just across the channel. One word from me will make your cities the target of their dreadful exercise.

Britain pays no tribute. My king?

MAGUNNA

No tribute. At this time.

CYMBELINE

I hear you Cymbeline, King of the Britons. And my master, the great Augustus, will soon hear your words as well.

CAIUS LUCIUS

(Exeunt Caius Lucius and Pisanio.)

Let them come. We know how to fight.

CLOTEN

Go, escort the ambassador.

CYMBELINE

(Exeunt Cloten and Iachomo)

One trial follows upon another, each one more dire than the last. Nothing has gone right since Belarius, my dear friend, my best warrior and counselor betrayed me. He was like the keystone of a great edifice, which now that he is gone falls stone by stone till nothing is left but sand.

Oh, sweetie, how can you say that? I'm not sand.

MAGUNNA

And then, no sooner than Belarius betrayed me, my son, my heir, disappeared in the night, never to be heard of again. I cannot hope, so many years have passed, that he still lives. But I do. I do.

CYMBELINE

But have you forgotten, between us we have raised up a new hope. My son Cloten and your daughter Imogen, once they are wed, will be your heirs, together.

MAGUNNA

My daughter is my heir.

CYMBELINE

And my son will marry her. But first we must dissolve this illegal, hasty, thoughtless marriage. Am I right?

MAGUNNA

I must think.

CYMBELINE

My dearest, you don't seem well. Have you been taking your medicine?

MAGUNNA

CYMBELINE

I don't know. I don't want to. It makes my mind catch on trifles, while great issues slide along all unattended.

MAGUNNA

But what does that matter if you are not well? You must keep your health, your medicine does that for you. For us. Go, lie down awhile. I'll bring you some.

CYMBELINE

I'm not tired.

MAGUNNA

You look tired. Go on, I'll soon be with you. Remember. I am your solace. I am your delight.

CYMBELINE

Yes. So you say. And still my troubles batter me from every direction.

(Exit Cymbeline)

MAGUNNA

Janella.

JANELLA

My queen.

MAGUNNA

You must brew me more of the King's elixir. Make it stronger this time. It isn't working as well as it used to.

JANELLA

Over time, the effect can lessen. I did tell your majesty. But a stronger dose may make him truly ill.

MAGUNNA

It must be stronger. Only until we have dealt with the problem of this stupid marriage.

JANELLA

Yes, my queen.

MAGUNNA

Janella. While you are about it, brew me a poison. Poison may be needed. There are rats about.

(Exit Magunna)

JANELLA

My queen.

She knows I have to do what she says. A temple slave, trained to make medicines, given to the service of the queen, what choice do I have? The priest who used to have this job died last year. It's worth my

JANELLA (cont.)

life to disobey her word. But she can't touch my skills. Those are my own. And when she tells to make the king's elixir stronger, I make it weaker. If she finds out, well, I'm just a slave. I make mistakes.

(Exit Janella)

Act II
Scene 1

(The palace garden. Enter Cloten and Iachomo)

CLOTEN

Why did you stop me? I would have killed him in one more second. Am I not the best swordsman in Britain?

IACHOMO

That's what everyone says.

CLOTEN

The only reason he wasn't lying dead at my feet in the throne room was because I didn't want to distress the princess with all that blood.

IACHOMO

You are always so thoughtful, my lord.

CLOTEN

Yes. But now we will hunt him down, you and I, and I will kill him if you just distract him for a moment. He's not going to have my bride! My mother the queen promised her to me! And then – one day – Imogen will be the queen, but I'll be the king.

IACHOMO
(aside)

Great Jupiter, save us all.

CLOTEN

We have to find Leonatus, before he gets away.

IACHOMO

My lord, you have often told me that in politics, guile works better than messy killings.

CLOTEN

Messy killings are faster. And they tell everyone who's the boss.

IACHOMO

True, my lord. But until you are the boss, a little guile can win your lady and destroy your rival.

CLOTEN

Sounds good. What do I have to do?

IACHOMO

Get me access to the princess.

CLOTEN

You?

IACHOMO

Once alone with her, I will spy out such intimacies about her person, so that we can make Leonatus believe that no sooner was he gone than Imogen took comfort elsewhere.

CLOTEN

With me.

IACHOMO

We destroy her reputation, Leonatus repudiates her, and you marry Princess Imogen out of charity.

CLOTEN

Good. Let's do it. I'll knock on her door, and you go in.

IACHOMO

As you recall, my lord, her ladies share her room with her, to guard her rest. We must first separate her from her attendants. Tonight, while she is in disgrace with the king, let her be locked up somewhere alone to meditate upon her disobedience.

CLOTEN

We'll lock her in the temple. Good!

IACHOMO

No, not good.

CLOTEN

Not good.

IACHOMO

Too many priests and priestesses, and too many temple soldiers.

CLOTEN

Oh, right. What, then?

IACHOMO

Have her locked in her father's strongroom. Bolted up with his other treasures, all alone.

CLOTEN

How will you get to her?

IACHOMO

I have my ways.

CLOTEN

Well, good. All right. How do we get her locked up?

IACHOMO

I leave that to you, my lord. Surely your mother the queen can prevail upon the king to impose this punishment?

Oh, good idea.

CLOTEN

As you say, my lord. Guile is best.

IACHOMO

And don't you forget it.

CLOTEN

Will you ask her now?

IACHOMO

Now?

CLOTEN

Now is a good time.

IACHOMO

All right. Mother? Mother!

CLOTEN

(Exit Cloten)

Can a good man serve a bad master? I don't think so. I'm not a bad man, and yet, to do my master good service, I often do bad deeds. A good servant, but a bad man. But what can I do? It is my fate.

IACHOMO

(Raises his hands in prayer)

Oh, Jupiter, would that my stars were changed, and this were not my lot.

(Waits. Listens)

He does not hear.

(Exit)

Scene 2

(Another part of the garden. Enter Leonatus, dressed for traveling, carrying a bundle.)

LEONATUS

Princess – Imogen? This morning when I woke, I was a man in hopeless love, pining for a star beyond my reach. And now – husband to the prin – to Imogen. My wife. And banished from the kingdom, on pain of death. This morning I would have said, one kiss from the – from Imogen – was worth my life. And now, with my old life behind me, facing I know not what in some strange land, it's true. Her kisses on my lips – oh, Imogen – I can face anything now. She loves me. Oh, Imogen!

(Enter Imogen)

IMOGEN

Leonatus?

Here.

LEONATUS

Oh, Leonatus!

IMOGEN

(They embrace and kiss)

My dear, dear love.

LEONATUS

Are you sorry I got you into this?

IMOGEN

No, never. To marry you, to love you openly. It's like a dream.

LEONATUS

I am my father's subject. But I could not allow him to marry me to Cloten. Never.

IMOGEN

So happy to be of service in this matter.

LEONATUS

Marrying you was what I wanted too. So sweet when duty and desire are the same.

IMOGEN

Most sweet.

LEONATUS

(He kisses her)

I must go. I cannot disobey the king's order of banishment.

IMOGEN

No, upon your life. But give me time. I'll talk to him. And soon you will be recalled, with his good will, as my husband.

LEONATUS

It didn't work for my father.

IMOGEN

I was too little to speak for him. I'm not now.

LEONATUS

No.

IMOGEN

Where will you go?

LEONATUS

To Rome. By all reports, my father headed there. If I can find him, one good thing will come out of this banishment.

IMOGEN

So far as Rome.

LEONATUS

It's not that far. When Julius Caesar conquered Britain, he brought with him a powerful sorcerer, who opened a portal from here to a port in Wales called Milford Haven. There, another portal opens on to Rome.

IMOGEN

I never knew that.

LEONATUS

The portal from Milford Haven to Londinium is heavily guarded, of course. Your father's father, King Biadeze, caused the Temple of Jupiter to be raised up over it, and it is walled in and guarded day and night.

IMOGEN

All those temple soldiers, of course.

LEONATUS

But the way *to* Milford Haven is not guarded. Going there is as easy as going to the temple privy.

IMOGEN

Oh, poor Milford Haven.

LEONATUS

I'll set out now, and sleep in Milford Haven tonight.

IMOGEN

And you'll take care.

LEONATUS

Always.

IMOGEN

For you belong to me now. Here. Take this ring.

LEONATUS

I can't take that.

IMOGEN

You can. I give it to you.

LEONATUS

It is your father's ring, designating you his heir. I must not wear it.

IMOGEN

If you are truly my husband, then you will. There.

(Takes his hand and puts the ring on his finger.)

LEONATUS

I will wear this for you. And you wear this for me. The only thing I have left of my father.

(Takes off his arm ring)

IMOGEN

Oh, Leonatus. I will wear it, and think of you. Go. Take care. Come back to me.

LEONATUS

Upon my life, who are my life.

(Kisses her)

Farewell.

(Exit)

IMOGEN

Love and duty together. I am blessed. I would doubt myself, except that the alternative is Cloten, a marriage bad in every way. I think my father would not live long, once I was married to the queen's son.

(Enter Pisanio)

PISANIO

Princess, the queen has sent me.

IMOGEN

What says the queen?

PISANIO

She said to tell you that the King is so angry with you that he ordered you to be sent to the temple prison to do such penance as the cruelest priests would lay on you.

IMOGEN

My father said this?

PISANIO

So said the queen. But she has interceded for you. Instead, you are to spend one night in penitent meditation, locked in the king's strong room, alone. I am to take you there.

IMOGEN

Just you? Well, I will go. There is nothing I would rather than to be alone tonight.

(Exeunt)

Scene 3

(The queen's apartments. Enter the queen, and Janella)

MAGUNNA

Have you brought me what I asked for?

JANELLA

I have it here, the elixir of the king.

MAGUNNA

Hm.

JANELLA

See, it is darker. That's how much stronger it is.

MAGUNNA

Darker, stronger, good. But how does it taste? He doesn't like the taste.

JANELLA

I made a special incantation. He won't taste it at all. Just as if it were colored water.

(Aside)

It's colored water.

MAGUNNA

Very good. And it is strong.

JANELLA

The strongest yet.

MAGUNNA

So good. He needs his strength. The king has many burdens. We womenfolk must help him in every way we can.

JANELLA

That's true.

MAGUNNA

Did you bring me what I asked?

JANELLA

Oh, yes, my queen. See what I have for you.

Poison? MAGUNNA

Many poisons. One for every need, and every occasion. JANELLA

Many poisons! Yes. Because there are many things – rats – that need to be poisoned. MAGUNNA

So I thought, my queen. JANELLA

Very good. MAGUNNA

This one is a long, slow poison, beginning with pains in the feet and eyes. After twenty-seven days, the pain becomes agony, then stops. And then – JANELLA

Death? MAGUNNA

This one is much quicker. There are no symptoms but one. A little tingling in the left hand twelve hours after ingestion, and then – JANELLA

Death. MAGUNNA

This one you give at night. It is tasteless, but it smells of mint. A small dose before sleeping, and the only symptom is – JANELLA

Death. MAGUNNA

This one is for your most hated enemies. JANELLA

Enemies? I have no enemies. I'm the queen. MAGUNNA

I mean, for the rats you really don't like. JANELLA

Yes, the rats. MAGUNNA

JANELLA

A little dose will bring on belly-aches. That passes. Nine hours later the tongue swells up and turns black. That passes. Then the guts expand and twist, causing agony. Then everything passes. A blissful hour of peace, with no pain, and then –

MAGUNNA

Death. This is for a very special rat. What's this, then?

JANELLA

Oh. This is a sleeping potion.

MAGUNNA

Why would I want a sleeping potion?

JANELLA

My queen, should any of these medicines fall into the hands of your enemies, you need but say that this is the only one of yours. Only a sleeping potion.

MAGUNNA

My sleeping potion.

JANELLA

(Aside)

In fact, they're all just sleeping potions. I don't know what the queen wants these poisons for, but my guess is, not for any good. I don't trust her.

MAGUNNA

But how much of this would I give someone so that a healthful sleep will end in death?

JANELLA

My queen is wise. Too much sleep is like a death, and too much sleeping potion will cause the sleeper never to wake again. I have given each of these a different color, and simplified all the doses for your majesty, to make it easy to remember.

MAGUNNA

Good.

JANELLA

This one is red, red as in fire which burns at once. Just one drop will cause a fast death.

MAGUNNA

A fast death.

JANELLA

This one is yellow, like fair sun, which we sometimes see burning far away. Seventeen drops given in three different doses on nine different days, will cause eventual pain in the eye –

MAGUNNA
Tingling, and death.

JANELLA
Now this one is white, and it is for the toothache.

MAGUNNA
And death?

JANELLA
Just for the toothache. The priestess sent it with these others, you asked for it last week.

MAGUNNA
Last week. Of course. And this one, for the horrid rat.

JANELLA
Brown with black spots, the horrid rat's color. One drop on the morning of the new moon, or three drops when it is a quarter full, or eighteen drops when the moon is full –

MAGUNNA
Why so much?

JANELLA
Poisons are all under the sway of the moon, as their purpose waxes and wanes, and so the power of the moon, at its strongest, can draw away poisons. So give a bigger dose.

MAGUNNA
And this one. It is green, for mint. Tasteless, given at night.

JANELLA
Your majesty's memory is prodigious. Give it in two doses, one of eight drops, one of three.

MAGUNNA
And then – death.

(Laughs)
I don't know why I'm laughing. There is nothing here to laugh at. Medicine is a serious business. Killing rats, too. Medicine, rats – and death.

JANELLA
If my queen is pleased, that is all the thanks I need.
(Aside)

It's all the thanks I'll get.

MAGUNNA
Your queen is pleased. The best thing about having a temple slave as a servant is that you don't have to pay them. You may go.

JANELLA

Thank you, my queen.

(Aside)

If they were poisons, I would be worried, if I thought the queen could count.

(Exit Janella)

MAGUNNA

Nine days, seventeen drops, given at night, yellow is for teeth. Green is for healthful sleep. Brown is a very bad rat.

(Giggles)

Here is enough for every rat and snake at court. Enough for everything. All I need do is find a way to give it to all who need my medicine. The best way is as a gift. A most delicious gift. And I must remember to keep a little, a little of the darkest, strongest, quickest, a gift for my little temple slave. Death.

(Laughs. Exit)

Scene 4

(Cymbeline's chambers. Enter Cymbeline, attended by Pisanio, with the king's elixir.)

PISANIO

My king, the queen has sent me to you. She has found your medicine.

CYMBELINE

No, take it away.

PISANIO

The queen bade me tell you this is new medicine. Better than ever.

(Aside)

I hate my job.

CYMBELINE

I don't want it. The longer I go without my medicine, the better I feel. My head clears. I can think a little. Let me only have the time and I can find my way out of all these difficulties. Rome demanding tribute, threatening attack. Why does that not seem half so dire as my daughter's defiance and marriage?

PISANIO

Offstage events are never as compelling as problems happening on stage, right in front of you. Oh. You weren't talking to me. Sorry.

CYMBELINE

Send for my daughter. I will speak with her. Get her to see reason. It's important that she marry Cloten. Why? I don't remember. He brings us no strong alliance. I am married already to his mother, the queen. And he himself is no soldier, no wise counselor, no . . . nothing at all.

PISANIO

He is a boob. I can say that. He doesn't hear me. I'm not important.

CYMBELINE

Go, I say. Fetch my daughter.

PISANIO

My lord king, do you not recall, you ordered that your daughter spend this night in penitential meditation, locked in your treasure room.

CYMBELINE

I don't remember that.

PISANIO

Those were your orders.

(Aside)

So said the queen.

CYMBELINE

Well. Perhaps a night so spent will bring her to a better frame of mind. It was a good idea. I think. I didn't used to be so woolly-minded. It may be old age hollows out my brain as it has my sinews. Or care has done this to me. Or heartbreak.

Oh, Belarius, my heart's brother. Why did you betray me? We beat back the Silures to their borders, we drove the Dumnonii into the sea. Our sons were born almost the same day. When my lady died, my true queen, Arabeth, you were my best comforter, my wisest councilor. But my son has vanished. And yours, for all my care of him, is also proved a traitor.

Oh, Jupiter, are these afflictions my fault for being a bad king? Or if I were a better king, would I simply shrug them off, as nothing. Or if I were a better man. Perhaps I do need that potion. I could sleep.

(Enter Magunna)

MAGUNNA

My dear king and husband, look what I have for you.

CYMBELINE

No. I don't want any medicine.

MAGUNNA

And you shall not have any. Go to, begone with that stuff.

PISANIO

(Aside)

And always the blame. I hate my job.

(Exit Pisanio)

Look what I have brought you. Cookies.

Cookies? What kind.

In first century Britain? Oatmeal. That's all we have.

I like oatmeal.

With honey.

And raisins?

Yes, we do have raisins. Here.

Oh, that's delicious. Much better than medicine.

Yes, I think so. Come. Let's to bed. I am so good to you. Don't forget.

I don't forget. I'm never allowed to forget.

(Exeunt)

Act III
Scene 1

(The palace strong room, with one treasure chest.
Enter Pisanio and Imogen)

PISANIO

Yes, me again. Conducting the princess to the strongroom and locking her in. This way, princess.

IMOGEN

This is the strong room? Are you sure.

PISANIO

There's only one.

IMOGEN

Shouldn't there be many more chests of silver? I remember more.

PISANIO

I wouldn't know.

IMOGEN

Well, it has been many years since my father showed it to me. Am I to have no supper?

PISANIO

The feast to welcome the ambassador from Rome was canceled.

IMOGEN

Of course. But that doesn't mean there isn't any food to eat.

PISANIO

I have these.

IMOGEN

Cookies! With raisins! Oh, thank you.

PISANIO

The queen baked them.

IMOGEN

Oh. Thank you.

(She puts the cookies aside.)

PISANIO

I'll go now. Good night, princess.

(Aside)

Stupid, thankless job.

(Exit Pisanio)

IMOGEN

Of all the ways I imagined spending my wedding night, this is not quite the worst. My father did not execute us out of hand. I was almost sure he wouldn't. After all, I am his heir. Leonatus and I are not imprisoned in the temple together. Imprisoned with Leonatus was one of the best possible outcomes. Oh, Leonatus, I wish you were here, best of friends and dear husband. I spent last night in fasting and prayer before the sacred rites this morning. I will lie here and remember everything I love best about Leonatus. That will be exhausting.

(Lies down)

His nose. His eyes. His voice. His hands. His . . .

(Imogen sleeps. Iachomo lifts the top of the treasure chest and goes to stand over her.)

IACHOMO

Fair perfection. As far above me as the brightest star of heaven. What's this? Belarius's gift to his son. I can use this.

(He takes the arm ring from her.)

Princess?

(Imogen wakes)

IMOGEN

What? Iachomo, what are you doing here?

IACHOMO

I have come to ruin you.

IMOGEN

You would not dare.

IACHOMO

I must dare what I would not, in the service of my lord.

IMOGEN

Cloten

IACHOMO

Even so.

IMOGEN

You would rape me? Why?

IACHOMO

Oh, no. That I would not dare. To go before my master to the place he most desires? Never.

What, then.

IMOGEN

Oh, princess, if it were only known that I had spent the night with you, in a locked room, that were enough to ruin you.

IACHOMO

Ruin me?

IMOGEN

Ruin your reputation. Without which, you cannot be your father's heir. Don't shout. They won't hear you. And the guards have orders not to open the door before morning.

IACHOMO

No one will believe your lies.

IMOGEN

I have this.

IACHOMO

(Shows the arm ring)

It belongs to Leonatus. What of it.

IMOGEN

Such a pretty story, how he gave it to you as a keepsake when he left. – I see I have it pat.

IACHOMO

Are you a spy, as well as a thief?

IMOGEN

I am a student of the art of love. Only from a distance. But of course he would give you his dearest possession. How could he not? But imagine the whispers. He is only just gone, and already you have spent a night with another man, and passed on Leonatus's keepsake to a new lover.

IACHOMO

No one would believe it.

IMOGEN

No one who knows you would believe it. But everyone would talk of it. Everyone would take a side, did she, didn't she, could she, has she? The very talk will drag your name in the dirt.

IACHOMO

And what does Cloten possibly have to gain from that?

IMOGEN

That depends. What will you trade for this?

IACHOMO

(Holds up the arm ring)

IMOGEN

What do you want?

IACHOMO

Your father's ring. If I bring that to Cloten, and he wears it on his hand, it will set off a different set of whispers. Cymbeline has chosen a new heir. An adopted son in the place of a disobedient daughter.

IMOGEN

You think that will be enough to make Cloten king?

IACHOMO

I don't. Cloten may.

IMOGEN

Yes, Cloten would. But I can't give it to him.

IACHOMO

I see. You traded Leonatus your best keepsake for his. Such is love. It will have to be your reputation, then.

IMOGEN

And what does Cloten gain by ruining me?

IACHOMO

The death of Leonatus, of course. Leaving you a widow, and free to marry again.

IMOGEN

Leonatus is not going to die because he hears a rumor.

IACHOMO

No. He's going to come running back to try and defend you. He loves you, he won't be able to leave it alone. He is outlaw, under sentence of death. If he returns here, every man's hand will be raised against him. And if he reaches the palace, Cloten will strike him down himself.

IMOGEN

Cloten isn't capable. Do you think Leonatus will walk in unprepared?

IACHOMO

I'll probably have to help him.

IMOGEN

Don't do it, Iachomo. There is no good nor honor in this deed.

IACHOMO

But in this I do good service for my lord.

IMOGEN

For Cloten! Good service for a man like him, what is that?

IACHOMO

The best that I can do.

IMOGEN

Change masters, then. Enter my service. Be my knight, and serve Leonatus and me together.

IACHOMO

With all my heart. But to do so I must betray my master. And I can't do that.

IMOGEN

You keep faith with him when he would not keep faith with you.

IACHOMO

And so I maintain what little honor I possess. I'm sorry, princess.

IMOGEN

Do me one service, then. While we are here.

IACHOMO

Anything in my power.

IMOGEN

Count the silver in this strongroom. My father said he has been putting by the tribute price year upon year. Where has it gone? Shouldn't it be here?

IACHOMO

I can tell you that that chest is nearly empty.

IMOGEN

Who has the key to this strongroom besides the king?

IACHOMO

My master has a key.

IMOGEN

Cloten? Why would my father give him a key?

IACHOMO

Cymbeline did not give the key to Cloten.

IMOGEN

Ah. My dear stepmother. What have you done with all the kingdom's silver?

IACHOMO

What's this?

(He picks up the packet of cookies.)

IMOGEN

My dinner. Put it down.

IACHOMO

You aren't to have any dinner, princess. You are engaged in fasting and penitent meditation this night.

IMOGEN

While being ruined?

IACHOMO

I haven't hurt you. I was never going to hurt you.

IMOGEN

Go on. Take them, then. I don't care.

IACHOMO

Oatmeal cookies.

IMOGEN

What other kind is there?

IACHOMO
(Eats a cookie)

Very good.

IMOGEN

I'll take your word. How does this farce end? They find you in here with me, and kill you out of hand?

IACHOMO

My master will let me out by and by.

IMOGEN

You trust him for that, do you?

IACHOMO

He thinks I'll have the ring.

IMOGEN

Sorry to disappoint.

IACHOMO

The armband will do. I'll tell him. I'll . . . where did you get these cookies?

(He falls asleep)

IMOGEN

A present from the queen. If you are poisoned, you were brought down by your own hand.

(Goes to him, feels his pulse)

He only sleeps. Now give me back what is mine from my husband.

(She takes the arm ring.)

(Enter Cloten and Pisanio)

CLOTEN

How now, dear sister, my bride to be? Here you are, caught with another man on your wedding night. For shame. I always knew you for a wanton bitch. It will take a strong hand to school you. A husband's hand. Iachomo? Iachomo! What have you done to him?

IMOGEN

I? He has worn himself out in your service.

CLOTEN

He's what? Get up, you dog. What have you done?

IMOGEN

I have done nothing. But you, dear brother, have done too much.

(Exit Imogen)

CLOTEN

No – stop her, Pisanio.

PISANIO

Stop, princess, stop. I'm sorry, my lord. I tried.

CLOTEN

Useless! Go after her!

PISANIO

At once, my lord.

(Exit Pisanio)

CLOTEN

Agh! Nothing ever goes right! Wake up, you fool. Get up, Imogen is getting away.

(Pulls him up and shakes him)

What is wrong with you?

(Slaps his face)

Wake up, wake up, wake up!

Ugh. IACHOMO

Did you get the ring? What do we do now? Iachomo!

(Pulls him to his feet.)

What did you say to her? What did you do to her? Did she saying anything about me?

(Iachomo falls down)

Agh! Why does everything have to be so difficult? Why am I the one who always has to do everything? You're no help at all.

(Kicks him)

I'm supposed to have the crown, that's what my mother told me. And Imogen will be my wife. What is the matter with her? Why did she want to go and marry Leonatus? I'm the queen's son. I'm more important, and I'm going to have the crown. Wake up, Iachomo!

(Pounds him on the back)

Wake up wake up! What do I do now?

(Iachomo rouses and coughs up a piece of cookie.)

Ugh. IACHOMO

Are you awake now? Rough night?

Hardly. IACHOMO

Did you get the ring? CLOTEN

She doesn't have it. She gave it to Leonatus. IACHOMO

What? She can't do that. CLOTEN

Nevertheless. IACHOMO

What do we do now? He has the ring.

CLOTEN

It doesn't matter. We go on with the plan.

IACHOMO

We go on with the plan. All right. What's the plan?

CLOTEN

Where is the princess?

IACHOMO

She left.

CLOTEN

I told her that we were going to destroy her reputation.

IACHOMO

Oh. That's good.

CLOTEN

That would bring Leonatus hurrying back to defend her, so he can be killed.

IACHOMO

That's very good. And I will kill him. I am the best swordsman in Britain, you know.

CLOTEN

So I've heard.

IACHOMO

I will kill him like this, and like this.

CLOTEN

My lord, Leonatus isn't going to come here.

IACHOMO

He's not?

CLOTEN

No. The princess is not going to let him come here and be executed. She is going to go to him. She's probably on her way right now.

IACHOMO

She's gone? To him? We have to stop her.

CLOTEN

IACHOMO

No, my lord. No. Listen. You want the crown, it's almost in your hand. Leonatus has gone, Imogen has gone after him, and that leaves you, here, at the side of the king, during a war. Leave it to the queen to get the king to proclaim you his heir before the battle is joined. And so, it is done.

CLOTEN

But Imogen gets away.

IACHOMO

The plan was for you to win the crown.

CLOTEN

Yes. By marrying Imogen, who is the heir, and then I'll be the heir too.

IACHOMO

Plans change. This is a better one. And it's done.

CLOTEN

No. I like the other one. The one where I marry Imogen, and then she's my wife, and she has to do anything I say. And that includes –

IACHOMO

I know what it includes, my lord. But if your plan is to win the crown –

CLOTEN

Yes, but I want Imogen too. That's a better plan.

IACHOMO

It is a little complicated by her marriage to Leonatus.

CLOTEN

That's easy. We just have to kill him. Kill Leonatus, marry Imogen, become the heir. That's the new plan.

IACHOMO

Do you know where Leonatus has gone?

CLOTEN

No.

IACHOMO

Then how are you going to find him to kill him?

CLOTEN

I'm not. You are. You find Leonatus, I'll find Imogen. We'll kill Leonatus together, and then bring the princess back here. That is the plan.

My lord –
IACHOMO

That's the plan! Now come on. She's getting away.
CLOTEN

(Exeunt)

Scene 2

(Another part of the palace. Enter Imogen, followed by Pisanio)

Princess –
PISANIO

I will not be locked up again. You saw who got in there with me. He said he was going to ruin me, and kill Leonatus.
IMOGEN

I didn't come to take you back.
PISANIO

Or give me away?
IMOGEN

I wouldn't do that.
PISANIO

But will you help me?
IMOGEN

In any way I can.
PISANIO

I need a change of clothes. Bring me some of Leonatus's. We've slipped out of the palace together time and again, dressed as horse boys, and ridden across the bridge as far as the temple of Isis. I'll change my state, dress as a boy, and follow Leonatus to Rome.
IMOGEN

Rome is a long way. Will you go alone?
PISANIO

It's only a few steps. Leonatus told me that there is a portal in the temple of Jupiter created by a sorcerer in Julius Caesar's army. It opens on a village by the sea in Wales called Milford Haven, where another portal can bring you straight to Rome. It's as easy as going to the privy.
IMOGEN

PISANIO
Poor Milford Haven.

IMOGEN
Get me those clothes. I'll be gone tonight.

PISANIO
Princess, war is coming. Is this the time to leave your father's kingdom, your father's side?

IMOGEN
The best service I can render my father is to bring back Leonatus to serve him in this dark hour. I will be back as soon as I can. But get me those clothes.

(Exit Imogen)

PISANIO
I will. Go safely, princess. Come back soon.

(He goes to exit. Enter Caius Lucius. Pisanio turns around and attends him.)

CAIUS LUCIUS
Has any message yet arrived from Rome?

PISANIO
Not yet, general.

Roman attendant.
(Aside)

Here is a message just arrived from your soldiers in Gaul. They have met the ships that will bring them to the harbor you designated.

CAIUS LUCIUS
At last. Now I can quit this court. Cymbeline must be wondering why I am still here.

PISANIO
It doesn't say where you are to meet the army.

CAIUS LUCIUS
Not one army, Pisanio. Two. One will come by ship from Gaul. The other will come straight here.

PISANIO
How is that possible?

CAIUS LUCIUS
Not many know that when great Caesar conquered this land, he had with him a powerful sorcerer. The sorcerer created a portal here, and another one on the west coast with a fair harbor. The portal lies in the

CAIUS LUCIUS (cont.)

temple of Jupiter. The way here of course is guarded, but once I join my army, we will make short work of them.

PISANIO

How will you reach the army?

CAIUS LUCIUS

Another portal opens on the coast. In a little place called Milford Haven. Going there is as easy as going to the privy.

PISANIO

Oh. Poor Milford Haven.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Before we depart we must do one thing. Spy out the number of soldiers on hand to defend Londinium. Then we will go to lead my troops through the portal. In but a few days, Rome will conquer Britain once more. Come, pack my things. I will take my leave of Cymbeline and go, only to return dressed to the knees in blood.

(Exit Caius Lucius)

PISANIO

Yuck.

(Enter Cymbeline and Janella)

CYMBELINE

Pisanio.

PISANIO
(Aside)

Not a Roman anymore.

My king?

CYMBELINE

Why is Caius Lucius still at court? He already had our leave to go.

PISANIO

He has been waiting on a message from his troops in Gaul. He says he will take leave of you tonight.

CYMBELINE

Waiting here, on a message from his troops in Gaul. Strange. Janella, what auguries does the temple bring us for the coming battle?

JANELLA

The temple has taken the auguries four times. Each time the outcome looks doubtful, muddled, uncertain.

CYMBELINE

What question did you ask upon making the sacrifice?

JANELLA

Just as you commanded, will we overcome the Romans when they arrive.

CYMBELINE

When they arrive where?

JANELLA

Why, here, I suppose. Won't the army be coming here?

CYMBELINE

That is the question. If Caius Lucius's army is landing on our coast, why didn't he go and meet them? Why did he wait here for a message?

JANELLA

Why does it matter? This is our strong place. We call up our army here and hold Londinium.

CYMBELINE

Better to meet them where they land, before they ravage Britain's soil.

PISANIO

How can we know where they will land? There are hundreds of landing places on our coast. We can't keep track of them all, we don't have satellites.

JANELLA

We must keep our army here. If we hold Londinium, we hold Britain.

CYMBELINE

But I do know where they will land. At least, I know the first place Romans will arrive. It is not well known, but when Julius Caesar conquered Britain, he had a sorcerer with him in his ranks.

JANELLA

Is this the great Virgil, who opened the portal beneath the temple?

CYMBELINE

It is not generally known.

JANELLA

Your majesty forgets that I am temple bred. We young ones used to bathe in the sea at Milford Haven before breakfast. It's as easy as going to the privy.

PISANIO

I said it last time.

CYMBELINE

Poor Milford Haven.

JANELLA

But there are no Roman soldiers there.

CYMBELINE

There will be soon. A portal in Rome in their great Temple of Jupiter opens in Milford Haven. That is where they will arrive. That is why Caius Lucius is still here. He is not going to meet the army from Gaul. He is going to Milford Haven to meet the army from Rome.

JANELLA

Then our best plan is to hold the portal in the temple. Save the temple, save the city, save Britain.

CYMBELINE

It were better to stop the Romans ever coming through the portal to Milford Haven. The farther from Londinium we stop them, the safer we are.

JANELLA

The messengers to gather in your hosts have only just departed. We have no army yet to take to Milford Haven.

CYMBELINE

If we wait for our army to arrive, it will be too late.

PISANIO

Is there no sorcerer who can close the portal?

CYMBELINE

That's been tried. Not even a mountain of stone can collapse the portal. The arches are too strong. Roman, you know. The walls of the temple have guarded it till now.

JANELLA

And must guard it still.

CYMBELINE

A smaller force, gathered from close by, with perhaps some temple soldiers to bring up our numbers, could go with me to Milford Haven, to hold the portal there.

(To Pisanio)

Go, see what strength we can muster in the next few hours.

(To Janella)

And you, go to the temple and see what soldiers we can draw from there. And tell the rest of them, all of them, to offer sacrifice, and pray.

(Exeunt Janella and Pisanio)

CYMBELINE (cont.)

There is not a day when I do not wish for my friend, my councilor, my dear companion. Belarius, I have sent as far as Rome to find you. I could forgive your treachery and have you at my side. But trust once betrayed can never be made up again. Unhappy Cymbeline, will these woes never cease? But I must go on, and save Britain if I can.

(Enter Pisanio)

PISANIO

My lord king, the queen has sent to know how you are. She asks that you come to her, if you may.

(Aside)

That's not how she put it, but he doesn't need to know that.

CYMBELINE

I will come. She is my solace. My delight. I'm sure it's true.

(Exit Cymbeline)

PISANIO

War is coming. And I will attend. I will probably be killed in the ranks. Rankers always have to be killed, piles of them, so that everyone knows it's a real war, with real dead. I hate my job. A character is what he does. And I don't do much. I follow in the wake of more important people, moved along by their currents. Or I just attend, which is, to stand still. But that isn't really me.

(He looks off, both directions. Sees no one.)

Watch.

(Music. Pisanio dances. Brilliantly. Beautifully.)

There. That's me. I may not matter, but when I am killed, be sorry.

(Exit.)

Scene 3

(The palace garden. Enter Cloten and Iachomo, dressed for travel.)

CLOTEN

Through the privy? We go through the privy?

IACHOMO

So I was told. Leonatus has gone to Milford Haven by way of Caesar's portal. Imogen will follow him there, so there we should go.

CLOTEN

Through the privy.

IACHOMO

Unless you want to travel two hundred and fifty miles across rough country inhabited by enemy tribes.

CLOTEN

Right. The privy it is. Find Leonatus, find Imogen, kill Leonatus. Let's make her watch. And then Imogen will be mine.

IACHOMO

I think the Princess Imogen will still be her own, whomever she marries.

CLOTEN

What's that?

IACHOMO

Lead on, my lord.

CLOTEN

To the privy!

(Exeunt)

End of Act III. Intermission.

Act IV
Scene 1

(A hillside above Milford Haven in Dyffed. Enter Belarius, clothed in faded court clothes patched with leather and skins.)

BELARIUS

Hail, fair sun, rising above the dew-clad hills. It does me good to know that this same sun shines upon Londinium, and my dear lord Cymbeline. Light his way, fair sun. Warm his hands. Keep him well. Though you don't know it, my king, banished though I am these twenty years, your servant Belarius serves you still.

How now, my captain, what's the news?

(Enter Cadwal, dressed in leather and skins cut to look like Belarius's court clothes)

CADWAL

Lord general, and my father, I have made inspection of all posts before the dawn this morning.

BELARIUS

No less did I expect of you, my able captain.

CADWAL

The portal from Londinium is undisturbed since last night. No tracks mar the ground. But a scout from the Silures told me that two men arrived last night through the portal from Rome.

BELARIUS

Spies, are they?

CADWAL

So the Silures believe. They are apprehended and await your interrogatory.

BELARIUS

Good. Very good. No slinking sneaks shall find out our defenses.

CADWAL

If spies come, does that mean war? A battle?

BELARIUS

War will come. Rome never leaves its kill uneaten. They will return, and bring an army.

CADWAL

But will they bring it here?

BELARIUS

Julius Caesar left these portals here, to Rome and to Londinium so he could move his armies without ships, and even without roads. They will come through here. It is the easiest and the cheapest passage.

CADWAL

Or so they think. But we will make them pay dear. Our traps are ready, and we have armies to receive them. Let them come!

BELARIUS

You have never paid a price in blood, or seen friends fall, and buried them. Or seen men die in pain, or live in agony. War is an unnecessary evil, that follows upon men's greed.

CADWAL

My blood, nor yet my life, is well lost, in service of the king.

BELARIUS

You say well.

(Aside)

But I will give my life to see you come to no harm, my boy.

(To Cadwal)

I will go and see these spies, and hear what can be learned from them.

CADWAL

I will keep watch here, where I can see the portal, the road, and the harbor. My signals are ready, and my sword is to hand.

BELARIUS

I leave you to your duty.

(Aside)

No man could want a better son, but he is not mine. Someday, I must tell him. When it is safe.

(Exit)

CADWAL

If I should die in the wars, the king may never know. But Jupiter knows, I am the king's man, always. My sword, my service, and my life, is King Cymbeline's.

The day may come when the King learns what we have done for him. Perhaps he'll send for us, when the Roman army has come and been soundly defeated. Or, no, we beat the army, take their leader prisoner, and go to Londinium to present him to the king.

King Cymbeline, I am a humble captain under the command of General Belarius. Here kneels in supplication the Roman general – four Roman generals – defeated by our hand, in your service. How was this done? My father coaxed and counseled the warring tribes to treaty, in your name, to defend our coast from Rome and fight each other afterwards. From that day to this, two armies camp on each side of the Pembroke River, and practice their warfare in great games of attack ball.

CADWAL (cont.)

More trophies would we place before your feet, great king, but there are drowned. When the Roman navy assayed our coast, we had ready great catapults, armed with blocks of stone cut from the cliffs, that broke the ships and sent them to the bottom. But did any of the Roman soldiers not break out of our trap? Some did, but they learned that these hills about the port can be fired all at once. To reach the portal to Londinium they had to brave a maelstrom, and so they died. All this we did in service to you. And no reward we ask for but to continue in your service, my king.

Oh, come on, Romans. Your welcome is prepared. What are you waiting for?

And I am prepared. I have trained all my life to be worthy, on the good day, to be the king's man.

What's this? The portal – someone is coming through, from Londinium. Only one. A youth. A very fair youth. I wonder if he has ever seen the king. I will question him.

(Cadwal hides)

(Enter Imogen dressed as a man, wearing Leonatus's arm ring on her arm, and her sword at her side.)

IMOGEN

How strange. As soon as the smell of the privy faded, the light guided me here. And this is not Londinium. The sea. It's beautiful. I see a village by the harbor. There will I find out the second portal that will bring me to Rome. I walk in the very steps of my dear Leonatus. Oh, Jupiter, let me find him soon.

(Cadwal steps out, sword drawn)

CADWAL

Stand fast!

(Imogen turns and draws her sword.)

IMOGEN

Who goes there?

CADWAL

Nay, that is my part. I am the sentry here.

IMOGEN

A sentry? You seem more like a robber, to draw on me, and tell me to stand.

CADWAL

I'm not a robber. I'm guarding the portal. You came out of the portal from Londinium so I must question you.

At sword point? IMOGEN

Will you stand? Then I'll put up my sword. CADWAL

I'll put up mine. IMOGEN

From whence came you? CADWAL

From the portal, as you saw. IMOGEN

From Londinium? From the temple of Jupiter? From the palace of the king? CADWAL

Aye so. IMOGEN

Have you seen the king? But say first, are you a Briton, or a Roman? CADWAL

A Briton, on my soul. IMOGEN

And so am I. CADWAL

A Briton? Here? IMOGEN

In the service of the king. CADWAL

What king? IMOGEN

King Cymbeline, of Britain. CADWAL

I am in a way to being in his service as well. IMOGEN

You are? As well? CADWAL

IMOGEN

Though it is primarily his daughter that I serve. The Princess Imogen.

CADWAL

Princess Imogen. Is she as beautiful as a star? As graceful as a dolphin on the waves? As gentle as the morning breeze?

IMOGEN

It pains me to say that the princess is as ugly as an old boot. She is always cross, never has a kind word for anyone, and has destroyed most of the king's plate in her tantrums. Still, we do our best to serve her highness.

CADWAL

And greater the honor, when service is not easy. As ugly as a boot?

IMOGEN

Only in the morning. After that, she's worse.

CADWAL

What an affliction for noble Cymbeline, in his only child.

IMOGEN

We weep for him.

CADWAL

But tell me, good youth, can you at the court do this?

(He does a feat of acrobatics)

Or this?

(Does another)

IMOGEN

I have never seen it.

CADWAL

Here in Dyffed, we test ourselves in feats of strength and speed, so that we continually better ourselves.

IMOGEN

So I see.

CADWAL

Shall you and I be comrades? Shall we be brothers? Or, would you not wish to exchange such oaths with me.

IMOGEN

It would be my honor. I would be proud to have such a friend.

CADWAL

My name is Cadwal.

IMOGEN

Strange, I had a brother of that name. I am – Fideles.

CADWAL

Jupiter and all the gods, look down on us. I swear to be a brother to you, Fideles.

IMOGEN

And I to you, Cadwal.

CADWAL

Good. Very good.

IMOGEN

Will you tell me one thing?

CADWAL

Anything.

IMOGEN

Did you see a young man come through the portal yesterday?

CADWAL

We saw one arrive last night.

IMOGEN

Did you speak to him?

CADWAL

We watched him, how he turned again and again back to the portal, and cried, oh my lady, Jupiter keep you, do not forget me, and the like.

IMOGEN

Oh, what else did he say?

CADWAL

Just that. He wept as he went, and so we let him go.

IMOGEN

Where has he gone?

CADWAL

He went through the portal to Rome within the hour.

IMOGEN

I must follow him. Show me the way, good Cadwal.

CADWAL

Nay, I cannot. Two spies arrived from Rome this morning, so the portal to Rome is closed and guarded. War is coming. You must not go to Rome now. Stay with us. My father will be glad to receive you.

IMOGEN

You are very kind. If I were free, I would be happy to accept your offer.

CADWAL

I could show you excellent sport, and when the battle begins, we could fight side by side.

IMOGEN

I could not ask for a better comrade. But first let me make inquiries in the village, to be certain that my friend is not still here.

CADWAL

I cannot leave my post, but I can go a little ways and point you to the road. Come, brother.

IMOGEN

Many thanks for your good service.

(Exeunt Cadwal and Imogen)

Scene 2

(A public room in Cymbeline's palace in Londinium. Enter Caius Lucius and Pisanio)

CAIUS LUCIUS

Pisanius, have you spied out the number of the soldiers the king has assembled.

PISANIO

(To the audience)

Roman attendant. Again.

(To Caius Lucius)

I have. And the number of temple guards.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Then we must be on our way. The king will find it strange that we linger here still.

PISANIO

He will probably guess what we are up to.

CAIUS LUCIUS

No doubt.

PISANIO

Do you think he knows about the portals in the temple?

CAIUS LUCIUS

No. They are a close-held secret among the highest priests. He will not know until our army charges from the temple to the palace precinct. Here comes the king.

(Enter Cymbeline, Magunna, and Janella, carrying packets of cookies)

CYMBELINE

My daughter gone? Where? Left she no word? When was she last seen?

MAGUNNA

My son Cloten said she left in the night. The punishment you laid on her was too great for her to bear patiently.

CYMBELINE

Where did she go?

MAGUNNA

Fear not, dear lord. Cloten has gone after her. He will bring her back.

CYMBELINE

And yet I do fear.

CAIUS LUCIUS

King Cymbeline, we lingered only to take our leave of you.

CYMBELINE
(Aside)

You lingered here to count our troops. No matter.

The ambassador is welcome to stay as long as he cares to.

CAIUS LUCIUS

We will but stay long enough to offer prayers in your Temple of Jupiter, and then we will be gone

CYMBELINE
(Aside)

Very suddenly.

We will meet again, Caius Lucius, when our sacrifice to the gods for our differences will be offered in blood.

CAIUS LUCIUS

You have only to pay the tribute to avert that calamity.

MAGUNNA

No. No tribute. Our silver stays where it is.

So be it.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Yet take this to stay your hunger on the way. It is a specialty of our kitchens.

MAGUNNA

(Magunna takes the packets from Janella, and gives one of them to Caius Lucius)

Cookies? I didn't know Britain had cookies.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Oatmeal. With raisins.

MAGUNNA

What other kind is there? Our thanks, good Queen. King Cymbeline, farewell.

CAIUS LUCIUS

You have our leave.

CYMBELINE

Poor Milford Haven.

(Aside)

(Exit Caius Lucius. Pisanio follows, then turns around and comes back.)

Let us gather all the men that can be raised, and make our way to Milford Haven, there to hold the portal, and Britain.

I cannot stay to seek my daughter. I can only pray that she keeps safe. We will look for her again when the war is won.

MAGUNNA

Go, dear king. I will command in your absence, and see that all is prepared for your safe and swift return. Farewell.

(Exeunt Cymbeline, Pisanio, and Janella)

My son is safe away. Imogen is fled. Leonatus is banished. Belarius is long gone. One by one my enemies have been scattered. Now, all that is left is me. Me, in charge of the whole kingdom. At last! I knew from my earliest days that I was born to rule.

(She takes a cookies and nibbles it absently)

What else could I do but pursue my destiny. I had no choice. Those that stood in my way had to be disposed of. But now, I am in charge.

Now, let's see. What shall I do first?

MAGUNNA (cont.)
(She looks at the mostly-eaten cookie)

Oh, no. Oh no. Janella? Janella!

(Exit Magunna)

Scene 3

(The hillside in Dyffed above Milford Haven.
Enter Cloten and Iachomo)

CLOTEN

When I am king, my temple priests will find themselves cleaning those privies every day. With their bare hands. What a stench.

IACHOMO

You are not meant to fall down in them.

CLOTEN

You were not meant to trip me!

IACHOMO

I'm sorry, my lord.

CLOTEN

You will be. Now where is Imogen? Shouldn't she be here? I can't wait to capture her. Stolen from the palace, away from all her attendants. I'll teach her to despise me.

IACHOMO

You mean, you wish to teach her *not* to despise you.

CLOTEN

I'll teach her whatever I like.

IACHOMO

Yes, my lord.

CLOTEN

Where is she? She should be right here.

IACHOMO

If she has followed Leonatus, she may have gone all the way to Rome by now.

CLOTEN

Where is the portal to Rome, then?

IACHOMO

Near the harbor, so said the priest.

CLOTEN

There are a lot of people down there. With spears. Milling about.

(Beat)

You go down and find the portal. I'll wait here and – guard our retreat.

IACHOMO

They're just some local tribesmen.

CLOTEN

Do as I tell you.

IACHOMO

Yes, my lord.

(Exit Iachomo)

CLOTEN

Imogen? Imogen! Oh, wait till I find you. I will show you who your master is. Do you think I haven't heard you little asides, your comments. When I finish with you, you're going to tell everyone that you're in love with me. You love my courage, my strength at arms, my fashion sense. When I arrive, wherever you are, you will run to me, and beg me to make love to you. In front of everyone! Imogen?

(Enter Cadwal)

CADWAL

Now who is this? Another gentleman of the king's court?

Hail, brother.

CLOTEN

What? Who are you to speak to me?

CADWAL

A soldier of the king. A captain in the shore guard. Did you come through the portal, from Londinium?

CLOTEN

You should not speak to me unless I speak to you first. Don't you have any manners? Of course not. This is the land of the wild men.

CADWAL

It is my duty to ask you to state your business. This is my post.

CLOTEN

Wild men don't have posts. But I will ask you – have you seen a girl? She would have come through the portal some hours ago.

CADWAL

A girl?

CLOTEN

She has disobeyed her father, and her soon-to-be husband. She is going to be punished, and taught a lesson, and I am going to do the honors. When I finish with her, she will be obedient, she will hold her head like this, or I will punish her again.

CADWAL

Who is this unfortunate girl?

CLOTEN

The princess Imogen, my intended bride.

CADWAL

The princess Imogen?

CLOTEN

She will be my handmaiden, all her days.

CADWAL

I cannot let you use her so.

CLOTEN

What?

CADWAL

I have sworn myself her servant. Or, her servant is my sworn brother, so I must defend her as he would. You will not abuse the Princess Imogen.

(He draws his sword)

CLOTEN

You? Do you know who I am?

CADWAL

Were you the King's own son, still, I must defend the princess.

CLOTEN

Well, if you want to die today, I will oblige you. I'll have you know I am the best swordsman in Britain.

(He draws his sword)

CADWAL

I have long wanted to meet you.

(Cloten attacks. Cadwal blocks his blow and kills him.)

You're the best swordsman in Britain? If I'd known that was all you had, I'd have gone easier.

(Enter Belarius)

BELARIUS

Cadwal, my son, it is time to leave this post. The Roman troops have been sighted within the portal. They are coming.

CADWAL

I was about to light the signal fire. Look there, father.

BELARIUS

Is it ships? My old eyes can't quite make them out.

CADWAL

Roman ships. Just as you predicted. A dozen of them, and more coming after.

BELARIUS

I see them now. Under sail and under oar. We have time. Cadwal, go and command the catapults. Sink the ships before they land on Dyffed's soil.

CADWAL

My place is before the portal, father. It is you who designed the catapults and trained the men who aim them best. While I have trained with both the Demetae and the Silures's spear men.

BELARIUS

It does not matter if I fall in this war. The catapults will not be taken if we can hold the portal.

CADWAL

We will need every man at the portal. And the catapults must be ready to turn if the Romans break through. That is your position, father. I must go to mine.

BELARIUS

I only would that yours was not the chancier place.

CADWAL

For what have you trained me, if not to die in the service of the king?

BELARIUS

Oh no, my boy. I trained you to *live* in the service of the king. And that you must do.

(Sees Cloten)

What's this?

CADWAL

He came through the portal just now. He told me he sought the princess Imogen, and meant to do her harm. I told him I would not let him.

BELARIUS

It is the custom in these parts to sacrifice to the gods before going to war, some pig, or cur no one wants. Let him serve.

CADWAL
(To Cloten's corpse)

Go to the gods. Tell them what you said, and what I did.

BELARIUS
Come. We must take our places. You have been the best son a man could ask for.

CADWAL
And you, my honored father. Go well.

BELARIUS
Stay well.

(Exeunt, dragging Cloten's corpse.)

Scene 4

(A room in Cymbeline's palace in Londinium.
Enter Queen Magunna)

MAGUNNA
I have a tingling in my thumb. That can't be right. Is my eye swollen? How many drops did I put in those cookies? Was it seventeen? Or seven? There's only a difference of one, so what difference could it make, after all. Uh! My guts. I'm the queen, I shouldn't even have guts anymore. Agh!

I wish now I had been kinder to the king. . . . No I don't.

Oh, where is my little temple slave, Janella? She could give me a potion, a medicine. Not to sleep. Only to stop being afraid to sleep. Is my tongue swelling? Is it turning black? No, it can't be. It's too soon.

Janella?

(Exit)

Act V
Scene 1

(A hillside in Dyffed, above the village of Milford Haven. Enter Leonatus.)

LEONATUS

Belarius? My lord? General Belarius?

I can't be lost. Milford Haven is below. The portal is up there. Somewhere. I may have been misdirected. Or misinformed? Lord Belarius!

I stayed to drink one cup, and pour a libation to the gods for my beautiful Imogen. And all the wild men, tribesmen from these hills, were calling on my father. Master of catapults. Master of armies. Here, in these hills, general over these tribes. Defending the portal in Milford Haven from the might of Rome. Oh blessed Milford to be a haven for Belarius. My father. Here.

They said I would find him on this hillside, with his captain. Belarius? My lord?

I have never seen him, my father. How will he know me? What will he think of me?

Oh, Jupiter, Father of the gods. The troops below prepare for battle, so you must be near. Let me prove myself worthy to my father. Keep him safe.

(Enter Iachomo)

IACHOMO

Leonatus. Traitor. Outlaw.

(Iachomo draws his sword.)

LEONATUS

Iachomo? What are you doing here?

IACHOMO

Looking for you.

LEONATUS

And your master, Lord Cloten?

IACHOMO

He is looking for the princess Imogen.

LEONATUS

You may think he has the easier job.

IACHOMO

No, I don't.

Are you here to kill me?
LEONATUS

I'm supposed to try.
IACHOMO

Did the king send you?
LEONATUS

No, oh no.
IACHOMO

Then it's Cloten? You're going to kill me for Cloten?
LEONATUS

I think he would rather that he killed you.
IACHOMO

But you're going to have to help him.
LEONATUS

Can I think about this?
IACHOMO

Would you mind if I wait over there?
LEONATUS

No, no, go ahead.
IACHOMO

(Leonatus exits)

If I kill Leonatus, it will please my master. Especially if he manages to convince himself that he was here all the time, and that he, somehow, struck the mortal blow.

But to kill Leonatus will upset the princess Imogen. And that I would rather not.

If I think about it a little longer, Leonatus will be quite out of sight. And then – oh, what's this? My master? Oh, Lord Cloten, you must have offended the wrong man at last.

(Iachomo backs away and exits)

(Enter Belarius, holding Cloten's head on a spear. He plants it so it stands by itself.)

BELARIUS

Stand thou there, thou gory sacrifice, peering over the battlefield with horrid glare of death. Jupiter! A gift for you, the first fruits of the coming battle, food for crows.

BELARIUS (cont.)

I have done all I can with the hill men manning the catapults. I must join the ranks before the portal. I cannot leave Cadwal in the place of danger alone. I swore to all the gods protect his life, even at the cost of my own. This oath, I will not break.

Who's there? Come out. I can hear you. Were you spying on me, boy? You don't look like a Roman.

(Enter Imogen, still dressed as a man)

IMOGEN

No, good sir. I was seeking an old friend, and not finding him, I came back this way to find a new friend.

Oh, what a horrid sight is this.

BELARIUS

The raven's breakfast, first fruits of the battlefield.

IMOGEN

He was not a Roman.

BELARIUS

No. He offered some slight to the Princess Imogen.

IMOGEN

That he did.

BELARIUS

So he was sacrificed to the gods.

IMOGEN

He is as revolting a sight now as his words and deeds often showed him to be. Hang there, Cloten, in your true form now.

BELARIUS

But came you from the portal, from Londinium?

IMOGEN

Earlier today.

BELARIUS

Tell me, have you seen Royal Cymbeline?

IMOGEN

Only yesterday.

BELARIUS

How looked he? Was he well?

IMOGEN

He is sad, sir, and full of troubles. Otherwise he is well.

BELARIUS

Oh, Jupiter, would that I could take his troubles from him. But we may yet take one from him, if the battle goes as planned. Yet what battle ever went as planned.

IMOGEN

Are you going to join the soldiers below defending the portal? May I go with you?

BELARIUS

One of the king's gentlemen, are you?

IMOGEN

A servant of the princess Imogen, in a manner of speaking.

BELARIUS

Trained in arms?

IMOGEN

Of course.

BELARIUS

You are most welcome.

(Holds out his hand, stops.)

What's this?

(Grasps Leonatus's arm ring)

IMOGEN

That's mine.

BELARIUS

Is it yours in truth? When I left him, I gave it to my son.

IMOGEN

Your son? Leonatus?

BELARIUS

Leonatus is my son.

IMOGEN

Then you are Belarius.

BELARIUS

I am. My son!

(Starts to embrace Imogen. She stops him.)

IMOGEN

I am, not so much your son. More, I am your daughter.

BELARIUS

My – daughter? Ah. Indeed. My daughter. Well. Times change. I can accept that. But trained in arms, you say? And still, my son.

(Starts to embrace her)

IMOGEN

Not so much your son, but married to your son. He gave me this. Leonatus.

BELARIUS

You, young man. Married to my son, you say? Married to him? Before Jupiter, in the temple?

IMOGEN

Only yesterday.

BELARIUS

Married to my son. Well. So – it seems I have two sons now. Two sons instead of one. Yes. Very good. I'm happy. Very very happy. My son is married. He is well? He is a good man?

IMOGEN

Leonatus is the best of men. He is beautiful, kind, well-spoken, he is good.

BELARIUS

And trained in arms?

IMOGEN

He has been an able soldier for the king.

BELARIUS

I am very glad to hear it. But he is not here? Not with you?

IMOGEN

The king has banished him, for marrying me.

BELARIUS

For marrying you? Why, that's – that's very wrong. He should support this marriage! I support this marriage. I do. Where has he gone, my son?

IMOGEN

He went to Rome to seek you. The best report was that he would find you there. And now the portal is closed, and we are at war.

BELARIUS

He came by here and I did not see him? But he is well, you say.

IMOGEN

Very well. How is it, sir, that you are not in Rome?

BELARIUS

Banished though I am, I am still King Cymbeline's man. When I came here and found the portal from Rome wholly unguarded, it seemed I could best serve my king by defending Londinium at this place. You see those men below, gathered before that cave at the edge of the beach? Those are the Demetae, and the Silures, wild tribes of Dyffed. Over many weeks of talks, they agreed to ally themselves with Britain, and defend this place against the Romans.

IMOGEN

We will not fight alone, then. You have saved us. You have saved Britain.

BELARIUS

It's not saved yet. It will take every man to hold the portal, and turn the Romans back. Will you come? My son?

IMOGEN

With all my heart, dear father.

(Starts to embrace him, but Belarius offers a hearty handshake instead.)

(Enter Cadwal)

CADWAL

Father! What do you here? The Romans are coming, why are you not on the headland with the catapults?

BELARIUS

The catapults are prepared. The men there have better eyes than mine. My place is before the portal, with you.

CADWAL

Then General, lead on. Fideles! Well met. Father, this is the youth I told you of. We are sworn brothers.

IMOGEN

This is your son?

BELARIUS

He is in some sense my son. Cadwal, you speak truer than you knew. I told you that I left a son in the King's care when I was banished. This man is married to my son Leonatus.

CADWAL

Married? To your son? Well. They do things differently at court, indeed. Married?

IMOGEN

These two days.

CADWAL

Then I'll be bold and ask, will you marry me too? I have never liked a man so well.

BELARIUS

Now, son. It is possible to take things too far.

CADWAL

How so? When love calls, must we not answer?

BELARIUS

But wait a little while. Our lives hang on the threads of fate. Let us see what befalls us first in the wars.

CADWAL

Onward, then. If I am not to die, then I will hold out hope for a happiness I never dreamed of, when the battle is concluded, and the Romans are destroyed.

BELARIUS

Come then, for the King, and down with Rome!

IMOGEN

I may have found my brother now in truth. Oh, Jupiter, preserve him and my father, both my fathers, so we may all join hands again hereafter.

(Exeunt omnes.)

Scene 2

(The hillside in Dyffed below the portal from Londinium. Enter Caius Lucius, with Pisanio, and Roman Soldiers [played by Cloten and Magunna])

CAIUS LUCIUS

Like some ancient magician, I have summoned two armies from Rome, and there, they come. See where our ships line the sea as far as the horizon. One army arrives with them, and the other, there below, mills about the portal from Rome. Dressed in skins. Are those our new troops from far flung Cappadocia? They are not in uniform.

PISANIO

I don't think those are our troops, general.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Local tribesmen. So many of them. Between us and the portal.

PISANIO

What should we do, general?

CAIUS LUCIUS

This is not a problem. Only a setback. Soon our ships will arrive and those wild men will flee. If there's one thing we Romans have learned, tribal armies have no discipline. They won't stay.

PISANIO

They're dressing in ranks before the portal.

CAIUS LUCIUS

It's just a random regrouping. They'll start playing a game of attack ball in a moment. Well, it doesn't matter. Our ships will rout them. We'll wait here. Pass out those cookies that the queen gave us. We wouldn't want those to fall into enemy hands, eh, men?

(They all eat cookies)

This is just a setback. We will win. Rome always wins.

PISANIO

General? What is that? Flying toward the foremost ship?

CAIUS LUCIUS

A giant rock? Catapults! Catapults, aiming at my ships? Attack! Now!

PISANIO

There are dozens of them. What can we do? Besides get killed.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Well, they can't aim the things. Barbarians don't study trigonometry.

PISANIO & ROMAN SOLDIERS

Oh!

CAIUS LUCIUS

My trireme, split apart.

ROMAN SOLDIER

There's another –

PISANIO

A hit. And another.

ROMAN SOLDIERS

Oh!

PISANIO

They're turning.

ROMAN SOLDIER

The ships are turning back. Are they allowed to do that?

CAIUS LUCIUS

No! Come back here! Bring back my army! Pisanio! Signal them! Do something!

PISANIO

I think there's something in these cookies.

(He staggers)

CAIUS LUCIUS

No! Come back and fight like Romans!

(Enter Cymbeline, attended by Janella.)

CYMBELINE

Come! Together we will hold the portal as long as we may stand. It is the best service we can do for Britain. Oh, Jupiter, save my country now.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Look there! We are saved!

Stand, Cymbeline, put up your arms. You are now the prisoner of Rome!

(Enter Leonatus)

LEONATUS

Not while Leonatus lives! To my death I will defend my king.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Put up your swords, gentlemen. Rome treats her prisoners well.

(Enter Iachomo)

IACHOMO

Rome murders her prisoners when it suits her, especially the great ones. Leonatus, may I fight beside you to defend the king?

LEONATUS

With all my heart, Iachomo.

CAIUS LUCIUS

For Rome!

ROMAN SOLDIERS

For Rome!

PISANIO

Okay!

(The Romans, staggering under the effect of the

sleeping potion in the cookies, attack. Leonatus and Iachomo defend Cymbeline. Janella and Cymbeline fight back as well. Just when all is lost:)

(Enter Belarius, followed by Imogen, and Cadwal)

The king! Save the king!

BELARIUS

(He kills Pisanio)

I knew it.

PISANIO

The king!

CADWAL

The king!

IMOGEN

Save the king!

BELARIUS

(The Roman Soldiers, staggering, run away. Exeunt. Caius Lucius fights the effect of the cookies.)

Barbarians, throw down your arms, and learn the mercy of Rome.

CAIUS LUCIUS

Caius Lucius, you are trespassing on our land. Did we not give you leave to go? We do so again and say, go, and return no more.

CYMBELINE

(Caius slumps)

I have much more to say. Rome . . . forever.

CAIUS LUCIUS

(Caius Lucius falls unconscious.)

Is he dead?

CYMBELINE

He only sleeps, my king.

JANELLA

(Iachomo checks Pisanio)

IACHOMO

This one is dead.

CYMBELINE

Now. What have we here?

BELARIUS

My king, pardon your servant Belarius, long in exile from you. Whatever crimes I may have committed against you, that moved you to banish me, I repent them all. Forgive me.

CYMBELINE

Belarius?

CADWAL

Oh, king, before you pass judgment on your servant, look about you. The armies of Rome are held at the portal by armies that General Belarius brought into your service. The catapults he built and the men he trained to use them have sunk eight Roman ships, and harry the ones that flee. All this, Belarius did in your service, in his exile.

CYMBELINE

Belarius, most able of all my soldiers and counselors, I doubt it not.

BELARIUS

Forgive me.

CYMBELINE

Your crime I cannot forgive, or pardon. A betrayal too base, too bad.

BELARIUS

But what did I do that so offended you? I was never told.

CYMBELINE

You tried to force the queen.

BELARIUS

What? I did not.

CYMBELINE

She came to me with scratches on her face, and told me how your forced your way into her presence, into her very room.

BELARIUS

Lord king, upon my soul, that did not happen. The queen summoned me to her rooms. Imagine my confusion when I saw she was alone. She told me I must support your adoption of her son, Cloten, or she would be avenged on me. When I said I would not, she scratched her face herself, and fled. My king, think. Why would I scratch a woman's face?

CYMBELINE

She gave me medicine. I could never think clearly. But now, now, I begin to see.

JANELLA

My king, I am a temple slave, long trained in medicines, newly come to the queen's service. The elixir that she commanded of me was not meant as a medicine. And lately she ordered me to brew for her poisons.

CYMBELINE

She must answer. She must be questioned. She must . . .

JANELLA

My lord, the queen is dead of poison by her own hand. She cannot answer you.

CYMBELINE

She . . .

IMOGEN

Dear father, I pray you, look again upon my –

CYMBELINE

Who are you, young gentleman?

IMOGEN

Father, it's me. Imogen.

LEONATUS

Imogen? Imogen!

(He embraces her)

This is Imogen. What are you doing here?

IMOGEN

I came looking for you.

LEONATUS

And you found me. Let us never be parted again.

IMOGEN

No. Father –

CYMBELINE

Imogen? My daughter? Imogen!

(He embraces her)

CADWAL

Oh, Imogen! I see it now. That's the Princess Imogen.

(Imogen embraces Cadwal)

CADWAL

Oh!

BELARIUS

My king, if you cannot believe me, or forgive me, I pray you will at least hear me. A wrong I have done you, but not by my purpose. When you banished me, I came so far, to Milford Haven. But then I bethought me of your wrath, and the queen's wrath, and I returned in secret. I bribed a member of the queen's household to bring to me my son. I was afraid that your anger, or the queen's, would fall upon my boy, my Leonatus. The handmaid brought a child to me in dead of night, wrapped in a blanket. I brought him this far and laid him to sleep. In the morning I found she had not given me my son, but yours. I think at the direction of the queen. I did not dare go back. I could not bring my precious charge into danger, nor abandon him and chance my fate alone. I have stayed here, and served you as best I could. And raised your son for you, as though I was his father.

This is Cadwal. Your son.

CYMBELINE

Cadwal. My son.

CADWAL

Your son.

IMOGEN

And my brother.

CADWAL

My brother. My very brother. I knew it.

CYMBELINE

I should not have been so angry. But I sent for you. To hear your side, and you did not come.

BELARIUS

I was told you had signed a warrant for my banishment, upon pain of death. I was told you would not hear me.

CYMBELINE

I thought you did not come because you had betrayed me in truth.

BELARIUS

I have never betrayed you.

CYMBELINE

I never thought you could, nor would. But you did not come. Oh, Belarius, forgive me.

BELARIUS

With all my heart.

And this is my son. Cadwal.

CYMBELINE

My king. My father.

CADWAL

I prayed that you lived. I forgot to pray that you had grown into so fine a man. Cadwal.

CYMBELINE

And this – this is my son? My Leonatus?

BELARIUS

Father.

LEONATUS

Leonatus, you have proved your worth long since. I could ask for no better man, to marry with my daughter. Now that my son . . . my son.

CYMBELINE

My lord Prince Cadwal, let me give you what is rightfully yours.

LEONATUS

(Takes off the ring, and gives it to Cadwal.
Cymbeline takes it from him, puts it on Cadwal's
finger)

By this be it known by this you are our acknowledged son, and heir.

CYMBELINE

I am all amazed. I have vowed to all the gods to serve you, my king. And so I ever shall.

CADWAL

You shall serve me, and Britain. Oh, my son. My friend. My daughter. My son.

CYMBELINE

(Clap of thunder. Music. Jupiter descends upon an
eagle, and throws another thunderbolt for good
measure. Everyone falls to their knees, amazed.)

(Caius Lucius rouses.)

Great Jupiter! Father of the gods! You have heard Rome's prayers! Smite these saucy enemies of Rome – teach them to pay the tribute that they owe –

CAIUS LUCIUS

(Jupiter makes a sign, and Caius Lucius stops.)

Caius Lucius. Go back to Rome.

JUPITER

(Caius Lucius exits.)

(Jupiter goes to the spear with Cloten's head on it and takes it.)

Very good. Thanks.

JANELLA

Great Jupiter, father of the gods, what brings you here when all has been resolved? The evil queen is dead, her son as well, the king is saved, the Romans overcome, and all who were lost and banished are found, reunited and befriended once again.

JUPITER

Think you, Janella, that we gods listen only to the prayers of the great? Cymbeline, you are blessed by your friend's return. But if you had not banished him, he would not have been here, to save your kingdom. Be content. He has raised for you a fair and mighty son, who will carry on in fame and honor, served ably by his sister and brother. But this is not all of the kingdom. Iachomo.

IACHOMO

Oh, god.

JUPITER

You prayed for a better man to serve. I give you to Cadwal, who will teach you honor, and justice. And you will not mock him.

IACHOMO

No.

JUPITER

Except when he needs it.

Janella. Rise. You are no longer a temple slave. You are a priestess of medicines, and will teach others to dispense them wisely. It is a needed skill, for which you will be honored all your days.

The queen and her son are with the shades in the underworld. They have a great journey to make, before they see the light again. And that is all. Except one thing.

Pisanio. Rise up, and stand. You shall not attend another moment here in Britain. My cup-bearer, Ganymede, is gone now to the heavens. You can see him in the night, dancing among the stars. You shall come with me to Mount Olympus, and serve us in the court of the gods.

(Hands him the spear with Cloten's head)

Be good, and blessed be you all.

(Thunderbolt. Jupiter departs. Exit.)

(Pisanio goes to follow him.)

PISANIO

And still, an attendant.

(Music. He dances off. Exit.)

CYMBELINE

Let us go to the temple and tell what we have seen.

BELARIUS

But first, my king, let us go and greet the tribes of the Silures and Demetae, your liege men and servants, who have fought for you this day.

CYMBELINE

Let us feast, and thank our allies, and tell our tales. And we will raise a temple here in Milford Haven to mark the place. And send the prisoners to Londinium to clean the privies. Belarius. Cadwal. Let us go together.

IMOGEN

Leonatus. Let us go together.

LEONATUS

Always.

CADWAL

Come, Iachomo.

(Exeunt omnes.)

The End

Cymbeline Simplified! or, *The Queen's Cookies* #1.3

by Carol Wolf

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Flying O Ranch