

# **Pericles**

**by William Shakespeare**

Presented by Paul W. Collins

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Contact: [paul@wsrightnow.com](mailto:paul@wsrightnow.com)

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## Chapter One

### A Riddle's Reward

Out of the darkness, the spirit of a sprightly old Englishman comes into view. Eyes twinkling, he ambles up to the front of the platform. His ink-stained fingers and plain coat betoken the character of a humble man. Like his good friend Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower is a story writer—well beloved, and among the best.

The author rubs his knobby hands together, eager to share tall tales—recounted in his own colorful and vibrant way—derived from those told by predecessors, especially the Greeks poets of many centuries past.

“To sing a song that of old was sung, from ashes ancient Gower is come, assuming man’s infirmities, to glad your ear and please your eyes!

“It hath been sung at festivals, for embers’ eves and holy-days; and lords and ladies in their lives have read it for restoratives. The purpose is to show men *glorious—et bonum quo antiquius, eo melius!*”—and the older a good thing, the better, “if you, born in these latter times, when wit’s more ripe, accept my rhymes.

“So that hearing an old man sing may to Your Worships *pleasure* bring, I *life* would wish—and that I might exude it for you like *taper-light!*”

He steps to the right, sweeping his hand back toward the stage setting, dimly limned behind him—a royal palace. “This, *Antioch*, then; Antiochus the Great built up this city for his chiefest seat, the fairest in all Syria!

“I’ll tell you what mine authors say: this king unto him took a fere,”—a wife, “who died and left a female heir, buxom, blithe, and fair of face, as if heaven lent her all its grace!”

His clear-eyed gaze is stern. “For whom the father *liking* took—and her to *incest* did provoke! Bad child—worse *father*, to entice his own to evil should be done by none!”

The frown deepens. “But by custom,” he adds, “what they did begin, was, with long use, accounted no sin.”

The poet paces, hands clasped behind his back. “The beauty of this shameful dame drew many princes hither to frame her in marriage-pleasures mellow—or as bedmate and play fellow!

“Which to prevent he made a law, to hold her quiet and men in awe, that whoso asked her for his wife—a *riddle* not told, lost his *life!*”

“So for her many a wight did try, as yon grim looks do justify,” he says, nodding toward a row of men’s severed heads—seven, each impaled on a tall, gore-stained pike.

“What now ensues: ’fore the judgment of your eye I bring my cause—and those who best can testify...”

King Antiochus walks slowly across the dark, stone-paved courtyard, passing the grisly array. Flickering torchlight seems to animate the sagging faces: purpled eyelids hood black sockets’ undying stare; each mouth forms a hollow moan of endless dread.

The king addresses the tall, handsome visitor: “Young prince of Tyre, you have at large received the *danger* of the task you undertake?”

“I have, Antiochus,” says Pericles. “And, with a soul emboldened by the glory of her praise, think death no hazard in this enterprise!”

The king calls to an attendant at the back. “Bring in our *daughter!*—clothed like a bride for the embracements of even *Jove himself!*”

“—at whose conception tall *Lucina!*”—goddess of childbirth; an aspect of the virgin deity Diana—“reigned!

“—and Nature this dowry gave to glad her presence: the senate-house of planets all did sit, to knit in her their best perfections!”

Court musicians play a sweet refrain as the beautiful princess glides to her father’s side.

Pericles smiles, watching her. *See where she comes, appavelled like the spring, to grace her subjects! And her thoughts, the kind of every virtue, give renown to men!—her face the book of praises, where is read nothing but special pleasures!—as if from thence sorrow were ever razed, and testy wrath could never be her wild companion!*

*You gods that made me man, and hold sway in love—who have inflamèd desire in my breast to taste the fruit of yon celestial tree, or die in the adventure—as I am son and servant to your will, be my help to compass such a boundless happiness!*

The king begins. “Prince Pericles,—”

“—who would be *son-in-law* to great Antiochus!”

“—before thee stands this fair *Hesperides*, with golden fruit!—but dangerous to be touched, for deadly *dragons* are here to affright thee *hard!*

“Her face, like heaven, enticeth thee to view her boundless glory,” he says, watching the visiting young king coldly, “which deserving must gain.

“And *without* which, because thine eye presumes to reach, *all thy whole heap* must die. Yon sometimes-famous princes, like thyself, drawn by report, adventurous by desire, *tell* thee that, with speechless tongues and semblance pale, without covering save yon field of stars!” They remain unburied.

As the sovereign strides to the row of dead suitors’ heads, his glare implies that he speaks as much to prophesy as to warn. “Here they stand—martyrs slain in Cupid’s wars—and with dead cheeks advise thee to desist from going into the net of *Death*—whom none resists!”

But the courtiers avoid looking at the pallid faces, once bright and hopeful, and the horrid wounds that will never bruise or heal.

Pericles, though, is undaunted. “Antiochus, I *thank* thee, who hath, by those fearful objects, taught my frail mortality to know itself, and to prepare this body, like to them, for what I must come to. Death brought to mind should belike do as a *mirror*: tell us life’s but *breath*—to *trust* it, error.

“I’ll make *my* will, then, not as *sick* men do—who know the *world*, but find woe in seeking *heaven*—and grasp not at *earthly* toys, as erst they did. Thus I’ll bequeath as every prince *should* do: a happy peace to you and all good men, my riches to the earth from whence they came.

“And my fire of unspotted *love to you!*” he tells the princess. “Ready for the way of life or death, I await the sharpest blows, Antiochus!”

The king’s thin smile is smug. *Scorning advice, read the conclusion then—which, ruled but not expounded, is decreed: as did these before thee, thou thyself shalt bleed!*

His daughter is offering Pericles a seducing smile. “Having thus said, yet mayst thou prove prosperous! Of all assayed yet, I wish *thee* happiness!” she says coyly.

Pericles steps forward. “Like a bold champion, I assume the lists,”—enter the place for a trial in chivalry, “asking no advice, nor any other thought but *faithfulness* and *courage!*”

The lady comes to hand him a scroll. He unfurls it, and silently reads the riddle:

*I am no viper; yet I feed  
On Mother’s flesh, which did me breed.  
I sought a husband, in which labour  
I found that kindness in a father.  
He’s father, son, and husband mild;  
I, another wife, and yet his child.  
How this may be, even yet, for two—  
If you will live, resolve it you!*

“*Sharp physic* is the last!” says Pericles; death cures all.

But then, looking at the haughty young woman and the decadent old man, he suddenly understands the riddle’s implication. *O you Powers that give heaven countless eyes, viewing*

*men's acts why cloud you not their sights perpetually, if this be true which makes me pale to read it?*

He speaks so softly that only the daughter can hear. "Fair glass of *Delight*,"—her mirror, "I lovèd you," he tells her, "and could still, were not thy glorious casket stored with ill!

"But I must tell you how my thoughts revolt!—for he's no man for whom perfection waits that, knowing *sin* within, will touch so much as the *gates*."

"You are a *fair viol*—your senses the strings that, fingered to make Man's *lawful* music, would draw *Heaven* down, and all the gods to hearken! But being played upon before your time, Hell alone danceth to so harsh a chime!

"In good sooth, *I care not for you*."

Antiochus can see that she is frowning. "Prince Pericles, *touch not, upon thy life!*" he cries, although the young king has not moved, "for that's an article within our law as dangerous as the rest!

"Your time's expired! Either expound *now*," he demands, "or *receive your sentence!*"

The courtiers watch, wide-eyed, as Pericles steps fearlessly toward him—but again the youth speaks very quietly. "Great king, few love to *hear* the sins they love to act. 'Twould abraid yourself too near for me to *tell* it!

"For Vice, like the wandering wind, *blows dust* in others' eyes to spare itself. But *reported*, the end withal is bought thus dear: the breath is *gone!*—and sore eyes see clear to *stop* the air that would hurt them!

"The blind *mole* casts copèd hills toward heaven, to tell that earth is wronged by man's oppression—and the poor vermin doth die for't! He who has a book of *all* that monarchs do is more secure to keep it *shut* than shown."

Pericles moves even closer: "Kings are *earthen* gods, voicing as *law* their *will*—if *Jove* do stray, who dare say that *he* doth ill?"

"It is enough *you* know." *And this is fit*, he thinks. *Bad, being known, fosters worse to smother it!*

"All love the womb that their first being bred—so give my *tongue* like leave to love my *head!*"

*By Heaven, I would that I had thy head!* thinks Antiochus, well understanding the threat of exposure: courtiers' furtive whispers could quickly turn to angry shouts. *He has found the meaning! But I will gloze with him.* He smiles. "Young Prince of Tyre," he says, loudly enough for all to hear, "though by the *tenor* of our strict edict, in your exposition's misinterpreting we might proceed to *cancel your days*—but *hope*, proceeding from such an one as your fair self, doth turn us otherwise!

"Forty days longer we do *respite* you—if by which time our secret be undone, this mercy shows: we'll joy in such a *son!*

"And until then your entertaining shall be as doth befit our *honour* and your *worth!*"

The court of Antioch buzzes with surprise at the cruel king's new magnanimity.

But Pericles perceives the king's cynical irony: Antiochus will act *dishonorably* against a royal *threat*: his hospitality will soon become lethal. As the courtiers drift away, the visitor muses. *How courtesy would seem to cover sin, when what is done is like an hypocrite, which is good in nothing but in sight!*

*If thou wert true whom I interpret false, then it were certain you were not so bad as with foul incest to abuse your soul!* He watches as Antiochus and his daughter embrace. *There now!—in your unseemly claspings with your child, you're both father and son-in-law—with pleasure fit for husband, not father!—and she's an eater of her mother's flesh, by the defiling of her parents' bed!*

*And both like serpents are, who though they feed on sweetest flowers, yet poison breed!*

He looks around, and signals for his attendants to come to him.

*Antioch, farewell! For wisdom sees: those men not blushing in actions blacker than night will shun no course to keep them from the light! One sin, I know, another doth provoke—murder's as near lust as flame to smoke! Poison and treachery are the hands of shame—aye, and its shields, to put off the blame!*

He will not sleep here tonight. *Then, lest my crest be copped to keep you clear, by flight I'll shun the danger which now I fear!*

He and his men hurry to claim their horses, and soon they are galloping down the road south—away from Antiochus' hard tower, thrusting up in the dark.

The king sits alone, and seethes.

*He hath found the meaning!—for which we mean to have his head! He must not live to trumpet forth my infamy, nor tell the world Antiochus doth sin in such a loathèd manner!—and therefore instantly this prince must die! For by his fall must my honour be kept high.*

He hears footsteps in the hall. “Who attends us there?”

The trusted lieutenant he has summoned enters the room. “Doth Your Highness call?”

“Thaliard, you are of our chamber, and our mind takes private actions in part by your secrecy—and for your faithfulness we will *advance* you.” He rises and goes to a table. “Thaliard, behold: here's poison, and here's gold; we hate the Prince of Tyre, and thou must *kill* him!

“It fits thee not to ask the reason why—because *we bid it!* Say: is it *done?*”

“My lord, 'tis done.”

“Enough.” Antiochus wants no delay. “Let your breath cool yourself in *telling of your haste!*”

Just then a young messenger comes to the king from the front gates' guards. “My lord, Pericles is fled!” Seeing the king's face redden, the boy bows quickly and runs.

“As thou wilt live, fly after!” growls Antiochus. “And like an arrow shot by a well experienced archer, that *hits* the mark his eye doth level at, ne'er *return* unless to say, ‘*Prince Pericles is dead!*’”

Thaliard bows. “My lord, if I can get him within my purposed length, I'll make him sure enough!”—safely silent in death. “So, farewell to Your Highness,” he says, hurrying away.

“Thaliard, *adieu,*” mutters Antiochus.

He looks down, clenching both fists. *Till Pericles be dead, my heart can lend no succor to my head!*

**T**yre, another, smaller city-based state in the vast Seleucid Empire, stands seventy-five leagues to the south of Antioch on the eastern shore of the blue Aegean, where it has thrived for well over a thousand years.

In the throne room of his opulent palace, Pericles wants to be alone—to think. “Let none disturb us,” he tells the lords of his court as they file out.

*Why should this change of thoughts—their sad companion, dull-eyed melancholy—be my so-usèd guest as not an hour in the day's glorious walk—nor peaceful night, the tomb where grief should sleep—can breed me any quiet?*

*Here pleasures court mine eye, but my eyes shun them!*

*The danger which I fear is at Antioch, whose aim seems far too short to hit me here. Yet no pleasure's art joys my spirit; neither doth the archer's distance comfort me!*

*Then it is thus: the passions of the mind that have their first conception of a missèd dread have, after, nourishment and life as care!—and what was first but fear of what might be done grows older now, in caring that it not be done!*

*And so with me: the great Antiochus, 'gainst whom I am too little to contend, since he's so great as can make his will his act, will think me speaking though I'm sworn to silence! Nor boots it me to say I honour him, if he suspect I may dishonour him!*

*As for what would make him blush in being shown, he'll stop the course by which it might be known! With hostile forces he'll o'erspread this land, and with the dint of war will look so huge*

*that amazement shall drive courage from this state!—our men will be vanquished ere they do resist, and subjects punished that ne'er thought offence!*

*Which care for them, not pity of my self—who want no more than do the tops of trees which shadow the roots they grow by, to protect them—makes my body to pine, and soul to languish—and banishes both before him who would punish!*

He sees Lord Helicanus, his chief advisor, ease open one of the tall double doors to slip in; but several other courtiers push through after him.

Cries an obsequious nobleman, “Joy and all comfort in your sacred breast!”

“And keep your mind, till you return to us, peaceful and comfortable!” adds another warmly.

Pericles has expressed his intention to depart—to travel from his home land on a long voyage.

“Peace, *peace!*” says Helicanus, annoyed by the others, “and give *experience* tongue!

“They do *abuse* the king who *flatter* him; for flattery is a bellows that blows upon the thing which is flattered—the *spark* to which the blast gives heat in stronger glowing, whereas reproof—obedient and in order—*benefits* kings; for as they are men, they may *err*.”

He tells the sovereign, “When *Signior Soothe*, here, does proclaim *the peace*, he flatters you—*makes war* upon your life!” The loyal statesman, forty-five, is very troubled by Pericles’ decision. “Prince, pardon me or strike me, as you please,” he says, kneeling. “I cannot be much lower than on my knees.”

Pericles waves away the others. “All leave us else. But let your cares find out what *shipping* and what *lading*’s in our haven, and then return to us.” The courtiers bow and go. They will send men to inquire at the wharves.

Pericles looks down at the kneeling nobleman. “Helicanus, thou hast *movèd* us; what seest thou in our looks?”

“An *archer*’s bow, dread lord!”

“If there *be* such darts in princes’ frowns, how durst thy tongue move *anger* to our face?”

Helicanus shrugs. “How dare the plants look up to heaven, from whence they have their nourishment?”

“Thou know’st I have the power to take thy life from thee....”

“I have ground the axe myself; do you but strike the blow.”

Pericles smiles and offers him a hand. “Rise, prithee, *rise!*” He goes to a heavy table of dark, carved pine, on which lie maps. “Set it down thou art no *flatterer!* I *thank* thee for it!—and heaven forbid that kings should let their ears hear their own faults hid!

“Fit counsellor and savant for a prince, who by thy *wisdom* makest a prince thy servant, what wouldst *thou* have me do?”

“To bear with *patience* such griefs as you *yourself* do lay *upon* yourself!”

Pericles laughs. “Thou speak’st, Helicanus, like a physician that minister’st a potion unto me that thou wouldst *tremble* to receive thyself!

“Attend me, then,” he says, having decided to reveal his reasoning. “I went to Antioch, where, as thou know’st, against the face of Death I sought the purchase of a glorious beauty, from whence my issue I might propagate—square arms to foreign princes, and bring joy to our subjects.

“Her *face* was to mine eye beyond all wonder; the *rest*—hark in thine ear—as *foul* as *incest!*

“Which once my knowledge found, the sinful father seemed not to strike, only *soothe!* But thou know’st this: ’tis time to *fear*, when *tyrants* seem to kiss! Such fear so grew in me that I *hither fled*, under the covering of a care-filled night that served as my good protector!

“And being here, I bethought me what was past—what might be *following*.”

He paces, picturing Antiochus. “How many worthy princes’ bloods were shed to keep his bed in darkness, unlaid ope?”

“I know him tyrannous—and tyrants’ fears *decrease* not, but *grow faster* by the year! And should he suspect, as no doubt he doth, that I would open it to the listening air....

“To *lop* that doubt, he’ll *fill this land with arms*, and make pretence of wrong that I have done him! Then *all*—for *mine*, if I may so call it, ‘*offence*’—must feel *war*’s blow, that spares not innocence!

“*Love* for which all—of whom thyself art one, who now reprovest me for it—“

“Alas, sir!” cries Helicanus, apologetically.

“—drew sleep out of mine eyes, blood from my cheeks, musings into my mind, with a thousand doubts how I might *stop* this tempest ere it came! But finding little comfort, and not to aggrieve them, I thought it princely charity thus to *relieve* them!”

“Well, my lord,” says Helicanus, “since you have given me leave to speak, freely I *will* speak!

“*Antiochus* you fear—and *justly* too, I think, you fear the tyrant who, either by public war or private treason, would take away your life. Therefore, my lord, *go*, travel for a while, till that his rage and anger be forgot, or till the Destinies do cut his thread of life.

“Your rule direct unto another; if to me, *light* serves not *day* more faithful than I’ll be!”

“I do not doubt *thy* faith,” says Pericles. “But should *he* wrong my liberties in my absence...?”

If Antiochus were to wage war, “We’ll mingle our *bloods* together in the earth from whence we had our being and our birth!”

Pericles nods, satisfied. “Then, Tyre, now I look from thee—and to *Tarsus* tend my travel, where I’ll hear from thee, and by those letters I’ll dispose myself.

“The care *I* had, and *have*, for subjects’ good, I lay on *thee*, whose wisdom and strength can bear it,” he assures Helicanus. “I’ll take thy *word* for faith, not ask thine oath; who shuns not to break one will surely crack both.

“In our orbs we’ll live so safe and sound that Time this truth shall evince: *thou* showed’st as a true *subject* shines, *I* as a true prince!”

—

Later that morning, a visitor stands waiting, with his attendants, in the throne room. *So, this is Tyre, and this the court*, thinks Thaliard, looking glumly around the cheerful hall. *Here must I kill King Pericles.*

*And if I do it not, I am sure to be hanged at home!*

*’Tis dangerous! Well I perceive he was a wise fellow and had good discretion, who, being bade to ask what he would of the king, desired he might know none of his secrets! Now do I see he had some reason for’t: for if a king bid a man be a villain, he’s bound by the indenture of his oath to be one!*

*Hush! Here come the lords of Tyre....*

As Helicanus approaches with old Lord Escanes and several other noblemen, he is telling them, “You shall not need, my fellow peers, further to question me about your king’s departure. His *seal* and *commission*, left in trust with me, do speak sufficiently: he’s gone *to travel*.”

Thaliard is stunned. *What?—the king gone!*

“If further yet you will be satisfied why he would depart unlicensed, as it were, by your loves, I’ll give some light unto you,” says Helicanus. “Being at Antioch,—”

*What of Antioch?* The emissary listens intently.

“—royal Antiochus, on what cause I know not, took some *displeasure* from him—at least he judgèd so. And, unsure if he had erred or sinned, to show his regret, he would correct *himself*—and so puts himself under the *shipmen*’s toil, which with each minute threatens life or death!”

Thaliard is relieved. *Well, I perceive I shall not be hanged now, although I could have been! But since he’s gone, this the king must please: he ’scapèd from the land, to perish in the seas!*

*I’ll present myself.* He steps forward. “Peace to the lords of Tyre!”

Helicanus returns the bow. “Lord Thaliard from Antiochus is welcome!”



“From him I come with message unto princely Pericles. But since my landing I have understood your lord has betook himself to unknown *travels*. My embassy must return from whence it came.”

“*We* have no reason to require it, commended to our *master*, not to us,” says Helicanus—dryly, considering the likely mission. “Yet, ere you shall depart, this we desire: as *friends* to Antioch, we may *feast* ye in Tyre!”

Once back at home, Lord Thaliard will report that penitent King Pericles has left the amiable realm of Tyre to brave the ocean’s hazardous waves.

## Chapter Two A Rescue, a Wreck

**A**cross the wide sea, ninety leagues northwest of Tyre, lies the port of Tarsus, capital of that long-prosperous farming region, which is now suffering from a protracted drought—and the resultant famine.

With neither grain to ship nor revenue with which to import food, the Tarsians see their harbor languish, its piers idle and forlorn. Moored at the many docks, round-bottom vessels, unladen and unmanned, float high and still on murky water.

This morning Lord Cleon, governor of all Tarsus, has visited the silent, empty warehouses, passed shuttered shops, and seen workers wandering, unemployed and in despair. With his wife and their attendants, he is now returning to his mansion on the highest hill overlooking the bay.

“My Dionyza, shall we rest us here?” he asks her. “And by relating tales of *others’* griefs, see if ’twill teach us to forget our own.”

She scoffs. Angry townsmen have complained—vociferously—at each pause along their path. “That were to *blow* at fire in hope of *quenching* it!

“Ah, my distressed lord,” she says, “such griefs as *ours* are, here they’re more *felt*.” The people are past worry—they are hungry. “And seen with *mischief’s* eyes, like to groves, being topped”—pruned, “they *higher* rise.”

Dionyza is annoyed; deigning to visit the commoners, she has not encountered the customary adulation, but only protest. She finds the visit futile. “He who digs into hills because they do aspire throws *down* one mountain to cast *up* a higher!” She wants to go home.

The governor, however, wants a show of sympathy for the citizens clustered about them. He raises his voice. “Oh, Dionyza, who wanteth *food* but can not *say* he wants it?—or will *conceal* his hunger till he *famish*?

“To air our woes, our tongues into sorrows do sound *deep*! Till lungs fetch breath which may proclaim them *louder*, our eyes will *weep*! If the *heavens* slumber while their creatures want, *we* may awake their helps to *comfort* them!”

As bystanders frown up toward somnolent gods, Cleon tells her, privately, “I’ll thus discourse on woes felt several years; if you lack breath to speak, *help* me with *tears*!” Listeners are watching the callous lady.

She regards him sourly. “I’ll do my best, sir,” she mutters. Dionyza never cries.

Cleon looks back, down toward the sea, and draws a public speaker’s deep breath. “This *Tarsus*, o’er which I have the government—is a city to whom *Plenty* held out a full hand!—herself strewed fair riches, even in the streets!—where towers bore heads so high they kissed the *clouds*, and strangers ne’er beheld but *wondered*!

“Here men and dames went strutting, adorned like one another’s mirror to trim them by!

“On their tables were full stores, to glad the sight!—and not so much to *feed* on as to *delight*!

“All poverty was scorned—and in pride so great, the name of *help* grew odious to repeat!”

Dionyza nods. “Oh, ’tis too *true*!”

“But see what *gods* can do: although they gave in abundance to their creatures, for whom but of late earth, sea, and air were all *too little* to content and please, these *mouths*, by this dire change, are as *houses* defiled by want of *use!*—they are now *starved* for want of *exercise!*”

“Those palates which, not but two summers younger, required *innovations* to delight the taste, would now be glad of *bread*—even *beg* for it!”

“Those *mothers* who, nuzzling up their babes, thought nought too curious,”—nothing too extravagant, “now are ready to *eat those little darlings* whom they loved!”

“So sharp are *hunger’s* teeth that man and wife draw lots who *first* shall die, to lengthen the other’s life!”

Cleon glances at his noble companions; two are pressing perfumed silk kerchiefs to their noses to ward off the city’s common odors. “Here stands a lord, and there a lady, *weeping!*”

He motions toward the town. “Here many *sink*; yet those who see them fall have scarce strength left to give them burial! Is not this true?”

Some of the “mouths” nod.

“Our cheeks and hollow eyes do witness it!” says Dionyza. No one among their party is so foolish as to laugh—not with her plump face so near.

Says Cleon, “Oh, let those cities that of *Plenty’s* cup and her prosperities so *largely* taste with their superfluous revelry *fear these tears!* The misery of Tarsus might be *theirs!*”

A townsman hurries forward, past the stalled procession. “Where’s the lord governor?”

“Here. Speak out thy *sorrows* which thou bring’st in haste, for *comfort* is too far for us to expect!”

The out-of-work baker is agitated: “We have descried, from upon our neighbouring shore, the portly sail of *ships* making *hitherward!*”

Cleon groans. “I *thought* as much! *One* sorrow never comes but it brings an *heir* that may succeed it as inheritor—and so with *ours!* Some neighbouring nation, taking advantage of our misery, hath stuffed these hollow vessels with their power”—military might—“to beat us down, who are down *already!*”

“And to make a conquest of unhappy *me!*—overcoming whom no *glory* is gotten.”

“That’s the least fear,” say the young man, “for, by the semblance of their white flags displayed, they bring us *peace*, and come to us as *favourers*, not as foes!”

Cleon is scornful. “Thou speak’st like him ’s *untutored*, so to repeat! Who makes fairest *show* means the most *deceit!*”—a principle he knows well. “But bring they what they will and what they can, what need *we* fear? The *ground’s* the lowest—and we are halfway there!”—into the grave.

“Go tell their general we attend him here, to know for what he comes, and whence he comes, and what he craves.”

The man bows. “I go, my lord!” He hurries down to greet the visitors’ leading vessel.

Cleon, watching as the ships approach, muses. “Welcome is this prince, if he in peace consist; if in war, we are unable to resist!”

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“Lord Governor, for so we hear you are,” says Pericles, smiling as he strides up to meet Cleon, “let not our ships and number of our men be like a *beacon* fire”—one lighted to signal warning—“to amaze your eyes!”

“We have heard of your miseries as far as *Tyre*, and see the desolation of your streets! We come not to add fear to your sorrows, but to *relieve* them of their heavy load! These our ships—which you haply may think are like the Trojan horse was, stuffed with men of bloody mien, expecting to overthrow—are stored with *grain* to make bread for your *needy*, and to give them *life* whom hunger has starved half dead.”

“The *gods of Greece*”—the most powerful ones—“protect you!” cries a citizen. He and the others kneel together before Pericles, voicing relief and delight. “And we’ll *pray* for you!”

“Arise, I pray *you!*” says the young king jovially. “*Rise!*—we do not look for *reverence*, only *loving*—and harbourage for ourself, our ships and men.”

Cleon, noting Pericles’ gold crown, bows. “When any here shall *not gratify*, or repay you with *unthankfulness*—though it be our *wives*, our *children*, or *ourselves*—may the curses of heaven and men follow their evils!

“Till when—the which I hope shall ne’er be seen!—Your Grace is welcome to our town and us!”

Pericles clasps his hand. “Which welcome we’ll accept, and feast here a while—until your stars that frown lend us a *smile!*”

—

John Gower again comes forward on the platform. “Here have you seen: a mighty king his child, poor dear, to incest bring; a better *prince* and a benign lord who will prove awesome in both deed and word!

“Be quiet then, as man should be till he hath passed necessity, and I’ll show you those in trouble’s reign—losing a mite, a *mountain* to gain!

“The good to whom I, conversing, give my benison”—Pericles—“is still at Tarsus, where each man thinks *writ* what he has spoken!—and remembering what he *does*, they build him a statue to make him glorious!”

The storyteller moves to the left, making room on the stage. “But adverse tidings ’fore your eyes are brought!” He turns to watch the silent action. “What need *speak* I what’s being wrought?”

*Pericles is talking with the governor when, passing by their attendants, a gentleman arrives, and bows; he has brought a letter to the king. Pericles reads it—and his face reveals growing consternation.*

*Then Cleon reads the missive, while Pericles rewards the messenger: with his sword, he confers knighthood on his kneeling subject.*

*Pericles bow to the governor, taking his leave; then his men follow him out at the left side. Cleon and his train exit at the other.*

Gower turns back. “Good Helicane, who has stayed at home, eats not honey of others’ labour, like a drone, but thoroughly strives to kill any bad, keep good alive! And to fulfill his prince’s desire, he sends word of all that haps in Tyre—how Thaliard came, full bent to sin, and had intent to *murder* him!

“And that in Tarsus ’twould not be best for him longer to make his rest!

“Hearing so,” says Gower, “Pericles puts forth to seas—where when men be, there’s seldom ease. For now the wind begins to blow! Thunder above and deeps below make such unquiet that the sailing ship which should house him safe is *wracked* and *split!*

“And *he*, good prince, all having *lost*, by waves from coast to coast is tossed!—bereft of men, of wealth—not aught escaping but *himself!*

“Till Fortune, tired with doing bad, throws him ashore, to have him glad.

“And here he comes. . . .

“What shall be next,”—says the poet, stepping away, “pardon old Gower; this ’longs to the *text. . . .*”

Pericles struggles out of the foaming tide, his clinging clothes sodden with brine, to stagger onto a narrow shore.

“*Yet cease your ire*, you angry stirrers of heaven!” he cries into the howling tempest. “Wind, rain and thunder, remember: earthly *man* is but a substance that must *yield* to you! And I, as befits my nature, do obey too.”

He moans in weary supplication, and falls to the hard wet sand. *Alas, the sea hath cast me on rocks, washed me from shore to shore, and left me but my breath!—nothing to think on but ensuing death!*

He calls aloud to Neptune: “Let it suffice the greatness of your powers to have bereft a prince of all his fortunes, and thrown him from your watery grave! Here to have death in *peace* is all he’ll crave!”

He falls back, exhausted, and soon slips into a fitful sleep.

The storm has passed. Pericles awakens, lying, weak and nearly naked, on a strip of sunny beach along the southern Mediterranean. He hears a voice, and looks up to see a poor fisherman approaching not far away.

The sunburned ancient is calling seaward, “What, *ho!—Pilch!*”

A shirtless boy, staring out over the water, answers. “*Yo!* Come and bring away the nets....”

“*What?*” The man is annoyed. “*Patch-breeches*, I say!” he shouts.

The lad of twelve calls back. “*What say you, master?*”

“Look that thou *stirrest* now!” cries the old man, motioning him forward. “*Come away*, or I’ll fetch thee with a *wanion!*”—with a curse.

Says the tanned boy, approaching, “Faith, master, I am thinking of the poor men that were cast away before us even now!”

The fisherman nods. “*Alas*, poor souls! It grieved my heart to hear what pitiful cries they made to us to help them, when, well-a-day, we could scarce help *ourselves!*”

“Aye, master.” The boy shakes his head sadly. “Said I not as much when I saw the *porpoise*? How he bounced and tumbled! They say they’re half fish, half flesh. A *plague* on them!—they ne’er come but I look to be *washèd!*”—soaked by foul weather.

The lad ponders. “Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea....”

“Why, as men do a-land—the great ones eat up the little ones,” says the fisherman. “I can compare our rich misers to nothing so fitly as to a *whale*: he rumbles and ranges, driving the poor fry before him, and at last *devours them all*—at a *mouthful!*”

“Such whales have I heard of o’ the *land*, who never leave off gaping till they’ve swallowed the whole parish—church, steeple, bells, and all!”

*A pretty moral!* thinks the young king, amused. He sits up, still unnoticed behind the others in the tall salt grasses.

“Master,” says the lad, “if I had been the sexton on *that* day, I would have been in the *belfry!*”

A young fisherman at the water’s edge has stopped working on their nets, and he now joins them. “*Why, man?*” he asks the boy.

“Because he should have swallowed *me too!*—and when I had been in his belly I would have kept up *such a jangling* of the bells that he should never have left till he cast bells, steeple, church, and parish *up again!*”

“If only the good King Simonides were of *my* mind—”

*Simonides*. Pericles, listening, recognizes the name; he knows of this North African realm, conquered, and now held, by the Greeks.

“—we would *purge* the land of these drones that rob the bee of her honey!”

Thinks Pericles, *Now from the finny subjects of the sea these fishers can tell the infirmities of men!—and from their watery empire detect all that land may prove, or men recollect!* He rises. “*Peace* be at your labour, honest fishermen,” he rasps, his throat raw from crying out at sea.

The others are startled; but the younger, brawnier man only regards him sourly. ““*Honest!* Good fellow, what’s *that?*” he demands. “Search you out the calendar, and if a *day* it befit, nobody here looks after it!”—celebrates honesty.

“You may see!” says Pericles, smiling and spreading his arms, to stand as an example. “The sea hath cast such a one upon your coast!”

The big fisherman laughs. “What a *drunken knave* was the sea to cast thee in *our* way!”

Says the king, brushing off sand, “A man whom both the waters and the wind on that vast tennis-court have made the *ball* for them to *play with* entreats you to pity him! He who asks of you was never used to beg....”

“No, friend?—cannot you *beg*?” asks the old man. “There’s them in our country,”—scorn is clear in his tone, “gets more with *begging* than *we* can do with *working*!”

The other fisherman challenges the bedrabbled castaway: “Canst thou catch any fishes, then?”

“I never practised it.”

“Nay, then thou wilt starve, surely; for *here*’s nothing to be got, now-a-days, unless thou canst fish for’t!”

Pericles is shivering. “What I have *been* I have forgone to show; but what I *am*, *want* teaches me to think on: a man thronged up with *cold*! My veins are chill, and have no more of life than may suffice to give my tongue that heat to ask your *help*!

“Which if you shall refuse,” he says weakly, “when I am dead, for that I am a man, pray see me buried.”

“*Die* quoth-a? Now gods forbid!” says the wizened man gruffly. “I have a wrap here; come, put it on; keep thee warm.” He tugs a plain, wrinkled cloak from a scuffed canvas bag, and the king draws it around himself.

“Now, afore me, a *handsome* fellow!” laughs the kindly old fisherman, watching as Pericles rubs his arms for warmth. “Come, thou shalt come home—we have meat on *holidays*, fish on *fasting* days—and, moreo’er, sausages and flap-jacks! And thou shalt be welcome.”

Pericles bows. “I thank you, sir,” he says humbly.

The younger man laughs. “*Hark* you, my friend—you said you could not beg!”

The King of Tyre shrugs. “I *had* only to crave....”

“But *crave*? Then I’ll turn ‘craver,’ too—and so shall I ’scape whipping!”

Pericles is surprised. “Why, are all your beggars *whipped*, then?”

“Oh, not all, my friend, not *all*! For if all your beggars were whipped, I would wish no better office than to be *beadle*!”—the man paid to do the whipping. “But, master,” he tells the chuckling old man, “I’ll go draw up the net.” He and the boy head back to the surf.

Pericles admires their salty panache: *How well this honest mirth becomes their labour!*

“Hark you, sir, do you know where ye are?” asks his companion.

“Not well....” Pericles wants to learn more.

“Well, I’ll tell you: this is called *Pentapolis*, and our king the good *Simonides*.”

“The *good* King *Simonides*, do you call him?”

“*Aye*, sir—and he *deserves* so to be callèd, for his peaceable reign and good government!”

“He is a happy king, since he gains from his subjects the name of *good* by his governance. How far is his court distant from this shore?”

“Marry, sir, half a day’s journey.” The fisherman is proud of knowing the news. “And, I’ll tell you, he hath a fair *daughter*!—and *tomorrow* is her *birthday*!—and there are princes and knights come from all parts of the world to *joust in tourney* for her love!”

“Were my *fortunes* equal to my desires,” says Pericles, “I could wish to be *one* of them.”

“Ah, sir, things must be as they may.” The crinkled brown face is mischievous. “What a man cannot get *lawfully* he may deal for—with his life’s *soul*!” No demon rises, though, from the straggling brown kelp.

The youth and the wiry boy, panting and sweating, have dragged a stretch of woven mesh from the sea onto the sand. “Help, master, help!” calls the older one. “Here’s a fish hangs in the net like a *poor* man’s right in the *law*—’twill *hardly* come out!”

They manage, pulling and twisting, to free the heavy catch, then clear it of seaweed. “*Hmh!* *Pox* on’t! ’Tis come out at last—and ’tis turned into a rusty *armour*!” mutters the man in disgust; he’d much prefer a big, salable fish.

Pericles hurries over to them. “An *armour*, friends? I pray you, let me see it!” He is delighted with what they have hauled out. “*Thanks*, Fortune, that, after all my crosses, yet thou givest me something to *repair* myself!—though it was mine *own*,” he notes, “part of my heritage, which my dead father did bequeath to me with this strict charge, even as he left his life: ‘*Keep it*, my Pericles!—it hath been a shield ’twixt me and Death!’

“And he pointed to this ’brace,”—a piece of jointed armor for the right arm, ““for that it *savèd* me! Keep it! In *like* necessity—which the gods protect thee from—it may defend *thee!*”

“It kept where I slept, I so dearly loved it, till the rough *seas*, that spare not any man, took it in rage!—though, calmèd, they have given’t again.

“I *thank* thee for’t!” he cries to the waves. “My shipwreck’s not so ill, since I have here my father’s *gift*—and his *will!*”

“What mean you, sir?” asks the old man. He sees no document.

“To beg of you, kind friends, this coat of worth, for it was sometime tangent to a king!—I know it by this mark,” he says, turning over the mail to show scarred links. “He loved me dearly, and for his sake I wish the having of it!

“And that you’d guide me to your sovereign’s court, where with it I may appear as a gentleman! And if ever my low fortune’s *better*, I’ll pay you *bounties*; till then, rest your debtor!”

“Why, wilt thou tourney for the *lady?*” asks the old fisherman.

Pericles nods. “I’ll *show* the virtue I have, borne in *arms!*”

“Well, do ye *take* it!—and the gods give thee *good* on’t!”

“Aye, but hark you, my friend,” says the younger man, “’twas *we* that made this garment come up through the rough streams of the waters! There are certain condolences, certain avails.... I hope, sir, if you thrive, you’ll remember from whence you *had* it.”

“Believe’t, *I will!*” vows Pericles heartily. “By *your* furtherance I am clothèd in *steel!* And in spite of all the ruptures of the sea,” he adds, “this *jewel* holds its biding on my arm!” He shows them a bracelet set with a large precious stone.

He touches the shining gem. “Unto thy value I will mount myself upon a courser whose prancing steps shall make the gazer *joy* to see him tread!”

Suddenly he blushes. “Only, I am yet unprovided, my friends, with of a pair of *bases!*”—a knight’s leg coverings—*trousers*.

“We’ll certainly *provide!*” laughs the young fisherman. “Thou shalt have my best robe to make thee a pair—and I’ll take thee to the court myself!”

Pericles is thinking beyond the bouts of chivalry. “Then may honours be but foal to my will!

“That day I’ll *rise!*—or else add ill to ill!”

### Chapter Three Courtly Challengers

**K**ing Simonides, with his daughter and their attendants, arrives this sunny day at a colorful pavilion set up near the palace in Pentapolis. One side of the wide tent is open for viewing of the lists, an area marked off in the field for the afternoon’s jousting. As the royals move to the front, the ruler asks a waiting lord, “Are the knights ready to begin the tournament?”

“They are, my liege, and stay your coming to present themselves.”

“Return with them; we are ready,” says the king. “And our daughter, in honour of whose birth these triumphs are, stands here like *Beauty*’s child, whom *Nature* begat for men to see!—and seeing, *wonder* at!” he says proudly. The nobleman bows and goes to summon the knights errant.

Princess Thaisa is beautiful indeed—but modest. “It pleaseth you, my royal father, to express my commendations *great* whose merit’s *less!*”

“It’s fit it should be so,” says he, “for princes are a model which heaven makes like itself; and, as jewels lose their glory if neglected, so princes their renown if not *respected.*”

The king watches as the knights stride toward the lists in their bright armor, followed by the dapper squires who have been busy polishing it. An image is emblazoned on each shield. "'Tis now your honour, Daughter, to explain the labour of each knight by his *device*."

The princess, hearing two nearby lords' uncouth laughter, blushes. "Which, to *preserve* mine honour, I'll perform!" It will be a challenge: each *impresa* is subject to interpretation; but she intends to study the men themselves more closely than the emblems they have chosen.

The first knight comes before them, bows courteously, and proceeds to one side of the open space in front of the tent; his squire carries the contender's shield and long lance.

"Who is the first that doth present himself?" asks Simonides of the golden-haired lady.

"A knight of *Sparta*, my renowned father. And the device he bears upon his shield is a black Ethiopie, reaching at the sun; the words might be: '*Lux tua vita mihi*'"—*Your light gives me life*.

"He loves you *well* that holds his *life* in you!" The king frowns chuckling nobles to silence. "Who is the second that presents himself?"

"A prince of *Macedon*, my royal father; and the device he bears—upon his *shield*—is an armed knight who's *conquered* by a *lady*. The motto thus is *Spanish: More in softness than strength*."

The king's laugh reflects a ribald reading—and a dig at rival Spain. "And what's the third?"

Thaisa sees his haughty demeanor as he glances at them, then peers intently around the pavilion. "The third is of *Antioch*, and his device a *wreath*. Of chivalry," she adds—but it looks like one for a grave; she feels a chill. "The words: '*Me pompae provexit apex*'"—*My pride takes me highest*.

"What is the fourth?"

"A burning torch that's turned *upside down*." She thinks for a moment. "The words: '*Quod me alit, me extinguit*.'"

Her father concurs. "Which shows that *Beauty* hath her power in the *will*—and can, as well as inflaming, kill."

Another bold knight passes by.

"The fifth: a hand environed with clouds, holding out gold that's by a *touchstone* tried. The motto, thus, '*Sic spectanda fides*'"—*So regard fidelity*; as subject to testing.

"And what's the sixth and last," asks Simonides, "which the knight *himself* with such a graceful courtesy delivers?"

Pericles, who has no squire, bows. As he goes to wait beside the lists, he smiles at Thaisa.

As her cheeks redden, the princess considers. "He seems to be a stranger, and his presentment is a withered branch that's green only at the top." Her azure eyes twinkle. "*In hac spe vivo!*"—*In this hope I live!*

"A pretty motto," says her father—unaware that it now is hers. "From the dejected state wherein he is, he hopes by *you* his fortunes yet may flourish."

One of the patricians watches with disdain. "Anyway, he had *need* of better than *this* mean show can speak in his just commend—for, by his rusty outside, he appears to have more practice with the *whipstock* than the lance!"—*he looks like a knave*.

"*Well* may he be a stranger," sniffs another lord, "for he comes to a tournament of honour strangely *furnishèd!*"

"And for a set *purpose* has let his armour rust until this day: to *scour* it with the *dust!*" gibes a third.

Simonides frowns at them. "Opinion that makes us scan the *outward habit* and pass by the inward *man* is but a fool's.

"But stay, the knights are coming! We will withdraw into the gallery." The king and the princess go up to the highest seats, ready to watch the competition for the lady's favor.

Soon the trials begin, and observers, from commoners behind the ropes to nobles in the stand, shout encouragement, cheering and jeering the courtly contestants, who ride high on their steeds.

Finally, a victor emerges. He dismounts to bow to the king, and raises his arms in triumph, as voices in the crowd rise, cheering happily.

“The indigent knight!” cries one man, still surprised.

A poor stranger in rusting armor has won the tournament—and the admiration of a very pleased princess.

Simonides hails the visitors, now in his palace, where they are to be entertained and provided with a banquet of fresh fruit, richly ripened cheeses, crusty brown bread—and plenty of good wine.

“Knights, to say you’re *welcome* were superfluous! To place your *worth in arms* in the volume of your *deeds*, as if upon a ‘title’ page, were no more than you’d expect, nor less than’s fit, since every word commended itself in the *showing!*”

“Prepare for *merriment*, for mirth *becomes* a fest!” he cries. “You are *princes* as my guests!”

“But *you*,” says Thaisa, looking up happily at Pericles—who actually *is* of royal blood, though she doesn’t know it—“are *my* knight and guest!—to whom this wreath of victory I give, and crown you *king* of this day’s *happiness!*”

Pericles bows, and dips his head to receive a new crown, the circlet of shiny green leaves she proffers. “’Tis more by Fortune, lady, than by merit,” he says modestly—feeling the warmth of her hands near his face.

“Call it by what you will,” says Simonides, “the day is *yours!*—and here, I hope, is none that envies it!”

“In framing artists, Art hath thus labored: to make some *good*, others to *exceed*—but *you*, most favored, her *scholar* she decreed!” He steps onto the dais. “Come, queen o’ the feast—for, Daughter, so you are—here take your place.

“Marshal the rest, as they deserve their grace,” he tells his steward.

Says the eldest knight, “We are honoured much by good Simonides!”

“Your very presence glads our days!” the king tells them. “*Honour* we love—for who hates honour hates the gods above!”

The steward tells Pericles, “Sir, yonder is your place!” He points to a tall chair just to the right of the two thrones.

“Some other is more fit!” protests Pericles.

A big knight clasps an arm around his broad shoulders. “Contend not, sir!—for we are gentlemen who, in neither our hearts nor outward eyes, envy the great, nor the low despise!”

Pericles smiles. “You are right, courteous knights.”

“Sit, sirs, *sit!*” commands Simonides. The knights find places at the tables, and Pericles takes the seat of honor beside Princess Thaisa.

Servants bring more to eat, adding some little cakes to a small table at the front, by Simonides.

Over a dish laden with food, the portly king, watching the couple as they chat cheerfully, muses; his child has become a woman. *By Jove! I wonder, King of Thoughts, that—he but thought upon—she foregoes all these treats!*

Thinks the princess, *By Juno, queen of marriage, all viands seem unsavoury, I wishing him my meat!*

She leans to tell her father, “He is certainly a gallant gentleman!”

Simonides replies casually. “He’s but a *country* gentleman,” he says, chewing, “has done no more than other knights have done.” He takes a drink. “Has broken a staff or two. So let it pass.”

But Thaisa sighs, murmuring “To *me* he seems like diamond to glass!”

Pericles is ruminating. *Yon king’s to me like my father’s picture, which tells in what glory he once was!—had princes sit about his throne like stars, and he the Sun for them to reverence! None beheld him but, like lesser lights, did avail their crowns to his supremacy!*



He feels a twinge. *Now his son is like a glow-worm in the night, which hath fire in darkness, none in light! Whereby I see that Time's the king of men: he's both their parent and their grave—and gives them what he will, not what they crave.*

Simonides calls happily to his guests: "What, are you *merry*, knights?"

"Who can be *other* in this royal presence?" cries one, as the guests applaud.

Simonides stands and raises his goblet. "Herewith a cup that's stored unto the brim!—as you do *love*, full to your mistresses' lips! We drink this health to *you!*"

The knights rise and quaff with him. "We thank Your Grace!"

Simonides again sits, and turns to the princess. "Yet pause awhile," he says quietly, watching Pericles. "Yon knight doth sit too *melancholy*—as if the hospitality of our court had not shown it might countervail his worry. Note it not *you*, Thaisa?"

She seems content just being near the stranger—the man who might become her husband. "What is it to me, my father?"

He leans closer. "Oh, attend, my daughter, to *this*: princes should live like gods above, who freely give to every one that comes to honour them! And princes *not* doing so are like to gnats, which make no sound—only *killed* are wondered at!

"Therefore to make his visit sweeter, say that ye'll drink this goblet of wine to him!"

Thaisa blushes. "Alas, my father, it befits not me unto a stranger knight to be so bold! He might at my proffer take offence, since men take women's gifts for impudence."

The king again frowns. "What? Do as I *bid* you, or you'll provoke me else!"

She has been longing to speak to Pericles. *Now, by the gods, he could not please me better!*

"And furthermore," says the king, "tell him we desire to know of him of whence he is, his name and parentage."

Rising, she curtsseys, picks up the wine, and goes to the champion. "The king my father, sir, has drunk to you."

Pericles stands and smiles. "I thank him."

Thaisa gazes up at the handsome face. She lifts the goblet in salute. "Wishing it so much blood unto your life!"—added strength and longevity, she means, although *blood* can mean *desire*.

"I thank both him and you," Pericles replies, also innocently, but much aware of the bright blue of her eyes as she sips, "and pledge him freely!" He, too, is tasting—both the wine and a more piquant potion.

"And further he desires to know of you: of whence you are, your name and parentage."

"A gentleman of Tyre; my education, in arts and arms; my name, Pericles—who, looking for adventures in the world, was by the rough seas reft of ships and men, and after shipwreck driven upon this shore."

She curtsseys and returns to her father. "He thanks Your Grace; names himself Pericles, a gentleman of Tyre, who only by mischance of the seas is cast onto this shore, bereft of ships and men!"

"Now, by the gods, I pity his misfortune, and will awake him from his melancholy!" says Simonides. He calls jovially to the knights before him, "*Come*, gentlemen! We sit too long on trifles, and waste the time which looks for other *revels!* Even your armour, as you are so dressed, well becomes a soldier *pressed!*"—conscripted. "I will not hear this music called too harsh for *ladies'* heads: 'tis no excuse, since they love men in *arms* as well as in *beds!*"

The knights find gentlewomen for a stately dance, done to a tune played by three court musicians.

"As well as this was *taskèd*, so 'twas well *performèd!*" cries the king as they finish. "Come, sir," he says, pulling Pericles toward Thaisa, "here is a lady that wants breathing, too! I have heard your knights of Tyre excel in making ladies skip—and that their *measures*"—dance steps—"are as excellent!"

“In those that *practise* them, they are, my lord!” Pericles refers simply, innocently, to dancing, which the young prince has done it only with a tutor.

Simonides laughs. “Ah, that’s as if you would *deny* our fair *courtesy!*”

The music is louder and faster this time, and the lively couples all dance with vigor and great enjoyment.

“Unclasp, unclasp!” calls the king, as they finish the round. “*Thanks, gentlemen, to all!*—all have done well! But *you* the best!” he tells the tall and graceful gentleman from Tyre. He calls: “*Pages and lights*, to conduct these knights unto their several lodgings!

“Yours, sir,” he tells Pericles, “we have given order be next to our own.”

Pericles bows. “I am at Your Grace’s pleasure.”

Simonides releases his now-paired guests. “Princes, it is too late to *talk* of love—and that’s the mark I know you level at!” The knights laugh. “Therefore each one betake him to his rest!”

It is nearing midnight. “May all who are for achievement, *toward morrow* do their *best!*”

**H**elicanus, continuing in command at Tyre during the king’s absence, can now make a startling revelation, as preface to some news. “Know, Escanes, this from me: *Antiochus* from *incest* lived not free!

“For which the most-high *gods*, no longer minded to *withhold vengeance*—in store and due unto his heinous’s capital offence—even in the height and pride of all his glory, when he was seated in a chariot of inestimable value, and his daughter with him—a *fire from heaven* came down and *shrivelled up their bodies!*—even to *loathing*; for they so *stunk* that all those whose eyes adored them ere their fall did scorn that their hands should give them *burial!*”

The older lord is astonished: “’Twas *very strange!*”

“And yet but *justice!* For though this king were great, his greatness was no guard to bar *heaven’s* shaft!—and sin had its *reward.*”

“’Tis very true!”

They can hear voices from the corridor, as several noblemen of the realm come toward the throne room. They sound determined. “Not a man can private conference or council see who has respect for any but *he!*” one is saying. Another concurs. “We shall no longer *grieve* without the *proof!*” “And cursèd be he that will not second it!” adds a third, as they enter the hall.

“Follow me, then!” says the first. They approach the throne. “Lord Helicane, a word. . . .”

“With me? And welcome! Happy day, my lords. . . .”

“Know that our griefs are risen to the top, and now at length they overflow their banks!”

“Your *griefs!* For *what?*” asks Pericles’ dutiful surrogate. “Wrong not your prince you love!” he warns.

“Wrong not *yourself*, then, noble Helicane!” says the tall lord respectfully. The nobles have been pleased with his governance, despite the uncertainty of the ruler’s absence. “If the prince do *live*, let us *salute* him!—or *know* what ground’s made happy by his breath. If in the world he *live*, we’ll seek him out! If in his grave he rest, we’ll find him there, and be resolvèd.

“But he lives to *govern us!*—or, dead, gives cause to mourn at his funeral, and leaves us to our free election!”

“This dearth is indeed *strongest* in our *censure,*”—Tyre’s greatest defect, notes the second lord. “Goodly buildings left without *roof* soon fall to ruin!

“Knowing this kingdom is without a head, *to your noble self*, who best know how we live and how to reign, we thus submit as our sovereign!”

“*Rule*, noble Helicane!” says the tall nobleman, and he and the others bow deeply.

The loyal Helicanus is taken aback. “For *honour’s* cause, *forbear* your suffrages! If that you love *King Pericles*, forbear!

“Undertaking *your* wish, I’d *leap into the seas*—where’s hourly *trouble* for a minute’s ease!” Helicanus knows that the northern threat expired with Antiochus; upon learning of his death,

Pericles will surely return. “A twelvemonth longer, let me entreat you, endure the absence of your king!—if at which time expired he not return, I shall with agèd patience bear your yoke.”

He can see they are unwilling to wait. “But if I cannot win you to this love, go search like *nobles!*—as noble *subjects!* And in your search, spend your adventure’s *worth!*”—spare no effort. “If you find and win him unto return, *you* shall sit about his crown like *diamonds!*”

The tall patrician nods. “’Tis *wisdom*; he’s a fool that will not yield! And since Lord Helicane enjoineeth us, we with our travels will endeavour!”

Helicanus smiles, pleased. “Then you love *us*, we *you*, and we’ll clasp hands!” Each reaches to place a hand atop his. “When peers thus knit, a kingdom ever stands!”

## Chapter Four Won, then Lost

**I**n the palace at Pentapolis, the king enters the large hall where the visiting knights have again gathered.

“Good *morrow* to the good *Simonides!*” cries the youngest—the one least pained by the previous night’s indulgence in drink. Most of the others, wincing at the loud voice, stifle groans.

The sovereign is clearly troubled. “Knights, from my daughter I must let you know that, for this twelvemonth, she’ll not undertake a *married* life! Her reason, which from her I cannot yet learn, is known only to herself.”

“May we not earn access to her, my lord?” asks another of the knights, still hopeful of courtship.

Simonides sighs. “Faith, by no means; she has so strictly tied her to her chamber that ’tis impossible! One twelve-moons more she’ll wear Diana’s livery!”—remain a virgin. “This hath she vowed by the eye of Cynthia,”—the moon, “and on her honour will not break it!”

Says a third knight sadly, “Loath to bid farewell, we’ll take our leaves.” He bows courteously, as do the others.

Simonides gives a nod of approval, and watches the disappointed gentlemen go, to return home on their several ways.

*So—they are well dispatched! Now to my daughter’s letter!* Taking it from his coat, he unfolds the paper and reads.

*She tells me, here, she would wed the stranger knight, or never more view nor day nor light!*

*’Tis well, mistress! Your choice agrees with mine—I like that well!* He reads further, and laughs. *Nay, how absolute she’s in ’t, not minding whether I dislike or no!*

*Well, I do commend her choice, and will have it be delayed no longer!*

*Soft!—here he comes! I must dissemble....*

Says Pericles, “All fortune to the good Simonides!”

The king smiles. “To you *as much*, sir! I am beholding to you for your sweet music this past night! I do protest mine ears were never better fed with such delightful, pleasing harmony!”

“It is Your Grace’s pleasure to commend, not my desert.”

“Sir, you are music’s *master!*”

“The worst of all her scholars, my good lord.”

Simonides now regards him. “Let me ask you one thing: what do you think of my daughter, sir?”

“A most virtuous princess!”

“And she is *fair*, too, is she not?”

“As a fair day in summer!—*wondrous* fair!”

“Sir, my daughter thinks very well of you—aye, *so* well, that you must be her master, and she will be your scholar. Therefore *look* to it.”

Tutor her? Pericles likes to sing, but.... “I am *unworthy* for her schoolmaster.”

“She thinks not so,” says Simonides. “Peruse this *writing* else.”

Pericles takes the paper. *What’s here? A letter—that she loves the knight of Tyre!*

He sees that her father is eyeing him closely—and a previous lesson flashes in his mind. *’Tis the king’s subtlety to have my life!*

He blurts out, “Oh, seek not to *entrap* me, gracious lord—a stranger and distressed gentleman that never aimed so high as to love your daughter, but bent all offices to *honouring* her!”

Simonides scowls, grabbing the letter. “Thou hast *bewitchèd* my daughter!—and thou art a *villain!*”

“By the *gods*, I have *not!* Never did *thought* of mine levy offence!—nor never did my *actions* yet commence a deed might gain her love, or your displeasure!”

“Traitor, thou liest!” cries the king.

“*Traitor!*”

“*Aye*, traitor.”

Pericles glares, proud and defiant. “Unless it be *the king* that calls me traitor, even *in his throat*”—right to his face—“I *return* the *lie!*” Repeating the accusation would demand a duel.

The ruler is still frowning; but he thinks, *Now by the gods, I do applaud his courage!*

Pericles is indignant. “My actions are as noble as my *thoughts*, that *never* relished of a base descent! I came unto your court for *Honour’s cause*, and not to be a rebel to her state!—and he that *otherwise* accounts of me, this sword shall prove he’s Honour’s *enemy!*”

Simonides scoffs. “*No?* Here comes my daughter—she can *witness* it!”—attest to the charge.

Pericles faces Thaisa. “Then as you are as *virtuous* as *beautiful*, resolve your angry father if my tongue did ere solicit, or my hand subscribe, to any *syllable* that made love to you!”

Despite a lingering frustration, she smiles. “Why, sir, say if you *had*; who takes *offence* at what would make me *glad?*”

Simonides looks shocked. “Yea, mistress, are you so peremptory?” he demands angrily. *I am glad on’t with all my heart!*

“*I’ll* tame you!” cries the seemingly irate king. “*I’ll* bring you into subjection!

“*Will you*—not having my *consent!*—bestow your love and your affections upon a *stranger?*” *Who for aught I know may be—nor can I think the contrary—as great in blood as I myself!*

“Therefore *hear* you, mistress!—either frame your will to *mine*—

“And *you*, sir!—hear you *both!*—either be ruled by me, or I will make you—”

He pauses. “—*man and wife!*”

Pericles and Thaisa blink, then smile.

The king beams. “Nay, come, your hands and lips must *seal* it, too!” They blush, take each other by the hand, and kiss—quite tenderly.

“To be so joined—*thus* I’ll your hopes destroy!” laughs the old king. “And for a *further* grief: *God give you joy!*”

“Well, are you both pleasèd?”

Thaisa smiles up at Pericles. “*Yes*, if you love me, sir!”

“Even as my *life*, or blood that fosters it!”

“What, are you both agreed?” asks Simonides.

“Yes, if it please Your Majesty!”

“It pleaseth me so *well* that I will *see you wed!*—then with what haste you can *get you to bed!*”

**A**s evening darkness glides westward, again blanketing the happy kingdom, John Gower returns to the front.

“Now *sleep* hath beslackèd all the rout; no din but *snores* the house about—made louder by the o’er-fed breast of this most-pompous *marriage* fest!

“The cat with eyne of burning coal now crouches ’fore the mouse’s hole!—and crickets sing at the oven’s mouth, e’er the *blithe*-er for their drought!

“Hymen hath brought the bride to bed—where enfolded, by loss of maidenhead, a *child* is molded!”

Gower watches as players move into place behind him. “Now, be you attent, past time briefly spent we’ll *further* fancies cunningly reach!

“What’s mute in *show*, I’ll plain with *speech*....”

*At court with his attendants, the King of Pentapolis greets a messenger, who bows and gives Pericles a document. He examines it, briefly, then hands it to Simonides.*

*The old king reads and, delighted, addresses the courtiers. Then he bows to Pericles, and the lords of Pentapolis all kneel before the King of Tyre.*

*Thaisa comes to them, well rounded in her pregnancy, and accompanied by a nurse. Her father shows her the letter, and she is pleased to learn she is a queen.*

*Pericles and Thaisa take leave of Simonides, departing with the nurse and their attendants.*

Gower explains: “Past many a dire and painful lurch, for Pericles the careful *search*—through four opposing coigns that do the world together join; by horse and sail at high expense!—was made with all due diligence.

“At last, unto those quests of Tyre, Fame *answered* their most-strange inquire!

“Then to Simonides are brought letters whose tenor thus is wrought: Antiochus and his daughter dead, the men of Tyre now on the head of *Helicanus* would set the crown of Tyrus.

“But he will none! The mutiny there he hastes to slack!—says if Pericles come not back in twice-six moons, obedient to their dooms, *then* he will take the crown.

“The sum of this, brought hither to Pentapolis, be-ravishes all the regions round! And every one as can clap does sound: ‘Our heir apparent is a *king*! Who thought, who *dreamed*, of such a thing?’

“Briefly must he hence to Tyre! His queen, with child, speaks her desire—which who shall deny her?—along to go!

“Lychorida, her nurse, takes she—omit we all their toil and woe—and off they sail across the sea!

“Their vessel glides on Neptune’s billows; half the flood their keel hath cut!”—they are midway on the journey to Tyre. “But Fortune’s mood again enlarges: the windy West such a *tempest* disgorges that, like a duck that for its living dives, so up and down the poor ship *strives*!

“The lady shrieks!—and well a-near does fall in *travail* with her fear!”—soon goes into labor.

“And what ensues in this fell storm, itself for you shall now perform! I nill of that would state—than by me told, may this *better* relate: in imagination hold this stage a sea-tossed *ship*, upon whose deck Pericles seems to slip....”

Pericles catches himself at the rail, and shouts through the gale, first to Neptune, then to Jupiter: “Thou god of this great vast, *rebuke* these surges which wash both *heaven* and *hell*! And *thou* who, having called them from their sleep, hast upon the *winds* command, bind them to the bells! Oh, still thy dreadful, deafening *thunders*, quench thy nimble, sulphurous *flashes*!”

The creaking wooden vessel rises and plunges, beleaguered by the stormy Aegean. Clinging to a rope at the mast, in the gloom under darkening clouds, Pericles glimpses a faint gleam as a hatch opens, and Thaisa’s nurse emerges.

“Oh, how, Lychorida, how does my queen?” he asks, meeting her as she edges forward, hood and cloak pulled close against stinging rain and salt spray.

He calls into the clamor of roiling skies, “Thou *storm* most *vehement*!—wilt thou *spit all thyself*?”

“The seaman’s whistle is as a *whisper* in the ears of *Death*!—*unheard*, Lychorida!”

He looks up. "*Lucina*, O divinest patroness and midwife, gentle to those that cry by night, convey thy deity aboard our bobbing boat!—make *swift* the pangs of my queen's travails!"

And then he is stunned. "*Now*, Lychorida?" he gasps—seeing that she is cradling in her arms, on a small pillow, a swaddled baby.

Tears are mingled with the streaming rain on her face. "Here is a thing *too young* for such a place!—who if it could *perceive* would *die*!—as *I* am like to do!" She reaches to him. "Take in your arms this piece of your dead queen."

Even as he holds his child for the first time, Pericles staggers, and backs against the mainmast. "*What?—what*, Lychorida?"

"*Patience*, good sir! Here's all that is left living of your queen: a little *daughter*! For the sake of *it*, be manly, and take comfort; do not assist the storm!"

"O you *gods*!" wails Pericles. "Why do you make us *love* your goodly gifts, then *snatch them straight away*? We here below call not back what *we* give, therein to lose honour with *you*!"

"*Patience*, good sir, if only for this your charge!" cries Lychorida; now is hardly the time to affront the gods.

The rain has paused, briefly, and Pericles looks down at the infant's peaceful face. "Now, may thy life be *mild*—for a more blustrous *birth* had never babe! *Quiet and gentle* come thy conditions, for thou art the *rudeliest* welcomed to this world as ever was prince's child!

"What haply *follows*?" he wonders. "Thou hast as *chiding* a nativity as heaven's fire, wind and water can *make* on earth, to herald thee from the womb!

"And even at the first, thy *loss* is more than can thy portage acquit with *all thou canst find here*!" The infant must carry on in the world without her mother. "Now may the good gods shine their best eyes upon't!"

Two mariners reel past, defying the deck's roll and pitch as they struggle to keep the groaning craft afloat. The ship's master sees the tears. "*What?—courage*, sir!" he calls. "God save you!"

"*Courage enough*," replies Pericles. "I do not fear the flood!—it hath done to me the *worst*! Yet for the love of this poor infant, this fresh new seafarer, I would it would *be quiet*!"

The master calls to his men: "Slack the bowlines there!" The old man glares upward. "Thou wilt, wilt thou? *Blow!*—and *split thyself*!"

His burly boatswain watches the swelling waves. "*Just sea-room*!"—he asks only for open water in which to navigate. "Then if the brine in cloudy billow *kiss the moon*, I care not!"

The master removes his sodden cap and approaches Pericles respectfully. "Sir, your queen must go *overboard*!—the sea works high; the wind is loud, and will not lie till the ship be cleared of the dead."

Pericles stares. "That's your *superstition*!"

"Pardon us, sir!—with us at sea it hath been ever observèd, and we are strong in custom. Therefore soon yield her; for she must be overboard straight!"

Sorrowfully, Pericles nods. "As you think meet." He sobs, "Most pitiable queen!" As the master goes to get a casket, two sailors carry Thaisa, wrapped in white linen, to the wet deck. Pericles can only sob.

"Here she lies, sir," says Lychorida, taking the infant back into her arms.

Pericles kneels by his wife's side. "A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear: no *light*, no *fire*—the *friendly* elements forgot thee utterly!

"Nor have I time to give thee *hallowèd* to thy grave, but straight must cast thee, scarcely coffined, unto the ooze—where for a monument to thy bones, and e'er-illumined lamps, the belching whale in humming water must mourn o'er thy corpse, left lying with the simple shells.

"Oh, Lychorida, bid Nestor bring me ink and paper—spices, and my casket of jewels. And bid Nicander bring me the case of satins. Lay the babe upon the pillow."

He touches the sheet. "Hie thee, while I say a priestly farewell to her." Lychorida is weeping. "*Suddenly*, woman!" She nods, tearfully, and hurries below.

The boatswain returns. "Sir, we have a chest beneath the hatches, caulked and bitumed a-ready." It will soon be sealed with more tar.

"I thank thee." Pericles looks out to starboard, where, earlier, land had been discerned. "Mariner, say what coast is this."

"We are near *Tarsus*"—a port just to their north.

"Thither, gentle mariner—alter from thy course to Tyre! When canst thou reach it?"

"By break of day, if the wind cease."

"The babe cannot hold out to Tyre! I'll make for Tarsus. There will I visit Cleon; there I'll leave it to careful nursing.

"Go thy ways, good mariner. I'll bury the body presently."

The boatswain goes to get the makeshift coffin.

Alone, the king sobs as he lifts a corner of the sheet and kisses his pale young queen goodbye.

## Chapter Five Recovery, Commitment

Shortly before dawn's light, a gale comes crashing ashore from the Aegean Sea, battering the western coast of Asia Minor near the thriving city of Ephesus. Fierce winds sweep over the foaming tide, and across the grounds of Lord Cerimon's stone mansion, shivering its tall casements.

A servant hurries into a room off the main hall, ushering along six weary seamen who have been shipwrecked.

Cerimon, just awakened and still in his night clothes, arrives. The patrician Greek scholar is widely celebrated for his abilities as a healer. He looks around for his steward. "*Philemon, ho!*"

The man is already at a side door. "Doth my lord call?"

"Get fire and meat for these poor men!" The mariners, their clothing sodden with seawater, settle onto benches at the back, or lie on the floor along the wall. "It's been a turbulent and stormy night!"

The old servant, lighting tapers, nods. "I have been in many; but such a night as *this*, till now I ne'er endured!"

Philemon soon returns from rousing a cook, and he watches while Cerimon moves from man to man, examining each carefully for injury.

He finds that the captain's journey is ending; the physician places a hand gently on the boatswain's shoulder. "Your master will be dead ere you return; there's nothing in nature can be ministered that will recover him."

He turns to hand Philemon a note. "Give this to the 'pothecary, and tell me how it works." The steward goes down the hall for coat and hat, then hurries out into the rain to get the medicines he will bring to the surviving sailors.

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Cerimon, in a thick robe, is sitting in his study and making entries in his journal when two distraught neighbors are shown in by a servant. The taller visitor bows. "Good morrow!"

"Good morrow to Your Lordship!" says the other Ephesian.

Cerimon rises. "Gentlemen, why do you stir so early?"

"Sir, *our* lodgings, standing bleak upon the sea, shook as if the *earth* did quake!—the very *principals* did seem to rend, and all to *topple!*" the tall man tells him. "Pure surprise and fear made me to quit the house!"

"That is the cause we trouble you so early; 'tis not our *husbandry!*" says his portly friend—who actually does hope for breakfast.

Cerimon teases: "Oh, you *say* well!"

“But I much marvel that Your Lordship should at these early hours shake off the golden slumber of repose and have such attire about you,” says the tall one. He looks around at the books and papers in the well-appointed room. “’Tis most surprising that one whose nature not being *compelled* thereto should be so conversant with *pain*,” he says, of the nobleman’s generosity and kindness.

Cerimon ponders. “I’ve held it ever that virtue and nobleness were endowments greater than cunning and riches. Careless heirs may the latter two darken and expend, but immortality attends the former—making a man like a god.

“’Tis known I have long studied physic, through which secret art, by turning o’er authorities,”—their books’ pages—“I have made familiar to me, and together with my practise, brought to my aid the blest infusions that dwell in vegetives, in metals, and in stones. And I can speak of the disturbances that *Nature* works, and of her *cures*.” He closes his book of records. “Which doth give me more content in a course of *true* delight than to be thirsting after tottering ‘honours,’ or to tie my treasure up in silken bags that please the *fool!*... until death.”

The paunchy man commends the nobleman. “Your Honour has through Ephesus poured forth your charity, and *hundreds* who by you have been restored call themselves your creatures! And not only your knowledge, your personal pains, but even your *purse*, ever open, hath built Lord Cerimon such strong renown as time shall never—”

A loud noise of harsh scraping interrupts. The visitors follow Cerimon to a room into which three servants have dragged, past the open door, a dark, wet object.

“So; *lift* there!” orders the oldest, pushing the door shut against the wind. The others hoist the large wooden box, and carry it toward a low stone bench.

“What is that?” asks Cerimon.

“Sir, even now did the sea toss upon our shore this *chest!*” the elderly man tells him. “’Tis from some wreck.”

“Set it down; let’s look upon’t.” The men lower their burden.

“’Tis like a *coffin*, sir,” the stout gentleman observes.

“Whate’er it be, ’tis wondrous heavy,” says Cerimon, as his men wipe their sweating faces. “Wrench it open straight! If the sea’s stomach be o’ercharged with *gold*, ’tis a good compulsion in Fortune that it belches upon *us!*”

“So ’tis, my lord.”

Cerimon regards the dripping case. “How close ’tis caulked and bitumed!”—well sealed with pitch. “Did the sea *cast it up?*”

The old servant nods, cap in hand. “I never *saw* so huge a billow, sir, as tossed it upon shore!”

“Wrench it open,” Cerimon tells the servant who has used his knife to cut through the cover’s seal. He leans forward, “Soft!—it smells most *sweetly* in my sense....”

The short gentleman agrees. “A delicate aroma!”

“As ever hit my nostril!” says Cerimon. “So, up with it,” he tells the servant, and the lid is raised. “O you most potent gods! What’s here? A *corpse!*”

“Most strange!” cries the tall gentleman.

Cerimon peers into the box. “Shrouded in cloth of state; balmed with bags full of spices....” He opens the box of jewels. “And *entresured!*” Spotting a letter, he adds, dryly, “A passport, too!

“Apollo, perfect me in the characters....” But the language is not foreign; he reads aloud from a document blotched by tears: “Here I give ye to understand, if e’er this coffin drive a-land, that I, King Pericles, this queen have lost—*worthy* of all our mundane cost!

“Who finds her, give her burying; she was the daughter of a king! Besides this treasure for a fee, may the *gods* requite this charity!”

Cerimon is moved. “If thou livest, Pericles, thou hast a heart that ever cracks for woe!” He looks at the corpse. “This chanced last night.”



The short gentleman concurs. "Most likely, sir."

"Nay, *certainly* last night; for look how fresh she looks!" says Cerimon.

He has been unwrapping the shroud to see the face—and now is startled to sense some warmth. "They were too *rough* that threw her into the sea!" He turns to the servants. "*Make a fire within!* Fetch hither the boxes from my cabinet!" They run to the physician's work room.

"Death may *usurp* many hours from Nature, and yet the fire of life *kindle again* the oppressed spirits! I've heard of an Egyptian that had for *nine hours* lain dead who was by good applications *recoverèd!*"

The servants and Philemon return, bringing the physician's paraphernalia and some strips of clean linen, and soon they have logs burning on the hearth.

"Well done, well done, the fire and cloths!" says Cerimon, rubbing his hands together eagerly. He opens a small, brass-bound casket of medicines and selects a vial of amber fluid; he removes the cork stopper, and carefully allows three drops to fall between Queen Thaisa's parted lips.

He motions to the old Turkish servant. "The rough and woeful music that we have—cause it to *sound*, beseech you!" As men strike a tabor and rattle a tambourine, he watches her. "The violence *more!*" he demands.

The men add a shrill pipe and some vigorous foot-stamping to their clamorous performance.

"*Now thou stirr'st*, thou block!" cries Cerimon—very pleased to see, within the shroud, a hand moving. "Stop the music there! I pray you, give her air!" he tells the two neighbors, who are leaning closer to look.

"Gentlemen, this queen will *live!*" he says happily. "Nature *awakes!*—a warmth breathes out of her! She hath not been entranced above five hours—*see* how she 'gins to bloom into flower again!"

Says the tall gentleman, truly amazed, "The *heavens* through *you* increase our *wonder*, and set up your fame forever!"

"She is alive!" cries Cerimon, as the blonde lady's lashes flutter. "Behold, her eyelids, cases to those heavenly jewels which Pericles hath lost, begin to part their fringes of bright gold; the diamonds of a most praised water"—highest clarity—"do appear, to make the world *twice* rich!"

"*Live*, fair creature," he urges, "and make us weep to hear your tale, rare as it appears to be!"

Thaisa moves, and after a moment, she looks up, still in a daze. "O dear *Diana*, where *am I*? Where's *my lord*? What world is *this*?"

The shorter gentleman stares. "Is not this *wondrous*?"

"Most rare!" breathes his friend.

Cerimon fairly dances with delight. "Hush, my gentle neighbours! Lend me your hands; to the next chamber bear her!"

"Get linen!" he tells the steward. "*Now* this matter must be looked to; for her, *relapse* is *mortal!*"

"Come, *come!*"

He appeals to the god of healing: "And, Aesculapius, *guide* us!"

**F**ollowing Pericles' arrival with considerable food and help, Tarsus has survived its crisis: plenteous crops and a grand harvest have fed the people and nourished the nation. Over the seasons, the warehouses and storage sheds have been replenished, and heavy vessels sailing from the busy port must ease past ships bringing many goods from abroad.

But now the sorrowful King of Tyre, a guest at the governor's mansion, addresses his host. "Most honoured Cleon, I must needs be gone! My twelve months are expired, and Tyrus stands in a litigious peace.

"You and your lady receive from my heart all of *its* thankfulness; the *gods* must make up the rest to you!"

Says Lord Cleon, “Shifts in your fortune, though they’ve hurt you full mortally, yet glance wandringly upon us...”

“Oh, your sweet *queen*,” moans Lady Dionyza. “If only the strict Fates had pleasèd, you had brought her hither to have blessed mine eyes with her!”

“We cannot but obey the powers above us,” says Pericles sadly. “Could I rage and roar as doth the sea she lies in, yet the end must be as ’tis.”

Beside him, Lychorida holds his child in her arms.

“My gentle babe, Marina, whom I have named so for she was born at sea, here I charge to your charity withal—leaving the infant here in your care, beseeching you to give her princely training, that she may be mannered as she is born.”

“Fear not, my lord!” says Lord Cleon. “Think but that Your Grace—who *fed my country* with your grain!—for which the people’s prayers *ever fall upon you!*—must be thought upon in your *child*. If therein *my* nature need a spur, the common body by you relievèd would *force* me to my duty! And if *neglection* should make me vile, may the gods revenge it upon me and mine, to the end of generation!”

Pericles smiles. “I believe you; your honour and your goodness teach me of’t without your vows.”

He turns to Dionyza, with a pledge of his own: “By bright Diana, whom we honour, till Marina be *married*, madam, all unscissored shall this hair of mine remain, though I show ill in’t.

“So I take my leave. Good madam, make me blessèd in your care in bringing up my child!”

“I have one myself,” she replies, “who shall not be more dear in my respect than yours, my lord.”

Pericles bows. “Madam, my thanks and prayers!”

“We’ll bring Your Grace e’en to the edge o’ the shore,” Cleon offers, “then give you up to the sleeping Neptune and the gentlest winds of heaven.”

“I will embrace your offers,” says Pericles. “Come, dearest madam.”

He looks to the nurse and his daughter. “Oh, no tears, Lychorida, no *tears!*” he chides gently, to steady her. “Look to your little mistress, on whose grace you may depend hereafter!

“Come, my lord,” he says, turning away—tearful himself, despite his words.

—

At Ephesus, Lord Cerimon stands beside the chair on which Thaisa rests, her hands folded on a warm blanket; she has recovered her health, but with melancholy thoughts the lady has remained forlorn—and perturbed.

Still, he shows her what he feels she is now ready to see. “Madam, this letter, and some certain jewels which lay with you in your coffer, are now at your command.” She looks up, surprised, then unfolds the paper. “Know you the character?”—the handwriting.

“It is my lord’s,” she says sorrowfully. “That I was shipped at sea, I well remember, just at my childbirth time; but whatever there *delivered*, by the holy gods, I cannot rightly say!

“But since King Pericles, my wedded lord, I ne’er shall see again, a *vestal* livery will I take unto me, and never more have joy.” She intends to devote herself to solemn and austere abstention from worldly pleasures.

“Madam, if this you purpose as ye speak, *Diana’s* temple is not far distant, where you may abide till your date expire. Moreover,” says kindly Cerimon, “if you please, a niece of mine shall there attend you.”

Thaisa folds up the blanket, rises and curtseys. She smiles, gratefully, as she gives him the box of precious gems. “Thy recompense is *thanks*, and this withal; my *good will* is great, though the gift be small!”

## Chapter Six Bad to Worse

Old Gower ambles into the light—with an hourglass. “Imagine Pericles arrivèd at Tyre, welcomed, and settled to his home’s desire. His woeful queen we leave at Ephesus, unto Diana there a votaress.”

He stops now, and smiles, almost apologetically. “Posting on lame feet—of rhyme—I carry only wingèd *time*, which never could I so convey, unless *your thoughts* came on my way.” A wide sweep of his arm and hand blurs the tilting glass and its flowing sand, and he motions us past a fortnight—of years.

“Now to *Marina* bend your mind, whom, fast-growing, our scene must find.

“At Tarsus by Cleon trained in music and letters, she hath gained by education such grace as makes her the general *wonder*, both for heart and for place!

“And of this kind hath Cleon his *own*: a wench alike now full-grown, even ripe for marriage rite. This maid is *Philoten* hight,”—*called*; the teller of stories savors antique terms, “and ’tis said for certain in our story, she would ever with *Marina* be.

“When *Philoten* weaved the slender silk, with fingers long and white as milk, or with sharp needle did the cambric wound, by hurting it, she made it more sound. When she sang along with a lute, made the nightingale a mute; and when she would with rich and constant pen hail her goddess *Diana*, even then did she in skill contend with absolute *Marina*....

“*So* might vie the black crow’s *night* with dove of *Paphos*’ feathers *white*!

“Unto *Marina* are praises *driven*—paid as *debt*, and not as given!

“This so darkens all *Philoten*’s marks that *Cleon*’s wife, with envy rare, a present *murder* does prepare for good *Marina*, so that her daughter might stand peerless by this slaughter!

“And so, alas, that monster *envy*, oft the wrack of earnèd praise, by treason’s knife seeks to erase *Marina*’s very life!

“Accurst *Dionyyza* hath for the blows impressed a tool of wrath”—conscripted a henchman.

“And soon, her vilest thoughts to stead, *Lychorida* our nurse is *dead*!”

Says Gower, turning to watch the platform behind him, “The *unborn* crime I do commend for you to apprehend. *Dionyyza* does appear, with *Leonine*, a *murderer*....”

They stand in the sunshine, on a grassy field sloping down to the shore. “Thine oath remember!—thou hast *sworn to do ’t*!” insists the governor’s steely wife. “’Tis but a blow which never shall be known.

“Thou canst not do a thing in the world so soon to yield thee so much profit! Let not conscience, which is but cold, claiming no love i’ the bosom, inflame ever so slightly; nor let pity, which even *women* have cast off, melt thee—but be a *soldier* to thy *purpose*!”

“I will do ’t.” He watches as the princess gathers flowers from among grasses beside the sand. “But yet she *is* a goodly creature.”

“The fitter then the *gods* should have her. Here she comes, *weeping* for her only mistress’ death,” she says scornfully. “Thou art resolvèd?”

“I am resolved,” *Leonine* tells her grimly.

*Marina* approaches, cradling a basket of blossoms, and thinking of *Lychorida*. *So will I rob Tellus of her weeds*—the earth-goddess of her raiment—*to strew thy grave with flowers! The yellows, blues, the purple violets, and marigolds shall as a carpet hang upon thy green, while summers’ days do last.*

*Ay, me!—poor maid, born in a tempest, when my mother died! This world to me is like a lasting storm, whirling me from my friends!*

Lady *Dionyyza* scolds. “How now, *Marina*?—why do you keep alone? How chance my daughter is not with you? Do not confound your blood with sorrowing—you have a nurse in *me*.

“*Lo, how your favour’s changèd*”—face is affected—“by this unprofitable *woe!* Come, give me your flowers,” she says, taking the basket. “Walk with Leonine along the sea-margent,” she urges, motioning toward the shore. “The air is alive there, and it pierces lungs, sharpens the stomach!”—stirs vigor. “Come, Leonine, take her by the arm—*walk* with her.”

Marina would demur. “No, I pray you; I’ll not bereave you of your servant,” she says—unaware of the irony.

“Come, come!” says Dionyza. “I love the king your father, and yourself, with more than *foreign* heart! We every day expect him here; when he shall come and find our *paragon*—to all reports—thus *witherèd*, he will *repent* the length of his great voyaging!—blame both my lord and me that we have taken no care to your best course!

“Go, I pray you, *walk* and *be cheerful* once again; recover that excellent complexion which did steal the eyes of young and old. Care not for *me*; I can go home alone.”

Marina had wanted to visit, again, her nurse’s grave, but she nods. “Well, I will go; but yet I have no desire to it.”

“Come, come, I know ’tis *good* for you,” says Dionyza. “Walk half an hour, Leonine, at the least.” She wants the deed done well away from the castle. “Remember what I have said.”

“I warrant you, madam.”

Dionyza’s smile is thin. “I’ll leave you, my sweet lady, for a while; pray, walk softly, do not heat your blood! *Tsk!* What a *care* I must have of you!”

Marina curtseys as they leave her. “My thanks, sweet madam.”

The two walk slowly down to the sand. “Is this wind westerly that blows?” she asks.

“South-west.”

“When I was born, the wind was the North!”—strong and cold.

“Was’t so?”

“My father, as Nurse said, did never fear,” says Marina proudly, “but cried, ‘*Good seamen!*’ to the sailors!—galled his kingly hands, hauling ropes!—and, clasping to the mast, endured a sea that almost burst the deck!”

“When was this?”

“When I was born. Never was *wind* nor *wave* more *violent!* When from the ladder-tackle a canvas-climber *washèd off*, says another, ‘*Hah! Wilt out?*’”—*are you quitting?*

“And with a deadly industry they skip from stem to stern! The boatswain *whistles* and the master *calls*—and *treble* their distress!”

Leonine stops and pulls off his gloves. “Come, say your prayers.”

“What mean you?”

“If you require a little space for prayer, I grant it,” he says darkly, a knife gleaming in his hand. “Pray; but be not tedious, for the gods are quick of ear—and I am sworn to do my work with haste.”

Marina stares, wide-eyed. “Why will you *kill* me?”

“To satisfy my lady.”

“Why would *she* have me killed?” cries Marina. “Now by my troth, as I can remember I never did her hurt *in all my life!*—I never spake bad *word*, nor did ill turn to *any* living creature! Believe me, now, I never killed a mouse, nor hurt a fly! I trod upon a *worm* against my will—but I *wept* for it!

“How have I offended? Wherein might my death yield her any profit, or my life imply her any danger?”

Leonine shrugs. “My commission is not to reason of the deed, but do it.”

“You will *not* do’t for all the *world*, I hope!” Her eyes scan his face. “You are well favoured, and your looks foreshow you have a gentle heart! I saw you lately when you caught a hurt in *parting* two that fought! In good sooth, it showed *well* in you! Do so *now!*—your lady seeks my life; come you *between*, and save poor me, the weaker!”

“I am sworn,” he mutters, “and will dispatch.” He grasps her by the hair and raises the blade.

“*Hold, villain!*” An angry cry startles Leonine.

He sees two men running on the sand, already quite near—and both are brandishing broadswords. He turns and dashes away, scrambling up onto the firm turf, then in among the trees.

The pirate who shouted laughs at the fleeing lubber, but his younger companion gazes hungrily at Marina. “A prize! A *prize!*”

“*Half part, mate, half part!*” cries the older man as he grabs her arm. “Come, let’s have her aboard immediately!”

The men hurry away down the shore, pulling poor Marina with them, and pondering happily their shares of the captive’s ransom.

From the woods above, Leonine watches. *These roguing thieves serve the great pirate Valdes, he realizes, and they have seized Marina.*

*Let her go. There’s no hope she will return. I’ll swear she’s dead and thrown into the sea.*

He moves carefully among the trees, still observing the shore. *But I’ll see further. Perhaps they will but please themselves upon her, not carry her aboard. If she remain, whom they have ravished must by me be slain!*

But the pirates row out to their ship and board it—taking away with them the princess, a girl of fifteen, her hands bound together with rope.

Thirty leagues north of Ephesus lies the old port city of Mytilene, on an island in the Aegean. A vital center of commerce, it is teeming with lusty sailors on brief leave ashore, eager to spend their silver—and infested with some women who would, for a price, satisfy the seamen’s desires, along with those of affluent locals.

“Boult!” calls a seedy man, sitting with his wizened wife in the brothel they operate.

A sinister bulk comes into the squalid room. “Sir?”

“Search the market *narrowly!*” the procurer orders. “Mytilene is *full* of gallants, but we lose much money in this mart by being too *wenchless!*”

“We were never so much *out of creatures,*” complains the woman. “We have but three *poor* ones, and they can do no more than they *do*—and with continual action, even *they* are as good as rotten!”

The small man’s hand strikes the table. “Therefore let’s have *fresh*, whate’er we pay for ’em! If there be not a conscience to be used in *every* trade, *we* shall never prosper!” he says, of the hope to purvey better-quality merchandise.

“Thou sayest true.” She shakes her head. “’Tis not *in* our bringing up of poor bastards—as I have brought up, I think, some *eleven!*”—prostitutes’ daughters.

“Aye, *to* eleven—then brought them *down* again!” says the henchman; each has come to her own bad end. “But shall I search in the *market?*”—a desperate move.

“What *else*, man?” demands the bawd. She scowls. “The stuff we *have*, a strong *wind* will blow it to pieces, they are so pitifully sodden!”

“Thou sayest true,” says her husband. “They’re *too* unwholesome, in conscience! The poor Transylvanian is *dead* that lay with the littlest baggage!”

Boult had brought the reckless, fevered client to them. “Aye, she quickly cooked him!—she made him *roast* meat for worms!” He buttons his frayed brown coat, spotted with stains of cheap wine. “But I’ll go search the market,” he says, and goes out at the door.

The wiry old man muses. “Three or four thousand chequins were a pretty proportion for to live quietly, and so give over...” He wants money enough to retire from the business.

“Why to *give over*, I pray you? Is it a *shame* to get when we are old?”

“Ah, our *credit* comes not like the *commodity*,” he notes wryly, “nor the *wages* weigh with the *danger!* Therefore, if we could pick up some petty estate,”—gold from a wealthy customer, “’twere not amiss to keep our door latched in our youth.”

She laughs harshly; their youth is long gone.

“Besides,” he says, “the sore terms we stand upon with the *gods* will be strong reason with us for giving over.”

She scoffs. “Come, *other* sorts offend as well as we!”

“As *well* as we!—aye, and *better*, too! We offend *worse*—nor is our profession any but a *trade*; it’s no ‘*calling*.’ But here comes Boulton.”

The big brute returns, bringing with him the two pirates and Marina. He tugs her forward by the arm, saying, “Come your ways.” He turns to the sordid sailors. “My masters, you say she’s a *virgin*?”

“Oh, sir, we doubt it not,” says the younger—ruefully.

Boulton tells the elder procurer, “Master, I have gone through”—made a bargain—“for this piece you see. If you like her, so; if not, I have lost my earnest”—deposit.

The bawd squints at the dejected younger woman. “Boulton, has she any quality?”—breeding.

“She has a good face, speaks well, and has excellent-good clothes; there’s no necessity of further qualities as can make her be *refused*.” Not in the line of work proposed.

“What’s her price, Boulton?” asks the woman.

“I cannot be abated one doigt of a thousand pieces,” the older pirate tells them.

The house’s owner rises, irked by the price, but resigned to necessity. “Well, follow me, my masters; you shall have your money presently. Wife, take her in; instruct her what she has to do, that she may not be raw in her entertainments.”

He leads the cutthroat seamen to a back room—hoping they’ll spend some of the proceeds with the late Transylvanian’s wretched nemesis.

The bawd wants immediate return on the outlay. “Boulton, take you the marks of her—the colour of her hair, complexion, height, age, with warrant of her *virginity*—and cry up that he who will give *most* shall have her *first*! Such a maidenhead were no cheap thing, if men are still as they *have* been!

“Get this done as I command you!” she says grandly, anticipating much profit.

Boulton effects a courtly bow. “Performance shall follow!” he vows, already on his way to solicit.

Marina shivers in dread. *Alack that Leonine was so slack, so slow!—he should have struck, not spoke!—and that these pirates, not barbarous enough, did not throw me o’erboard to seek for my mother!*

“Why lament you, pretty one?”

“That I am pretty.”

“Come, the gods have done *their* part in you.”

“I accuse *them* not!”

“You are alighted into *my* hands—where you are likely to *live*,” the bawd points out.

“The more my *fault*, to ’scape his hands where I was likely to *die*!”

“Ah, but you shall live in *pleasure*.”

“*No!*”

“Yes, *in deed* shall you, and taste of gentlemen of all fashions!”—a play on a phrase for *encounter*. Marina shudders. “You shall fare well!”—the bad jest taken further. “You shall draw the preference of all complexions,” the bawd assures the blonde, regarding the establishment’s varied maritime clientele. She sees that the girl is holding both hands tightly against her head. “*What?*—do you stop your ears?”

Marina glares at the callous crone. “Are you a *woman*?”

“What would you have me be, if I be not a woman?”

“An *honest* woman, or *not* a woman!”

The bawd only laughs. “Marry, *whip* thee, gosling!” But then she regards the girl sourly. “I think I shall have something to do with you. Come, you’re a young, foolish *sapling*, and must be bowed as I would have you!”

“The gods defend me!” cries Marina, backing away.

The woman shrugs. "If it please the gods to defend you by *man*, then men must you *comfort*; men must feed you, men must *upward* speed you." She looks to the door. "Boult's returned.

"Now, sir, hast thou cried her through the market?"

"I have cried her almost to the *number of her hairs!*—I have *drawn her picture* with my voice!"

"Then I prithee tell me, how dost thou find the inclination of the people?—especially of the younger sort."

Boult laughs. "'Faith, they listened to me as they would have hearkened to *their father's testament!*'—reading of the will. "There was a Spaniard's mouth so watered that he 'wet the bed' at her very description!"

The bawd is delighted. "We shall have *him* here *tomorrow*—with his best ruff on!"—starched stiff.

"*Tonight,*" Boult believes, "*tonight!* But, mistress, do you know the French knight that cowers i' the hams?"—lacks rise between thighs.

"Who, Monsieur Veroles?"

"Aye, he. He offered to *cut a caper* at the proclamation!—but then he made a groan at it, and swore he would see her tomorrow."

"Well, well, as for *him*, he *brought* his disease hither—here he does but *return* with it," says the old woman peevishly. "I know *he* will come into our shadows to scatter his crowns"—not coins, symptoms of syphilis—"out of the sun."

Boult regards Marina happily. "Well, if we had from *every* nation a traveller, we should lodge them all with *this* sign!"

"Pray you, come hither awhile," the bawd tells her, ready to advise. "You'll have fortunes coming upon you!" Marina winces. "Mark me: you must *seem* to do that fearfully which you commit willingly!—seem to *despise* profiting where you have most gain! *Weeping* that you live as ye do makes *pity* in your lovers; it's seldom but that pity begets you a good *opinion*, and that opinion, more *profit!*"

Marina shakes her head sadly, watching the reprobate. "I understand you not."

Demands Boult impatiently, "Oh, take her home, mistress, take her *home!* These blushes of hers must be quenched with some present *practise!*"

"Thou sayest true, i' faith; so they must," says the woman, "for even your *bride* goes in shame to that which is her way to go with *warrant.*"

"'Faith, some do, and some do *not,*'" says Boult. He looks again at Marina—closely. "But, mistress, as I have bargained for the *joint....*"—secured this cut of meat.

The crone nods. "Thou mayst cut a morsel off the spit."

Boult grins. "I *may* so!"

"Who would deny it you?" She pulls back the edge of Marina's cloak. "Come, young one, I like the manner of your garments well!"

Boult, too, notes her fine clothes—and decides, considering the value of fresh property, that he can wait a while. "Aye, by my faith, they shall not be changed yet!"

"Boult, spread thou *that* in the town!—report what a *sojourner*"—short-lived commodity—"we have!" the bawd urges. "You'll lose nothing by custom"—by her starting to sell. "When Nature framed *this* piece, she meant *thee* a good turn! Therefore say what a *paragon* she is—and thou hast the *harvest* out of thine own report!"

Boult intends to reap. "I warrant you, mistress, *thunder* shall not so awake the beds of *eels* as my giving out her beauty stir up the lewdly inclined! I'll bring some home *tonight!*"

Marina pales at the promises.

The old woman seizes her arm. "Come your ways; follow me."

Marina resists. "If fires be *hot*, knives *sharp*, or waters *deep*, then *tièd* will I still my virgin knot *keep!*" She appeals to the chaste goddess of the moon: "Dian, *aid* my purpose!"

The bawd cackles. "What have *we* to do with *Diana?*"

“Pray you, will you go with us?” she asks politely—and roughly shoves the princess forward.

## Chapter Seven Marina’s Way

Why, you are *foolish!*” snaps the large lady. “Can it be *undone?*”  
In their mansion atop the hill overlooking the capital of Tarsus, the governor faces his wife, appalled by her revelations. “Oh, Dionyza, such a piece of *slaughter the sun and moon* ne’er looked upon!”

She replies scornfully: “I think you’ll turn *child* again!”

“Were I chief lord of all this spacious *world*, I’d *give* it to *undo* the deed!” cries Cleon. “*Oh, that noble lady,*” he groans, remembering Marina, “much less in *lineage* than in *virtue*, yet a princess equal to any single crown o’ the earth!

“*Oh, villainous Leonine!*—whom thou hast *poisoned*, too!” He stares at her. “If thou hadst drunk what thou gave to him it had been a kind of justice *well becoming* thy crime!”

He shakes his head, thinking fearfully of the King of Tyre’s next visit—which is expected soon. “What canst thou *say* when noble Pericles shall demand his *child?*”

“That she is dead. Nurses are not the *Fates*—are to *foster*, not to preserve. She died in the night—I’ll *say* so. Who can cross it?—unless *you* play the pious innocent, and for an honest *attribute*”—to look so—“cry out she died by foul play.”

“*Oh, go to!*” growls Cleon. He rubs his throbbing temples. “Of all the faults beneath the heavens, the gods do like this worst!”

“Well, well, be you one of those that think the pretty *wrens* of Tarsus will fly hence and open this to Pericles? I do shame to think of what a noble *strain* you are, and of how *cowardly* a *spirit!*”

Cleon glares at the brazen woman. “Whoever but adds his *accord* to such proceeding, though not his prime consent, *he* did not flow from honourable sources!”

“Be it so, then,” says the lady calmly. “As yet none but *you* does know how she came dead, nor none *can* know, Leonine being gone.

“She did *disdain my child!*” says Dionyza angrily, “and stood between her and her fortunes! None would look on her but cast their gazes on *Marina’s* face!—whilst *ours* was blurred, and held as a *malkin,*”—a stray cat, “not worth the time of day!

“It *pierced me through!* And though *you* call my course unnatural—you your child *not well loving!*—yet *I* find it *meet!*—an enterprise of kindness performed for *your sole daughter!*”

“Heavens forgive it!”

Dionyza continues, coldly, “And as for Pericles, what should he say? We *wept* after her hearse, and still we *mourn*; her *monument* is almost finished, and her *epitaphs* in glittering, golden characters express the general *praise* of her—and *care* in *us*, at whose expense ’tis done!”

He stands aghast. “Thou art like the *harpy* which, with an *angel’s face* to *betray*, dost *seize* with an *eagle’s talons!*”

Dionyza sneers. “*You* are like one that doth swear to the gods, superstitiously, that *winter* kills all the flies!”

She turns away with contempt. “But yet I know you’ll do as *I* advise.”

Now Gower moves from the side to the center, watching as the scene again changes on the platform beyond.

“Thus time do we truncate, long leagues make *short!*—sail seas in but *cockles*, having merely *wished* for’t!—meaning to take you from bourne unto region, from each of them borne by *imagination!* By you being pardoned, we commit no crime to use but one language in each several clime where our passing scene does seem to live.



“I beseech you now to learn what I give, who i’ this gap can teach thee the stage of our story.

“Pericles again goes athwart the wayward sea, attended by many a lord and knight, to see his *daughter*—all his life’s delight!

“Old Escanes, whom Helicanus hath advanced to great and high estate, is left to govern, bear you in mind. Now Helicanus comes along behind.

“Well-sailing ship and bounteous wind have brought this king to *Tarsus!* Think *his* piloting thoughts, and thus shall *yours* with the steerage come on: *to fetch home his daughter* he first has gone!”

Gower steps to the right. “See them like motes and shadows move awhile; your ears unto your eyes I’ll then reconcile....”

*With all of his train following, King Pericles, his hair and beard now grown quite long, meets Cleon and Dionyza before the monument to Marina. The governor shows Pericles the memorial, on which ivy has already begun to grow. Pericles, weeping, reads the inscription. He cries out in lamentation, and departs in a deep and dolorous passion. The others, heads bowed, follow sadly.*

“See how belief may suffer from foul *show*,” says Gower, walking toward the tomb. “Thus *borrowed* passion stands for true-held woe.

“And Pericles—in sorrow all devoured, shot through with sighs, by bitterest tears o’ershowered—leaves Tarsus, and again embarks.

“He swears never to wash his face, nor cut his hairs; he puts on sackcloth.

“To sea he *bears* a tempest, which his *mortal* vessel tears! And *yet* he rides it out.”

Gower stops beside the monument. “Now hear you: Dionyza, with a wicked wit, Marina’s epitaph hath writ.” From the stone he reads aloud the inscription:

“The fairest, sweet’st, and best lies here,  
Who withered in her spring of year.  
She was of Tyrus, the king’s own daughter,  
On whom foul Death hath made this slaughter.  
*Marina* was she callèd, and thus at her birth  
Thetis,”—goddess of the sea—“being *proud*, swallowed some o’ the *earth!*  
Therefore the lands, fearing to be o’erflowed,  
Hath Thaisa’s birth-child on the *heavens* bestowed.  
Wherefore does Thetis, swearing she’ll never stint,  
Make raging battery upon shores of flint!”

Gower shakes his head. “No masking does befit hard *villainy* so well as soft and tender *flattery!*

“Let Pericles believe his daughter’s dead, and bear that his courses be orderèd by Lady Fortune, while our scene must play his *daughter’s* woes—and *heavily*, alas-the-day, in such *unholy* throes!

“Have patience, then, and think you now in *Mytilene*....”

On a dark and filthy street near the water, two affluent city gentlemen emerge from a brothel unsated—and astonished.

“Did you ever hear the *like?*”

“*No!*—nor never *shall* do in such a place as this, *she* being once gone!”

The younger looks back at the tawdry establishment. “But to have *divinity* preachèd *there!* Did you ever *dream* of such a thing?”

“No,” says the older man, stopping. “No,” he says thoughtfully, looking up the long street toward a temple. “Come, I am no more for bawdy-houses. Shall we go hear the vestals sing?”

The younger man has never before visited the shrine devoted to Diana, but he nods. “I’d do something now that is *virtuous*—and I am out of the road of rutting forever!”

They walk, still somewhat dazed, toward the hallowed site.

Inside the despicable den, the old procurer fumes—still unrewarded. “Well, I had rather than twice the worth of her she had *ne’er come here!*”

“Fie, *fie* upon her!” cries his wife. “She’s liable to freeze the god *Priapus* and *undo a whole generation!* We must either get her *ravished* or be *rid* of her!

“When she *should* for clients do fitment on her knees—and do the kindness of our profession for *me!*—she tells them her *reasons*, her *prayers!*—her master *quirks* that would make a *puritan* of the *Devil*, ’fore he’d cheapen a kiss of *hers!*”

Boult, too, is worried. “’Faith, I *must* ravish her, or she’ll disfurnish us of all our *cavaliers*, and make our *swearers* into *priests!*”

Marina’s refusals anger the master of the house. “Nay, as for me, the *pox* upon her *green-sickness!*”

The bawd sourly concurs. “’Faith, there’s no way to be rid of’t but by the *way* to the *pox!*”—the route to a disease of venery.

A tall man, very well dressed, enters the front room somewhat stealthily, and peers around in the gloom, holding before his face an elegantly feathered eye-mask at the end of a thin black rod. “Here comes the Lord Lysimachus—*disguised!*” she says, rolling her eyes.

“We should have *both* lord and low one, if the peevish baggage would but give way to customers!” grumbles Boult.

The nobleman asks curtly, “How now. Have a dozen of *virginities?*”

The slovenly woman laughs as she curtseys clumsily. “Now the gods do bless Your Honour!”

Boult bows. “I am glad to see Your Honour in good health!”

“You may *well* wish so,” says Lysimachus. “’Tis the better for *you* that your resorters *stand* upon sound legs. How now? *Wholesome* iniquity have you?—that a man may deal withal, yet defy the surgeon?”

She replies coyly: “We *have* one here, sir!—if she *would*—but there never came *her* like in Mytilene!”

“If she’d *do* ‘the deed of darkness,’ wouldst thou say?” A virgin might be challenging, he thinks.

“Your Honour knows well enough what to say!”

“Well, call forth.”

Boult wants to stimulate the customer. “Flesh and blood, sir, ‘the *white* and *red,*’ sir, you shall see arose! And she were a *rose* indeed, if she had but. . . .”

“*What*, prithee?” He thinks *bloomed* would be rather mild, here; *opened up*, perhaps.

“Oh, sir, I can be *modest.*”

Lysimachus laughs. “That dignifies the renown of a *bawd* less than it gives *good* report to call a whore *chaste!*” He waves the man away, and Boult goes to fetch the new addition to the firm.

The procurer’s wife smiles as Boult returns with Marina. “Here comes that which *grows* to the *stalk!*” she says lasciviously. “Never yet *plucked*, I can assure you! Is she not a *fair* creature?”

Lysimachus looks Marina up and down—and sighs; he knows how to negotiate. “’Faith, she would serve, after a long voyage at sea.” He hands the crone a coin. “Well, there’s for you. Leave us.”

She curtseys—but, taking Marina by the arm, she says to him, “I beseech Your Honour, give me leave! A *word*, and I’ll have done *presently.* . . .”

Lysimachus is eyeing the young lady. “I beseech you, *do!*”

Her voice hushed but urgent, the bawd tells Marina, “First, I would have you note this is an honourable man!” She means a *wealthy* one.

Marina looks at the patrician, who is watching impatiently from behind his mask. “So I desire to *find* him, so that I may *worthily* note him.”

“Next: he’s the *governor* of this *country!*” Its agents accept—extort, in her view—the payment of bribes. “And a man whom I am bound to—”

“You are bound to him indeed, if he govern the country; but how *honourable* he is in that, I know not.” Citizens should be dutiful; but the princess despises official toleration of the highly popular crimes committed here.

The bawd whispers to her insistently: “Pray you, without any more virginal fencing, *will you use him kindly?* He will line your apron with gold!”

“What he will do *graciously*, I will thankfully receive.”

Lysimachus comes nearer. “Have you done?” He smiles warmly.

“My lord, she’s not *pacèd* yet; you must take some pains to work her to your manage,” the old woman cautions—in horseman’s terms, as if the princess were simply coltish. She motions to her husband and Boulton: “Come, we will leave his honour and her together; go thy ways.”

Soon Marina is alone with the lord who would be stealthy.

“Now, pretty one, how long have you been at this trade?” he inquires politely.

“What trade, sir?”

“Why, I cannot name’t but I shall offend.”

“I cannot be offended with *my* trade. Please you to name it.”

“How long have you been of this *profession?*”

She has long professed her faith. “E’er since I can remember.”

Lysimachus has seen wily street urchins, of course. “Did you go to ’t so young? Were you a gamester at five or at seven?”

She frowns; beliefs are not games. “*Earlier*, too, sir—if now I be one.”

At *if*, Lord Lysimachus frowns, too. “Well, the *house* you dwell in proclaims you to be a creature of *sale!*”

She demands angrily, “Do you *know* this house to be a place of such resort, yet will come *into* ’t? I hear say you are of *honourable* parts, and are the *governor* of this place!”

He is taken aback. “Why, hath your principal made known unto you who I am?”

“Who is my ‘principal’?”

“Why, your... *herb*-woman—she that sets *seed and root* of shame and *iniquity!*” says the seeker of their fruits. He regards her with a cynical eye. “So, you have heard something of my *power*—and remain aloof for more *serious* wooing!”—to garner greater reward. “But I protest to thee, pretty one, *my* authority shall not *see* thee, let alone look *friendly* upon thee!

“Come, bring me to some private place! Come, *come!*”

Marina steps back. “If you were *born* to honour, *show it now!*” she demands. “If it was *put upon* you, *make good* the judgment that thought you worthy of it!”

“What’s this, what’s this?” he mumbles, annoyed and petulant. “*No more!*—be *sage!*” he warns, to urge a woman of low commerce to stop haggling.

But the princess is defiant. “As for me—who am a *maiden*, though most ungentle fortune have placed me in this *sty*, where, since I came, *diseases* have been sold for more than *remedies!*—*oh*, that the gods would set me *free* from this unhallowèd place, though they did change me to the poorest bird that flies i’ the purer air!” A tear appears on one cheek.

Lysimachus is stunned. “I did not think thou shouldst have spoken so well!” he gasps. “Ne’er dreamed thou *couldst!*”

“*Had* I brought hither a corrupted mind,” he says, flushing, “*thy* speech would alter it!”

He is stricken to see another tear slip down. “Hold—here’s gold for thee! Persever in that clear way thou goest—and the gods strengthen thee!”

Marina touches his hand, and looks up, meeting his eyes. “The good gods preserve *you.*”

Watching her honest face, Lysimachus blushes again. “As for me, be you thoughten that I came with no ill intent,” he says weakly. He looks around—and has an epiphany of sorts. He blinks, and murmurs, “To me the very doors and windows now savour vilely....”

“Fare thee well! Thou art a piece of *virtue*, and I doubt not but thy training hath been noble! Hold—here’s *more* gold for thee! A *curse* upon him—die he like a *thief!*—that robs thee of thy *goodness!*”

“If thou dost hear from me, it shall be for thy *good!*” he vows.

Now Boulton, who has heard *gold*, comes into the room, to claim a gratuity for the transaction. “I beseech Your Honour, one piece for me!”

“*Avaunt*, thou damnèd *door-keeper!*” cries the transformed governor. “Your house, but for this *virgin* that doth prop it, would *sink and overwhelm you! Away!*” He strides from the building in high indignation.

Boulton glares. “What’s *this?*” His jaws clench. “We must take *another course* with you! If your peevish *chastity*—which is not worth a *breakfast* in the cheapest country under the *sky!*—shall undo *the whole household*, let me be *gelded* like a spaniel!

“Come your ways!” He motions her toward the door leading to the bed-chambers.

Marina stands still. “Whither would you have me?”

“I must have your maidenhead *taken off* ere the common hangman”—Death—“shall execute it! Come your ways. We’ll have no more gentlemen driven away! *Come your ways*, I say!” He grasps her arm roughly.

The bawd has heard voices raised. “*How now?*” she asks, entering the room. “What’s the *matter?*”

“Worse and *worse*, mistress!” says Boulton. “She has here spoken *holy* words to the Lord *Lysimachus!*”

“Oh, abominable!” cries the crone.

Boulton regards Marina dourly. “She makes our profession, as it were, to *stink* afore the face of the gods!”

“Marry, hang her up forever!”

“The nobleman would have dealt with her like a *noble* man, but she sent him away as cold as a *snowball!*—saying his *prayers*, too!” adds the disgusted pander.

The weary bawd has suffered enough. “Boulton, take her away!—*use her at thy pleasure!* Crack the glass of her *virginity*—and make the rest *malleable!*”

The big man is confident. “Even if she were a *thornier* piece of ground than she *is*, she shall be *ploughed!*”

Marina looks upward. “Hark, *hark*, you *gods!*”

“She *conjures!*” warns the old woman. “*Away* with her! Would she had never come within my doors!” She scowls at Boulton. “Marry, hang *you!*—she’s born to *undo* us!”

“*You* will not go the way of *woman-kind?*” she says angrily to the princess. “Marry, you’ll *come up*, my *dish* of chastity, with *rosemary* and *bay!*”—well seasoned. She clumps away.

Boulton towers above Marina. “Come, mistress; come your ways with me.”

“Whither wilt thou have me?”

“To take from you the *jewel* you hold so dear!”

“Prithee, tell me one thing first....”

Boulton motions toward the door. “Come now for *your* first thing!” he taunts; *thing* is a term for the male member.

“What canst thou wish thine *enemy* to be?” asks Marina.

The pander laughs, picturing, wryly, a harsh punishment. “Why, I could wish him to be *my master*—or, rather, my *mistress!*”

But Marina shakes her head. “Neither of those is so badly off as *thou* art, since *they* do *better*, with thee in their command!

“*Thou* hold’st a place in reputation with which the *painèdest fiend of Hell* would not exchange: thou art the *damnèd doorkeeper* for every coistrel that comes inquiring for his *Tib!*”—scoundrel wanting a whore. “To the *fist* of every choleric rogue is *thine* ear liable!”—for cuffing. “*Thy* food is such as hath been *belched* on by *infected lungs!*”

Boulton shrugs. “What would *you* have me do?—go to the *wars*, would you?—where a man may serve seven years for the *loss of a leg!*—and have not money enough in the end to buy him a *wooden* one?”

Marina's eyes search his sad face—and pleads: “Do *anything* but this thou doest! Empty old receptacles or common shores of *filth*; serve by indenture to a *hangman!*—either of those ways is yet better than *this!*—for what *thou* professteth to be, a *baboon*, could he speak, would call a name *bought too dear!*”—*damned*.

“Oh, that the gods would safely *deliver* thee from this place!” She takes his hand and gives him the governor's penance. “Here—here's *gold* for thee.”

Boult blinks, astonished.

She has an alternative to offer, as well. “If that thy master would *gain* by me, proclaim that I can sing, weave, sew, and dance—with other *virtues*, which I'll keep from boasting of—and I will undertake to *teach* all of these! I doubt not that this populous city will yield many students!”

Boult, surprised, considers. “But *can* you teach all this you speak of?”

She challenges: “Prove that I can *not*, and you may take me home again and prostitute me to the basest groom”—*stable-boy*, not *wayward husband*, although the brothel accommodates both—“that doth frequent your house!”

Boult believes the lady could actually accomplish what she suggests. “Well, I will see what I can do for thee. If I *can* place thee, I will.”

“But amongst *honest* women,” Marina insists.

Boult laughs. “Faith, my acquaintance lies little amongst *them!*”

“As my master and mistress have bought you, there's no going but by their consent. Therefore I will make them acquainted with your purpose, but I doubt not I shall find them tractable enough.

“Come, I'll do for thee what I can.” He grins: “Come *your* ways!”

## Chapter Eight Recognitions

John Gower ambles forward and stands again at the right. “Marina thus the brothel 'scapes!  
“She moves into an *honest* house, so our story says. She *sings* like one immortal, and *dances* just as goddess-like to her *admirèd* lays!”—songs. “Poor clerks she skills; and with her needle enhances Nature's own shapes, of bud, bird, branch or berry—so well that her art sisters even *natural* roses!—yarn and silk are *twinned* with rubied cherry!

“As for pupils, lacks she none of *noble* race; they pour their bounty upon her—and the gains she gives to the cursèd bawd.

“Here we *Marina* place.”

Now he moves toward the other side, raising an eyebrow. “To her *father*, wind-guided on the sea, turn again. He arrives from whence we left him, lost; and *here* suppose him now, at anchor on this coast.

“Good Neptune's annual *feast* to keep, the city's now intent; from thence Lysimachus our Tyrian ship espies, its banners *sable*,”—funereal black, “but trimmed with rich *expense!* *To it* in his barge with hopeful fervor hies.”

Gower glances toward the tall vessel, with its solemn flag and costly fittings. “In our supposing, once more put your sight on heavy-hearted Pericles; think this his bark, where what in *action* is done, more than *I* might shall be uncoverèd.

“Please you, sit—and hark...”

An officer of Pericles' ship looks around the deck. “Where is Lord Helicanus? He can resolve you,” he tells the visitor who has just come aboard. “Oh, here he is—

“Sir, there's a barge put off from Mytilene, and in it is Lysimachus—the *governor*—who craves to come aboard. What is your will?”

“That he have his,” says Helicanus. The city man bows and returns with his news to the harbor vessel lying beside.

“Call up some gentlemen,” orders Helicanus, to ready a reception for the governor.

A Tyrian sailor goes below. “*Ho*, gentlemen! My lord summons!”

As they emerge into the sunshine, one asks, “Doth Your Lordship call?”

“Gentlemen, there’s some of worth would coming aboard; I pray ye, greet them fairly.”

Lysimachus and several of his lords arrive, smiling broadly. The noblemen from Mytilene are first greeted by the Tyrian officer; he brings them to old Helicanus, whose hair is now white. “Sir, this is the man that can, in aught you would, resolve you.”

Lysimachus steps forward to bow. “*Hail*, reverend sir! The gods preserve you!”

“And *you*, sir, to outlive the age *I* am,” says Helicanus, returning the courtesy, “and die as *I* would do!” His smile suggests *never*.

Lysimachus laughs. “You wish me *well*!”

“Being on shore honouring *Neptune*’s triumphs, and seeing this goodly vessel ride unto us, I made to it, to know of whence you are.”

“First, what is your place?”

“I am the governor of this land you lie before.”

“Sir, our vessel is of Tyre; in it, the *king*—a man who for this three months hath not spoken to any one, nor taken sustenance but enough to prolong his grief.”

On the wide wooden deck is a weather-grayed canvas shelter; redolent of despair, it allows the sorrowing king to take air, but remain in shadows. Its front curtain is closed.

“Upon what ground is his distemperature?”

“’Twould be too tedious to repeat,” says Helicanus, “but the main grief springs from the loss of a beloved *daughter*, and a *wife*.”

Lysimachus looks at the tent. “May we not see him?”

“You may; but bootless is your sight: he will not speak to any,” says Helicanus.

“Yet let me obtain my wish.”

Lord Helicanus nods. “Behold him,” he says, drawing back the curtain to reveal King Pericles, clad in rough sackcloth, supine and oblivious on a plain bench of dark-stained wood. His beard and hair are very long, and unkempt. “His was a *goodly* person, till the disaster, that one mortal night, drove him to *this*.”

Lysimachus kneels. “Sir!—*King!*—All *hail!* The gods *preserve* you! *Hail*, royal sir!”

“It is in vain,” Helicanus notes sadly. “He will not speak to you.”

One of the lords in Lysimachus’s party approaches him as he muses, watching the unresponsive ruler. “Sir, we have a *maid* in Mytilene I durst wager would win some words of him....”

“’Tis well bethought!” says the governor. “Questionless, with her sweet harmony and other chaste attractions she would *charm*, and make battery through his deafened parts which now are midway stopped up!”

He speaks to the nobleman, who hurries away to the rail.

Lysimachus tells his surrogate host, “She is held happily as the fairest of all!—and, with her fellow maids, is now within the leafy shelter that abuts against the island’s side.”

Helicanus sighs. “All’s surely effectless; yet nothing we’ll omit that bears *recovery*’s name!

“But since your kindness we have stretchèd thus far, let us beseech you that we may have, for our gold, *provisions*—wherein we are not destitute for want, but weary for their *staleness*.”

Mytilene will certainly be willing to sell fresh and various comestibles to the Tyrians. “Oh, sir, ’tis a courtesy which, if we should deny, the most-just gods for every *growth* would send a *caterpillar*, and so afflict our providence!”

He glances at the silent sovereign. “Yet once more let me entreat to know at large the cause of your king’s sorrow.”

“Sir, I will recount it to you.” Helicanus looks toward an opening in the bulwark. “But, see; I am prevented....”

The governor's barge has returned with the tall lord, and from the park beside her cottage he has brought Marina, attended by one of her patrician pupils.

"Ah, *here* is the lady that I sent for!" says Lysimachus. "*Welcome*, fair one!" he calls.

He asks, watching her with admiration. "Is't not a goodly presence?"

"She's a gallant lady!" says Helicanus, impressed by Marina's poise as she approaches.

Lysimachus nods. "She's such a one that, were I well assurèd came of a gentle kind and noble stock, I'd wish no better choice, and think me *rarely wed!*"

Reaching them, Marina curtsies, and the noblemen nod to her.

"Fair one," says Helicanus, "all *goodness* that consists in thy bounty *exercise* even here, where is a *kingly* patient! If that thy perspicacious and artificing feats can draw him but to *answer* thee in aught, thy sacred physic shall receive such pay as thy desires can wish!"

Marina smiles. "Sir, I will use my utmost skill in his recovery, provided that none but I and my companion maid be suffered to come near him." Men, she knows, tend to take over, and demand.

As Helicanus guides her to the slight sanctuary, the curtain is rustled by a breeze.

"Come, let us leave her," says the governor, "and may the gods make her prosperous!"

First, Marina sings, softly, a sweet song for the disheveled, odd-looking king.

- Watching, from away at the starboard side, Lysimachus asks, "Markèd he *your* music?"

- "No. Nor looked on us."

- The governor tells Helicanus: "See—she will *speak* to him...."

"Hail, sir," says Marina. "My lord, lend ear."

Pericles, moving for the first time, blinks, and mumbles almost inaudibly.

Marina steps forward. "I am a maid, my lord, who ne'er before *invited* eyes—but have been gazed on like a comet!" Unwanted attention, she suspects, has aggravated *his* loneliness.

Her voice continues. "She who speaks, my lord, it may be hath endured a grief that might equal yours, if both were justly weighed. Though wayward fortune did maim my state, my derivation was from ancestors who stood equivalent with mighty *kings!*"

"But Time hath obscurèd my parentage, and, in a world of awkward causalities, bound me in *servitude*...."

The king slowly rubs his eyes; without looking, he motions for her to leave.

*I will desist*.... Marina looks at his face, and is strangely moved. *But there is something glows upon my cheek, and whispers in mine ear, 'Go not till he speak!'*

Pericles sits up and pulls his long hair back at either side. He looks at her, and speaks—annoyed. "'Thy fortunes... parentage'—*good* parentage—to equal *mine!*" He challenges, his voice rising: "Was it not *thus?* What *say* you?"

"I said, my lord, if you did know my parentage, you would not abuse me."

Having seen her now, Pericles nods. "I do think so." She averts her own gaze as he stares. "Pray you, turn your eyes upon me. You are like something that...." He squints. "What country-woman? Here, of these shores?"

"No—nor of *any* shores. Yet I was brought forth *mortal*, and am no other than I appear."

Pericles, unwilling to deal with a riddle, slumps back with a groan. *I am great with woe, and shall deliver* weeping!

But he turns his head to regard her again—thoughtfully. *My dearest wife was like this maid—and such a one my daughter might have been*....

*My queen's square brows; her stature to an inch, and as a wand so straight; her eyes as jewel-like, and cased as richly; as silver-voicèd—in speech, another Juno, who starves the ears she feeds, and makes them hungrier the more she gives them!*

"Where do you live?"

"Where I am but a stranger," Marina replies. "From the deck you may discern the place."

"Where were you bred? And how achieved you these endowments, which to own make you more than rich?"

Marina smiles. "If I should tell *my* history, it would seem like lies, disdainèd in the reporting."

"Prithee, speak!" says Pericles. *Falseness cannot come from thee; for thou look'st as modest as Justice, and thou seem'st a palace for the crownèd Truth to dwell in!*

He says, kindly, "I *will* believe thee, and make my senses to credit thy relation of points that seem impossible—for thou look'st like one I loved.

"Who were thy friends? Didst thou not say, when I did wave thee back—which was when I misperceivèd thee—that thou camest from good descending?"

"So indeed I did."

"Report thy *parentage*," says Pericles, sliding forward. "I think thou said'st thou hadst been tossed from wrong to injury—and that thou thought'st thy griefs might equal *mine*, if both were opened."

"Some such thing I said—but said no more than what my thoughts did warrant me was *likely*...."

"*Tell* thy story! If *thine*, considerèd, prove the *thousandth part* of *my* enduring, thou art a *man*, and I have suffered like a *girl*!"

"What were thy friends? How lost thou them? Thy *name*, my most-kind virgin? Recount, I do beseech thee!

"Come, sit by me."

As her young companion watches, she perches beside him, at the edge of the bench. "My name is Marina."

Pericles gasps. "Oh, *I am mocked!*" he cries, jumping up, "and *thou* by some incensèd *god* art sent hither to make the world *laugh* at me!"

"*Patience*, good sir," she says gently, "or here I'll cease."

He thinks, *And thou dost look like Patience, gazing o'er kings' graves and smiling Extremity out of action!*

Calming himself, Pericles promises, "Nay, I'll be *patient*. Thou little know'st how thou dost startle me, to call thyself *Marina!*" He sits down.

"The name was given me by one that had some power: my *father*—and a king."

"*What?* A *king's* daughter—and called *Marina!*"

"You said you would *believe* me," she protests, coming to her feet. "But not to be a troubler of your peace, I will end here."

Pericles rises, staring at her, dazed. "But are you flesh and blood?—have you a working pulse, and share no *fairy* motion?"

"Well; speak on.... Where were you born?—and *wherefore* called Marina?"

"Called Marina for I was born at sea."

"*At sea!* What mother?"

"My mother was the daughter of a king; she died the minute I was born—as my good nurse Lychorida hath oft, weeping, reported."

Pericles gapes. "Oh, stop there a little!" *This is the rarest dream that e'er dull sleep did mock sad fools withal! This cannot be!—my daughter's* burièd!

"Well," he says, as soothingly as he can, "where were you bred?" Seeing that she is becoming alarmed, he moves back a little. "I'll hear you more—to the bottom of your story, and never interrupt you...."

Marina is doubtful. "You *scorn!* Believe me, 'twere best I did give o'er."

"I will *believe* you *by the syllable* in what you shall deliver!" pledges Pericles. "Yet, give me leave to ask: how came you unto these parts? Where were you bred?"

"The king my father did in *Tarsus* leave me, till cruel *Cleon*, with his wicked wife, did seek to *murder* me! They having worked a villain to attempt it, he had *drawn* to *do* it! Then a crew of pirates came and rescued me, brought me to *Mytilene*—"



His cry of angry dismay has halted her story. “Well, good sir,” she says, flustered, “whither would *you* have me?” And now *she* is surprised. “Why do you *weep*?”

He is staring, speechless.

“It may be you think me an impostor. *No*, in good faith!—I *am* the daughter to good *Pericles*, if King *Pericles be!*”

The monarch is staggering. “*Ho!*—*Helicanus!*”

“Calls my lord?”

Pericles grasps his friend’s arm for support. “Thou art a grave and noble counsellor, most wise in general! Tell me, if thou canst, who this maid is—or is *likely* to be—that thus hath made me weep!”

“I know not.” He motions to the governor. “But here’s the regent, sir, of Mytilene, who speaks nobly of her...”

Lysimachus comes forward to Pericles. “She would never tell us her parentage!—being demanded that, she would sit still, and weep!”

“Oh, *Helicanus*, *strike* me, honoured sir!” pleads the king. “Give me a gash, put me to sudden *pain!*—lest this great *sea of joys* rushing upon me o’erbear the shores of my mortality, and drown me with its sweetness!”

He faces Marina: “Oh, come hither, thou that *beget*’st him that did *thee* beget!—thou that wast *born* at sea, *buried* at Tarsus, and *found* again at sea!

“Oh, *Helicanus*, down on thy *knees!*—*thank* the holy gods as loud as their *thunder* threatens us!” he cries. “*This is Marina!*”

“What was thy *mother*’s name?” he asks urgently, longing to hear it. “Tell me but *that!*—for truth can never be *confirmed* enough, though doubts be put to sleep...”

“First, sir, I pray: what is *your* title?”

“I am *Pericles of Tyre!* In the rest you’ve said thou hast been *godlike* perfect! Only tell me now my drownèd queen’s *name*, and become the heir to *Pericles’ kingdom*—and *another* like to thy father’s!”—Pentapolis.

Amazed, she kneels. “Is it no more to be your daughter than to say my mother’s name was *Thaisa?*” As she looks up at him; her face reflects both pride and sorrow: “*Thaisa* was my mother, who did end the minute I began.”

“Now, *blessing* on thee!” His tears are flowing freely. “*Rise!*—thou art *my child!*”

Father and daughter embrace, both weeping in joy. He kisses her cheek tenderly.

He calls: “Give me fresh garments—mine *own*, *Helicanus!* She is *not* dead at Tarsus—as she *would* have been by savage *Cleon!* She shall tell thee all!—and thou shalt kneel, justified in *knowledge* she is thy very *princess!*”

*Helicanus*, astonished by the discoveries, sends a man to fetch the king’s proper raiment.

Pericles now sees Lord Lysimachus. “Who is this?”

“Sir, ’tis the governor of Mytilene,” says *Helicanus*, “who, hearing of your melancholy state, did come to see you.”

“I embrace you!” cries Pericles to Lysimachus, doing so, for Marina has thrived here. “Give me my robe!” he cries, as it is brought to him; he pulls on the long red cape trimmed with ermine. “Now am I wild only in my *beholding!*” He is unable to take his gaze from Marina.

But then he pauses for a moment, and looks up—humbly. *O heavens, bless my girl!*

The onlookers watch, entranced, as the reborn king fairly glows with new life.

“But, *hark!*... what *music?*” he asks softly, now standing quite still. “Tell *Helicanus*, my Marina!—tell *him* o’er, point by point!—for yet he seems to doubt, how surely you are my daughter!”

And then he stops, and again listens. “But... what music?” he asks, his voice hushed.

“My lord, I *hear* none,” *Helicanus* tells him, watching as the king peers around—then upward.

“None?” Pericles laughs joyously. “The music of the *spheres!*”—heavenly harmonies. He backs slowly toward the bench, listening intently. “*List, my Marina!*”

Helicanus cautions the others: “It is not good to cross him; give him way.”

Pericles sits and listens, eyes closed, “*Rarest sounds!*—do ye not hear?”

“My lord, I hear,” says his friend softly.

For the king, though, sounds *are* drifting from above, and a tingling rapture settles upon him.

“Most heavenly *music!*” breathes Pericles, overwhelmed; he sinks back, peacefully. “It bids me unto listening... and thick slumber hangs upon mine eyes....”

“Let me rest,” he sighs.

Helicanus motions to Pericles’ attendants. “A pillow for his head!”

“So leave him, all,” he urges quietly. Marina and the others move away, following him aft.

“My companion friends,” Helicanus tells them, “if this but answer to my just *belief*, I’ll well recount for you!” They listen to the story, well known in Tyre, of the king’s trials.

As Pericles lies dreaming, in a beautiful vision the goddess Diana seems to descend and hover above him. Her speech is subtle, warm, and charming; it echoes faintly, as if coming from a great distance.

*My temple stands in Ephesus. Hie thee thither, and upon mine altar make sacrifice.*

*With my maidens’ priestess met, do the people call; together mourn thy crosses and thy daughter’s—all! There reveal how at sea thou didst lose thy wife, and give them repetition to the life!*

*Perform my bidding!—or thou’lt live in woe; do it, and be happy, by my silver bow!*

She smiles. *Awake!*—and tell thy dream!

With that, she vanishes.

Slowly blinking, Pericles rises, calm and resolute. *Celestial Diana, goddess argentine, —of the moon’s silvery light—I will obey thee!*

“Helicanus!” he calls.

That lord returns, with Lysimachus and Marina. “Sir?”

“My purpose was for Tarsus—there to *strike* the inhospitable *Cleon!*”

“But I am for *other* service first! Toward *Ephesus* turn our blown sails! Eftsoons I’ll tell thee why!”

He takes Marina by the hand and faces Lysimachus. “Shall we refresh us, sir, upon your shore, and give you gold for such provision as our intents will need?”

“Sir, with all my heart! And when you come ashore, I have *another* suit,” says Lysimachus gazing at Marina—who blushes.

Pericles beams. “You shall *prevail*, were it to *woo my daughter!*—for it seems you have been *noble* towards her! Come, my Marina!”

“Sir, lend me your arm,” says she.

Lysimachus lead the way to the barge, and soon they have crossed over the tranquil blue water, toward the governor’s sunny mansion in the center of great Mytilene.

## Chapter Nine Recovery

**N**ow our sands are almost run; more, but little, yet to come,” old Gower advises.

“This, my last boon, give unto me, and *with* such kindness do *believe* ye!

“You aptly will suppose what *pageantry*, what feats, what shows, what *minstrelsy*, there were in Mytilene!—what pretty din the regent made, here to greet these kin!

“So *well* he thrived, he’s promised to be *wived!*—to the fair Marina!

“But we’re done no-wise till has been made by Pericles his *sacrifice*—as bade by adorèd Diana.

“Whereto being bound, the *interim*, pray you, all compound in feathered briefness: wishes fall out as willed, and sails are soon filled!”

As the new scene is revealed, he moves aside. “At *Ephesus* in the *temple*, see our king and all his company! That hither he can come so *soon* is, thank you, by *your fancy’s* doom!”

The high priestess stands, with four virgins at each side, near the raised altar in the temple of Diana, ready for the sacrifice arranged for today. On the steps below are Lord Cerimon and many other residents of Ephesus, noble, gentle and common.

A regal train approaches. At the front with the still-unshorn sovereign and Helicanus are Marina and Lysimachus.

Pericles kneels and looks to the sky. “Hail, *Diana!* To perform thy just command, I here profess myself the King of Tyre—who, frighted from my country, did wed at Pentapolis the fair Thaisa.

“At sea in birthing bed dièd she, but brought forth a maid-child called Marina—who, O goddess, wears yet thy silver livery”—is still a virgin.

“At Tarsus was she nursèd with Cleon—who at fourteen years sought to *murder* her!

“But her better stars brought her to Mytilene—’gainst whose shore riding, our fortunes brought us toward the maid, and where, by her own most-clear remembrance, she made herself known my daughter,—”

A cry shatters the calm: “*By voice and face, you are! You are!*” cries the priestess. “O royal *Pericles!*” She moans—and faints, falling to the stone.

Pericles rushes to her side. “What means the nun? She dies! *Help*, gentlemen!”

Old Cerimon comes to them and kneels. “*Noble sir*, if you have told Diana’s altar true, *this is your wife!*”

Pericles only groans. “Reverend appearer, no. I threw *her* overboard from these very arms.”

Cerimon smiles. “*Upon this coast*, I warrant you....”

“’Tis most certain.”

“*Look at the lady!*” says Cerimon, watching as she opens her eyes. “Ah, she’s but *o’erjoyed!*”

“Early one blustering morn this lady was thrown upon this shore! I oped the coffin, found there rich *jewels*—”

“Now we see *one!*” cries Pericles.

“Great sir, I restorèd her, and placed her here in Diana’s temple; the others shall be brought to you at my house—whither I *invite* you. *Look!*—Thaisa is *recoverèd!*” They help the lady to her feet.

“Oh, let *me* look!” she says weakly, peering at the king. “If he be none of mine, my sanctity will to my sense bend no licentious ear, but curb it, spite of seeing....”

“Oh, my lord, are you not *Pericles*? Like him you *spake!*—like him you *are!* Did you not cite a *tempest*, a *birth*, and a *death*?”

Pericles hearkens, stunned. “The voice of dead Thaisa!”

“That Thaisa am *I*, supposed dead and drowned!”

Pericles looks up. “Immortal *Diana!*” he whispers reverently.

The priestess smiles, and moves closer. “*Now* I know you better!” She shows him a golden ring. “When we with tears parted Pentapolis, the king my father gave *you* such a ring....”

Pericles shows her its twin—and jubilates, despite the tears. “This, *this!* *No more*, you gods!—your present kindness makes my past miseries *sports!* You shall do well if, on the touching of her lips, I may *melt*, and no more be seen!”

He spreads his hands wide. “Oh, come, be buried a second time, *within these arms!*” The reunited lovers embrace in wonder.

“My heart leaps to be gone to my mother’s bosom!” cries Marina, coming to Thaisa, and taking her hand.

“Look who kneels here!” Pericles tells his wife. “Flesh of *thy* flesh, Thaisa!—thy burden at sea—and called *Marina* for she was yielded there!”

As her arms encircle her rising daughter, Thaisa is happily weeping. “*Blest!*—and *mine own!*”

Lord Helicanus comes to kneel, at last, before Thaisa. “Hail, madam!—and my *queen!*”

She dabs at the tears, smiling. “I know you not....”

“You have heard me *say*,” Pericles tells her. “When I did fly from Tyre, I left behind an ancient substitute—can you remember what I called the man? I have named him oft....”

Thaisa nods. “’Twas *Helicanus* then.”

“Ever *confirmation!* *Embrace* him, dear Thaisa!—this is *he!*”

“Now do I long to hear how you were *found*; how impossibly *preservèd!*—and whom to *thank*, besides the gods, for this great *miracle!*”

Thaisa leads him to the healer. “*Lord Cerimon*, my lord!—*this* man, through whom the gods have shown their power, can from first to last resolve you.”

Pericles bows to the nobleman. “Reverend sir, the gods can have no *mortal* officer more like a god than you! Will you deliver how this dead queen *re-lives?*”

Cerimon bows to the king. “*I will*, my lord! Beseech you, first go with me to my house, where you shall be shown all that was found with her, and hear how she came to be placèd in the temple—no needful thing omitted!”

Pericles kneels before the goddess’s statue. “Pure Diana, *bless thee* for thy vision! I will offer nightly oblations to thee!”

He rises, and brings Lysimachus to the queen. “Thaisa, this prince—the fair betrothèd of your daughter—shall *marry* her at *Pentapolis!*”

“And now, this ornament that makes *me* look *dismal* will I clasp to my form!” he proclaims, embracing Thaisa. He turns to Marina and touches his hair. “And what these fourteen years no razor touched, to grace thy *marriage-day*, I’ll beautify!”

Thaisa thinks of her childhood home at Pentapolis. She tells Pericles, sadly, “Lord Cerimon hath good, credible letters, sir, that my father’s dead.”

Pericles remembers well King Simonides’ warm good humor. He says, softly, as she lays her head on his shoulder, “*Heaven’s* made a *star* of him.”

“Yet there, my queen, we’ll celebrate their nuptials, and ourselves will in that kingdom spend our following days.

“Our son-in-law and daughter shall in *Tyrus* reign!

“Lord Cerimon, we do in *longing* wait to hear the rest, as yet untold!

“Sir, lead us the way!”

John Gower returns.

“When Fame has spread the cursèd deeds of Cleon ’gainst honoured Pericles, to such a *rage* does the city turn, they *him and his* in the palace *burn!* The gods so seem content to punish for *murder not done*, if follows *consent*.

“Of Antiochus and his daughter you’ve already heard: to a monstrous lust, the due and just reward.

“In Helicanus you may well descry a figure of truth, of faith, of loyalty.

“In reverend Cerimon there well appears the worth that learnèd charity ever wears.

“Pericles’ queen and daughter you’ve *seen*: though assailed with fortunes fierce and keen, *virtue* preservèd from fell destruction’s blast, led on by heaven, is crowned with *joy* at last!

“So, your patience evermore attending, may *new* joy wait upon *you!*—for here our play has ending!”