

Cymbeline 1.1a

Enter two Gentlemen

- First Gentleman** You do not meet a man but frowns: our bloods
No more obey the heavens than our courtiers
Still seem as does the king.
- Second Gentleman** But what's the matter?
- First Gentleman** His daughter, and the heir of's kingdom, whom
He purposed to his wife's sole son--a widow
That late he married--hath referr'd herself
Unto a poor but worthy gentleman: she's wedded;
Her husband banish'd; she imprison'd: all
Is outward sorrow; though I think the king
Be touch'd at very heart.
- Second Gentleman** None but the king?
- First Gentleman** He that hath lost her too; so is the queen,
That most desired the match; but not a courtier,
Although they wear their faces to the bent
Of the king's look's, hath a heart that is not
Glad at the thing they scowl at.
- Second Gentleman** And why so?
- First Gentleman** He that hath miss'd the princess is a thing
Too bad for bad report: and he that hath her--
I mean, that married her, alack, good man!
And therefore banish'd--is a creature such
As, to seek through the regions of the earth
For one his like, there would be something failing
In him that should compare. I do not think
So fair an outward and such stuff within
Endows a man but he.
- Second Gentleman** You speak him far. What's his name and birth?
- First Gentleman** I cannot delve him to the root: his father
Was call'd Sicilius, who did join his honour
Against the Romans with admired success,
So gain'd the sur-addition Leonatus;
And had, besides this gentleman in question,
Two other sons, who in the wars o' the time
Died with their swords in hand; for which their father,
Then old and fond of issue, took such sorrow
That he quit being, and his gentle lady,

Big of this gentleman our theme, deceased
 As he was born. The king he takes the babe
 To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,
 Breeds him and makes him of his bed-chamber,
 Puts to him all the learnings that his time
 Could make him the receiver of; which he took,
 As we do air, fast as 'twas minister'd,
 And in's spring became a harvest, lived in court--
 Which rare it is to do--most praised, most loved,
 A sample to the youngest; to his mistress,
 For whom he now is banish'd, her own price
 Proclaims how she esteem'd him and his virtue;
 By her election may be truly read
 What kind of man he is.

Second Gentleman

I honour him

Even out of your report. But, pray you, tell me,
 Is she sole child to the king?

First Gentleman

His only child.

He had two sons: if this be worth your hearing,
 Mark it: the eldest of them at three years old,
 I' the swathing-clothes the other, from their nursery
 Were stol'n, and to this hour no guess in knowledge
 Which way they went.

Second Gentleman

How long is this ago?

First Gentleman

Some twenty years.

Second Gentleman

That a king's children should be so convey'd,
 So slackly guarded, and the search so slow,
 That could not trace them!

First Gentleman

Howsoe'er 'tis strange,

Or that the negligence may well be laugh'd at,
 Yet is it true, sir.

Second Gentleman

I do well believe you.

First Gentleman

We must forbear: here comes the gentleman,
 The queen, and princess.

Exeunt