

Cymbeline abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 3

Heroic

Situation: Having asked a Lord if he were among those who fled from the battle and learned that he was, Posthumus, excited over his role in helping to rout the Romans, lets the Lord know what heroes Belarius and his sons were, the Lord not particularly impressed.

LORD: Cam'st thou from where they made the stand?

POSTHUMUS: Though you, it seems come from the fliers.

LORD: Ay.

POSTHUMUS: No blame be to you, sir, for all was lost. The King himself of his wings destitute, the army broken, and but the backs of Britons seen, all flying through a narrow lane; the enemy full-hearted struck down some mortally, some slightly, leaving cowards living to die with lengthened shame.

LORD: Where was this lane?

Posthumus to Lord

A white-bearded, ancient man did this for
His country. He and two handsome lads, more
Boys than men, secured the pass, crying "our
Timid die flying, not our men." Halt, or
We will act like Romans; do not cower,
Halt. These three men, through their actions, did more
Than the whole army that did nothing. Sir,
They grinned like lions, routing the chaser,
Turning our poor cowards, as one could see,
Overcome when ten chased one, into men,
Each man now a slaughterman of twenty.
Do not wonder at it! Believe it when
Two boys, a man twice a boy, and a lane
Preserved the Britons. 'Twas the Romans bane.

LORD: Farewell. You're angry.