

## Cymbeline abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 1

### History

**Situation: Cymbeline's daughter, Imogen, has recently married Posthumus. One gentleman lets another know just who this young Posthumus is. We also learn that some twenty years ago the king's two sons were stolen "from their nursery."**

SECOND GENTLEMAN: You go far in praising him.

FIRST GENTLEMAN: I do limit him rather than unfold his measure duly.

SECOND GENTLEMAN: What's his name and birth?

#### First Gentleman to Second Gentleman

**Sicilius, his father, with honors,  
Did serve King Cassibelan in the wars  
Against the Romans with admired success,  
They being then led by Julius Caesar,  
Earning him the surname Leonatus.  
From grief he quit being when his other  
Sons, swords in hand, died. Then his gentle wife  
Deceased as this baby was born; his life  
Left to the hands of the King, who cared for  
Him, he now Posthumus Leonatus.  
He was bred as a sample to the more  
Mature and as a guide to those who fuss.  
That the princess selected him with his  
Virtues shows us the kind of man he is.**

SECOND GENTLEMAN: But pray you tell me, is she sold child to th' 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' th' swathing clothes the other, from their nursery were stol'n, and to this hour to 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 should be so slackly guarded, and the search so slow that could not trace them?

FIRST GENTLEMAN: howsoe'er 'tis strange, yet it is true, sir.