

Cymbeline abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 1

Defiant

Situation: The Queen boldly tells the King to stand up to Rome, reminding him of times past when “Londoners’ strutted when Cassibelan almost broke Caesar’s sword.” Lucius, on behalf of Augustus Caesar, arrives in London and demands that Britain begin tendering past war reparations as a tribute to Caesar in the amount of three thousand pounds annually.

CYMBELINE: What would Augustus Caesar with us?

LUCIUS: When Julius Caesar was in this Britain, he conquered it. Cassibelan, thine uncle, granted Rome a tribute, yearly three thousand pounds, which by thee lately is left untendered.

CLOTEN: There be many Caesars ere such another Julius. Britain’s a world by itself, and we will pay nothing.

Queen to King

Remember, sir, the kings your ancestors,
Together with the bravery of your shores,
This isle, standing as Neptune’s, is ribbed with
Rocks unscalable and roaring waters;
With sands that suck up enemy boats if
They try to land. And the shame of Caesar’s
Non-bragging conquest as he was carried
From our coast, twice beaten, when he tarried
To secure ignorant baubles that were
Soon crushed like eggshells against our rocks. At
That time, our great courageous kings did stir
Britons with joy. For some time after that
Londoner’s strutted when your famed grand-Lord,
Cassibelan, almost broke Caesar’s sword.

CLOTEN: Come, there’s no more tribute to be paid. Our kingdom is stronger than it was at that time, and, as I said, there is no more such Caesars.

CYMBELINE: Son, let your mother end.