

# Cymbeline

Act V, sc. 5 (line 152)

## IACHIMO

Upon a time,--unhappy was the clock  
That struck the hour!--it was in Rome,--accursed  
The mansion where!--'twas at a feast,--O, would  
Our viands had been poison'd, or at least  
Those which I heaved to head!--the good Posthumus--  
What should I say? he was too good to be  
Where ill men were; and was the best of all  
Amongst the rarest of good ones,--sitting sadly,  
Hearing us praise our loves of Italy  
For beauty that made barren the swell'd boast  
Of him that best could speak, for feature, laming  
The shrine of Venus, or straight-pight Minerva.  
Postures beyond brief nature, for condition,  
A shop of all the qualities that man  
Loves woman for, besides that hook of wiving,  
Fairness which strikes the eye--

*CYMBELINE*

*I stand on fire:*

*Come to the matter.*

## IACHIMO

All too soon I shall,  
Unless thou wouldst grieve quickly. This Posthumus,

Most like a noble lord in love and one  
That had a royal lover, took his hint;  
And, not dispraising whom we praised,--therein  
He was as calm as virtue--he began  
His mistress' picture; which by his tongue  
being made,  
And then a mind put in't, either our brags  
Were crack'd of kitchen-trolls, or his description  
Proved us unspeaking sots.

**CYMBELINE**

*Nay, nay, to the purpose.*

**IACHIMO**

Your daughter's chastity--there it begins.  
He spake of her, as Dian had hot dreams,  
And she alone were cold: whereat I, wretch,  
Made scruple of his praise; and wager'd with him  
Pieces of gold 'gainst this which then he wore  
Upon his honour'd finger, to attain  
In suit the place of's bed and win this ring  
By hers and mine adultery. He, true knight,  
No lesser of her honour confident  
Than I did truly find her, stakes this ring;  
And would so, had it been a carbuncle  
Of Phoebus' wheel, and might so safely, had it  
Been all the worth of's car. Away to Britain

Post I in this design: well may you, sir,  
Remember me at court; where I was taught  
Of your chaste daughter the wide difference  
'Twixt amorous and villanous. Being thus quench'd  
Of hope, not longing, mine Italian brain  
'Gan in your duller Britain operate  
Most vilely; for my vantage, excellent:  
And, to be brief, my practise so prevail'd,  
That I return'd with simular proof enough  
To make the noble Leonatus mad,  
By wounding his belief in her renown  
With tokens thus, and thus; averting notes  
Of chamber-hanging, pictures, this her bracelet,--  
O cunning, how I got it!--nay, some marks  
Of secret on her person, that he could not  
But think her bond of chastity quite crack'd,  
I having ta'en the forfeit. Whereupon--  
Methinks, I see him now--