

# Cymbeline

by William Shakespeare

Act V, sc. 4. Line 123 – Verse/Prose

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## Posthumus Leonatus

Sleep, thou hast been a grandsire, and begot

A father to me; and thou hast created

A mother and two brothers: but, O scorn!

Gone! they went hence so soon as they were born:

And so I am awake. Poor wretches that depend

On greatness' favour dream as I have done,

Wake and find nothing. But, alas, I swerve:

Many dream not to find, neither deserve,

And yet are steep'd in favours: so am I,

That have this golden chance and know not why.

What fairies haunt this ground? A book? O rare one!

Be not, as is our fangled world, a garment

Nobler than that it covers: let thy effects

So follow, to be most unlike our courtiers,

As good as promise.

*Reads*

'When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be lopped branches, which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.'

'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen

Tongue and brain not; either both or nothing;

Or senseless speaking or a speaking such

As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,

The action of my life is like it, which

I'll keep, if but for sympathy.