

The New Kittredge Shakespeare

# William Shakespeare

A dramatic painting of a stormy sea. A dark wooden ship is being tossed by large, white-capped waves. In the background, a tall, craggy rock formation rises from the sea. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a bright light breaking through on the left side, creating a rainbow-like glow. The foreground shows a rocky shore with a small pool of water reflecting the scene.

## PERICLES

Prince of Tyre

Series Editor: James H. Lake

Edited by  
Jeffrey Kahan

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**PERICLES**  
**PRINCE OF TYRE**

Editor

**Jeffrey Kahan**

*University of La Verne*

Series Editor

James H. Lake

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## INTRODUCTION

### ***Pericles*: A Dark Biblical Story with Pagan Enchantments**

*Pericles* begins with John Gower coming on stage. Gower is not a character of Shakespeare's creation but is, in fact, an actual and—even in Shakespeare's time—long-dead author. Rising from the grave, Gower tells us a story, but not one of his own devising. Rather, this author tells us a story that comes from the pen of yet another, presumably even older author.<sup>1</sup> It's tempting to see Gower as a stand-in for Shakespeare here, both authors retelling stories that came down from a golden age; stories that are oft repeated at “festivals,/On ember-eyes and holy-ales” (1.0.5-6).

And what a story it is! The first time we meet Prince Pericles, he is about to risk his life to win the hand of a fair princess. The charming context, however, soon turns grim: there are crimes of incest in Antiochus' court which Pericles uncovers and from which he must flee. His escape from one peril leads to still other adventures: Pericles is shipwrecked on foreign shores; he soon makes his way to the court of the good King Simonides, where he wins the love of yet another princess, this one as faithful as the other was falsehearted. Pericles and his bride, Thaisa, now great with child, happily set sail to the prince's kingdom of Tyre. But a sinister storm brews, the skies thunder and flash, the billows roll, surge, and snap, and Thaisa, in the wet misery of the storm, dies while giving birth to a daughter. The grieving prince seals his wife in a casket filled with jewels and casts her into the furious sea. In the morning, her coffin is found by some villagers, who take it to Cerimon, a local healer and wizard, who uses science, music, and magic to revive the seemingly-dead princess. Suddenly inspired with religious fervor, Thaisa decides to dedicate her remaining years to the worship of the goddess Diana. Meanwhile, Pericles leaves his infant daughter Marina with King Cleon and Queen Dionyza of Tarsus. The years pass, and Marina, now a beautiful woman, is much beloved by everyone in Tarsus—everyone that is, except Queen Dionyza, who believes that

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1 A number of editions to the play are cited in this Introduction. Their full bibliographical references can be found in the Bibliography and Filmography (pg. 101). Shakespeare's Gower probably has in mind Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon* (ca.1186). See Alfred R. Bellinger, Yale Shakespeare ed. 1925: 112-14.

her own daughter is overshadowed by Marina's gracious beauty. Dionyza soon hires Leonine to kill the princess. Amazingly, Marina escapes only to be kidnapped by pirates. Nonetheless, Leonine informs Dionyza that Marina is dead. She and King Cleon agree to tell Pericles that Marina died suddenly and of natural causes. Upon hearing that his daughter is dead, Pericles falls into a deep and burying depression. He might have been still more disconsolate were he to have learned that Marina survived an attempted assassination only to be sold to a brothel in the port city of Mytilene, where men bid to be the first to rape her. As horrible as this sounds, the situation soon turns comic when all her libidinous customers are chastened by her purity and modesty, including Lysimachus, governor of the town. Marina leaves the brothel, her virginity still intact, and teaches the women of the town to sing, weave, sew, and dance. When Pericles' ship arrives at Mytilene, Lysimachus wonders if Marina's loveliness might not cheer the grief-stricken prince. She plays her harp and sings, but Pericles remains bleak and impassive, until Marina tells him the story of her life. When Pericles realizes that his daughter lives, he is overjoyed and, moments later, hearing the miraculous music of the gods, falls into a trace in which Diana, the goddess of chastity, orders him to make sacrifice at her temple in Ephesus. Pericles obeys the divine decree and is there reunited with his long-lost wife Thaisa. The good news continues. Lysimachus, who helped save Marina from the brothel in Mytilene, asks Pericles for Marina's hand in honorable marriage. The play closes with Gower assuring us that Antiochus, Dionyza, and all other evil-doers are punished for their crimes.

As Algernon Charles Swinburne has noted, Pericles is not someone we are likely to meet, except in the classical writings of Homer or in the Testaments of the Hebrews and Christians.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, Thaisa's and Marina's respective returns from the dead suggest a Shakespearean interest in resurrection myths. Likewise, Marina's miraculous ability to shield herself from danger may suggest the broad outlines of Daniel in the lion's den. To most, however, Pericles' suffering recalls the biblical story of Job: a stormy life, unendurable, undeserved, and seemingly unceasing. Setting aside biblical parallels for the moment, we may certainly agree that Pericles' labors rival those of Greek myth. The incest of Antiochus' court mirrors that of Oedipus; his shipwreck recalls the misadventures of Odysseus, the pawn of Circe's lust and Hera's vengeance; Cerimon's revival of Thaisa echoes Orpheus' music-charming attempt to save Eurydice. These mythic devices may seem farfetched in our world, dominated by politics, paperwork, student loans, and mortgage payments. Shakespeare's evocation of this long-dead poet, who evokes a still older poet, may only further increase that seemingly unbridgeable distance. That was then; this is now. The time of heroes, if it ever existed, is no longer.

And yet we should not dismiss fiction because it violates our rational considerations. *Pericles* is not a journey through history or geography; it is not a

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2 Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Pericles and Other Studies* (London: For Private Circulation, 1914), 17.

record of battles, of zero-sum gains and net losses. Those factual narratives, valuable in their own right, can be measured as true or false against historical records. *Pericles* is a story of poetry and the imagination, one in which we journey back in time to walk with and, in a deeper sense, *as* the prince, losing ourselves as he lost himself and finding, as he found, something profound in the experience.

Profundity, however, is not the same as power. In video games, the hero, after the defeat of each enemy, often collects more abilities and, hence, more control over his world, but in *Pericles* the prince is weakened after each contest. He came to Antioch with a free and open heart. He no sooner saw a king but thought him noble; he no sooner saw a princess but loved her entirely. His willingness to gamble life for love was a sign of his own confidence. Death, Pericles, believed, was no match for him. After the revelation of incest and the threat of assassination, that self-assurance is taken from him, so much so that when he comes to Pentapolis, Pericles worries that the much-respected King Simonides is, like Antiochus, a tyrant and a murderer:

'Tis the King's subtlety to have my life.—  
 O, seek not to entrap me, gracious lord,  
 A stranger and distressed gentleman,  
 That never aim'd so high to love your daughter,  
 But bent all offices to honor her. (2.5.42–46)

The once-valiant prince is now all too willing to set aside his love of a princess to save his own skin. Although Pericles is mistaken about Simonides—who is joyful that his daughter has found so good a man—the prince's luck is short lived. Upon the (presumed) deaths of his wife and daughter, Pericles' spirit is broken still further. He is alone and wishes only to be left alone; a “grieving Howard Hughes, with uncut hair and unending silences.”<sup>3</sup> Thaisa, too, retreats from human contact. After her miraculous revival, she longs for nothing more than the life of a sequestered nun. As for Marina, her suffering seems to be yet another variation of her father's longing for physical and emotional isolation. Marina's refusal to be physically exploited is understandable and laudable. Her refusal to discuss her royal parentage with the tangibly noble Lysimachus, on the other hand, suggests a voluntary and unnecessary emotional isolation analogous to her father's self-imposed seclusion.

In the “HOW TO READ *PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE AS PERFORMANCE*” section of this edition, I argue that these various inward turnings are thematically linked to Antiochus' act of incest. The argument is not without controversy and may well agitate some readers. What we can say firmly and less controversially is that what draws Pericles out of his dejection is not his faith, for he questions the wisdom of the gods at 3.1.22–24, nor his love of Marina, for the woman he meets in 5.1 is a stranger to him, but his compassion for others. Pericles is a prince exiled from his own kingdom and mired in his own losses. Hearing the tragic tale of a Mytilene

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3 Benedict Nightingale, “Pericles: the comeback.” *The Times*, September 20, 2003. The same comparison is made by Michael Billington, though in reference to Rob Edwards' *Pericles* (Dir. David Thacker, RSC, 1990). See his article, “Pericles reborn.” *The Guardian*, April 14, 1990.

slave girl, the prince pities and, in that act, is liberated from anguish. Strangers are suddenly kindred spirits. In our identification with Pericles, or, variously, with Thaisa and Marina, we, as readers and audience members, are taken, however transiently, out of ourselves. In feeling their pain, we are freed from our own; in seeing them rise out of the depths of despair, we are similarly unchained from the narrow, inward interests of our daily existence.

## Source Materials

Scholars have long identified John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (composed ca.1386; published 1390) as Shakespeare's primary source. There are occasional echoes of Gower's phrases throughout the play. The most striking is at 3.2.107, where Shakespeare preserved Gower's very words: "Where am I!/ Where is my lorde, what worlde is this?"<sup>4</sup> But Shakespeare also departed from his sources in many notable instances: in Gower's version, Antiochus' daughter is raped; in Shakespeare's *Pericles*, she is a willing victim; in Gower, Pericles is employed by Simonides as a music teacher for his daughter; in Shakespeare's version, he is not. Further, Simonides' wife is alive in Gower and plays an active role in matching her daughter with the prince; in Shakespeare's version, she is never mentioned.

Shakespeare was also indebted to Laurence Twine's *The Patterne of Painefull Adventures*, registered in 1576 and reprinted as late as 1607. Here too, Shakespeare rejected important details: in Twine, Marina, newly sold into sexual slavery, is made to bow before a golden statue of the god Priapus. No such scene exists in *Pericles*. Further notable differences: In *Patterne of Painefull Adventures*, Lysimachus, renamed Athanagoras, has a daughter, presumably from a prior marriage; in *Pericles*, he does not. Finally, Twine's *Patterne of Painefull Adventures* extends the story to long after the curtain fall of events in *Pericles*; these final details include the birth of Pericles' son, Altistrates.

Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (composed ca.1570s-80s; published 1590) has also been proposed as a minor source. As Kittredge noted, the name "Pericles" may or may not be a perversion of the name of "Pyrocles," a much-shipwrecked hero in Sidney's *Arcadia*.<sup>5</sup> If the link is justified, the play may be read didactically, at least according to Mary Judith Dunbar, who noted that Pyrocles' various misfortunes are a romantic presentment of ethical and political themes essential to "the education of princes."<sup>6</sup> The Arden editor F.D. Hoeniger further suggests that Sidney's *Arcadia* "exercised considerable influence on the play's language."<sup>7</sup>

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4 Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. 8 vols. (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York, Columbia University Press, 1957-75), Vol. VI: 401. The line corresponds to Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, BK VIII, line 1214-1215.

5 Kittredge ed. 1936: 1378.

6 Mary Judith Dunbar, *Pericles: A Study of Dramatic Construction* (Ph.D Dissertation, Stanford University, 1976), 42.

7 Hoeniger, Arden ed. 1963: XIX.

# PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

*Gower*, as Chorus.

*Antiochus*, King of Antioch.

*Pericles*, Prince of Tyre.

*Helicanus*, }  
*Escanes*, } two lords of Tyre.

*Simonides*, King of Pentapolis.

*Cleon*, Governor of Tharsus.

*Lysimachus*, Governor of Mytilene.

*Cerimon*, a lord of Ephesus.

*Thaliard*, a lord of Antioch.

*Philemon*, servant to *Cerimon*.

*Leonine*, servant to *Dionyza*.

Marshal.

A Pander.

*Boult*, his servant.

The Daughter of *Antiochus*.

*Dionyza*, wife to *Cleon*.

*Thaisa*, daughter to *Simonides*.

*Marina*, daughter to *Pericles* and *Thaisa*.

*Lychorida*, nurse to *Marina*.

A Bawd.

*Diana*.

Lords, Ladies, Knights, Gentlemen,

Sailors, Pirates, Fishermen, Messengers.

SCENE.—*In various countries.*

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# ACT I

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*Enter Gower.*<sup>†</sup>

[*Antioch. Before the Palace of Antiochus.*]

To sing a song that old was sung,  
 From ashes ancient Gower is come,  
 Assuming man's infirmities  
 To glad your ear and please your eyes.  
 It hath been sung at festivals, 5  
 On ember-eves and holy-ales;  
 And lords and ladies in their lives  
 Have read it for restoratives.  
 The purchase is to make men glorious,  
*Et bonum quo antiquius, eo melius.* 10  
 If you, born in these latter times  
 When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes,  
 And that to hear an old man sing  
 May to your wishes pleasure bring,  
 I life would wish, and that I might 15  
 Waste it for you, like taper light.

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## PROLOGUE

References to the *Pericles* story as found in Gower, Twine, and Wilkins are derived from Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. 8 vols. (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York, Columbia University Press, 1957-75), Vol. VI. References to Wilkins' *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* are derived from a diplomatic transcription prepared by Glenn H. Blayney for Oxford University Press/The Malone Society Reprints, 1964. 2. **Gower**: John Gower, fourteenth-century poet. — **come**: The eighteenth-century editor George Steevens suggested *sprung*. 3. **Assuming man's infirmities**: ie. Gower's spirit assuming corporeal form. 6. **ember-eves...holy-ales**: holidays, the former a Christian period of fasting. 8. **restoratives**: ie. a feel-good story, one that cheers and, thus, renews. 9. **purchase**: gain; Malone emended to *purpose*. 10. *Et bonum quo antiquius, eo melius*: Latin. The more ancient a thing, the better. 12. **ripe**: sophisticated. 13. **that to hear**: if to hear. 15-16. **I life would wish, and that I might/Waste it for you, like taper light**: Roughly, if my life were a candle, I could only wish to dazzle you with the incandescence of my tale.

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† For director David Thacker's 1990 RSC production, a bow-tied Rudolph Walker good-humouredly pointed to a red, leather bound book when affirming the ludicrous details of the story (C.S. "Pericles's great voyage of discovery." *The Daily Telegraph*, April 14, 1990). In director Phyllida Lloyd's 1994 production at the National Theatre, Gower (Henry Goodman) sprang out of a piano with a "jack-in-the-box spring" (Paul Taylor, "Under the weather." *The Independent*, May 24, 1994). In 2002 production by the London Bubble (Chiswick House grounds), "Gower happily dominates the evening. Like a master of ceremonies, he whips the pace along whenever the text shows severe signs of sagging" (Rachel Halliburton, "Putting panto into Pericles." *Evening Standard*, August 1, 2002). In Neil Bartlett's 2003 Lyric Hammersmith production, Bette Bourne's Gower was "a shambling old caretaker in a brown coat" (Benedict Nightingale, *Pericles*, Lyric Hammersmith." *The Times*, September 26, 2003).



A bow-tied Rudolph Walker as Gower. *Pericles*, 1989, directed by David Thacker, designed by Fran Thompson. (Joe Cocks Studio Collection © Shakespeare Birthplace Trust)

This Antioch, then, Antiochus the Great  
 Built up, this city, for his chiefest seat,  
 The fairest in all Syria—  
 I tell you what mine authors say. 20  
 This king unto him took a peer,  
 Who died and left a female heir,  
 So buxom, blithe, and full of face  
 As heaven had lent her all his grace;  
 With whom the father liking took 25  
 And her to incest did provoke.  
 Bad child; worse father! to entice his own  
 To evil should be done by none.  
 By custom what they did begin  
 Was with long use account'd no sin. 30  
 The beauty of this sinful dame  
 Made many princes thither frame,

---

18. **chiefest seat**: the capitol. 20. **I tell you what mine authors say**: suggesting that Gower himself is borrowing from a still older text. 21. **peer**: mate; Kittredge printed *feere*, perhaps combining Theobald's *pheere* and Dyce's reading of *feere*, meaning companion. Neither word suggests the incestuous nature of the relationship. 23. **buxom, blithe, and full of face**: lively, care-free, perfectly featured. 24. **heaven**: ie. God. 26. **provoke**: Note, however, that Shakespeare's Gower also blames the child in line 27. This differs from Gower's original tale, in which it is clear that Antiochus rapes his daughter: "And she was tender, and full of drede,/ She couth nought hir maydenhede/ Defende" (*Confessio Amantis*, BK VIII: 309-312). 28. **To evil**: to commit evil. 30. **with long use account'd no sin**: ie. incest became natural to them, though this is countered by Antiochus' terror that his secret affair will be made public. 32. **frame**: go.

To seek her as a bedfellow,  
 In marriage pleasures playfellow;  
 Which to prevent he made a law— 35  
 To keep her still, and men in awe—  
 That whoso ask'd her for his wife,  
 His riddle told not, lost his life.  
 So for her many a wight did die,  
 As yon grim looks do testify. 40  
 What now ensues, to the judgment of your eye  
 I give, my cause who best can justify. *Exit.*

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SCENE I. [*Antioch. A room in the Palace.*]<sup>†</sup>

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*Enter Antiochus, Prince Pericles, and Followers.*

ANTIOCHUS Young Prince of Tyre, you have at large receiv'd  
 The danger of the task you undertake.

PERICLES I have, Antiochus, and, with a soul  
 Embold'ned with the glory of her praise,  
 Think death no hazard in this enterprise. *Music.* 5

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33. **bedfellow**: companion, often assigned to men; the following line suggests sexual partner. 38. **His riddle told not**: failed to solve the riddle. 39. **wight**: person. 40. **As yon grim looks**: Likely a prop reference—i.e. a series of heads on sticks or on the battlements of the palace.

SCENE I.

1. **at large receiv'd**: fully heard.

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† In 1973, director Toby Robertson (Prospect Theatre Company) staged the play as an entertainment performed within the Mytilene brothel. Despite a brilliant performance by Derek Jacobi as Pericles, the production was deemed by critics as either “too-ingenious” (John Barber, “Curious trappings in ‘Pericles.’” *The Daily Telegraph*, August 22, 1973) or as just plain “disastrous” (Irving Wardle, “Pericles,” *The Times*, August 28, 1973). A 2002 RSC production at the Roundhouse Theatre (dir. Adrian Noble), opened “on a stage full of stunning lanterns and a heady scent of incense” (Jenny Dormer, *Stratford Standard*, August 16, 2002); Susannah Clapp, however, registered an entirely different impression: “a chamber of horrors—severed heads swing like conkers on long ropes” (*Observer*, July 14, 2002). Neil Bartlett’s 2003 Lyric Hammersmith production set the play in a hospital/insane asylum, with swing doors, oxygen tanks. Pericles wandered “forlornly round the stage in pajamas and moth-eaten cardigan” (Charles Spencer, “Moving from the ridiculous to the sublime” (*The Daily Telegraph*, September 29, 2003). A (RSC/Cardboard Citizens, 2003) production directed by Adrian Jackson recast the play to reflect the ongoing dilemma of political refugees: “In one huge chamber, you sit at shabby desks and are told to fill in a seemingly endless Home Office form, which made me want to cry almost instantly. In another, child-size camp beds stretch out to the crack of doom in the half-dark. Mountains of second-hand clothes are piled in corners and inside a bunch of canvas tents, television monitors flicker, showing real-life immigrants telling their stories” (Kate Bassett, “All washed up (on a shore of wet jumpers).” *Independent on Sunday*, August 3, 2003). A recent RSC (2006) production directed by Dominic Cooke recast the play to reflect ongoing political struggles in Africa, the tyrannous Antiochus (Clarence Smith) looking and sounding like Robert Mugabe (Ian Shuttleworth, “The Winter’s Tale/Pericles.” *Financial Times*, November, 17, 2006).



- Her countless glory, which desert must gain;  
 And which, without desert because their eye  
 Presumes to reach, all this whole heap must die.  
 Yon sometime famous princes, like thyself,  
 Drawn by report, advent'rous by desire, 35  
 Tell thee, with speechless tongues and semblance pale,  
 That, without covering, save yon field of stars,  
 Here they stand martyrs slain in Cupid's wars;  
 And with dead cheeks advise thee to desist  
 For going on death's net, whom none resist. 40
- PERICLES Antiochus, I thank thee, who hast taught  
 My frail mortality to know itself,  
 And by those fearful objects to prepare  
 This body, like to them, to what I must;  
 For death remembered should be like a mirror, 45  
 Who tells us life's but breath, to trust it error.  
 I'll make my will then, and, as sick men do,  
 Who know the world, see heaven, but, feeling woe,  
 Gripe not at earthly joys as erst they did,  
 So I bequeath a happy peace to you 50  
 And all good men, as every prince should do;  
 My riches to the earth, from whence they came;  
 But my unspotted fire of love to you. [To the Princess.]  
 Thus ready for the way of life or death,  
 I wait the sharpest blow, Antiochus. 55
- ANTIOCHUS Scorning advice, read the conclusion then;  
 Which read and not expounded, 'tis decreed,  
 As these before thee, thou thyself shalt bleed.
- DAUGHTER Of all 'say'd yet, mayst thou prove prosperous!  
 Of all 'say'd yet, I wish thee happiness! 60
- PERICLES Like a bold champion I assume the lists,  
 Nor ask advice of any other thought  
 But faithfulness and courage. [Reads.]  
*The Riddle.*  
 'I am no viper, yet I feed  
 On mother's flesh which did me breed. 65

31. **desert**: deserving. 34. **Yon sometime famous princes**: the skulls of prior suitors; see Prologue 40, above. 38. **martyrs slain in Cupid's wars**: died, sacrificed for love. 45-46. **death remembered should be like a mirror, / Who tells us life's but breath, to trust it error**: Difficult. Perhaps, mirrors do not reflect reality; physical life is only a semblance of real, immortal life. 49. **Gripe not... as erst they did**: Do not grasp as they did before. 50. **So I bequeath a happy peace to you**: Roughly, if I die, do not feel guilty. 52. **riches**: body. 59. **prosperous**: successful. 61. **the lists**: challenge, often associated with chivalric duels.

*Pericles*, 1958, directed by Tony Richardson, designed by Loudon Sainthill. The photograph shows Antiochus (Paul Hardwick, left) intimidating his daughter (Zoe Caldwell). (Angus McBean © Royal Shakespeare Company)



I sought a husband, in which labor  
 I found that kindness in a father.  
 He's father, son, and husband mild;  
 I mother, wife, and yet his child.  
 How they may be, and yet in two, 70  
 As you will live, resolve it you.'

Sharp physic is the last! but, O you powers  
 That give heaven countless eyes to view men's acts,  
 Why cloud they not their sights perpetually  
 If this be true which makes me pale to read it? 75  
 Fair glass of light, I lov'd you, and could still,  
 Were not this glorious casket stor'd with ill.  
 But I must tell you, now my thoughts revolt;  
 For he's no man on whom perfections wait  
 That, knowing sin within, will touch the gate. 80

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72. **Sharp physic:** distasteful medicine; physically painful, ill news. 74. **Why cloud they not their sights:** Roughly, why don't the gods hide this sin? 76. **Fair glass of light:** A reference to her seeming purity; like a mirror, she reflects light/goodness, but does not contain it. 77. **glorious casket:** looks are deceiving.

## HOW TO READ *PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE* AS PERFORMANCE

Shakespeare is not just an author taught in English classes; he is also a cornerstone of Western theater. While many of you may be reading this text as part of an English survey class, it is paramount to bear in mind that *Pericles* and his other plays were meant to be staged, not read. If reading novels or poems present their own problems of intention and nuance, Shakespeare's plays present additional challenges, in that theatrical performance is collaborative, and, thus, the meaning of the play varies from cast to cast and era to era. Yet, if *Pericles* is complete only in the crucible of performance, can we (and should we) say that Shakespeare's plays have no intrinsic meaning? Certainly, the history of Shakespearean performance indicates the plasticity of the scripts. However, the end results, no matter how different, probably stem from a similar set of questions, which are of use to both readers and to performers of the play. In addition to exploring some of these questions, I will also offer my own concrete experiences as dramaturge for a 2002 University of La Verne student production.

Thinking of a Shakespeare play as meant for the stage can be initially disorientating for many English majors. We are taught, principally, to study character, theme, and plot. But imagine that you are a teacher who has been asked to direct the play. For anyone bent on bringing *Pericles* to the stage, a number of additional logistical factors will have to be overcome. Where exactly will you stage *Pericles*, and how will that space affect your presentation? If you have a multi-level set, you might want to have Gower come out on an upper balcony and present the action taking place on the main stage below. On the other hand, while this makes some initial sense, you will be faced with a problem: What will you do with Gower for the rest of the play? If he simply takes a seat on the upper balcony and observes the action, audiences might find themselves drifting from the action of the play to observing Gower's reaction to it. If directing within a proscenium arch theater—think of a big TV box with the action happening within it—audiences may feel removed from the action, and Gower's narrative frame, essentially another layer of separation, may alienate them still more. Staging *Pericles* in a park has its own issues. At least in a modern theater you can dim the lights to suggest the end of a scene or a break of some sort. Entrances and exits in a park or in

the round will have to be worked out meticulously. And then there is the shipwreck. A state-of-the art theatre can create nearly as many special effects as found in a *Star Wars* movie, but getting an audience to believe, without the aid of movie magic, that a ship is being tossed about on the high seas, when in reality your actors are standing on a manicured lawn, may prove difficult.

In casting and in costume, choices will have to be made. Will you opt for an all male cast, attempting to recreate the historical dynamic of Shakespeare's original company? On the one hand, this may make sense, if you wanted to create a historically accurate production. On the other hand, an all male production might be seen by many in the audience as a political statement on gay marriage or gay rights. You may not object to that, but it may not have been your point either. Another issue to consider: Will you have one actor playing one part, or will you double-up roles? The play does have a variety of small parts. If you cast an actor to play just Antiochus, you will have him on for the first act, but what is that actor to do for the rest of the play? In a school production, where actors are performing gratis, that may not be an issue. In a professional production, paying someone to do nothing for four acts is economically unsound. And what about costumes? The play is set in the ancient Mediterranean. Do we want Prince Pericles in a Greek toga, or do we want some leeway here? In the nineteenth century, many Shakespeare directors felt it was necessary to create a sense of historical verisimilitude. The rehearsal for Charles Kean's *King Lear* offers a prime example. When, in the action of the play, one actor gave another a key, Kean interrupted: "Good heavens!" he shouted to the actor playing Edmund, "you give it ... as if it was a common room-door key. Let the audience see it, sir; make 'em feel it; impress upon 'em that it is a *key of the period*, sir."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, creating a museum-piece setting can make audiences feel that the play is not speaking to their own issues. Using mixed costume, particularly modern costume, may allow some audience members to feel that, despite the archaic language, the play has a trans-historical nature—that it can still speak to their concerns. In the brothel scenes, for example, you might have the prostitutes in punk gear, or have some of them shooting or snorting drugs—simple actions by which the director may comment on inner-city economic blight, adolescent ennui, drug use, or the spread of AIDs and other sexual diseases.

Then there is the issue of Shakespeare's language. *Pericles* offers quite a bit of prose, but the major, aristocratic figures, particularly Pericles himself, speak almost entirely in verse. Do you want Pericles' language to retain its high poetic formulation, or will you suggest to your lead actor that he deliver his poetic lines as if he were merely speaking prose? You are dealing here with the issue not only of language but also of its forms. Reading poetry as prose may impoverish the lines; however, keep in mind that in the hands of a weak actor, your poetic Pericles may come across as overly dramatic or just plain silly.

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1 Charles E.L. Wingate, *Shakespeare's Heroes on the Stage* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1896), 93.

Perhaps you don't have enough actors or time to stage a full version. It may seem like sacrilege to some, but there is nothing wrong with cutting characters or whole scenes or rearranging their order. Many scholars now believe that Shakespeare wrote a maximal script—a script larger than it needed to be—in part to give his company some useful choices. In essence, Shakespeare seems to have written his plays as textual play-doh, ready to be shaped in any number of ways: a full production might be shaped for the Globe, another shorter version might be moulded for a smaller touring cast, etc. Perhaps you'd like to cut out Act 1, or the character of Gower?

No matter the amount of play-text involved, you will need some sort of shape or internal coherence, what a director might call an interpretation or through-line. This can be a tricky thing. If, on the one hand, you use the play to make a comment on, say, the war in Iraq, you may be accused of taking liberties with the text. On the other hand, Pericles is a refugee, fleeing from war or the threat of it. The art of interpretation is to pick a theme—and a way of expressing that theme—that fits the play. Your interpretation is your own, but it should, at least in part, open the audience to the brilliance of the text, rather than the passion of your politics.

Theatre can be liberating, a place for free-thinking, but it can also be a resource for scholarly exploration. For example, in my work as dramaturge on the play, I was struck by the opening issue of incest and Pericles' later exchange with Marina. I spent many weeks and months wondering whether scholars were correct in thinking that Shakespeare abandoned Wilkins' first two acts in favor of a three act play (Acts 3-5) that made little or no attempt to link up with what had come before. Perhaps Shakespeare did write only Acts 3-5, but the idea that the overriding theme of incest at the beginning of the play was utterly abandoned seemed somehow wrong.<sup>2</sup> There was, to my mind, a circularity to Pericles' encounter with his daughter, one that concluded the issue of Antiochus and his offspring.

A little bit of digging revealed that I was not alone in this thought. The Restoration playwright and poet John Dryden wrote: "Pericles, Prince of Tyre, must not be in danger in the fifth act, of committing incest with his daughter."<sup>3</sup> Further, this was an old worry that just wouldn't go away: In 1987, Ruth Nevo argued that Pericles was haunted by the fear of incest; in 1996, Maria Teresa Macaela Prendergast argued that the play contains three incestuous pairings: Antiochus and his daughter, Cleon and his daughter, and Pericles and Marina; in 2001, Stephen Orgel argued that the "incest plot resonates throughout the play."<sup>4</sup>

In my early discussions with the director, Georgij Paro, I presented this information, and we agreed to explore whether the idea of Pericles having some incestuous desire for his daughter might work in performance. Encouraged by our

2 For more on Wilkins' possible role in writing *Pericles*, see Introduction.

3 John Dryden, *Essays of John Dryden* (London and New York: Macmillan and Co, 1985), 159.

4 Ruth Nevo, *Shakespeare's Other Language* (New York and London: Methuen and Co, 1987), 42; Maria Teresa Macaela Prendergast "Engendering *Pericles*." *Literature and Psychology* XXXXII.4 (1996): 53-75; Stephen Orgel, *The Pelican Shakespeare* ed. 2001: XLI. See also performance note for 5.1.103.

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