CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Pericles, Prince of Tyre

William Shakespeare · *c. 1608 · original English text (Project Gutenberg #1537)*

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. The hosted text is Shakespeare's English, Project Gutenberg #1537. For grades 10–12. Quote Gower's chorus, not only the list of scenes. Tact at Antioch. Teach the wanderings and the recognition.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What can a wandering prince keep, and what can he recover, when a riddle at Antioch sends him to sea, and how should a school read Gower's old song without lingering on the court's corruption or skipping the recognition at the close?

"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"

Act I, Chorus, before the palace of Antioch

Ancient Gower comes from ashes to sing an old song. At Antioch a corrupt court sets a riddle; Pericles flees, and the play becomes a romance of voyages, of Tarsus, of a wife lost at sea, of a daughter, Marina, and of a recognition. Teach the wandering and the recovery, for grades 10–12. Tact on the Antioch material; do not linger there. Quote Gower, not the table of scenes.

KEY CHARACTERS

Gower
The ancient chorus who comes from ashes to sing an old song

Pericles
Prince of Tyre, who flees a corrupt court and wanders the sea

Marina
The daughter lost and found; the recognition is the play's mercy

Thaisa, and the rulers of the ports
The wife lost in a storm, and the cities that test or shelter the wanderers

AN OLD SONG, AND A CHORUS FROM ASHES

> *"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"*
>
> Act I, Chorus

Grades 10–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

Ancient Gower

ACT I, CHORUS

He comes from ashes, assuming man's infirmities, to glad your ear and please your eyes. The song has been sung at festivals, on ember-eves and holy-ales. The play is offered as an old tale retold.

- The first lines are exact, including "ember-eves and holy-ales."
- Gower is the chorus, standing before the palace of Antioch.
- This is PG #1537, c. 1608, catalogue 10–12.
- Quote the chorus, not the list of scenes.

> *"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"*
>
> Act I, Chorus, before the palace of Antioch

02

Antioch, with Tact

ACT I

The first court is corrupt. A riddle is set, and Pericles must go. A school should name the corruption as the reason for flight, and should not linger on it or make it a spectacle.

- Tact. No prurience on the map. The matter is grave, and it is not the whole play.
- The riddle sends the prince to sea; that is the plot fact you need.
- Do not start the lesson in the later voyages only, and do not stay at Antioch.
- 10–12.

> *"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"*
>
> Act I, Chorus

03

Voyages

THE MIDDLE ACTS

Tyre, Tarsus, Pentapolis, a storm, a wife, a child: the play becomes a romance of the sea. Kindness and trial both meet him in strange cities.

- Teach the wanderings as a test of perseverance and of courtesy, not as a travelogue only.
- Marina will matter. Do not lose the daughter in the storms.
- Quote this file.
- The old song's shape is a romance, with a serious close.

> *"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"*
>
> Act I, Chorus

04

Marina, and a Recognition

THE LATER ACTS

A daughter is lost and is found. The recognition is the play's mercy after long wandering. Finish the play. Do not stop at the storms.

- The close is recovery, not merely escape.
- Teach patience and fidelity as the virtues the romance rewards.
- Tact on the dangers Marina faces; no spectacle.
- 10–12.

> *"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"*
>
> Act I, Chorus

05

An Old Song Retold

THE PLAY AS A WHOLE

The hosted file is complete, PG #1537. Gower's chorus frames the tale. A school should let the old singer lead, and should handle Antioch with tact.

- Catalogue 10–12.
- Quote Gower's first lines.
- This is a romance in the late-Shakespeare group as hosted here.
- Not a later film or a smoothed children's retelling.

> *"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"*
>
> Act I, Chorus, before the palace of Antioch

An Old Song | A Corrupt Court | Voyages | A Daughter Found | Patience

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 10–12

1. Gower opens: "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." Keep "ember-eves and holy-ales" if you quote further. Quote the chorus, not the list of scenes.
2. This is Shakespeare, c. 1608, PG #1537, Pericles, Prince of Tyre. For grades 10–12.
3. Antioch is a corrupt court and a riddle. Tact; no prurience on the map; do not linger there, and do not skip it.
4. The middle is a romance of voyages. Marina, the daughter, must not be lost in the storms. The close is a recognition; finish the play.
5. Not a later film or a smoothed children's retelling.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text (Project Gutenberg #1537), Project Gutenberg #1537, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/pericles/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.