

## English Literature Answer Key Lesson 4

### Lady of Shalott

#### 1. VOCABULARY

##### EXERCISE 3.1 FILL IN THE BLANK

1. surly
2. burnished
3. wane
4. prow
5. clad
6. countenance
7. remote
8. shallop
9. damsel
10. reaped

#### 2. READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. e
2. b
3. c
4. a
5. e
6. e
7. a
8. c
9. e
10. d

#### 3. QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Who is “The Lady of Shalott”? Describe the tower she lives in.  
*The Lady of Shalott lives in a gray tower by a road that leads to Camelot. Her life is one of dreariness as she watches life pass her through the window.*
2. What does the Lady of Shalott do in her tower?  
*Night and day the Lady of Shalott weaves a colorful tapestry, called a “web” in the poem, of all the things that she sees: “But in her web she still delights/To weave the mirror’s magic sights.”*

3. Write down the colors that the Lady of Shalott sees in the mirror. What color is most often mentioned in the poem?  
*Through her mirror she sees the vibrancy of life, which is in stark contrast to her gray tower. She sees the red cloaks of market girls, a page clad in crimson, a silver bugle, the blue sky, a helmet and helmet-feather that "burned like one burning flame together," the purple night, and the coal-black curls of Lancelot.*
4. What drives the Lady of Shalott to leave her tower?  
*After she sees Sir Lancelot and hears him sing, she leaves her loom and tower.*
5. Tennyson uses a simile in Part IV of the poem to describe what the Lady of Shalott looked like when she traveled down the river. (A simile is a comparison using "like" or "as.") Write down the simile.  
*She is described as being "like a bold seer in a trance" who sees "his own mischance," or doom.*

## Cymbeline

### 1. QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How do the characters Imogen and Leonatus show their love to each other in the beginning of the story?  
*Having been brought up together, Imogen and Leonatus had a fondness for each other that went beyond that of between husband and wife. When Leonatus was banished from Britain, the two made a vow never to forget or to care for each other as long as they lived.*
2. Why do Imogen and Leonatus exchange the diamond and bracelet?  
*The diamond that Imogen gives and the bracelet that Leonatus gives are tokens of their vow to each other. It is these tokens that allow for the plot to take an ugly turn when Iachimo steals the bracelet from the arm of Imogen and shows it to Leonatus as evidence of Imogen's lack of fidelity.*
3. What is the wager between Leonatus and Iachimo? Why does Leonatus agree to such a wager?  
*Leonatus wagers with his ring that Iachimo will not be able to persuade Imogen to keep her vows. It is significant that the diamond ring is the token that Leonatus wagers, as it is the very thing that it is a reminder of his beloved and a reminder of his own fidelity. Leonatus agrees to the wager because he is so confident of Imogen's faithfulness. Iachimo wagers half of his estate, confident that he will be able to win over Leonatus's beloved.*
4. Which of the two—Leonatus and Imogen—is more trusting than the other? Does this show the nature of a man and of a woman?  
*Leonatus' trust in his beloved is shaken when he sees the bracelet; had he been*

*more trusting, he would not have handed over the diamond. As in many of Shakespeare's plays, however, things are not what they appear to be and often bad decisions are made because of false appearances.<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare implies that the woman is more trusting, as Imogen will not believe that her husband is untrue.*

5. How does Leonatus react when he suspects what Iachimo tells him is true? Does his reaction seem believable, considering his professed love at the beginning of the story?  
*Although he apparently loved her deeply and no longer cares for life, he plots to murder Imogen for her lack of faithfulness, showing that his jealousy seems stronger than his love. Whether it is believable or not depends on one's view of what is stronger in a man—love or jealousy.<sup>2</sup>*
6. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, there is a potion that simulates death. The potion is essential to the plot, especially the tragic ending, as Romeo believes that his beloved really has died and therefore takes his own life. There are several small incidents essential to the plot of *Cymbeline*, such as the Queen's potion. Explain how they affect the plot. Are these small incidents which affect the course of the plot believable?  
*Dressed as a boy for reasons of safety, Imogen does not arrive at Milford Haven, the place where she was apparently going to meet Leonatus. Instead, she becomes very tired, stops by a cave and meets up with an old man and two boys, who are the king's sons who had been stolen. The sleeping potion moves the plot along, as the boys think that she is dead. Again, this misconception supports the theme that appearances can be deceiving.*
7. In many of Shakespeare's plays, the plot involves mistaken identity and coincidence. Explain how these elements form a part of *Cymbeline*.  
*Imogen not only appears to be physically what she is not (a page boy), she also appears to be unfaithful when she is not. Shakespeare uses these devices to reveal hidden things, such as motives and emotions, vice and virtue. Cymbeline's two sons believe that Imogen is a page, and do not know that she is their sister. Again, this misconception supports the theme that appearances can be deceiving.*
8. As is true with all of Shakespeare's plays, there are a main plot and subplot. Be able to discuss what they are and how they are related.

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<sup>1</sup> Just one of many examples of false appearances wreaking havoc occurs in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. When it appears that his comrade in arms Brutus has been taken when he has not, Cassius despairs and takes his life.

*The theme of the deceitful appearances appears both in the plot and the subplot. Deceived by the appearances of his infidelity to him, the king banishes Bellarius. In retaliation, Bellarius steals the king's sons. In like fashion, Leonatus's false impression sways him to wickedness.*

9. *Cymbeline*, like *King Lear*, is based on early Briton history; however, it reads very much like a fairytale. Discuss the elements in the story that make it seem like a fairytale, such as the "they lived happily ever after" ending. Are there any realistic elements that suggest the story is actual history?

*There are many fairytale elements in the story, the most prominent being the sleeping potion. The plot is quite unrealistic, and such elements as Iachimo emerging from a trunk in Imogen's bedroom smack of fairytale or at least romance. The fighting between the Romans against the Britons, of course, is historical. The Romans conquered Briton in the first century AD.*

10. How does Leonatus redeem himself in the end of the story? Do you think that he fully redeems himself, considering the way in which he sought to take revenge against her for what he imagined to be her unfaithfulness to him?

*It is a hard thing for Shakespeare to convincingly redeem murderous intentions. Even though Leonatus shows himself to be violently jealous, Shakespeare intends to show his deep contrition, which causes him to exclaim, "Imogen, my love, my life!" His exclamation suggests that his murderous scheme was a result of his deep love and despair.*