

~~own library brought to Egypt by the nurse's ancestors! How can
we sleep for grief?~~

→ **SEPTIMUS** By counting our stock. Seven plays from Aeschylus, seven from Sophocles, *nineteen* from Euripides, my lady! You should no more grieve for the rest than for a buckle lost from your first shoe, or for your lesson book which will be lost when you are old. We shed as we pick up, like travellers who must carry everything in their arms, and what we let fall will be picked up by those behind. The procession is very long and life is very short. We die on the march. But there is nothing outside the march so nothing can be lost to it. The missing plays of Sophocles will turn up piece by piece, or be written again in another language. Ancient cures for diseases will reveal themselves once more. Mathematical discoveries glimpsed and lost to view will have their time again. You do not suppose, my lady, that if all of Archimedes had been hiding in the great library of Alexandria, we would be at a loss for a corkscrew? I have no doubt that the improved steam-driven heat-engine which puts Mr Noakes into an ecstasy that he and it and the modern age should all coincide, was described on papyrus. Steam and brass were not invented in Glasgow. Now, where are we? Let me see if I can attempt a free translation for you. At Harrow I was better at this than Lord Byron.

~~He takes the piece of paper from her and scrutinizes it, testing on or two Latin phrases speculatively before committing himself.~~

Yes—'The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne... burned on the water... the—something—the poop was beaten gold, purple the sails, and—what's this?—oh yes,—so perfumed that—'

THOMASINA (*Catching on and furious*) Cheat!

SEPTIMUS (*Imperturbably*) '—the winds were lovesick with them...'

THOMASINA Cheat!

SEPTIMUS '...cars were silver which to the tune of flutes kept stroke...'

THOMASINA (*Jumping to her feet*) Cheat! Cheat! Cheat!

SEPTIMUS

SEPTIMUS (*As though it were too easy to make the effort worthwhile*) '...and made the water which they beat to follow faster, as *amorous* of their strokes. For her own person, it beggared, all description—she did lie in her pavilion—'

Thomasina, in tears of rage, is hurrying out through the garden.

THOMASINA I hope you die!

She nearly bumps into Brice who is entering. She runs out of sight. Brice enters.

BRICE Good God, man, what have you told her?

SEPTIMUS Told her? Told her what?

BRICE Hodge!

Septimus looks outside the door, slightly contrite about Thomasina, and sees that Chater is skulking out of view.

SEPTIMUS Chater! My dear fellow! Don't hang back—come in, sir!

Chater allows himself to be drawn sheepishly into the room, where Brice stands on his dignity.

CHATER Captain Brice does me the honour—I mean to say, sir, whatever you have to say to me, sir, address yourself to Captain Brice.

SEPTIMUS How unusual. (*To Brice*) Your wife did not appear yesterday, sir. I trust she is not sick?

BRICE My wife? I have no wife. What the devil do you mean, sir?

Septimus makes to reply, but hesitates, puzzled. He turns back to Chater.

SEPTIMUS I do not understand the scheme, Chater. Whom do I address when I want to speak to Captain Brice?

BRICE Oh, slippery, Hodge—slippery!

SEPTIMUS (*To Chater*) By the way, Chater—(*he interrupts himself and turns back to Brice, and continues as before*) by the way, Chater, I