

BRYGID I haven't come out here just to hear your daughter play. I
had some other business nearby.

GWENETH I see. Please, take a seat.

BRYGID sits. GWENETH dismisses MORRIGAN who exits left, and sits next to Brygid.

BRYGID Where is your daughter?

GWENETH She's out somewhere, with friends. I'll get the maid to fetch
her. *(Calls out towards left)* Morrigan!
(Back to BRYGID)

My daughter is very gifted musically. My
husband and I would love to see her
play at one of the great Roman festivals in
Verulamium.

BRYGID Ah - she has to be very good, we have extremely high
standards. The
forthcoming concert will take place
before the Roman Governor himself, as well as Roman
dignitaries from
all over Britannia. They say, there may even
be some important guests from Rome.

GWENETH We do not often have the honour of entertaining Roman
guests. Your Celtic speech is
very good, not many Romans
bother to learn our language.

BRYGID Actually I'm not a Roman - I'm a Celt from the Germanic
provinces. Although I
was educated in Rome and married a
Roman. He was posted here and we've been living in
Britannia five years now.

GWENETH Where is that maid? *(Calls out)* Morrigan! She's cooking.

BRYGID It smells very nice. What is it?

GWENETH You wouldn't believe it - but she's cooking ox's stomach, it's
called tripe. We don't usually eat
offals, but these bad
harvests, mean we've had to tighten our belts. And
as she's been going on about how
delicious her tripe recipe is, we
thought we'd try some.

really Belatucadnos, Mercury is the god of prosperity, the
same as Rosmerta. And so on ...

MORRIGAN That's what the Romans tell us, and you believe them. They're
crafty they are...

GWENETH That's enough. Madam Brygid has come here to hear Mabina
play the fistula. Now please go and
find her.

MORRIGAN exits stage left mumbling to herself.

GWENETH She gets worse with age - unlike Roman wine. Oh, let me
offer you a goblet of wine - the
best of course?

BRYGID No thank you, I'll have one after I've heard Mabina play. I like to
keep a clear head when I'm listening to music. *(Pause)* Please -
show me how she is cooking these offals, while we are waiting?

They rise and exit left.

Enter CAPROC stage right, taking off his cloak. He holds it out and waits.

CAPROC Salve!

CAPROC throws his cloak in a corner.

CAPROC Maid! *(Pause – then calls out)* Where is everybody? The master's
back from Verulamium! Wine!

When there is no response, CAPROC starts to search for something, mumbling to himself.

CAPROC Where's the wine gone? What's she done with the wine?

CAPROC then starts to exit left as MABINA enters from stage right, followed by MORRIGAN.

MORRIGAN *(To MABINA)* There's some Roman woman here to hear you play
the whistle. You should learn to play the clarsach - now that, is real
Celtic music. It's a gift from the gods is the clarsach.

CAPROC Salve!

MORRIGAN What?

CAPROC I said Salve!

MORRIGAN Oh why don't you talk in our language?

BRYGID (To CAPROC) You are obviously trying to learn Latin?

GWENETH My husband is studying Latin that's why he goes to Verulamium. Caproc -
recite that Latin poetry you've learned
for madam Brygid?

CAPROC coughs nervously, composes himself - and begins.

CAPROC Unam tesseram balnea ingrediendi, obsecro um

GWENETH What's it mean dear?

CAPROC It's a quote from Virgil

BRYGID No, it means - could I have one token for the bathhouse
please?

CAPROC Oh so it is. I got it mixed up with a line from Aeneid -
that's by Virgil, isn't it?

BRYGID It certainly is. Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab
oris Italiam, fato profugus,
Laviniaque venit litora, multum ille et
terris iactatus et alto vi superum saevae memorem Iunonis ob
iram. It's beautiful!

There follows an embarrassed silence.

BRYGID (Pointing to stage left) Er - what is going out there? They seem to be
building a huge fire, it looks like they're preparing for a feast of some
sort.

GWENETH Yes it's for the festival of Beltane, in honour of our Celtic Fire
God.

BRYGID In Verulamium and Londinium where I lived before, most
Celts worship Roman
Gods now. It's only out in these villages
that Celtic religion is still practiced, is it not?

GWENETH And only those that still have Druids.

CAPROC We only worship Roman gods now. Apollo, Jupiter, Mars
- you know

BRYGID Yes, your maid has already told me. But I believe these
Druids used to
be very powerful once. What happened?

BRYGID *(Rising and bowing)* My name is Brygid and I am from Verulamium. I have come here to hear Mabina play.

DOGMIEL Ah - a Roman?

BRYGID No a Celt. I am originally from the Germanic lands.

DOGMIEL Another one.

BRYGID I beg your pardon?

DOGMIEL I mean another Celt who thinks they are Roman. *(To CAPROC)* I hear Caproc, that you're going around calling yourself Caprogenus, or some such Latin name, these days?

CAPROC All the noble and cultured Celts are Latinising their names
Dogmiel.

DOGMIEL So why are you doing it then?

BRYGID It is possible for us Celts to live with both cultures..

GWENETH She is here to listen to our daughter play. With all due respects oh Wise One, is this visit going to take very long?

DOGMIEL As long as is necessary. *(To CAPROC)* Caproc, I want to know what you'll be contributing for the forthcoming sacrificial feast to Beltane? He's a Celtic god in case you've forgotten.

CAPROC Nothing!

DOGMIEL Nothing?

CAPROC Yes nothing! I've only just made a sacrifice to the Roman god Minerva.

GWENETH Yes and with all these floods, we're having a very difficult time oh wise one, we're struggling to make ends meet. We can hardly feed ourselves, never mind a big powerful god, who is surely well fed with all the sacrifices he gets.

DOGMIEL You know damned well we don't offer sacrifices to feed the gods. They don't eat food like we do. We offer them to show our love.

MORRIGAN He's found another one.

