



*The Tempest* 2.1. 219-339

**SEBASTIAN**

What a strange drowsiness possesses them!

**ANTONIO**

It is the quality o' the climate.

**SEBASTIAN**

Why

Doth it not then our eyelids sink? I find not  
Myself disposed to sleep.

**ANTONIO**

Nor I. My spirits are nimble.  
They fell together all, as by consent.  
They dropped, as by a thunder-stroke. What might,  
Worthy Sebastian, O, what might--? No more.  
And yet me thinks I see it in thy face,  
What thou shouldst be: the occasion speaks thee, and  
My strong imagination sees a crown  
Dropping upon thy head.

**SEBASTIAN**

What, art thou waking?

**ANTONIO**



Do you not hear me speak?

**SEBASTIAN**

I do, and surely

It is a sleepy language and thou speak'st  
Out of thy sleep. What is it thou didst say?  
This is a strange repose, to be asleep  
With eyes wide open -- standing, speaking, moving --  
And yet so fast asleep.

**ANTONIO**

Noble Sebastian,  
Thou let'st thy fortune sleep, die, rather, wink'st  
Whiles thou art waking.

**SEBASTIAN**

Thou dost snore distinctly;  
There's meaning in thy snores.

**ANTONIO**

I am more serious than my custom: you  
Must be so too, if heed me; which to do  
Trebles thee o'er.

**SEBASTIAN**

Well, I am standing water.

**ANTONIO**



I'll teach you how to flow.

**SEBASTIAN**

Do so. to ebb  
Hereditary sloth instructs me.

**ANTONIO**

O,  
If you but knew how you the purpose cherish  
Whiles thus you mock it, how, in stripping it,  
You more invest it! Ebbing men, indeed,  
Most often do so near the bottom run  
By their own fear or sloth.

**SEBASTIAN**

Prithee, say on:  
The setting of thine eye and cheek proclaim  
A matter from thee, and a birth indeed  
Which throes thee much to yield.

**ANTONIO**

Thus, sir:  
Although this lord of weak remembrance -- this,  
Who shall be of as little memory  
When he is earthed -- hath here almost persuade,--  
For he's a spirit of persuasion, only  
Professes to persuade,--the King his son's alive,  
'Tis as impossible that he's undrown'd



And he that sleeps here swims.

**SEBASTIAN**

I have no hope  
That he's undrowned.

**ANTONIO**

O, out of that no hope  
What great hope have you! No hope that way is  
Another way so high a hope that even  
Ambition cannot pierce a wink beyond,  
But doubt discovery there. Will you grant with me  
That Ferdinand is drowned?

**SEBASTIAN**

He's gone.

**ANTONIO**

Then, tell me,  
Who's the next heir of Naples?

**SEBASTIAN**

Claribel.

**ANTONIO**

She that is queen of Tunis; she that dwells  
Ten leagues beyond man's life; she that from Naples



Can have no note, unless the sun were post--  
The man i' th' moon's too slow--till new-born chins  
Be rough and razorable; she that--from whom  
We all were sea-swallow'd, though some cast again,  
And by that destiny to perform an act  
Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come  
In yours and my discharge.

## SEBASTIAN

*What stuff is this! How say you?*

'Tis true, my brother's daughter's Queen of Tunis;  
So is she heir of Naples, 'twixt which regions  
There is some space.

## ANTONIO

A space whose every cubit  
Seems to cry out, "How shall that Claribel  
Measure us back to Naples? Keep in Tunis,  
And let Sebastian wake." Say, this were death  
That now hath seized them, why, they were no worse  
Than now they are. There be that can rule Naples  
As well as he that sleeps, lords that can prate  
As amply and unnecessarily  
As this Gonzalo. I myself could make  
A chough of as deep chat. O, that you bore  
The mind that I do! what a sleep were this  
For your advancement! Do you understand me?

## SEBASTIAN

*Methinks I do.*



**ANTONIO**

And how does your content  
Tender your own good fortune?

**SEBASTIAN**

I remember  
You did supplant your brother Prospero.

**ANTONIO**

True,  
And look how well my garments sit upon me,  
Much feater than before. My brother's servants  
Were then my fellows; now they are my men.

**SEBASTIAN**

*But, for your conscience?*

**ANTONIO**

Ay, sir, where lies that? If 'twere a kibe,  
'Twould put me to my slipper, but I feel not  
This deity in my bosom: Twenty consciences,  
That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be they  
And melt ere they molest! Here lies your brother,  
No better than the earth he lies upon,  
If he were that which now he's like -- that's dead --  
Whom I, with this obedient steel, three inches of it,  
Can lay to bed forever; whiles you, doing thus,



To the perpetual wink for aye might put  
This ancient morsel, this Sir Prudence, who  
Should not upbraid our course. For all the rest,  
They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk;  
They'll tell the clock to any business that  
We say befits the hour.

### SEBASTIAN

Thy case, dear friend,  
Shall be my precedent: as thou got'st Milan,  
I'll come by Naples. Draw thy sword: one stroke  
Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest;  
And I the king shall love thee.

### ANTONIO

Draw together,  
And when I rear my hand, do you the like,  
To fall it on Gonzalo.