



Cymbeline (Folger Shakespeare Library)

William Shakespeare

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Cymbeline tells the story of a British king, Cymbeline, and his three children, presented as though they are in a fairy tale. The secret marriage of Cymbeline's daughter, Imogen, triggers much of the action, which includes villainous slander, homicidal jealousy, cross-gender disguise, a deathlike trance, and the appearance of Jupiter in a vision.

Kidnapped in infancy, Cymbeline's two sons are raised in a Welsh cave. As young men, they rescue a starving stranger (Imogen in disguise); kill Cymbeline's stepson; and fight with almost superhuman valor against the Roman army. The king, meanwhile, takes on a Roman invasion rather than pay a tribute. He too is a familiar figure—a father who loses his children and miraculously finds them years later; a king who defeats an army and grants pardon to all.

Cymbeline displays unusually powerful emotions with a tremendous charge. Like some of Shakespeare's other late work—especially *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*—it is an improbable story lifted into a nearly mythic realm.

The authoritative edition of *Cymbeline* from The Folger Shakespeare Library, the trusted and widely used Shakespeare series for students and general readers, includes:

- Freshly edited text based on the best early printed version of the play
- Full explanatory notes conveniently placed on pages facing the text of the play
- Scene-by-scene plot summaries
- A key to the play's famous lines and phrases
- An introduction to reading Shakespeare's language
- An essay by a leading Shakespeare scholar providing a modern perspective on the play
- Fresh images from the Folger Shakespeare Library's vast holdings of rare books
- An annotated guide to further reading

Essay by Cynthia Marshall

The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, is home to the world's largest collection of Shakespeare's printed works, and a magnet for Shakespeare scholars from around the globe. In addition to exhibitions open to the public throughout the year, the Folger offers a full calendar of performances and programs. For more information, visit Folger.edu.

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