

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-00578-4 - Cymbeline, Volume 6  
William Shakespeare  
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## CYMBELINE

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The scene: Britain and Rome

## CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

- CYMBELINE, *king of Britain*  
 CLOTEN, *son to the Queen by a former husband*  
 POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, *a gentleman, husband to Imogen*  
 BELARIUS, *a banished lord, disguised under the name of Morgan*
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| GUIDERIUS  | } <i>sons to Cymbeline, disguised under the names of Polydore and Cadwal, supposed</i> |
| ARVIRAGUS  |  |
| } <i>sons to Morgan</i>                          |  |
| PHILARIO, <i>friend to Posthumus</i>             | } <i>Italians</i>  |
| JACHIMO, <i>friend to Philario</i>               |  |
| CAIUS LUCIUS, <i>general of the Roman forces</i> |  |
| PISANIO, <i>servant to Posthumus</i>             |  |
| CORNELIUS, <i>a physician</i>                    |  |
| <i>A Roman Captain</i>                           |  |
| <i>Two British Captains</i>                      |  |
| <i>A Frenchman, friend to Philario</i>           |  |
| <i>Two Lords of Cymbeline's court</i>            |  |
| <i>Two Gentlemen of the same</i>                 |  |
| <i>Two Gaolers</i>                               |  |
- Queen, *wife to Cymbeline*  
 IMOGEN, *daughter to Cymbeline by a former queen*  
 HELEN, *a lady attending on Imogen*
- Lords, Ladies, Roman Senators, Tribunes, a Soothsayer, a Dutchman, a Spaniard, Musicians, Officers, Captains, Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants, Apparitions*

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[I. I.] *Britain. The garden of  
 Cymbeline's palace*

*Enter two Gentlemen*

1 *Gentleman.* You do not meet a man but frowns.  
 Our bloods

No more obey the heavens than our courtiers  
 Still seem as does the king.

2 *Gentleman.* But what's the matter?

1 *Gentleman.* His daughter, and the heir of's  
 kingdom, whom

He purposed to his wife's sole son—a widow  
 That late he married—hath referred herself  
 Unto a poor but worthy gentleman. She's wedded;  
 Her husband banished; she imprisoned. All  
 Is outward sorrow, though I think the king  
 Be touched at very heart.

2 *Gentleman.* None but the king? 10

1 *Gentleman.* He that hath lost her too. So is  
 the queen,

That most desired the match. But not a courtier,  
 Although they wear their faces to the bent  
 Of the king's looks, hath a heart that is not  
 Glad of the thing they scowl at.

2 *Gentleman.* And why so?

1 *Gentleman.* He that hath missed the princess  
 is a thing

Too bad for bad report; and he that hath her—  
 I mean, that married her, alack, good man!  
 And therefore banished—is a creature such

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## CYMBELINE

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- 20 As, to seek through the regions of the earth  
 For one his like, there would be something failing  
 In him that should compare. I do not think  
 So fair an outward and such stuff within  
 Endows a man but he.
- 2 *Gentleman.* You speak him far.
- 1 *Gentleman.* I do extend him, sir, within himself,  
 Crush him together, rather than unfold  
 His measure duly.
- 2 *Gentleman.* What's his name and birth?
- 1 *Gentleman.* I cannot delve him to the root.  
 His father  
 Was called Sicilius, who did join his honour  
 30 Against the Romans with Cassibelan,  
 But had his titles by Tenantius, whom  
 He served with glory and admired success,  
 So gained the sur-addition Leonatus;  
 And had, besides this gentleman in question,  
 Two other sons, who in the wars o'th'time  
 Died with their swords in hand; for which their father,  
 Then old and fond of issue, took such sorrow  
 That he quit being; and his gentle lady,  
 Big of this gentleman, our theme, deceased  
 40 As he was born. The king he takes the babe  
 To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,  
 Breeds him and makes him of his bed-chamber,  
 Puts to him all the learnings that his time  
 Could make him the receiver of, which he took  
 As we do air, fast as 'twas minist' red,  
 And in's spring became a harvest; lived in court—  
 Which rare it is to do—most praised, most loved;  
 A sample to the youngest, to th'more mature  
 A glass that feated them, and to the graver  
 50 A child that guided dotards. To his mistress,

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For whom he now is banished, her own price  
 Proclaims how she esteemed him; and his virtue  
 By her election may be truly read,  
 What kind of man he is.

2 *Gentleman.* I honour him  
 Even out of your report. But pray you tell me,  
 Is she sole child to th'king?

1 *Gentleman.* His only child.  
 He had two sons—if this be worth your hearing,  
 Mark it—the eldest of them at three years old,  
 I'th'swathing clothes the other, from their nursery  
 Were stol'n, and to this hour no guess in knowledge 60  
 Which way they went.

2 *Gentleman.* How long is this ago?

1 *Gentleman.* Some twenty years.

2 *Gentleman.* That a king's children should be  
 so conveyed,  
 So slackly guarded, and the search so slow  
 That could not trace them!

1 *Gentleman.* Howsoe'er 'tis strange,  
 Or that the negligence may well be laughed at,  
 Yet is it true, sir.

2 *Gentleman.* I do well believe you.

1 *Gentleman.* We must forbear. Here comes  
 the gentleman,  
 The queen and princess. [they go

*Enter the Queen, POSTHUMUS and IMOGEN*

*Queen.* No, be assured you shall not find me, daughter, 70  
 After the slander of most stepmothers,  
 Evil-eyed unto you. You're my prisoner, but  
 Your gaoler shall deliver you the keys  
 That lock up your restraint. For you, Posthumus,  
 So soon as I can win th'offended king,

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I will be known your advocate. Marry, yet  
 The fire of rage is in him, and 'twere good  
 You leaned unto his sentence with what patience  
 Your wisdom may inform you.

*Posthumus.* Please your highness,  
 80 I will from hence to-day.

*Queen.* You know the peril.  
 I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying  
 The pangs of barred affections, though the king  
 Hath charged you should not speak together. [*she goes*  
*Imogen.* O

Dissembling courtesy! How fine this tyrant  
 Can tickle where she wounds! My dearest husband,  
 I something fear my father's wrath, but nothing—  
 Always reserved my holy duty—what  
 His rage can do on me. You must be gone,  
 And I shall here abide the hourly shot  
 90 Of angry eyes, not comforted to live,  
 But that there is this jewel in the world  
 That I may see again.

*Posthumus.* My queen, my mistress:  
 O lady, weep no more, lest I give cause  
 To be suspected of more tenderness  
 Than doth become a man. I will remain  
 The loyal'st husband that did e'er plight troth.  
 My residence in Rome at one Philario's,  
 Who to my father was a friend, to me  
 Known but by letter; thither write, my queen,  
 100 And with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send,  
 Though ink be made of gall.

*Re-enter Queen*

*Queen.* Be brief, I pray you.  
 If the king come, I shall incur I know not

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I. I. 103

## CYMBELINE

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How much of his displeasure. [*aside*] Yet I'll  
 move him

To walk this way. I never do him wrong  
 But he does buy my injuries, to be friends;  
 Pays dear for my offences.

[*she goes*]

*Posthumus.* Should we be taking leave  
 As long a term as yet we have to live,  
 The loathness to depart would grow. Adieu!

*Imogen.* Nay, stay a little.

Were you but riding forth to air yourself,  
 Such parting were too petty. Look here, love:  
 This diamond was my mother's; take it, heart;  
 But keep it till you woo another wife,  
 When Imogen is dead.

110

*Posthumus.* How, how? another?  
 You gentle gods, give me but this I have,  
 And cere up my embracements from a next  
 With bonds of death. [*putting on the ring.*] Remain,  
 remain thou here

While sense can keep it on. And, sweetest, fairest,

As I my poor self did exchange for you

To your so infinite loss, so in our trifles

120

I still win of you. For my sake wear this;

It is a manacle of love; I'll place it

Upon this fairest prisoner.

[*putting a bracelet on her arm*]

*Imogen.* O the gods!

When shall we see again?

*Enter CYMBELINE and Lords*

*Posthumus.* Alack, the king!

*Cymbeline.* Thou basest thing, avoid hence, from  
 my sight!

If after this command thou fraught the court

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## CYMBELINE

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With thy unworthiness, thou diest. Away!  
 Thou'rt poison to my blood.

*Posthumus.* The gods protect you,  
 And bless the good remainders of the court.

130 I am gone. [*he goes*]

*Imogen.* There cannot be a pinch in death  
 More sharp than this is.

*Cymbeline.* O disloyal thing,  
 That shouldst repair my youth, thou heap'st  
 A year's age on me.

*Imogen.* I beseech you, sir,  
 Harm not yourself with your vexation.  
 I am senseless of your wrath; a touch more rare  
 Subdues all pangs, all fears.

*Cymbeline.* Past grace? obedience?

*Imogen.* Past hope, and in despair; that way  
 past grace.

*Cymbeline.* That mightst have had the sole son of  
 my queen!

*Imogen.* O blesséd, that I might not; I chose  
 an eagle,

140 And did avoid a puttock.

*Cymbeline.* Thou took'st a beggar, wouldst have  
 made my throne  
 A seat for baseness.

*Imogen.* No, I rather added  
 A lustre to it.

*Cymbeline.* O thou vile one!

*Imogen.* Sir,  
 It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus:  
 You bred him as my playfellow, and he is  
 A man worth any woman; overbuys me  
 Almost the sum he pays.

*Cymbeline.* What, art thou mad?

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*Imogen.* Almost, sir. Heaven restore me! Would  
 I were  
 A neat-herd's daughter, and my Leonatus  
 Our neighbour shepherd's son!

*Re-enter Queen*

*Cymbeline.* Thou foolish thing! 150  
 [*to the Queen*] They were again together; you have done  
 Not after our command. Away with her,  
 And pen her up.

*Queen.* Beseech your patience. Peace,  
 Dear lady daughter, peace! Sweet sovereign,  
 Leave us to ourselves, and make yourself some comfort  
 Out of your best advice.

*Cymbeline.* Nay, let her languish  
 A drop of blood a day; and, being aged,  
 Die of this folly. [*Cymbeline and lords go*]

*Enter PISANIO*

*Queen.* Fie, you must give way.  
 Here is your servant. How now, sir? What news?

*Pisanio.* My lord your son drew on my master.

*Queen.* Ha? 160  
 No harm, I trust, is done?

*Pisanio.* There might have been,  
 But that my master rather played than fought,  
 And had no help of anger; they were parted  
 By gentlemen at hand.

*Queen.* I am very glad on't.

*Imogen.* Your son's my father's friend; he takes his part  
 To draw upon an exile. O brave sir!  
 I would they were in Afric both together;  
 Myself by with a needle, that I might prick  
 The goer-back. Why came you from your master?

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## CYMBELINE

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170 *Pisanio.* On his command. He would not suffer me  
 To bring him to the haven; left these notes  
 Of what commands I should be subject to  
 When't pleased you to employ me.

*Queen.* This hath been  
 Your faithful servant. I dare lay mine honour  
 He will remain so.

*Pisanio.* I humbly thank your highness.

*Queen.* Pray walk awhile.

*Imogen.* About some half-hour hence, pray you  
 speak with me.

You shall at least go see my lord aboard.

For this time leave me.

[*they go*]

[I. 2.] *The same. A public place*

*Enter CLOTEN and two Lords*

1 *Lord.* Sir, I would advise you to shift a shirt; the  
 violence of action hath made you reek as a sacrifice.  
 Where air comes out, air comes in; there's none abroad  
 so wholesome as that you vent.

*Cloten.* If my shirt were bloody, then to shift it.  
 Have I hurt him?

(2 *Lord.* No, faith; not so much as his patience.

1 *Lord.* Hurt him? his body's a passable carcass, if  
 he be not hurt. It is a throughfare for steel, if it be  
 10 not hurt.

(2 *Lord.* His steel was in debt; it went o'th'backside  
 the town.

*Cloten.* The villain would not stand me.

(2 *Lord.* No, but he fled forward still, toward your  
 face.