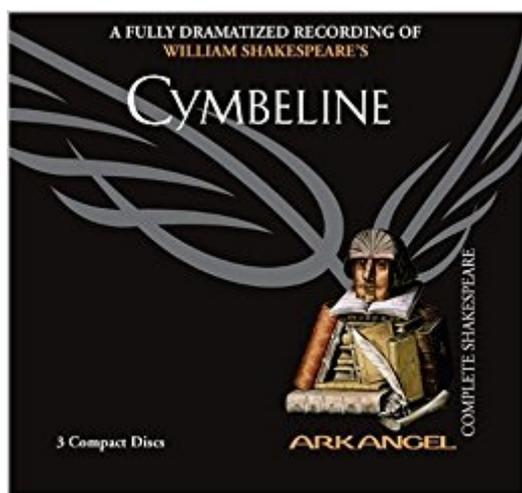


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# Cymbeline (Arkangel Shakespeare - Fully Dramatized) (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)



## Synopsis

[Full-Cast Audio Theater Dramatization. Sophie Thompson is Imogen, and Ben Porter is Posthumus. Cymbeline is played by Jack Shepherd while Suzanne Bertish is the Queen. Stephen Mangan plays Cloten, and Ron Cook plays Iachimo.] This strange, dark romance includes two songs composed by Shakespeare that are amongst the most beautiful in the English language. Imogen, the daughter of King Cymbeline, is persecuted by her wicked stepmother, the Queen, and by Cloten, the Queen's foolish son. Disguised as a boy, she sets out to find her husband, the banished Posthumus. On her journey, she unwittingly meets her two brothers, stolen from the court as infants and brought up in rustic innocence, unaware of their princely identities. Posthumus, meanwhile, has been convinced by the villainous Iachimo that Imogen is unfaithful to him.

## Book Information

Series: Arkangel Complete Shakespeare

Audio CD: 1 pages

Publisher: AudioGO; Unabridged edition (April 15, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1932219072

ISBN-13: 978-1932219074

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 1 x 6.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars 29 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,027,183 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #87 in [Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > \(S\) > Shakespeare, William](#) #302 in [Books > Books on CD > Poetry & Drama](#) #352 in [Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Poetry](#)

## Customer Reviews

“A remarkable edition, one that makes Shakespeare’s extraordinary accomplishment more vivid than ever.” —James Shapiro, professor, Columbia University, bestselling author of *A Year in the Life of Shakespeare: 1599* “A feast of literary and historical information.” —*The Wall Street Journal* —This text refers to the Paperback edition.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), English poet and dramatist of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean period, is the most widely known author in all of English literature and often considered

the greatest. He was an active member of a theater company for at least twenty years, during which time he wrote many great plays. Plays were not prized as literature at the time, and Shakespeare was not widely read until the middle of the eighteenth century, when a great upsurge of interest in his works began that continues today.

Cymbeline is among Shakespeare's last five plays, four of which are romances: "Pericles," "The Winter's Tale," "The Tempest," and "Cymbeline." "Cymbeline" is the least performed of the four; the plot is complicated, and the characters are mostly one dimensional (except for the heroine Imogen and the Machiavellian Iachimo). The play is ambitious, too, and entails all of Shakespeare's favorite subjects: love, loss, treachery, the unequal conflict between the good and the evil, and the fragile balance between men and women. However, Imogen is one of the Bard's inspired creations, on the level of Rosalind, but put through a far more harrowing experience. Helen Faucet, the 19th century actress, suggested the play should be retitled "Imogen, Princess of Britain." She has a point. The reason to read the play (so say the critics) is for Shakespeare's particularly exquisite verse.

"Cymbeline" is perhaps an acquired taste, but worth seeing for unsinkable Imogen, who has been played by a number of great actors down through the years, including Vanessa Redgrave and Dame Judi Dench. No less than Charles Van Doren has counted it among his five favorite plays by William Shakespeare. More about that later. The story is reminiscent of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs--with added pitfalls. Imogen's stepmother, the evil queen, wants her to marry her son, clueless and irredeemable Cloten. Against the Queen's wishes, and that of her father, King Cymbeline, she marries Posthumus. Posthumus is then banished from Britain. Before departing for Rome, he gives a bracelet to Imogen. In Rome, Posthumus meets the cunning interloper Iachimo, who tells him that his wife can be made unfaithful. Later, in Britain, in one of the play's truly bizarre scenes, Iachimo hides in a trunk in Imogen's bedroom. While she is asleep, he emerges and steals her bracelet. Learning that Iachimo has the bracelet, Posthumus believes the worst and orders his servant Pisanio to kill her. Meanwhile, Rome demands tribute from Britain but Cymbeline refuses. Pisanio, faithful to the bewildered Imogen, tells her to disguise as a boy and seek refuge with the invading Roman army. She becomes lost in Wales and meets a long-ago banished lord, Belarius, and two youths who are the sons of Cymbeline, and therefore princes, and Imogen's brothers. Belarius kidnapped them when he was banished and has raised them as his own sons, although Cymbeline

doesn't know this; he thinks they're dead. Imogen, meanwhile, becomes ill and takes a drug that puts her into such a deep sleep that she appears to be dead. Cloten arrives on the scene dressed in Posthumus's clothes, up to no good, and is killed by one of the princes. Imogen awakes and thinks Cloten's headless body is that of her husband's. Deeply grieved, she joins the Roman general, whose forces are ready to attack Cymbeline's forces. The courage of Belarius and the two princes win the day for Britain. All come before Cymbeline where, one revelation growing from another, the plot's many twists are unraveled. Cymbeline is reunited with his sons and happiness returns to the kingdom, except for the evil Queen, who has died mysteriously. Even Iachimo the interloper and liar is pardoned. Imogen and Posthumous are reunited and presumably live happily ever after. Sound far-fetched? It is. The play's saving grace is Imogen, ever faithful, ever pure of heart, ever plucky and resourceful, and allotted the play's sublimest lines; and Iachimo, rat though he is, Shakespeare renders a three-dimensional character. The rest are one-dimensional cardboard characters--stiff, myopic, inclined to believe the worst. About Imogen, in his book "William Shakespeare," George Branes writes: "We see her in the most various situations, and she is equal to them all. We see her exposed to trial after trial, each harder than the last, and she emerges from them all, not only unscathed, but with her rare and enchanting qualities thrown into ever stronger belief." Finally, Charles Van Doren has this to say: "When you have written 30 plays, and know everything about writing plays, and in particular know that your skill will not allow you to make any really bad mistakes, you may be willing to take some very big chances and try some things that have never been tried before. This is what Shakespeare does in Cymbeline and it is the reason above all why I love the play."

This version of the play is MISSING Acts III and IV. Act IV, Scene ii contains some of the most famous lines of Shakespeare: "Fear no more the heat of the sun ..." So, if you need this play, are crunched for time, and need it to supplement a research paper on stream-of-consciousness and Mrs. Dalloway ... I would definitely GET ANOTHER VERSION! Thanks a lot for the complete rip off.

I think you're all missing the point (or a bunch of ringers from digireads.com). What we have here is the basic text derived from a scanned version of the play, with no background information on how the text came to be. It's a decent enough interpretation, but with absolutely no editorial assistance to

understand the language or the context in which the ideas of the author are set forth. Definitely better than nothing, though.

There's plenty of room in the script on the side of the pages to write notes as you read. which when reading Shakespeare comes really in handy

A comedy and a near tragedy , a near miss. Funny , I read this while watching a film of it which made me respect he other comedies more, those that I've only read.

This book is in shambles. Every time I touch it, the cover crumbles more, in addition to being halfway falling off. The pages are torn and written in, which would be fine if not for the other things wrong. I had to practically laminate it with tape just so I could use it.

When I am preparing to teach any of Shakespeare's plays, I start with an order for an Arden Edition of the play. They are complete, feature good introductions and a wealth of notes. At times, there are more notes than play. That, for a foundation, is a good thing. This edition seems to live up to Arden's standards.

Not my favorite Shakespeare play but worth the read and worth seeing in a play after.

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