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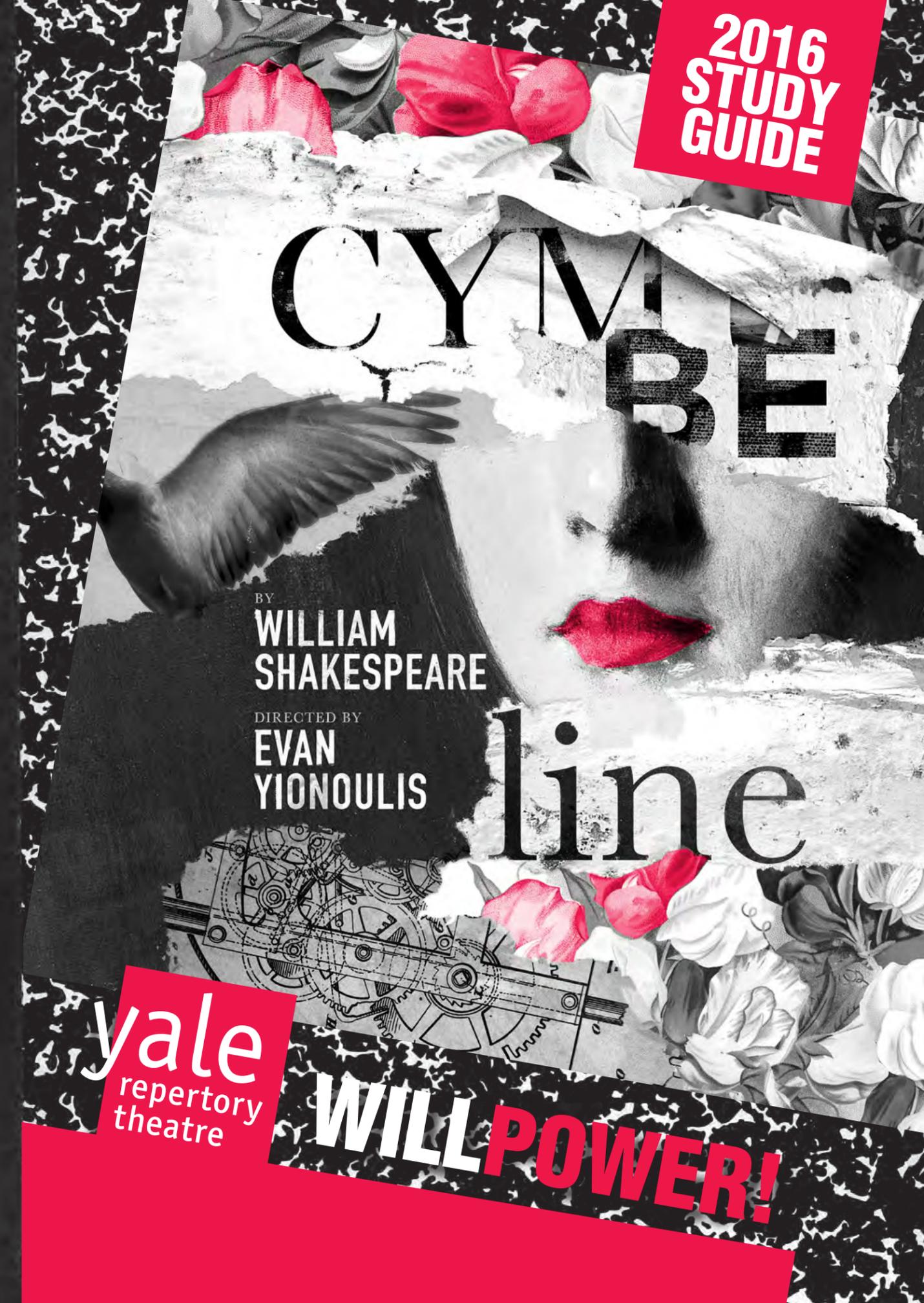
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**2016  
STUDY  
GUIDE**



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**WILL POWER!**

# welcome to WILLPOWER!

As part of Yale Repertory Theatre’s WILL POWER! educational initiative, we are pleased to offer this Study Guide to accompany our 2016 production of *Cymbeline*.

Quotes from *Cymbeline* are taken from Arden Shakespeare, reprinted in 2007.

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## SYNOPSIS

**Imogen**, daughter of Britain’s **King Cymbeline**, has married **Posthumus Leonatus**, even though he is not of royal blood. (Imogen is the king’s only child; he once had two sons, but they were kidnapped long ago.) Upon discovering Imogen’s unsanctioned marriage, the king banishes Posthumus. Before he departs for Italy, the lovers exchange tokens: she gives him a ring, he gives her a bracelet. Meanwhile, the **Queen** is plotting to have her son by a previous marriage, **Cloten**, married to Imogen. Cloten tries to awkwardly woo Imogen, but Imogen rejects him.

In Italy, Posthumus meets the scheming **Iachimo**, who bets that he can prove that Imogen is unfaithful. Posthumus takes the bet and gives Iachimo his ring as collateral.

Back in England, the Queen plots to poison both the King and Imogen. The doctor, **Cornelius**, suspects the Queen’s plot, and instead of poison, gives her a sleeping potion. The Queen passes the potion along to Imogen and Posthumus’s loyal servant **Pisanio**. Newly arrived Iachimo convinces Imogen that he is Posthumus’s friend and asks her to keep his trunk in her room. Iachimo hides in the trunk, and while Imogen is sleeping, he creeps out, memorizes the details of her room, and steals her bracelet: “proof” of her infidelity. Iachimo returns to Italy to tell Posthumus he won Imogen and shows him the bracelet. Posthumus bemoans the unfaithfulness of women. He writes two letters: one telling Imogen to meet him at Milford Haven, and one telling Pisanio to kill Imogen for adultery once they arrive.

**Caius Lucius**, an ambassador from Italy, arrives at Cymbeline’s court. Cymbeline refuses to pay his yearly tribute, and Lucius warns him of the wrath of Rome. Pisanio and Imogen receive their letters and set off for Milford Haven. On the journey Pisanio reveals the contents of his letter. He disguises Imogen as a boy, gives her the Queen’s potion for protection, and tells her to run away. Pisanio returns to court, where he finds Cloten in a rage because Imogen has disappeared. Pisanio sends Cloten, who puts on Posthumus’s clothes, to Milford Haven and writes a letter to Posthumus, telling him Imogen is dead.

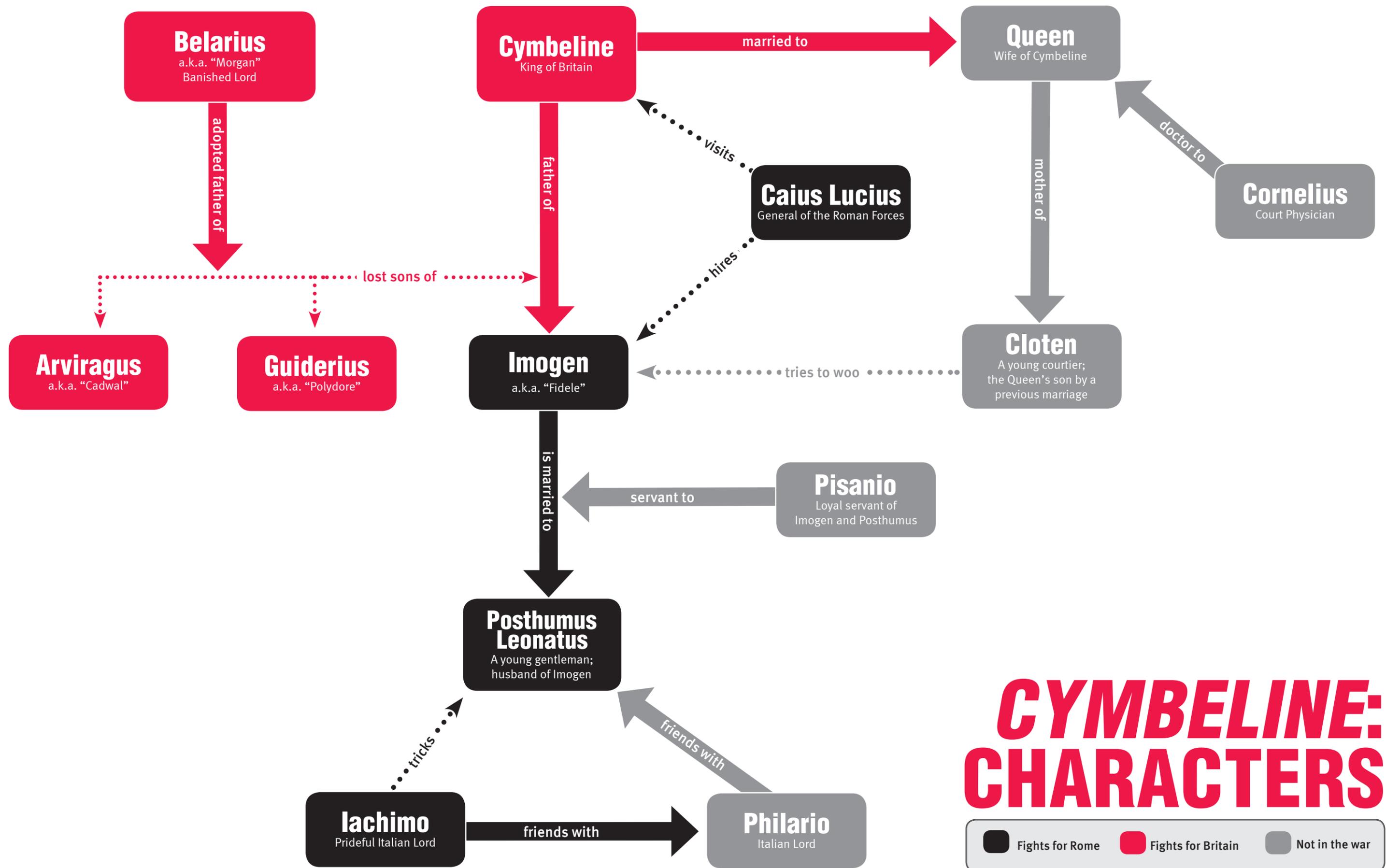
Imogen finds a cave, which belongs to **Belarius** and his adopted sons **Guiderius** and **Arviragus**. Imogen tells them her name is **Fidele**, and they welcome her as a brother. The next day, “Fidele” feels ill and takes the sleeping potion thinking it is medicine. Cloten arrives at the cave and gets in a fight with Guiderius, who cuts off his head. Arviragus finds “Fidele” in the cave and thinks him dead. The three mourn “Fidele” and lay him with Cloten’s body. Imogen, still dressed as “Fidele,” then awakens and sees Cloten’s headless body wearing Posthumus’s clothing. She thinks her husband is dead and weeps for him. “Fidele” is found by Lucius and agrees to join the Roman Army.

At court, Cymbeline and Pisanio prepare to fight the Romans. Guiderius, Arviragus, and Belarius fight for Britain, while Posthumus joins the Romans, along with Lucius and Iachimo. The two sides clash, and the Britons win the day. The Romans, including Posthumus, are thrown in jail. While awaiting execution, Posthumus has a dream in which his long-dead family and Jupiter himself appear to him. In the morning, the Romans are brought before Cymbeline. “Fidele,” seeing Posthumus’s ring on Iachimo’s finger, demands to know where it came from. Iachimo admits he got it from Posthumus by lying about Imogen’s virtue. Pisanio reveals that “Fidele” is Imogen and explains her disguise. Guiderius admits to killing Cloten, and Belarius explains that Guiderius and Arviragus are Cymbeline’s lost sons. Cymbeline, overjoyed, recognizes Imogen’s marriage, pardons the Romans, agrees to pay his tribute, and declares a feast.

—RACHEL CARPMAN

### REMIX IT

The above synopsis follows Shakespeare’s play as the Bard wrote it. However, it’s quite common for directors to cut lines—or even restructure scenes—in productions. This can help frame the play around a certain theme, highlight a particular character’s journey, or emphasize a particular element of the plot. After seeing the play, do you think that director Evan Yionoulis made any cuts or changes to the text?



# CYMBELINE: CHARACTERS

Fights for Rome
  Fights for Britain
  Not in the war



# Shakespeare's Staged History

When the first collection of Shakespeare's work was published in 1623, the editors split his plays into three genres: **comedy**, **tragedy**, and **history**. The histories are all named for English kings: *Henry V*; *Richard III*; *King Henry VIII*; *Richard II*; *King John*; *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*; and *Henry VI Parts 1, 2, and 3*. *Cymbeline*, first produced sometime between 1609 and 1611, is also named after a real British king—Kymbeline—but defies the history label; in fact, it was first categorized as a tragedy. This play features a tumultuous love story, a duplicitous Queen straight out of a fairy tale, and material too fantastical to have come from any history book, including ghosts and a god descending from the heavens. In *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare draws upon historical fact, but he takes major liberties in his adaptation to create a new and compelling story.

The freedom that allowed Shakespeare to embellish his version of Kymbeline's story was due in part to the scant material available describing the historical king's reign. King Kymbeline of Britain reigned from about 9 BCE to 42 CE. Most accounts of Kymbeline's life focus on two things: Britain's amicable relationship with Rome and his position as the British king during the life and death of Jesus Christ. Curiously, Christ receives only indirect attention in Shakespeare's play. Scholars find oblique references, pointing to such things as the resonance between the two brothers, Arviragus and Guiderius, crying over Imogen's supposedly dead body and the Virgin Mary weeping over the body of Christ after the crucifixion. Instead of concentrating on the connection between Kymbeline's reign and the origins of Christianity, however, Shakespeare takes Britain's relationship with Rome as his primary historical focus.

Kymbeline's connection to Rome began about fifty years before his rule when Julius Caesar first invaded the British Isles in 55 BCE. Rome was originally focused on Gaul (present-day France), but Caesar diverted attention to Britain because he thought the British were aiding his enemies. Although Caesar lost men and supplies during his first British invasion, he returned in 54 BCE with a larger contingent, eventually coercing Cassibelan, Kymbeline's great uncle and

British ruler at the time, to pay an annual tribute to Rome. Shakespeare briefly delves into the backstory of Cassibelan's struggle against Julius Caesar when Caius Lucius visits to retrieve Britain's "untender'd" tribute in Act III.

Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* refuses to pay the tribute, which precipitates a war between the two nations. The historical record varies slightly from this version of events. *Holinshed's Chronicles*, one of Shakespeare's primary source texts, states that, "after Julius Cesar's death when Augustus had taken upon him the rule of the Empire, the Britaynes refused to pay tribute" but also that "Kymbeline being brought up in Rome, and made a knight in the Court of Augustus" was, therefore, "at libertie to pay his tribute or not."

But Shakespeare is at his most creative when his source materials are scant. So it might have been that there would have been no consequences if Kymbeline had refused to pay his tribute; Caius Lucius might merely have accepted that answer and returned to Rome. But there is much more drama in conflict; skirmishes, battles, and all-out wars feature in many of Shakespeare's history plays. Shakespeare used the refusal of the tribute as an inciting event that would, through toil and blood, bring the main characters of his play back together in the final act. This masterful playwright used his vast imagination to fill in some of history's gaps to create vibrant drama out of what became a mere historical footnote.

—TAYLOR BARFIELD

**BASED ON A TRUE STORY**  
Pick up your history textbook. Find a short passage on an historical figure or an event. Using that short passage, create a story using only those sentences as your source. How would you remain faithful to history, and where might you deviate from the record of the past?

ABOVE: A KYMBELINE-ERA COIN. ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

# DIRECTOR'S CUT: Evan Yionoulis on *Cymbeline*



**EVAN YIONOULIS** is Resident Director at Yale Rep where her productions include *Owners*, *Stones in His Pockets*, *Bossa Nova*, *The Master Builder*, *Richard II*, *Black Snow*, *The People Next Door*, *The King Stag*, *Heaven*, and *Galileo*. New York credits include Howard Brenton's *Sore Throats*, Adrienne Kennedy's *Ohio State Murders* (Lucille Lortel Award, Best Revival) at Theatre

for a New Audience; Daisy Foote's *Him* (Primary Stages) and *Bhutan* (Cherry Lane Theatre); as well as Richard Greenberg's *The Violet Hour* (Broadway), *Everett Beekin* (Lincoln Center Theater), and *Three Days of Rain* (Manhattan Theatre Club, OBIE Award). She directed Tom Stoppard's *Hapgood* starring Kate Burton at Williamstown Theatre Festival. With frequent collaborator, composer/lyricist Mike Yionoulis, she has written and directed the short film *Lost and Found* (Cleveland International Film Festival) and is developing the *Dread Pirate Project* about Identity and the Dark Web. Other credits include productions at such theatres as the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Rep, Huntington Theatre Company, New York Shakespeare Festival, Vineyard Theatre, Second Stage, Dallas Theater Center, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Denver Center. She has directed presentations of the documentary play *Seven*, which tells the stories of seven extraordinary women who work for human rights in New York, Boston, Washington, London, New Delhi, and Deauville, France. She is the recipient of a Princess Grace Foundation Fellowship and the Foundation's prestigious statuette. She is a professor in Yale School of Drama's Departments of Acting and Directing.

PHOTO BY BEOWOLF SHEEHAN.

As a director embarks on a new production of one of Shakespeare's plays, she often spends a year—or more—making choices about what will be on stage. The text is often cut. Actors are cast to play the roles, and designers have to plot out what the set, costumes, and lights will look like. At the helm, the director makes many choices along the way to ensure that a vibrant story is told when the audience comes to the theatre.

Yale Rep's Literary Manager Amy Boratko sat down with Evan Yionoulis last fall to talk about the choices she's making for this production of *Cymbeline*.

**AMY BORATKO:** As a Resident Director at Yale Rep, you have the opportunity to bring projects that you want to direct to the theatre. Why did you propose Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*?

**EVAN YIONOULIS:** I've always loved *Cymbeline*. At its heart is Imogen, a strong young woman with passion and a remarkable inner light. And the play has so many familiar elements which Shakespeare puts together in new and theatrical ways: a forbidden marriage; jealous lovers; a treacherous seducer who arrives with a Trojan-horse trunk; a maiden-in-disguise; an ill-intentioned stepmother; plus stolen princes, poisonous concoctions, and a visit from the gods. It's very funny, and it also travels to very dark places before things come back together again in the end.

*Cymbeline* starts with families who have been torn apart: By death—Posthumus is an orphan and Imogen has lost her mother—or by treachery—Imogen's brothers were stolen in childhood and her marriage with Posthumus is threatened by the Queen's plot to put Cloten on the throne as Imogen's husband. Many characters are quick to judge and quick to act, →

## Continued: Evan Yionoulis on *Cymbeline*

and their anger and rashness cause distress on both the personal and political levels. The families feel pain, and so does the entire kingdom. When Imogen and Posthumus are forced apart, they embark on separate journeys. Both suffer a great deal, confront death, and discover the power of repentance and forgiveness. Meanwhile, there is a bloody war. By the end of the play, the families are reunited, and England and Rome are also brought back together. It's an amazing path for the play to take.

**AMB:** *Imogen and Posthumus's love story, for its time, is unusual. Shakespeare shows a couple who wants to marry for love and fights for the ability to choose a spouse. Women in his era weren't often afforded that opportunity.*

**EY:** That's right. In the beginning of the play, Imogen and Posthumus just want to have some control over their own lives. To Imogen, it doesn't make any sense that she can't marry Posthumus. Her dad, King Cymbeline, loved him and brought him up in court. But Imogen is a daughter. And Posthumus is not of royal blood. The King has to consider succession and rights to the throne, and he listens to the (bad!) advice of his wife. When Imogen and Posthumus get married in defiance, Cymbeline banishes Posthumus as punishment. Imogen's brothers, Arviragus and Guiderius, were stolen in infancy by a soldier, Belarius, whom Cymbeline had also banished, unjustly, on

hearsay evidence. Twenty years later, Belarius is a devoted, overprotective father to the boys and wants to keep them out of harm's way. But they, too, want to choose their own lives and have their own experiences. I think young audiences might relate to these characters striving for agency.

**AMB:** *You've been talking a lot about Imogen and Posthumus's journeys in the play, but the title character is King Cymbeline. Why do you think the play is named after him?*

**EY:** Well, scholars have rightly pointed out that he's the one person who spans both the personal and political arcs of the play.

And while it's not the kind of central role that, say, Hamlet is, Cymbeline is a very interesting—and rather problematic—character. Why is he blindly doing everything that the Queen says? Doesn't he see that Cloten is a terrible choice for Imogen? Doesn't he see the cost to his kingdom of provoking a war with Rome? Directors for centuries have tried to resolve these questions in various ways: for example, by insinuating that the Queen has been slowly poisoning Cymbeline, thus clouding his judgment. I'm not sure about that. Cymbeline says in Act V that he was fooled by the Queen's outward beauty and seeming kindness to him. The blindness of love is certainly an old and enduring idea in literature—and in life. The idea

of the difference between what's on the surface and what's underneath or within is a major theme in the play.

Cymbeline certainly is a major player in exhibiting the rash, anger-fueled behavior that dominates the world and is the catalyst for the play's action. Or you might say: the male, testosterone-driven behavior.

**AMB:** *But you're casting a woman in the role.*

**EY:** Yes. As written, *Cymbeline* has two female roles: the Queen and Imogen. Maybe there's a lady-in-waiting or two. But we're casting women in several of the male roles, including Posthumus. In addition to giving more wonderful acting opportunities to terrific female actors, I think the choice will allow the production to make us look in a new way at behavior we take for granted as gendered and maybe shouldn't. When he thinks Imogen has betrayed him, Posthumus talks about the “woman's part” in him in a very disparaging way, and even early in the play cuts his leave-taking short “lest I give cause/ To be suspected of more tenderness/ Than doth become a man;” Pisanio tells Imogen she must “forget to be a woman.” What does it mean to act, play, live the woman's part—or the man's? To explore this, I've cast a male actor in the role of the Queen.

**AMB:** *How will these actors be costumed? Will you disguise the sex of the actor, or, in your production, will the Queen wear clothing that might be considered masculine?*

**EY:** Both the sex of the actor and the gender of the character will live simultaneously. The characters will be dressed as the gender assigned by the play—so the Queen will be wearing a really fabulous gown! But everyone in the audience will be aware that a man is playing the role. We're not trying to disguise that.

**AMB:** *Casting the play is a series of big choices that a director makes about her production, and you've made a bold choice with how you're casting some of the major roles in the play. Another area that a director makes choices, particularly when doing a Shakespeare play, is how she cuts the text. Often, many lines are cut, and that has implications on the storytelling of a production. How have you been working with the text so far?*

**EY:** At Yale Rep, the last Shakespeare play I directed was *Richard II*. That's a pretty short play, comparatively. I didn't end up cutting that much. *Cymbeline* is one of Shakespeare's longest plays, over 4,000 lines. Doing the play completely uncut would



EVAN YIONOULIS'S 2007 YALE REP PRODUCTION OF *RICHARD II*. FROM LEFT: CAROLINE STEFANIE CLAY, ALLEN E. READ, BILLY EUGENE JONES, AND GEORGE BARTENIEFF; JEFFREY CARLSON AS KING RICHARD II; MICHAEL LEIBENLUFT, ALVIN EPSTEIN, JOSH ODSSESS-RUBIN, AND CAITLIN CLOUTHIER. PHOTOS BY JOAN MARCUS.



# WHAT IS LOVE?

## The Romance of *Cymbeline*

take over four hours to perform! I knew I wanted to cut at least 1,000 lines. But, before you can even decide what to cut, you have to decide what the heart of the story is. The first time I went through it, I thought I had cut a lot, and then I counted and found I'd only trimmed 200 lines, so I had to be more aggressive.

It's often easiest to take out whole sections rather than try to thin within speeches, because you have to be very careful to preserve the meter.

In *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare shows a battle but also writes a scene in which a character describes that same battle in great detail. We see it twice this way, and either the battle or its description has historically been a prime candidate for cutting. I've decided to nest the physical battle as a flashback in the scene where Posthumus describes it to a deserter, so they almost happen simultaneously. To me, it's very important to show the war. It's a senseless one, in that there has been an unnecessary failure of diplomacy. The soldiers are no less noble for their sacrifice, but we have to ask why the war happened in the first place, as we might about the senseless wars we've seen in our own lifetimes.

In other Shakespeare plays, like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *The Winter's Tale*, the characters have wild or far-reaching journeys, but end up back at court. The final scene of *Cymbeline* feels like a return-to-court scene, but Shakespeare actually sets it outside Cymbeline's tent on the battlefield. It's a joyful and funny scene, with revelations and resolutions, but these characters have been through something harrowing, and we need to remember that. They've bloodied the bucolic natural landscape with their war.

**AMB:** *Many directors choose to cut Jupiter's appearance to Posthumus. Are you keeping that in this production?*

**EY:** Yes. The scene is much more than just the god appearing to Posthumus. The young man dreams of his dead family—and the family calls for Jupiter. Jupiter then appears and assures them he's been watching over Posthumus the whole time. And though it still leaves open the question of the purpose of human suffering, Posthumus takes comfort in the visit by his lost family, even in a momentary dream.

I have, sadly, cut the Soothsayer and the prophecy Jupiter leaves to Posthumus, but I thought everyone would like to get home before midnight!

**AMB:** *You have also been working with your design team to create the look of the production—the set, costumes, and lights. What are your inspirations so far?*

**EY:** We've been looking at a lot of research of overgrown castle ruins, stone and vines and broken arches and staircases. Mist. The historical King Cymbeline ruled around the time of Christ. We're setting this production not specifically then, but rather in "a Far-Away Time." There'll be a space that's evocative of time past, and then the flesh-and-blood, passionate characters will enter, filling it with life and color.

Shakespeare's plays are usually pretty easy to categorize. Are there star-crossed teenagers or blood-soaked tyrants? Must be a tragedy. Girls in disguise and multiple marriages? Looks like a comedy. How about real-life rulers of Britain? Signs of a history. But toward the end of his life, Shakespeare resisted more and more keeping the clean divisions of genre. Four plays from the very end of his career—*Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*—defy these classifications almost entirely, combining elements of all three, plus a dash of the supernatural, to create something new. This genre is known as **Romance**.

Romance in a Shakespearean context doesn't mean a sticky-sweet love story. Rather, the term refers to a style of courtly writing that became popular in the Elizabethan era and is still popular today. Romances usually involve a hero on a quest, which may or may not be for love. They have themes of exile and return, elements of fantasy and the miraculous, and have several episodes, or mini-quests, that add up to the whole story. The most famous Romance of the time was *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the first major collection of stories about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

This form allowed Shakespeare to "re-mix" elements from his earlier plays. For example, many of the Romances contain tragedies, usually in the first few acts. These events split families and societies apart. At the beginning of *Cymbeline*, for example, Cymbeline has already lost his sons, alienated his daughter, and begun to dissolve the relationship between Britain and the Roman Empire. The rest of the plays are spent putting the pieces back together, bringing the characters to a place of forgiveness, and, as in comedies, a (mostly) happy ending. Families are reunited, lovers can marry (or, like in *Cymbeline*, stay married), but the joy is always mixed with sorrow. The shadow of death, usually absent from the comedies, remains in the Romances, suggesting that while the crimes of the past can be forgiven, they cannot be forgotten.

The Romances try to contain every aspect of human life: happiness, grief, rage, humor, loss, and rebirth. Relationships between parents and children are especially important, as the passing of power from one generation to the next represents the lifecycle of a kingdom. Because the scope of these plays is so large, they often take a wider view of characters and situations than the closely observed comedies and tragedies. In the Romances these elements are often **archetypal**, giving the plays the epic feel of myths and fairy tales.

In addition to the multitude of archetypes, these plays are infused with magic. Sometimes the magical elements are miraculous situations, like the unlikely reuniting of Pericles's family in *Pericles*, or the magical preservation of Queen Hermione as a statue in *The Winter's Tale*. In *The Tempest*, Prospero is a sorcerer who conjures scenes to awe and befuddle the visitors to his island. In *Cymbeline* the presence of the divine is palpable when Jupiter appears to Posthumus Leonatus in his jail cell. In production these moments were opportunities for lavish spectacle, allowing the actors to incorporate new fashions and stage technologies into their performance, bringing the magical workings of Shakespeare's imagination to life on the Elizabethan stage.

—RACHEL CARPMAN

### From the Kitchen of William Shakespeare

## CYMBELINE

**2 parts Forbidden Love**  
*Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice*

**1 part Travel to a Distant Land**  
*All's Well that Ends Well*

**1 part Supposed Infidelity**  
*Othello*

**2 parts Lost Siblings**  
*The Comedy of Errors, Twelfth Night*

**1 part Ambitious Mother**  
*Coriolanus*

**3 parts Girl Dressed as Boy**  
*As You Like It, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Twelfth Night*

**1 dash War**  
Your favorite tragedy or history play, to taste

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Yield: 5 Acts

# EVIL QUEENS, LOYAL SERVANTS, AND ROYALS IN DISGUISE: From Snow White to Imogen

**I**f I told you a tale about a wicked stepmother—an evil queen who envied her husband's daughter—and about a faithful servant who was asked to take the girl out into the woods and kill her, sending back to the castle with proof of the bloody deed, you'd recognize it instantly...as Snow White. But you'd be wrong. I'm talking about the story of *Cymbeline*.

**A**lthough Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* is based loosely on the story of a historical king, it also borrows a great deal from the genre of the fairy tale. Most of us can probably recall our own favorite fairy tales from childhood—sweet princesses imprisoned in castle towers from which they are then rescued by charming princes; wolves and goblins threatening innocent travelers who venture into the woods; powerful witches taking revenge on those who have trespassed onto their territory; and beggars or orphans discovering that they are secretly princes or princesses who were kidnapped as babies. But in order to see Shakespeare's use of fairy tales in *Cymbeline*, we have to look beyond the specifics of the particular stories we know and toward the fairy tale's basic building blocks.

**M**odern fairy tales began in the 1600s, right around the time Shakespeare was writing, as European folk tales that were previously passed down orally from generation to generation started to get written down. The stories are usually simple and speak to the concerns of their society. They rely on familiar plot patterns (such as the journey or the quest); their settings are straightforward and recognizable (the castle, the woods, the cottage); and their characters are archetypal and clear-cut (the innocent princess/prince, the good or bad king/queen, the monster, the trickster, the hero). The archetypes in particular make the tales remarkably flexible: you can take a witch or a princess and put her into any story, change some details, and at once have a new story that speaks to the concerns of a contemporary audience but feels deeply familiar. Even today we can look at many characters in our own popular entertainments and find early versions of them in a play that was written in England more than 400 years ago.

**A**rchetypes are everywhere in *Cymbeline*. Cymbeline's wife, the Queen, for example, is never given a proper name. She is an **archetype**; that is, her general identity as a ruler is more relevant to us than any detail specific to her person. What is more, the Queen is stepmother to our heroine Imogen, whom she persecutes with a vengeance in an attempt to give her own, clearly inferior, offspring more power. All of this puts the Queen directly in line with the evil queen/wicked stepmother figure, a character found tormenting her stepchildren in many myths, folk tales, and fairy tales from the ancient world to today. Not only does the wicked stepmother in *Cymbeline* try to get rid of the young and virtuous Imogen, but she plans to do so through the use of a poison—which ultimately fails to kill its victim—in a circumstance recognizable from many fairy tales, such as Snow White and Sleeping Beauty.

**A**nother character we might recognize from the fairy tale world is Pisanio, who functions like a "loyal servant," just like the good huntsman in Snow White. He must choose between following his duty as a servant and listening to his own moral instincts. He chooses, rightly, to follow his heart. Pisanio is instructed by his master, Posthumus, to kill Imogen in revenge for the love affair that Posthumus mistakenly believes Imogen has had with Iachimo. But Pisanio cannot bring himself to do it, and he saves Imogen's life instead.

**I**n addition to the Queen and Imogen, there is also something familiar in the story of Guiderius and Arviragus, the two brothers who are living off the land in a cave. When they first appear in the play, they have no idea that they are actually the two sons of Cymbeline, stolen from their home as infants. It is only in the last scene of the play that they learn their true identities. This element of the storyline recalls another common device found in fairy tales: the "royal in disguise." Think of stories like the Prince and the Pauper, Beauty and the Beast, or the Frog Prince, all of which involve a member of royalty or wealthy aristocracy whose identity is not known and who must, whether by choice or by circumstance, live like a peasant, beggar, or even animal until he or she is finally recognized and may claim their real title.

**F**airy tales are just one of the many genres that *Cymbeline* draws from, but by keeping an eye out for the places in which they appear, we are attuned in new ways to the questions this play raises about parent-child relationships, morality, class, the nature of sovereignty, and how Shakespeare and his audience felt about all those things.

—LYNDA A.H. PAUL



## Travelogue Of A Wicked Stepmother

Although in real life step-families are often perfectly happy together, many societies have found the figure of the stepmother threatening—especially to her stepchildren. Let's take a look at some examples. Notice that certain themes are repeated in many of the stories, regardless of the fact they come to us from different cultures and time periods.

Phaedra	Ancient Greece	Phaedra is married to Theseus when a bored goddess makes her fall in love with her stepson, Hippolytus. When Hippolytus finds out, he rejects her, and Phaedra is inconsolable. In some versions, she is so distraught that she tells her husband, Theseus, that Hippolytus tried to take advantage of her. In response, Theseus has his son killed.
Canidia	Ancient Rome	Canidia is a witch who, Horace writes, glares at a young boy in the way a stepmother would. This is meant to indicate her evil intentions toward him.
Cinderella's Stepmother	Folk tales found in many European and Middle Eastern cultures	Cinderella's stepmother is often depicted as the main source of the young girl's troubles. In different versions, she privileges her own daughters over Cinderella, tries to turn her husband against his daughter, and treats Cinderella as if she were dirt—or simply there to sweep it up.
Vasilisa's Stepmother	Russia	In this story, Vasilisa's father marries a new woman after his first wife dies. The new wife brings two daughters with her to the house, and all three of them hate Vasilisa for her beauty. In an attempt to get rid of her stepdaughter, Vasilisa's stepmother forces her to go into the woods to see the terrible witch Baba Yaga.
Hansel and Gretel's Stepmother	Germanic and Baltic regions	In many versions of the Hansel and Gretel story, it is their stepmother who convinces their father that the family will starve to death unless the children are abandoned in the woods and left to fend for themselves.
The Stepmother from the Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh	England	In this English folk tale, a king marries a witch after his first wife dies. The new wife hates the king's daughter from his first marriage because she is so beautiful. In her jealousy and hatred of the girl, the new wife turns her stepdaughter into a dragon.
Snow White's Stepmother	Throughout Europe	Snow White is the daughter of a king whose first wife dies. When he remarries, the new wife is extremely jealous of Snow White's beauty. In her wickedness and vanity, she repeatedly tries to have Snow White killed.
Janghwa and Hongreyon Jeon's Stepmother	Korea	The father of two sisters, Janghwa and Hongreyon Jeon, remarries after his first wife dies. The new wife hates the two girls. When she has had three new sons with her husband, she makes plans to ruin the reputations of her stepdaughters and have them killed.



## Where Are Fairy Tales Today? (Everywhere!)

References to fairy tales abound in the arts and entertainment of the past five centuries, and the tales continue to make up an important part of culture today. See the following for some examples of recent retellings of these old stories.

### TELEVISION SERIES

**Once Upon a Time (2011–present)**

This ABC series tells the story of fairy tale characters who have been cursed by the evil queen (Snow White's stepmother) to reside—with all memory of their past lives erased—in a small town in modern-day Maine. Each episode moves between the characters' current situations and their histories, while they slowly rediscover their past identities.

**Game of Thrones (2011–present)**

Based on George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, a series of fantasy novels, this television show depicts a dark story that uses a number of tropes from fairy tales in service of a violent epic about war.

**Grimm (2011–present)**

Like *Once Upon a Time*, *Grimm* is a mash-up of real life and fantasy. Its plot centers on a homicide detective who is descended from a long line of monster-fighting warriors with the last name of Grimm. The episodes often use the stories and characters from classic fairy tales as a basic plot device, though they are rewritten to fit the framework of the show.

### MOVIES

**Snow White and the Huntsman (2012)**

This dark reimagining of the classic fairy tale stars Charlize Theron as the evil Queen Ravenna, Snow White's stepmother, a vampire-like warrior woman who kills her new husband and keeps herself looking beautiful by stealing the youth of the women of the kingdom.

**Mirror Mirror (2012)**

This version of Snow White stars Julia Roberts as the stepmother—also known as the sorceress Clementianna—whose greed nearly destroys the kingdom she has been ruling since her husband, Snow White's father, went off to fight an evil force and never came back. While Snow White tries to help her impoverished people, she and Clementianna become rivals for the wealthy Prince Alcott's affections.

**Frozen (2013)**

This popular Disney movie, starring Idina Menzel as the voice of the heroine, Elsa, is inspired by Hans Christian Anderson's story *The Snow Queen*. The movie's plot departs in significant ways from the original fairy tale but retains several elements of Anderson's story, such as a strong, powerful female character who can command snow and ice.

**Into the Woods (2014)**

This movie is based on the musical by Stephen Sondheim that tells the story of what might happen if the characters from several different fairy tales—such as Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and Rapunzel—were to run into each other in the woods. The movie stars Meryl Streep as the Witch, who has frightening powers but a motherly desire to protect her daughter Rapunzel. It also features Johnny Depp as the Wolf from Little Red Riding Hood.

**Maleficent (2014)**

This revision of the story of Sleeping Beauty invites the viewer to consider the tale from the villain's point of view. Angelina Jolie stars as the complex figure of Maleficent, who in this version is not an evil witch, but rather, a wronged fairy, who seeks revenge on the royal family for the terrible way they treated her.



ANGELINA JOLIE IN *MALIFICENT*, 2014. IMAGE COURTESY OF WALT DISNEY FILMS.

# Actor's Notebook

When actors start to learn their roles, they study the language very carefully, looking at different aspects of the poetry. Look at the scene to the right. It's one of the most famous passages of *Cymbeline*, the funeral song in Act 4, Scene 2, when brothers Guiderius and Arviragus sing over the body of Imogen. Pretend you are playing one of these roles. Use the guide below to begin analyzing the dialogue and unlocking the scene's meaning.

## METER

The meter most commonly associated with Shakespeare's verse is **iambic pentameter**. That means that there are five metrical feet in a line, where a **foot** is composed of two syllables. **Iamb**s are metrical feet that follow a pattern of unstressed then stressed beats: duh-DUH, duh-DUH, duh-DUH, duh-DUH, duh-DUH. This song deviates from this common meter in two ways—in both the number of beats or syllables in a line and in the pattern of the stressed syllables.

Count the number of syllables in the line. Most of these lines have eight syllables or four feet. (Note: sometimes actors use their knowledge of meter to help them pronounce the words—sometimes contracting or eliding sounds.) These four-foot lines are called **tetrameter**.

Now, read the words of the first few lines. You'll notice that the pattern is stressed-unstressed, DUH-duh. Feet that have a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable are called **trochees**.

Marking the meter of lines is called **scanning**. Try to scan these lines and mark out the **trochaic tetrameter**, breaking

up each line into its number of syllables or beats, and deciding which of these are stressed or unstressed, long or short. Did you find any irregularities? Any places where the meter is not perfect? If so, read the line again. Is there something in the meaning of the line that has changed—a new idea or a change in thought? Sometimes the places where Shakespeare changes the rhythm of a line, something important might be happening!

## RHYME SCHEME

Looking at the rhyme scheme of a section of poetry can also give actors a clue as to its meaning. Even though two speakers are singing here, they are completing one song, one poem. Look at how the first verse is labeled: **ABABCC**. That means that the first and third lines rhyme; the second and fourth; and the final two. Does that rhyme scheme follow through for the whole passage? What does it mean when the pattern deviates from that scheme, for instance, in the final stanza of this passage?

## COUPLETS

This section of text breaks down into four six-line stanzas. (A **stanza** is a group of lines in poetry that form a recurring

metrical unit—that repeat the same rhythmical pattern.) The final two lines of each stanza rhyme—the CC pattern—and complete a thought. Two rhyming lines in a row are called a **couplet**. Each stanza builds up to these pairs of lines, which complete the thought of each stanza. Do you notice a pattern in the punctuation that comes just before these rhyming couplets in each stanza?

## METONYMY

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated. See here: “sceptre” stands in for “king,” “learning” for “scholar,” and “physic” for “doctor.”

## ANTITHESIS

Antithesis is a literary device where two phrases or terms with opposite meanings are put next to each other to achieve an effect. This passage is filled with antithesis. At the start, “the heat o’ th’ sun” is immediately followed by “the furious winter’s rages.” Where else does Shakespeare use antithesis in this song?

# CYMBELINE

Shakespeare

## GUIDERIUS

A Fear no more the heat o’ th’ sun,  
B Nor the furious winter’s rages;  
A Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
B Home art gone, and ta’en thy wages:  
C Golden lads and girls all must,  
C As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

antithesis

couplet

## ARVIRAGUS

Fear no more the frown o’ th’ great;  
Thou art past the tyrant’s stroke;  
Care no more to clothe and eat;  
To thee the reed is as the oak:  
The sceptre, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

metonymy

## GUIDERIUS

Fear no more the lightning flash,

## ARVIRAGUS

Nor th’ all-dreaded thunder-stone;

## GUIDERIUS

Fear not slander, censure rash;

## ARVIRAGUS

Thou hast finish’d joy and moan:

## BOTH

All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee and come to dust.

## GUIDERIUS

No exorciser harm thee,

## ARVIRAGUS

Nor no witchcraft charm thee.

## GUIDERIUS

Ghost unlaid forbear thee;

## ARVIRAGUS

Nothing ill come near thee.

## BOTH

Quiet consummation have,  
And renownèd be thy grave.

These twenty-four lines of text are some of the most famous from *Cymbeline*. Virginia Woolf uses these lines in her book *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Winnie and Willie in Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* (which will be Yale Rep's final show of the 2015-16 season) use the opening of this song to call attention to their own mortality.

The rhyme scheme changes in this stanza. It's different from the other three. What do you think that means? How is Shakespeare using verse to call our attention to these final six lines?

# Cymbeline: Shakespeare's Treasure Chest

In *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare recycles many themes and devices that he used in his earlier plays. Check out Shakespeare's treasure chest of recurring characters, themes, and plots!



## WAR. WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? A WHOLE OTHER PLOTLINE.

There is not much historical evidence suggesting that a war occurred between Cymbeline's England and Augustus Caesar's Rome. Shakespeare often uses war as a means to explore how interpersonal relationships between individuals can play out in the realm of international politics. Almost every one of Shakespeare's plays focused on English Monarchs (*Henry V*, *Richard III*, *King John*, etc.) includes a war. Even *Hamlet*, Shakespeare's most famous play, operates with an impending battle between Denmark and Norway in the background of the plot.



## DISTILLED LIQUOR

"Take thou this vial, being then in bed,  
And this distilled liquor drink thou off;  
When presently through all thy veins shall run  
A cold and drowsy humour, for no pulse  
Shall keep his native progress, but surcease...:  
Thou shalt continue two and forty hours,  
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep."

—FRIAR LAURENCE FROM *ROMEO AND JULIET*

In a plot to get the two lovers away from their feuding families, Friar Laurence gives Juliet a potion that will make her appear dead. Friar Laurence's message relaying his plan never gets to Romeo, and when the young lover sees Juliet cold in the Capulet monument, he takes his own life. In *Cymbeline* Cornelius creates a similar potion for the Queen, who gives it to Pisanio, who in turn gives it to Imogen. When Imogen takes the potion, she appears dead to Arviragus and Guiderius, who give her an extensive funeral.



## BOOM! WE'RE IN NATURE!

Where did Milford Haven's lush pastoral landscape come from? Weren't we just in a British castle and Rome? Beware whiplash: Shakespeare often shifts his plays from an urban setting to a more rugged natural landscape in the blink of an eye. Some examples from Shakespeare include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, and *As You Like It*.



## LONG-LOST RELATIVES

Cymbeline's long-lost sons are casually referred to by two gentlemen as early as Act 1, Scene 1. They appear in Act 3, alive and well. Shakespeare's characters constantly find lost relatives or relatives that they didn't even know they had. The recognition (and mis-recognition) of relatives appears in *Twelfth Night* with Viola and Sebastian and *The Comedy of Errors* with the Dromio and Antipholus twins.



## A GOD DESCENDS

In *Cymbeline*, Jupiter's presence transforms the landscape of the play by invoking a physical deity onstage. The god prophesies the reconciliation that will occur in the next scene and transports the play to a divine plane. Jupiter isn't the first god to appear on Shakespeare's stage: Hymen, the Greek god of marriages, descends to officiate the weddings at the end of *As You Like It*.



## WAIT?! YOU'RE ROYALTY?

While on the topic of the lost brothers, they represent another popular trope in Shakespeare's plays—hidden royalty. Characters who outwardly seem base or of lower rank turn out to be royalty, aristocracy, or of a higher social class. Perhaps the best known example of Shakespeare's long-lost royalty is Perdita from *The Winter's Tale*.



## CROSSDRESSING

Imogen is not the first of Shakespeare's heroines to dress as a boy. In Shakespeare's time, all of the female roles were played by boys. Shakespeare capitalized on this staging convention in his plays by very convincingly "disguising" female characters as boys. Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, and Portia in *Merchant of Venice* are three top examples. In all three of these plays, women dress as boys in order to infiltrate public spaces and social positions typically occupied by men such as a Duke's retinue and the judicial courts.



## LOSING YOUR HEAD

Cloten's been decapitated, and Imogen thinks that Cloten is Posthumus. What a case of mistaken identity! Decapitation is a common form of death in Shakespeare's plays. Often the head (or lack thereof) is used as a means to recognize or mis-recognize its former owner. Macduff takes Macbeth's head in *Macbeth*, the Duke gives Ragozine's head to Angelo in place of Claudio's in *Measure for Measure*, and Suffolk gets decapitated by pirates in *Henry VI, Part II*.



## TEST OF VIRTUE

During the Elizabethan era, goodness and virtue were closely aligned with fidelity—especially for women. When Posthumus praises Imogen to the Frenchman, he says she is "more fair, virtuous, wise, chaste, constant-qualified and less attemptable than any the rarest...ladies in France." In this scene Iachimo and Posthumus set up a test to determine Imogen's virtue and steadfastness toward Posthumus. A similar test of virtue happens in *The Winter's Tale* when Leontes consults the Delphic Oracle to determine if his wife, Hermione, has been faithful to him.



## IACHIMO, DON JUAN, AND THE GENTLEMAN WOOER

"Yours; whom in constancy you think stands so safe,  
I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring,  
that, commend me to the court where your lady is,  
with no more advantage than the opportunity of a second  
conference, and I will bring from thence that honour of  
hers which you imagine so reserved."

—IACHIMO FROM *CYMBELINE*

A key element of the wager scene is Iachimo's confidence that he can woo Imogen no matter how virtuous Posthumus thinks she is. Many might call this kind of fierce womanizer a "Don Juan," which became a prominent character type in the 17th century. Shakespeare created other characters with a passion for wooing women like Lucio in *Measure for Measure*, Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Bertram in *All's Well that Ends Well*.



## LOVE'S TRINKETS

Imogen gives Posthumus a ring to remind him of their love. Posthumus, in turn, gives Imogen a bracelet. Shakespeare usually uses trinkets such as these to identify a true lover or, as Iachimo will do later, to try and prove true love false. The most famous instance of one of Shakespeare's characters giving a trinket to signify love occurs in *Othello* when the titular character gives his mother's white handkerchief to his soon-to-be wife, Desdemona.



## GHOSTS

Hamlet says "by heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me" during his first encounter with his dead father's specter in *Hamlet*. Ghosts appear in *Macbeth*, when the deceased Banquo returns to haunt Macbeth, and *Richard III*, when Richard's enemies come back from the grave to curse the evil monarch. In *Cymbeline*, the Ghosts of Leonati past converge to raise Posthumus from despair as he sleeps in prison.

## SOUND FAMILIAR?

Even if you don't know Shakespeare's other plays, think about the way that each of these character types or plot points works in *Cymbeline*. Do you recognize any of these "treasures" from your favorite television shows or movies?

## THE BLOCKING PARENT

In the first scene of the play, King Cymbeline blocks his daughter Imogen from being with her chosen love, Posthumus, because he is not of royal blood. Cymbeline follows in a long line of parents who prevent (or try to prevent) their children from marrying their desired love. The Montagues and the Capulets from *Romeo and Juliet* block the famous young lovers from being together because of the long-standing feud between their families. Similarly, Egeus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* implores Theseus to end his daughter Hermia's relationship with Lysander because he wants her to marry Demetrius.

# PLAYING SPACES: How Theatre Buildings Shaped Shakespeare's Plays

We usually imagine the original performances of Shakespeare's plays in the Globe, a big, round, open-roofed theatre on the south bank of the Thames. But Shakespeare's Company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men (later called the King's Men) actually performed in multiple theatres and private spaces around London.

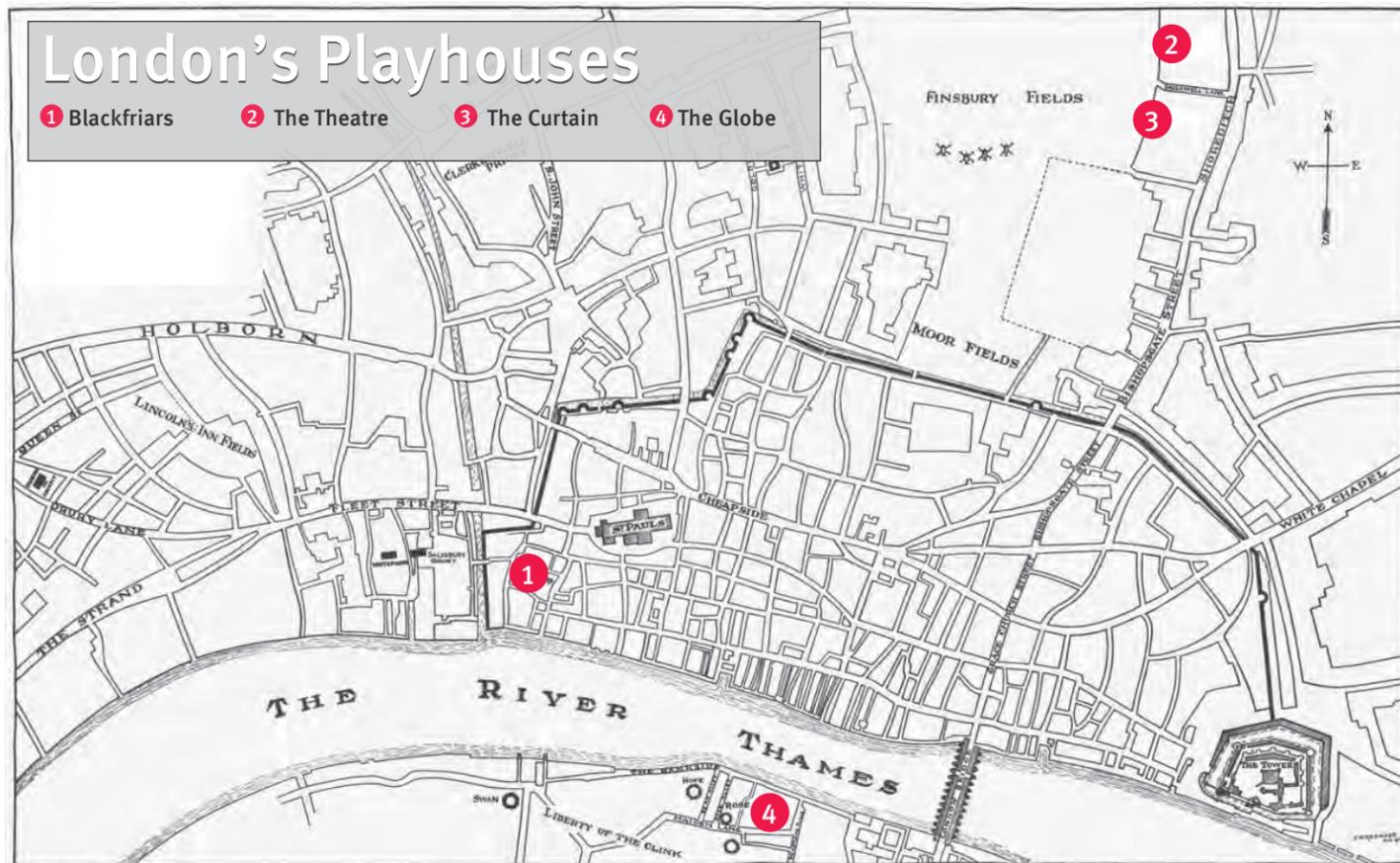
The first permanent theatre the Lord Chamberlain's Men occupied was called simply **The Theatre**, and stood outside the city of London in the neighborhood of Shoreditch. The Theatre had galleries and an open courtyard for the audience and a long thrust stage for the actors. As it was outside, it was dependent on natural light. The Lord Chamberlain's Men performed in The Theatre from 1594 until 1597, when disputes with the landlord drove them next door to the **Curtain Theatre**.

In 1598, in the dark of a Christmas night, the Lord Chamberlain's Men pulled the Theatre apart board by board and carried the pieces away. They used the wood to build **The Globe Theatre** in 1599. The Globe sat on the south bank of the Thames. The shape was much like the Theatre: it had three galleries for wealthier audiences and an open courtyard for the general public, known as the groundlings. As at the Theatre, performances at the Globe were always dependent on the sun and the weather. A reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe opened in 1997, and productions of Shakespeare's plays are still produced there today.

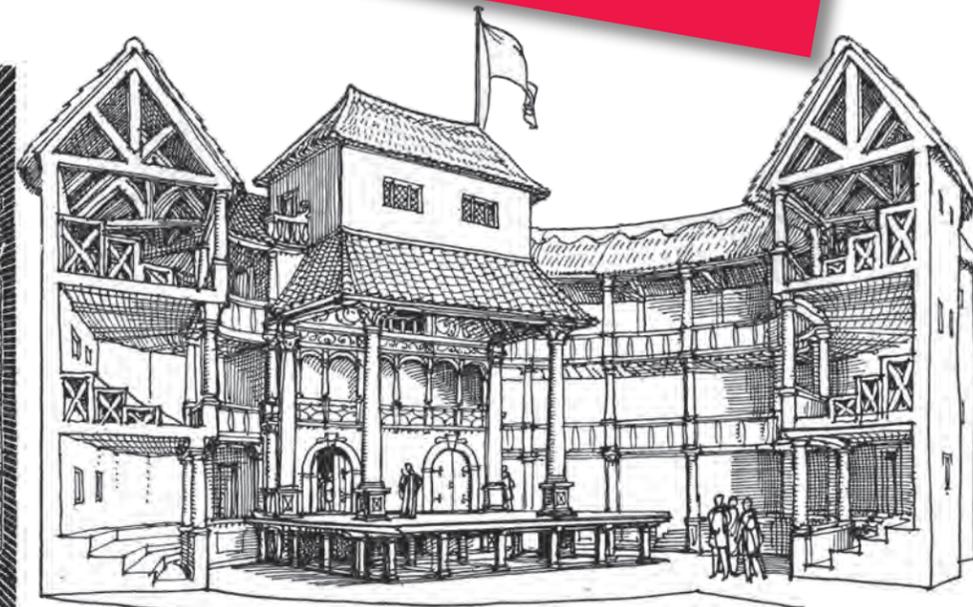
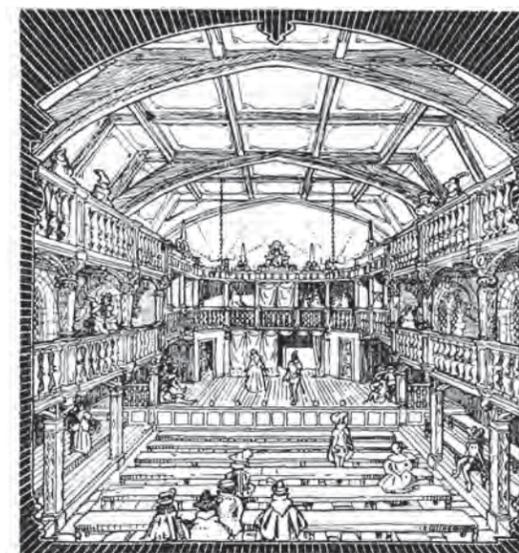
Even before the construction of the Globe, theatre impresario James Burbage (father of Richard Burbage, the star of Shakespeare's acting company) was looking to create a newer and better theatre for the Lord Chamberlain's men. In 1596, he bought part of a Dominican priory (a type of monastery) on the other side of the river. He and the acting company turned it into a state-of-the-art theatre which he called **Blackfriars**; however, the company didn't get permission to perform in the new theatre until 1608. Once the company moved to Blackfriars, they entered a world of new theatrical possibilities. The plays Shakespeare wrote after the move to Blackfriars are full of the kind of magic and spectacle that were suddenly achievable on an indoor stage.

Many scholars believe *Cymbeline* was the first play written specifically for Blackfriars. Because this theatre was indoors, the company had much more control over the environment than they'd had outdoors at The Theatre and later the Globe. The acoustics were drastically improved, and music became a centerpiece of plays performed here. The actors had control over the lighting; plays could move gracefully from day to night in just the time it took to light or extinguish a candle. Perhaps most exciting, Blackfriars had elaborate stage technology, like a "flying machine," which lowered actors from the balcony (called "the heavens") to the stage. The magnificent descent of Jupiter in Posthumus's dream is a vibrant example of the spectacular capabilities of Blackfriars.

—RACHEL CARPMAN



**INSIDE OUT**  
List all of the locations in *Cymbeline*. How many are indoor, and how many are outdoor? If you were directing the play today, where would you do it? What would the set look like? Do you think the indoor or the outdoor spaces are more important or have the same value?



ABOVE: THE INTERIORS OF BLACKFRIARS AND THE GLOBE.

# Before

# After

# Resources

1. Pin it! Directors have to make many decisions about what their production will look like: the set, the costumes, and the light. Take your turn making some choices. Pick a character in *Cymbeline* (or another play your class is reading), and make a Pinterest board of clothes that that character would wear. Would this character wear contemporary clothes or clothes from a certain period? Find photos and images that you might use to capture the look or “wardrobe” of this character.
2. Make a list of ten television shows or movies that you’ve seen this school year (or plays, if you’re an intrepid theatre-goer). After reading the piece on *Cymbeline*’s genre, think about this list. Are these comedies, tragedies, or something else altogether? Do they blend genre? Try to group the items in this list into their respective genres. What do the comedies have in common? What do the tragedies have in common? Is there anything you’d describe as a Romance? Why or why not?
3. The character of the Queen in *Cymbeline* has many elements of the archetypal “evil stepmother” from fairy tales. Before coming to the play, list other iconic characters from fairy tales (the article in this guide should help you get started!). Pick a character and list the places that you can see that “type” in popular culture—in shows, movies, books, video games, and songs. How do these contemporary stories use fairy tale characters, and why do you think they use them?

1. Casting Call: Evan Yionoulis has made some bold choices in her casting of *Cymbeline* (see her interview “Director’s Cut”). She has cast women to play Cymbeline and Posthumus and a man to play the Queen. After seeing the production, what did that choice mean to you? How did you think differently about the roles of men and women in the world of this play?
2. *Cymbeline* was written for an indoor theatre space, and Yale Rep produced the play in its University Theatre. What did the theatre itself look like? What was the stage like? How did the set capture outdoor and indoor spaces? If you thought about all the different locations in *Cymbeline*, how did the production show you each different location and move from place to place?
3. Shakespeare used an event from history to write *Cymbeline*, but he largely invented his own tale. History was his inspiration, and teaching us accurate facts was not. Think about the costumes and set of the production. Did Evan Yionoulis and her designers set the play in a long-ago time? Did the costumes look like they were from a particular era or time period? Why do you think they made that choice? How did the setting of this production affect your experience of the story? Did it make it easier or harder to follow? Did it allow you to connect the story to your own life today? Why or why not?

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## WEBSITES

**NEA Shakespeare in American Communities**  
shakespeareinamericancommunities.org

**Folger Shakespeare Library**  
folger.edu/cymbeline

**PBS In Search of Shakespeare: Shakespeare in the Classroom**  
pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/

**Speak the Speech: Universal Shakespeare Broadcasting**  
speak-the-speech.com/SOS.htm

**Shakespeare Online**  
shakespeare-online.com/plays/cymbeldp.html

**Shakespeare Resource Center**  
bardweb.net/index.html

## FILMS

*Cymbeline* (black and white, silent). Directed by Ludwig Berger. Germany, 1925.

*Cymbeline* (DVD). Directed by Elijah Moshinsky. With Helen Mirren and Richard Johnson. BBC Shakespearean Collection, 1983.

*Cymbeline* (DVD, streaming on AmazonPrime). Directed by Michael Almereyda. United States, 2015.

## STUDY GUIDES

**A Noise Within**  
anoisewithin.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/10/CymbelineStudyGuide\_a.pdf

**Utah Shakespeare Festival**  
bard.org/study-guides/cymbeline-study-guide

**New Orleans Shakespeare Festival**  
neworleansshakespeare.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Cymbeline-study-guide.pdf

**Shakespeare Theatre Company**  
shakespearetheatre.org/\_pdf/first\_folio/Cymbeline\_folio.pdf

**Theatre for a New Audience**  
tfana.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Cymbeline-360-Viewfinder1.pdf