



Westall, Richard. Imogen Entering the Cave of Belarius, ("Cymbeline," Act III, Scene VI). ca. 1795. Folger ART 268783 (framed).

This painting by Richard Westall depicts Imogen entering the cave of Belarius in Act 3, Scene 6. John Boydell commissioned the work for his Shakespeare Gallery, a business venture begun in 1786 to capitalize on Shakespeare's surging popularity. Boydell proposed to use Shakespearean subject matter to raise the prestige of an English school of "Historical Painting." He envisioned the project in three parts: a gallery where the public could pay to see original paintings; a series of prints based on the paintings, and an illustrated edition of Shakespeare's plays. Although not a financial success, the project produced a number of famous images of Shakespeare's works.

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