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The Winter's Tale (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)



Synopsis

King Leontes of Sicilia is seized by sudden and terrible jealousy of his wife Hermione, whom he accuses of adultery. He believes the child Hermione is bearing was fathered by his friend Polixenes, and when the baby girl is born he orders her to be taken to some wild place and left to die. Though Hermione's child escapes death, Leontes' cruelty has terrible consequences. Loss paves the way for reunion, and life and hope are born out of desolation and despair. One of the late romances in Shakespeare's canon, this complex work is at times tragic, at times humorous, but always entertaining and enlightening. Sinead Cusack plays Hermione, and Ciaran Hinds plays Leontes. Eileen Atkins is Paulina and Paul Jesson is Polixenes. Time the Chorus is played by Sir John Gielgud.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Aimed at a more scholarly audience, the New Cambridge Shakespeare produces superb editions that rank with the Arden and the Oxford as the best in the business. This year's *The Winter's Tale* is no exception. Edited by the late Susan Snyder and Deborah T. Curren-Aquino, this edition has a lucid and intelligent introduction that covers all of the crucial elements of this complicated late play: genre; Leontes' jealousy; the bear; Time; act V and the ending. There is also a fascinating discussion of the revision theory-Forman did not mention the statue scene in his 1611 account of the play, after all-but the edition decides against the theory, in spite of Snyder's having made the most eloquent case for it in 2002. There is a very useful discussion of sources, the notes to the play

are exemplary, and the Selected Reading list is both excellent and up-to-date. Although the appendix concentrates on performance issues (Forman's notes on the play, doubling possibilities, key staging choices, a performance chronology), the edition is notable for its blend of textual and performance discussions. Especially effective is the decision to match photographs of the play in performance with the thematic issues under discussion. The visual variations on the statue scene are especially welcome and will be a boon in the classroom. Finally, although it has become fashionable in recent years for critics, editors, and directors to darken the ending, this edition opts for ambiguity rather than pessimism and seems truer to *The Winter's Tale's* hybrid, tragicomic spirit as a result." -*Studies in English Literature*, Spring 2008 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

John Dover Wilson's *New Shakespeare*, published between 1921 and 1966, became the classic Cambridge edition of Shakespeare's plays and poems until the 1980s. The series, long since out-of-print, is now reissued. Each work contains a lengthy and lively introduction, main text, and substantial notes and glossary. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I feel like this Shakespearian play doesn't get enough face time. The first time I ever saw its title, I was in High School, looking at the names of all the plays Shakespeare ever wrote. We all know about his overly famous plays, like *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but what about *The Winter's Tale*? I was intrigued by the title at the time, and the fact that I'd never heard of it before (and with a brother heavily into Shakespeare and acting, that was unusual). I've never seen this title on a playbill, though I'm sure it must be performed somewhere, and my curiosity about this play was peaked--though in High School I didn't do anything about it. Recently, I had to teach *Hamlet*, and as I was looking on for a copy for my Kindle, I once again came across *The Winter's Tale*. As it was a free copy, I scooped it up and read it right away, just to assuage my curiosity. It was interesting. In my opinion, it's not really like Shakespeare's other plays. It's a bit intense in the beginning, and though there are comedic scenes, I wouldn't necessarily classify this as a comedy, nor a tragedy either. A romance, I suppose, but for me, it's a bit strange. Through a little research I found that Shakespeare actually modeled his play off *Pandosto*, by Robert Greene (which I've never read), but I, personally, see much of *Oedipus Rex* in this play. I know Shakespeare dealt a lot with Greek mythology in his works, and *The Winter's Tale* seems to really follow that of *Oedipus Rex*. I'm not going to give the entire synopsis away, or any spoilers, but, like *Oedipus*, King Leontes is a haughty man, paranoid. He refuses to listen to oracles and attempts to

do away with his newborn child by sending her away to die. While there are many differences between *The Winter's Tale* and *Oedipus*, there are also many similarities and I found this rather interesting, especially because I really enjoy *Oedipus*. That being said, I'd like to see this play performed someday, I always tend to like plays more when they're performed, so I'll have to keep my eyes peeled for this one. (Please note: I use the star rating system of Goodreads, which is different from that of . My overall rating is that I liked it.)

"*The Winter's Tale*" marks Shakespeare's entrance into a prescient world of High Romantic ideals, where the stagnancy of a courtly world dominated by emotionally afflicted males is subverted by a vernal world of female power. Leontes, King of Sicilia, is one of Shakespeare's most convincingly self-tortured characters, while Hermione is an icon of long-suffering patience, incarnated in the famous statue of the play's conclusion. Her daughter Perdita is the subject of potentially blasphemous adoration, not only for her suitor Florizel but for the entire world; she glows in the suggested light of pagan mystery cult, the Eleusinian mysteries of mothers and daughters in secret collusion with nature and against the withering forces of jealousy and death. In this light, the critical essay included with this edition is sadly tone-deaf to Shakespeare's potent poetic raptures in this play, hearkening instead to a dogmatic, albeit at least clearly presented, rehearsal of Renaissance attitudes about "patriarchy" which deadens Hermione and her faithful advocate Paulina into mere totems for self-exculpating males of the sort whom Shakespeare embodies, with withering criticism, in Leontes and the judgmental Polixenes.

For me, reading Shakespeare is kind of like trying to work through a slightly familiar written foreign language. These Folger books are helpful because they explain difficult phrases and unusual words on the page facing the confusions as they occur. They also tell you about the storyline and emphasize the important points, which are so easy to miss while trying to plug through the old English. Having read four of the Folger paperbacks and then attending the plays, I am just now starting to get fluent enough to enjoy the books and the language without constant referral to the notes. I don't know how else I would have been able to stick with ol' William without Folger as a tour guide.

Love the Classic

We are abruptly thrown into a man's paranoia which has very tragic consequences, The play then

takes us through slow paced central scenes and then to an surprise and abrupt ending. I think that I liked the play because of the magical ending. I read this downloaded version while I listened to an audioplay performed by Shakespearean actors.

It's just bare bones but it's free and helpful for those of us who spend a ton of money on school books. I loved it on kindle since we can change font, spacing, margins and even my 8 year old can follow along then. We do Shakespeare as a family subject.

William Shakespeare is always a good lecture option.

Playscripts are more like blueprints than finished products, and this one is no exception. I just last weekend saw a wonderful production of "Winter's Tale," but when I just read it, it was disappointing. Nevertheless the printed version was useful to me because I don't hear well and reading the script in advance helped me to miss fewer lines in the production.

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