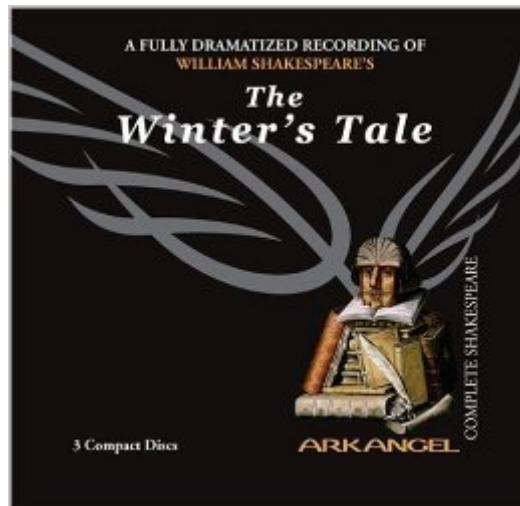


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The Winter's Tale (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)



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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Audio CD

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Customer Reviews

The Winter's Tale contains some of the most technically difficult solutions to telling a story that have ever appeared in a play. If you think you know all about how a play must be constructed, read The Winter's Tale. It will greatly expand your mind. The play opens near the end of a long visit by Polixenes, the king of Bohemia, to the court of his childhood friend, Leontes, the king of Sicily. Leontes wants his friend to stay one more day. His friend declines. Leontes prevails upon his wife, Hermione, to persuade Polixenes. Hermione does her husband's bidding, having been silent before then. Rather than be pleased that she has succeeded, Leontes goes into a jealous rage in which he doubts her faithfulness. As his jealousy grows, he takes actions to defend his misconceptions of his

"abused" honor that in fact abuse all those who have loved him. Unable to control himself, Leontes continues to pursue his folly even when evidence grows that he is wrong. To his great regret, these impulsive acts cost him dearly. Three particular aspects of the play deserve special mention. The first is the way that Shakespeare ties together actions set 16 years apart in time. Although that sounds like crossing the Grand Canyon in a motorcycle jump, Shakespeare pulls off the jump rather well so that it is not so big a leap. The second is that Shakespeare captures entirely different moods from hilarious good humor to deep depression and remorse closely adjacent to one another. As a result, the audience is able to experience many more emotions than normally are evoked in a single play. Third, the play's final scene is as remarkable a bit of writing as you can imagine. Read it, and marvel! After you finish reading this play, think about where your own loss of temper has had bad consequences.

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