

The Winter's Tale

Cast

Time the Chorus *Sir John Gielgud*
Leontes *Ciaran Hinds*
Hermione *Sinead Cusack*
Paulina *Eileen Atkins*
Polixenes *Paul Jesson*
Antigonus *Julian Glover*
Camillo *Geoffrey Whitehead*
Autolycus *Alex Jennings*
Perdita *Alison Reid*
Florizel *Mark Bonnar*
Old Shepherd *Anthony Jackson*
Clown *Stephen Mangan*
Archidamus *John Hollis*
Mamillius *Stephen Geller*
Cleomenes *Alan Cox*
Dion *John McAndrew*
Gaoler *Steve Hodson*
Officer *James Greene*
Mopsa *Sarah-Jane Holm*
Dorcas *Sian Radinger*
Emilia *Rebecca Saire*
Other parts played by:
Charlotte Harvey, Nicholas Murchie, Jonathan Tafler and Tanya Winsor

Play description

ACT I

Scene 1. Archidamus, a Bohemian lord, is warmly appreciative of the hospitality given to his King, Polixenes, by King Leontes of Sicilia. He and Camillo, a Sicilian lord, discuss the love between their kings, which goes back to boyhood.

Scene 2. Leontes presses Polixenes to stay longer, but his friend is set on leaving. When Leontes' wife Hermione, who is pregnant, succeeds in persuading Polixenes to stay a little longer, her friendly attentions to their visitor fill Leontes with violent jealousy. He reveals his suspicion that Polixenes is the father of the child Hermione is expecting to Camillo, who is astonished and does not believe the Queen to be guilty. Camillo pretends to agree to poison Polixenes, but immediately afterwards he reveals the plot to Polixenes and they make a rapid departure from Sicilia.

ACT II

Scene 1. Hermione plays with her son Mamillius and attendants. Leontes believes that Polixenes' flight is proof of his guilt. He publicly accuses Hermione of infidelity and she is led away to prison. Lord Antigonus makes an impassioned defense of Hermione and Leontes reveals that he has sent to Delphos to ask the Oracle of the god Apollo to confirm Hermione's guilt.

Scene 2. Paulina, Antigonus's wife, is refused access to Hermione in prison. She proposes presenting Hermione's newborn baby girl to Leontes in hope of appealing to his better nature.

Scene 3. Leontes asks after Mamillius, who is ill. Paulina brings the baby to Leontes, but he is crazed with jealousy and instructs Antigonus to take the infant to some remote place and leave it to die.

ACT III

Scene 1. Cleomenes and Dion return from Delphos full of hope that the Oracle's proclamation will help Hermione.

Scene 2. Hermione is brought to trial and makes a dignified assertion of her innocence. The Oracle is opened; it reveals that Hermione and Polixenes are innocent and that, "the king shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found." Leontes refuses to accept the truth of the Oracle; immediately, news comes that Mamillius has died. Leontes is now finally convinced, interpreting his son's death as

Apollo's retribution. Hermione swoons and is carried out. Paulina re-enters announcing Hermione's death and the King faces a future of grief and penitence.

Scene 3. Antigonus lands in Bohemia. Naming the baby Perdita, he lays her down with a blessing, before being chased off by a bear. A rustic Clown tells his shepherd father of the storm which has claimed the Sicilian ship and crew. He also witnessed Antigonus's horrible death, torn to pieces by the bear. They discover the abandoned baby and are jubilant to find gold beside her.

ACT IV

Scene 1. Time marks the passage of sixteen years. Polixenes' son Florizel is now grown up, as is Perdita, reared a shepherd's daughter.

Scene 2. In the royal palace of Bohemia, Camillo tells Polixenes how he longs to see Sicilia again, and how the penitent Leontes wishes him to return. Polixenes does not want him to go. Worried about Florizel, who has been seen frequenting the house of a shepherd and his daughter, they decide to disguise themselves and visit the place.

Scene 3. Autolycus, an itinerant trickster, convinces the Clown that he has been robbed. As the Clown helps him up, Autolycus picks his pockets.

Scene 4. Florizel and Perdita are ready for the sheep shearing feast, but Perdita is concerned at the King's reaction should he come across his son. Polixenes and Camillo do indeed arrive, disguised, and Perdita greets them graciously. They are full of admiration for her: "Nothing she does or seems/But smacks of something greater than herself/Too noble for this place." Florizel and Perdita are about to plight their troth when Polixenes and the Shepherd urge him to include his father in the proceedings. Florizel is adamant that this cannot be and Polixenes reveals himself, disinheriting his son and condemning the Shepherd to death. Despite Polixenes' rage, Florizel remains loyal to Perdita, choosing her over his succession. Camillo suggests that the young couple go to Sicilia, where Florizel can present himself as an emissary for his father and will certainly be warmly welcomed by Leontes; Florizel agrees joyfully. Autolycus exchanges clothes with the Prince, and Perdita disguises herself. Camillo plans to tell Polixenes of the escape, persuading him to pursue them to Sicilia, thus guaranteeing himself passage home. The Clown believes that if the shepherd can prove that Perdita is not his daughter, he can no longer be found guilty. He urges his father to show Polixenes the various things found with her when she was a baby. Overhearing their conversation, Autolycus promises to take them to the King. Hoping to profit from the situation somehow, he plans to take them aboard Florizel's ship.

ACT V

Scene 1. Paulina makes Leontes swear that he will not remarry. Florizel arrives with Perdita at the Sicilian court claiming to bring greetings from his father. Moments later, however, news arrives of Polixenes' approach, and Florizel is forced to confess the truth. Leontes, touched by their predicament, promises to be their advocate with Polixenes.

Scene 2. Three gentlemen discuss the ecstatic scenes when Perdita's true identity is revealed to Leontes. The Clown and Shepherd, delighted with their new gentlemanly status, promise Autolycus their patronage.

Scene 3. Paulina shows the royal company a statue of Hermione. Leontes is amazed by the lifelike quality of the image. Paulina says she can make it move and when it descends from its pedestal and embraces the King, they see that this is no statue, but Hermione herself, who has been kept hidden by Paulina until the Oracle has been fulfilled. Hermione is joyfully reunited with her family. Leontes urges Paulina and Camillo to marry and begs the forgiveness of Hermione and Polixenes.

Track list

Disc 1

Track 1	Act I	Scene i
Track 2	Act I	Scene ii
Track 3	Act II	Scene i
Track 4	Act II	Scene ii
Track 5	Act II	Scene iii
Track 6	Act III	Scene i
Track 7	Act III	Scene ii

Disc 2

Track 1	Act III	Scene iii
Track 2	Act IV	Scene i
Track 3	Act IV	Scene ii
Track 4	Act IV	Scene iii
Track 5	Act IV	Scene iv

Disc 3

Track 1	Act V	Scene i
Track 2	Act V	Scene ii
Track 3	Act V	Scene iii