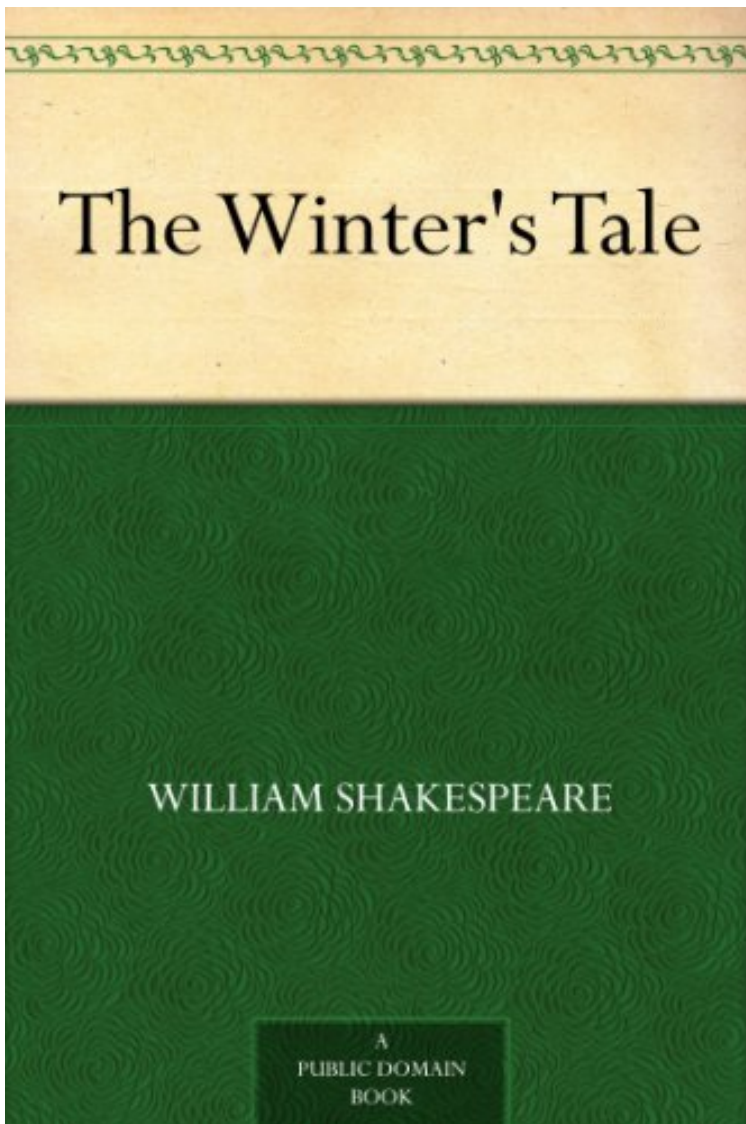


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# The Winter's Tale (English Edition)



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community of volunteers. You may find it for free on the web. Purchase of the Kindle edition includes wireless delivery..co.uk One of Shakespeare's most haunting and enigmatic late plays, *The Winter's Tale* is a fine example of Shakespeare's fascination with the dramatic genre of "romance": the portrayal of magical lands, familial conflict and exile, and final reunion and reconciliation. Drawing on Robert Green's story *Pandosto*, Shakespeare play tells the story of the middle-aged Leontes, king of Sicilia, and his childhood friend Polixenes, the king of Bohemia. Leontes mistakenly believes that his friend is having an affair with his wife, Hermione. In his jealousy, and consumed by "tremor cordis", he tries to murder Polixenes, who flees, and accuses his wife of adultery. Hermione gives birth to a baby girl, Perdita, who Leontes denounces as illegitimate, and casts her out into the wilderness. Hermione is ultimately proved innocent, but her son, Mamillius, dies of grief. Hermione collapses, apparently dead, and Leontes is left to pick up the tragic consequences of his actions. Time passes, and the action moves to Bohemia, where the lost child Perdita has grown up a shepherdess in the midst of "great creating nature". The final scenes of the play draw towards resolution and reconciliation between Leontes, Hermione and their lost daughter, culminating in one of Shakespeare's most moving final scenes. One of Shakespeare's most consummate plays, *The Winter's Tale* is a fascinating study of male insecurity and the relations between art and nature. --Jerry Brotton.

Extrait Chapter One Act 1 Scene 1 running scene 1 Enter Camillo and Archidamus ARCHIDAMUS If you shall chance, Camillo, to visit Bohemia, on the like occasion whereon my services are now on foot, you shall see, as I have said, great difference betwixt our Bohemia and your Sicilia. CAMILLO I think this coming summer the King of Sicilia means to pay Bohemia the visitation which he justly owes him. ARCHIDAMUS Wherein our entertainment shall shame us, we will be justified in our loves, for indeed- CAMILLO Beseech you- ARCHIDAMUS Verily, I speak it in the freedom of my knowledge: we cannot with such magnificence - in so rare - I know not what to say. We will give you sleepy drinks, that your senses, unintelligent of our insufficiency, may, though they cannot praise us, as little accuse us. CAMILLO You pay a great deal too dear for what's given freely. ARCHIDAMUS Believe me, I speak as my understanding instructs me and as mine honesty puts it to utterance. CAMILLO Sicilia cannot show himself over-kind to Bohemia. They were trained together in their childhoods and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now. Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made separation of their society, their encounters, though not personal, have been royally attorneyed with interchange of gifts, letters, loving embassies, that they have seemed to be together, though absent, shook hands, as over a vast, and embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds. The heavens continue their loves. ARCHIDAMUS I think there is not in the world either malice or matter to alter it. You have an unspeakable comfort of your young prince Mamillius: it is a gentleman of the greatest promise that ever came into my note. CAMILLO I very well agree with you in the hopes of him: it is a gallant child; one that indeed physics the subject, makes old hearts fresh. They that went on crutches ere he was born desire yet their life to see him a man. ARCHIDAMUS Would they else be content to die? CAMILLO Yes; if there were no other excuse why they should desire to live. ARCHIDAMUS If the king had no son, they would desire to live on crutches till he had one. Exeunt Act 1 Scene 2 running scene 1 continues Enter Leontes, Hermione, Mamillius, Polixenes, Camillo [and Attendants] POLIXENES Nine changes of the wat'ry star hath been The shepherd's note since we have left our throne Without a burden. Time as long again Would be filled up, my brother, with our thanks. And yet we should, for perpetuity, Go hence in debt: and therefore, like a cipher, Yet standing in rich place, I multiply With one 'We thank you' many thousands more That go before it. LEONTES Stay your thanks a while, And pay them when you part. POLIXENES Sir, that's tomorrow. I am questioned by my fears of what may chance Or breed upon our absence, that may blow No sneaping winds at home, to make us say 'This is put forth too truly'. Besides, I have stayed To tire your royalty. LEONTES We are tougher, brother, Than you can put us to't. POLIXENES No longer stay. LEONTES One sev'nnight longer. POLIXENES Very sooth, tomorrow. LEONTES We'll part the time between's then, and in that I'll no gainsaying. POLIXENES Press me not, beseech you, so. There is no tongue that moves, none, none i'th' world So soon as yours could win me. So it should now, Were there necessity in your request, although 'Twere needful I denied it. My affairs Do even drag me homeward, which to hinder Were in your love a whip to me, my stay To you a charge and trouble. To save both, Farewell, our brother. LEONTES Tongue-tied, our queen? Speak you. HERMIONE I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until You had drawn oaths from him not to stay. You, sir, Charge him too coldly. Tell him you are sure All in Bohemia's well: this satisfaction The bygone day proclaimed. Say this to him, He's beat from his best ward. LEONTES Well said, Hermione. HERMIONE To tell, he longs to see his son, were strong. But let him say so then, and

let him go. But let him swear so, and he shall not stay, We'll thwack him hence with distaffs. - Yet of your royal presence I'll adventure To Polixenes The borrow of a week. When at Bohemia You take - my lord, I'll give him my commission To let him there a month behind the gest Prefixed for's parting. - Yet, good deed, Leontes, I love thee not a jar o'th'clock behind What lady she her lord. - You'll stay? POLIXENES No, madam. HERMIONE Nay, but you will? POLIXENES I may not, verily. HERMIONE Verily? You put me off with limber vows. But I, Though you would seek t'unsphere the stars with oaths, Should yet say 'Sir, no going.' Verily, You shall not go; a lady's 'Verily' is As potent as a lord's. Will you go yet? Force me to keep you as a prisoner, Not like a guest: so you shall pay your fees When you depart, and save your thanks. How say you? My prisoner? Or my guest? By your dread 'Verily', One of them you shall be. POLIXENES Your guest, then, madam. To be your prisoner should import offending, Which is for me less easy to commit Than you to punish. HERMIONE Not your jailer, then, But your kind hostess. Come, I'll question you Of my lord's tricks and yours when you were boys. You were pretty lordings then? POLIXENES We were, fair queen, Two lads that thought there was no more behind But such a day tomorrow as today, And to be boy eternal. HERMIONE Was not my lord The verier wag o'th'two? POLIXENES We were as twinned lambs that did frisk i'th'sun, And bleat the one at th'other. What we changed Was innocence for innocence. We knew not The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dreamed That any did. Had we pursued that life, And our weak spirits ne'er been higher reared With stronger blood, we should have answered heaven Boldly 'Not guilty', the imposition cleared Hereditary ours. HERMIONE By this we gather You have tripped since. POLIXENES O, my most sacred lady, Temptations have since then been born to's. For In those unfledged days was my wife a girl; Your precious self had then not crossed the eyes Of my young play-fellow. HERMIONE Grace to boot! Of this make no conclusion, lest you say Your queen and I are devils. Yet go on. Th'offences we have made you do we'll answer, If you first sinned with us, and that with us You did continue fault, and that you slipped not With any but with us. LEONTES Is he won yet? HERMIONE He'll stay, my lord. LEONTES At my request he would not. - Aside? Hermione, my dearest, thou never spok'st To better purpose. HERMIONE Never? LEONTES Never, but once. HERMIONE What? Have I twice said well? When was't before? I prithee tell me. Cram's with praise, and make's As fat as tame things. One good deed dying tongueless Slaughters a thousand waiting upon that. Our praises are our wages. You may ride's With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere With spur we heat an acre. But to th'goal: My last good deed was to entreat his stay: What was my first? It has an elder sister, Or I mistake you - O, would her name were Grace! - But once before I spoke to th'purpose: when? Nay, let me have't: I long. LEONTES Why, that was when Three crabbd months had soured themselves to death, Ere I could make thee open thy white hand And clap thyself my love; then didst thou utter 'I am yours for ever.' HERMIONE 'Tis grace indeed. - Why, lo you now, I have spoke to th'purpose twice: To Polixenes? The one forever earned a royal husband; Th'other for some while a friend. Takes Polixenes' hand LEONTES Too hot, too hot! Aside To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods. I have tremor cordis on me: my heart dances, But not for joy, not joy. This entertainment May a free face put on, derive a liberty From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom, And well become the agent. 'T may, I grant. But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers, As now they are, and making practised smiles, As in a looking-glass, and then to sigh, as 'twere The mort o'th'deer - O, that is entertainment My bosom likes not, nor my brows. - Mamillius, Art thou my boy? MAMILLIUS Ay, my good lord. LEONTES I fecks! Why, that's my bawcock. What? Hast smutched thy nose? - They say it is a copy out of mine. - Come, captain, Aside? We must be neat; not neat, but cleanly, captain. And yet the steer, the heifer and the calf Are all called neat. - Still virginaling Aside Upon his palm? - How now, you wanton calf! Art thou my calf? MAMILLIUS Yes, if you will, my lord. LEONTES Thou want'st a rough pash and the shoots that I have To be full like me. - Yet they say we are Aside? Almost as like as eggs; women say so, That will say anything. But were they false As o'er-dyed blacks, as wind, as waters, false As dice are to be wished by one that fixes No bourn 'twixt his and mine, yet were it true To say this boy were like me. - Come, sir page, To Mamillius Look on me with your welkin eye. Sweet villain! Most dear'st, my collop! Can thy dam, may't be Affection? - Thy intention stabs the centre. Aside? Thou dost make possible things not so held, Communicat'st with dreams - how can this be? - With what's unreal thou coactive art, And fellow'st nothing. Then 'tis very credent Thou mayst co-join with something, and thou dost, And that beyond commission, and I find it, And that to the infection of my brains And hard'ning of my brows. POLIXENES What means Sicilia? HERMIONE He something seems unsettled. POLIXENES How, my lord? LEONTES What cheer? How is't with you, best brother? HERMIONE You look as if you held a brow of much distraction. Are you moved, my lord? LEONTES No, in good earnest. - How sometimes nature will betray its folly, Aside? Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime To harder bosoms! - Looking on the

lines  
Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil  
Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreeched,  
In my green velvet coat; my dagger muzzled,  
Lest it should bite its master, and so prove,  
As ornaments oft do, too dangerous.  
How like, methought, I then was to this kernel,  
This squash, this gentleman.- Mine honest friend,  
To Mamillius  
Will you take eggs for money?  
MAMILLIUS No, my lord, I'll fight.  
LEONTES You will? Why, happy man be's dole!  
My brother, Are you so fond of your young prince as we  
Do seem to be of ours?  
POLIXENES If at home, sir, He's all my exercise, my mirth, my matter;  
Now my sworn friend and then mine enemy;  
My parasite, my soldier, statesman, all.  
He makes a July's day short as December,  
And with his varying childness cures in me  
Thoughts that would thicken my blood.  
LEONTES So stands this squire  
Officed with me. We two will walk, my lord,  
And leave you to your graver steps.- Hermione,  
How thou lovest us, show in our brother's welcome.  
Let what is dear in Sicily be cheap.  
Next to thyself and my young rover,  
he's Apparent to my heart.  
HERMIONE If you would seek us, We are yours i'th'garden: shall's attend you there?  
LEONTES To your own bents dispose you: you'll be found,  
Be you beneath the sky.- I am angling now,  
Aside  
Though you perceive me not how I give line.  
Go to, go to!  
How she holds up the neb, the bill to him!  
And arms her with the boldness of a wife  
To her allowing husband!  
[Exeunt Polixenes, Hermione and Attendants]  
Gone already?  
Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a forked one!  
-Go, play, boy, play. Thy mother plays, and I  
Play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue  
Will hiss me to my grave. Contempt and clamour  
Will be my knell. Go play, boy, play.- There have been,  
Or I am much deceived, cuckolds ere now.  
And many a man there is, even at this present,  
Now while I speak this, holds his wife by th'arm,  
That little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence  
And his pond fished by his next neighbour, by  
Sir Smile, his neighbour. Nay, there's comfort in't  
Whiles other men have gates and those gates opened,  
As mine, against their will. Should all despair  
That have revolted wives, the tenth of mankind  
Would hang themselves. Physic for't there's none:  
It is a bawdy planet, that will strike  
Where 'tis predominant; and 'tis powerful, think it,  
From east, west, north and south. Be it concluded,  
No barricado for a belly. Know't, It will let in and out the  
enemy  
With bag and baggage. Many thousand on's  
Have the disease, and feel't not.- How now,  
boy?  
MAMILLIUS I am like you, they say.  
LEONTES Why that's some comfort. What, Camillo there?  
CAMILLO Ay, my good lord. Comes forward  
LEONTES Go play, Mamillius, thou'rt an honest man.-  
[Exit Mamillius]  
Camillo, this great sir will yet stay longer.  
CAMILLO You had much ado to make his anchor hold:  
When you cast out, it still came home.  
LEONTES Didst note it?  
CAMILLO He would not stay at your petitions,  
made  
His business more material.  
LEONTES Didst perceive it? - They're here with me already,  
whisp'ring, rounding  
Aside  
'Sicilia is a so-forth.' 'Tis far gone  
When I shall gust it last.- How came't, Camillo,  
To Camillo  
That he did stay?  
CAMILLO At the good queen's entreaty.  
LEONTES At the queen's be't. 'Good' should be pertinent,  
But so it is, it is not. Was this taken  
By any understanding pate but thine?  
For thy conceit is soaking, will draw in  
More than the common blocks. Not noted, is't,  
But of the finer natures? By some  
severals  
Of head-piece extraordinary? Lower messes  
Perchance are to this business purblind? Say.  
CAMILLO Business, my lord? I think most understand  
Bohemia stays here longer.  
LEONTES Ha?  
CAMILLO Stays here longer.  
LEONTES Ay, but why?  
CAMILLO To satisfy your highness and the entreaties  
Of our most gracious mistress.  
LEONTES Satisfy? Th'entreaties of your mistress? Satisfy? Let that suffice. I have trusted thee,  
Camillo,  
With all the nearest things to my heart, as well  
My chamber-councils, wherein, priest-like, thou  
Hast cleansed my bosom, I from thee departed  
Thy penitent reformed. But we have been  
Deceived in thy integrity, deceived  
In that which seems so.  
CAMILLO Be it forbid, my lord!  
LEONTES To bide upon't, thou art not honest: or,  
If thou inclin'st that way, thou art a coward,  
Which hoxes honesty behind, restraining  
From course required: or else thou must be counted  
A servant grafted in my serious trust  
And therein negligent: or else a fool  
That see'st a game played home, the rich stake drawn,  
And tak'st it all for jest.