

The Winter's Tale – Audition Pack

Following on from the success of A Midsummer Night's Dream, EAS Performs will be staging The Winter's Tale. Calling on a 60s/70s vibe, with costumes and music to match, this will be another incredibly fun journey while exploring some powerful and important themes.

Please find below a list of characters from The Winter's Tale. This list may change/expand in our version of the production, but it gives you an idea of the characters and their motivations.

Below there are five audition pieces, please choose one to memorise and prepare for your audition. We will also ask you to select a contemporary piece on the day from a selection and get you to cold read this piece.

I'm looking forward to meeting you.

Thank you,

**Adam Butler
Director**

Character List:

Leontes

The King of Sicilia, and the childhood friend of the Bohemian King Polixenes. He is gripped by jealous fantasies, which convince him that Polixenes has been having an affair with his wife, Hermione; his jealousy leads to the destruction of his family.

Hermione

The virtuous and beautiful Queen of Sicilia. Falsely accused of infidelity by her husband, Leontes, she apparently dies of grief just after being vindicated by the Oracle of Delphi, but is restored to life at the play's close.

Perdita

The daughter of Leontes and Hermione. Because her father believes her to be illegitimate, she is abandoned as a baby on the coast of Bohemia, and brought up by a Shepherd. Unaware of her royal lineage, she falls in love with the Bohemian Prince Florizel.

Polixenes

The King of Bohemia, and Leontes's boyhood friend. He is falsely accused of having an affair with Leontes's wife, and barely escapes Sicilia with his life. Much later in life, he sees his only son fall in love with a lowly Shepherd's daughter—who is, in fact, a Sicilian princess.

Florizel

Polixenes's only son and heir; he falls in love with Perdita, unaware of her royal ancestry, and defies his father by eloping with her.

Camillo

An honest Sicilian nobleman, he refuses to follow Leontes's order to poison Polixenes, deciding instead to flee Sicily and enter the Bohemian King's service.

Paulina

A noblewoman of Sicily, she is fierce in her defense of Hermione's virtue, and unrelenting in her condemnation of Leontes after Hermione's death. She is also the agent of the (apparently) dead Queen's resurrection.

Autolycus

A roguish peddler, vagabond, and pickpocket; he steals the Clown's purse and does a great deal of pilfering at the Shepherd's sheepshearing, but ends by assisting in Perdita and Florizel's escape.

Shepherd

An old and honorable sheep-tender, he finds Perdita as a baby and raises her as his own daughter.

Antigonus

Paulina's husband, and also a loyal defender of Hermione. He is given the unfortunate task of abandoning the baby Perdita on the Bohemian coast.

Clown

The Shepherd's buffoonish son, and Perdita's adopted brother.

Mamillius

The young prince of Sicilia, Leontes and Hermione's son. He dies, perhaps of grief, after his father wrongly imprisons his mother.

Cleomenes

A lord of Sicilia, sent to Delphi to ask the Oracle about Hermione's guilt.

Dion

A Sicilian lord, he accompanies Cleomenes to Delphi.

Emilia

One of Hermione's ladies-in-waiting.

Archidamus

A lord of Bohemia.

The Winter's Tale · I ii 295 · Verse

Camillo:

*My gracious lord,
I may be negligent, foolish and fearful;
In every one of these no man is free,
But that his negligence, his folly, fear,
Among the infinite doings of the world,
Sometime puts forth. In your affairs, my lord,
If ever I were wilful-negligent,
It was my folly; if industriously
I play'd the fool, it was my negligence,
Not weighing well the end; if ever fearful
To do a thing, where I the issue doubted,
Where of the execution did cry out
Against the non-performance, 'twas a fear
Which oft infects the wisest: these, my lord,
Are such allow'd infirmities that honesty
Is never free of. But, beseech your grace,
Be plainer with me; let me know my trespass
By its own visage: if I then deny it,
'Tis none of mine.*

The Winter's Tale · I ii 157 · Verse

Leontes:

*Thou want'st a rough pash and the shoots that I have,
To be full like me: yet they say we are
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 wish'd by one that fixes
No bourn 'twixt his and mine, yet were it true
To say this boy were like me. Come, sir page,
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:
Thou dost make possible things not so held,
Communicatest 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 hardening of my brows.*

The Winter's Tale · IV 0 1 · Verse

Time (Chorus):

*I, that please some, try all, both joy and terror
Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error,
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime
To me or my swift passage, that I slide
O'er sixteen years and leave the growth untried
Of that wide gap, since it is in my power
To o'erthrow law and in one self-born hour
To plant and o'erwhelm custom. Let me pass
The same I am, ere ancient'st order was
Or what is now received: I witness to
The times that brought them in; so shall I do
To the freshest things now reigning and make stale
The glistening of this present, as my tale
Now seems to it. Your patience this allowing,
I turn my glass and give my scene such growing
As you had slept between: Leontes leaving,
The effects of his fond jealousies so grieving
That he shuts up himself, imagine me,
Gentle spectators, that I now may be
In fair Bohemia, and remember well,
I mentioned a son o' the king's, which Florizel
I now name to you; and with speed so pace
To speak of Perdita, now grown in grace
Equal with wondering: what of her ensues
I list not prophecy; but let Time's news
Be known when 'tis brought forth. A shepherd's daughter,
And what to her adheres, which follows after,
Is the argument of Time. Of this allow,
If ever you have spent time worse ere now;
If never, yet that Time himself doth say
He wishes earnestly you never may.*

The Winter's Tale · III ii 16 · Verse

Hermione:

*Since what I am to say must be but that
Which contradicts my accusation and
The testimony on my part no other
But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me
To say 'not guilty:' mine integrity
Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it,
Be so received. But thus: if powers divine
Behold our human actions, as they do,
I doubt not then but innocence shall make
False accusation blush and tyranny
Tremble at patience. You, my lord, best know,
Who least will seem to do so, my past life
Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,
As I am now unhappy; which is more
Than history can pattern, though devised
And play'd to take spectators. For behold me
A fellow of the royal bed, which owe
A moiety of the throne a great king's daughter,
The mother to a hopeful prince, here standing
To prate and talk for life and honour 'fore
Who please to come and hear. For life, I prize it
As I weigh grief, which I would spare: for honour,
'Tis a derivative from me to mine,
And only that I stand for. I appeal
To your own conscience, sir, before Polixenes
Came to your court, how I was in your grace,
How merited to be so; since he came,
With what encounter so uncurrent I
Have strain'd to appear thus: if one jot beyond
The bound of honour, or in act or will
That way inclining, harden'd be the hearts
Of all that hear me, and my near'st of kin
Cry fie upon my grave!*

The Winter's Tale · III ii 185 · Verse

Paulina:

*What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me?
What wheels? racks? fires? what flaying? boiling?
In leads or oils? what old or newer torture
Must I receive, whose every word deserves
To taste of thy most worst? Thy tyranny
Together working with thy jealousies,
Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle
For girls of nine, O, think what they have done
And then run mad indeed, stark mad! for all
Thy by-gone fooleries were but spices of it.
That thou betray'dst Polixenes, 'twas nothing;
That did but show thee, of a fool, inconstant
And damnable ingrateful: nor was't much,
Thou wouldst have poison'd good Camillo's honour,
To have him kill a king: poor trespasses,
More monstrous standing by: whereof I reckon
The casting forth to crows thy baby-daughter
To be or none or little; though a devil
Would have shed water out of fire ere done't:
Nor is't directly laid to thee, the death
Of the young prince, whose honourable thoughts,
Thoughts high for one so tender, cleft the heart
That could conceive a gross and foolish sire
Blemish'd his gracious dam: this is not, no,
Laid to thy answer: but the last,—O lords,
When I have said, cry 'woe!' the queen, the queen,
The sweet'st, dear'st creature's dead,
and vengeance for't
Not dropp'd down yet.*