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# The Real Thing: A Play



## Synopsis

The play begins with Max and Charlotte, a couple whose marriage seems about to rupture. But nothing one sees on a stage is the real thing, and some things are less real than others. Charlotte is an actress who has been appearing in a play about marriage by her husband, Henry. Max, her leading man, is also married to an actress, Annie. Both marriages are at the point of rupture because Henry and Annie have fallen in love. But is it the real thing? In *The Real Thing*, Tom Stoppard combines his characteristically brilliant wordplay and wit with flashes of insight that illuminate the nature--and the mystery--of love, creating a multi-toned play that challenges the mind while searching out the innermost secrets of the heart.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As what is considered a turning point in Stoppard's ability to write romance, *The Real Thing* includes the usual ingenious commentary on life and art this time woven through a love story. Thus, the play can be enjoyed for the usual Stoppardian elevated language and fascinating explanations of quality art as well as its touching yet clever romantic plot. Moreover, it is this plot that sets it apart from Stoppard's earlier work. The characters in *The Real Thing* make up complex relationships and display emotions that add another facet to Stoppard's masterful control of the language. Dialogue seamlessly drifts between discussions of language to discussions of life, all the while maintaining the level of quality for which Stoppard is famous. It is a wonderful play demonstrating wit, intelligence, cleverness, and overall entertainment in a variety of ways. As Ros. and Guil. used

Hamlet and Travesties used the Importance of Being Ernest, The Real Thing contains certain references to 'Tis Pity She's a Whore that make that Jacobean tragedy a helpful piece of background reading.

This play is very funny in places, very moving in places, very absorbing in places -- all of it in an apparently seamless whole of the high Stoppardian quality. How does the man do it? How does one write a dissertation on the art of writing using a cricket bat as a teaching aid? To quote another recent Stoppard's work: "It's a mystery!..."

I truly enjoyed this revival of Tom Stoppard's The Real Thing. It has been one of my favorite plays since the original Broadway production with Jeremy Irons and Glenn Close. At one time, there was an audio version of that cast (I had it on cassette tape,) which is now out of print. I have looked everywhere! Nobody has it available.PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE!!! ---re-release THAT version of the play on CD. It would make a fantastic addition to anyone's collection of spoken word recordings.

Tom Stoppard is my favorite playwright. Yet, the first time I read The Real Thing, I really disliked it. I didn't find his focus on adultery at all compelling. When I read the play for a second time, I realized that it had a lot of merit that I had not previously noticed. For example, he examines the relationship between polemic and artistic creation, between the artistry of writing and writing which is personal and passionate. Is it a good thing to be able to manipulate words for any occasion, or is it better to feel strongly about what you are writing?

If you're going to read a play, this is the one. The dialogue is so witty and the story line is wonderful. Pure pleasure.

This is my favorite Stoppard play, but until I listened to this version, I hadn't realized how much of my appreciation was for the original production. This version is competently done (not easy when converting a stage play to audio-only), but it does under-emphasize some of my favorite lines. (This production also misses, through no fault of its own, the Stoppardian mixing of fiction and reality, past and future, of an adulterous playwright writing a play about an adulterous playwright writing a play about adultery, who ends up committing adultery with the star in reality.)

Exceptional book by a great writer---one of his best. Book arrived quickly and in great condition.

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