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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.

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Customer Reviews

A talented ensemble cast brings to life Stoppard's classic play featuring the loves and loves lost of playwright Henry; his wife, Charlotte; an actor named Max; and his activist wife, Annie. Featuring a play within a play, this production is superbly performed if slightly confusing in audiobook format--it's often difficult to keep track of who is speaking and to keep track of the endlessly reconfiguring relationships. Henry searches for meaning both in art and romantic relationships as he attempts to write a play about his love for Annie and begrudgingly ghostwrites a play for Brodie, an incarcerated soldier and talentless, aspiring playwright. Templeman shines as Henry, perfectly capturing his wit, bravado and pathos. With terrific performances from the supporting cast, this audiobook will delight Stoppard fans and theater lovers. (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business

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“[The Real Thing] is about both love and art, and it is wise, witty, and astonishing through and through...Enthralling.”
Alastair Macaulay, Financial Times on the London production
“You couldn’t ask for a more deeply felt, or more deeply affecting, drama about love than this...The Real Thing is indeed the genuine article--a play of strength, grace, melancholy and wit.”
Charles Spencer, The Daily Telegraph on the London production
“When it comes to putting erotic love in its place, no contemporary English playwright has done so with such illuminating rigour or eloquence as Tom Stoppard.”
Nicholas De Jongh, Evening Standard on the London production

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.

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.

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?

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

Interesting reading

Awesome

Stoppard at his best.

No complains.

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