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Review: *Winter's Tale*

By [Jordan Gass-Poore](#) on February 17, 2014 - 10:30am in [Reviews](#) | [New Releases](#)

I have to be honest, I initially thought *Winter's Tale* was an adaptation of one of my favorite Shakespeare plays, *The Winter's Tale* -- I hadn't heard of author Mark Helprin's 1983 novel, adapted into the new movie, until watching the trailer.

It's no coincidence that the movie made its U.S. theatrical debut on Valentine's Day -- a marketing ploy, of course, to get couples to hunker down in the dark for two-ish hours to watch actor [Colin Farrell](#) make love look even more confusing than it already is. This says something about Farrell, a chap whose real-life romantic mishaps have made headlines and had heads shaking (lest we forget his public outings with Britney Spears).

And it's hard to forget this in the aptly named *Winter's Tale* because Farrell plays the burglar-with-a-heart-of-gold, Peter Lake, so much like his public persona: greasy, strangely-cut hair and all... with an Irish accent.

There really is no need for Peter to have an Irish accent because he was raised in New York City. The same can be said for the movie's female lead, Beverly Penn (*Downton Abbey*'s [Jessica Brown Findlay](#)), whose convenient English accent is only briefly explained as a byproduct of her birth across the pond, despite her newspaper tycoon father's (William Hurt) American accent.

But this is just the tip of the unexplained plot point iceberg in *Winter's Tale*.

This trans-century romance begins on Ellis Island, where baby Peter is left in a model boat and sent afloat into New York Harbor by his parents, who are refused entrance into the country because of his father's supposed illness. Somehow, somehow Peter becomes the unwilling scion of the Devil's (Will Smith) minion, Pearly (an over-earnest Russell Crowe). When Peter rejects Pearly as a father figure, he is hunted by even lesser minions and stumbles across a Pegasus-like horse, which he names Horse. How original.

Oh, that's right, writer/director [Akiva Goldsman](#) (*A Beautiful Mind*) is trying to shove theological and philosophical metaphors down audiences' throats. Of course, Horse acts as both spirit guide and guardian angel to Peter, and according to a Google search, there is a difference between the two terms.

Figures of speech aside -- *Winter's Tale* is set in a fictional universe, after all -- Peter's discovery of the young, consumption-ridden Beverly is kind of, dare I say it, sweet, in that gagging sort of way -- he attempts to rob her family home but leaves only stealing her heart. Aw.

I may have been the only one in the theater gagging, seeing how the redhead has consumption, also known as tuberculosis, that doesn't cause her to cough or show any real signs of discomfort (her hair and skin still look impeccable), it just makes her feel hot, so hot that she melts snow... and Peter's heart. Aw. (Last one, I promise.)

The disease appears to motivate Beverly's otherworldly, light-seeing magic, diminishing her physical sight, which explains how Farrell, who's pushing 40, could get away with playing a twentysomething.

This movie may have people believe that there is a miracle inside everyone, which is on one hand uplifting, and on the other, really disappointing because, in the end, the moral of the movie is that people are all the same. And *Winter's Tale* is no different.



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