***ARCADIA* BY Tom Stoppard Synopsis**

*Arcadia* is set in Sidley Park, an English country house, in both the years 1809–1812 and the present day (1993 in the original production). The activities of two modern scholars and the house's current residents are juxtaposed with the lives of those who lived there 180 years earlier.

In 1809, Thomasina Coverly, the daughter of the house, is a precocious teenager and a mathematical prodigy. She studies with her tutor Septimus Hodge, a friend of Lord Byron who is an unseen guest in the house.

In the present, a writer and an academic converge on the house: Hannah Jarvis, the writer, is investigating a hermit who once lived on the grounds; Bernard Nightingale, a professor of literature, is investigating a mysterious chapter in the life of Byron. As their investigations unfold, helped by Valentine Coverly, a post-graduate student in mathematical biology, the truth about what happened in Thomasina's lifetime is gradually revealed.

The play's set features a large table, which is used by the characters in both past and present. Props are not removed when the play switches time period, so that the books, tortoise, coffee mugs, quill pens, portfolios, and laptop computers appear alongside each other in a blurring of past and present.