

# Plot of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*

King **Leontes** of Sicilia  
m. **Hermione**

hosts his best friend,

King **Polinexes** of Bohemia  
m. ? (apparently now deceased)

**Mamillius**, c. 7 9 mths. pregnant

**Florizel**



Leontes seized by mad **JEAOUSY**: SURE Hermione has committed adultery

Leontes orders **Camillo** to poison Polixenes

Instead, they flee to Bohemia

Leontes puts Hermione on trial for adultery and finds her guilty

→ Hermione sentenced to death and imprisoned

→ gives birth

→ Leontes orders Antigonus to abandon baby

→ Oracle proclaims Hermione innocent, but Leontes ignores it

→ News Mamillius dies of grief over his mother's fate

Leontes becomes sane → Hermione faints → pronounced dead by

Paulina

Enters state of perpetual mourning

**Antigonus** leaves baby in Bohemia

→ "Exit, pursued by a bear" (torn apart)

→ Baby found by **Shepherd** and his son ("Clown"), with "fardel" of gold, trinkets, and note naming baby **Perdita**

## Time (Chorus) – 16 yrs. have passed and we are in Bohemia

King Polixenes worries with Camillo that Prince Florizel has been secretly seeing shepherdess → resolves to spy on them in disguise

**Autolycus** enters singing of carefree sex and roguery → tricks Clown and steals his purse

### Sheep-shearing feast

Perdita's adopted father, Shepherd, is Host; she is hostess; Florizel, her lover, is in disguise as shepherd

→ Polixenes and Camillo in disguise as peasants

→ Autolycus in disguise as peddler and ballad-monger → sells and sings ballads → picks audience's pockets

→ dancing of shepherds/shepherdesses and then of peasants dressed like satyrs

→ when Perdita's "father" condones her marriage, Polixenes reveals himself in rage and threatens all to stop it

Autolycus exchanges clothes with Florizel and Perdita to help them escape to Sicilia

→ for price, he helps shepherd (with fardel) and Clown escape aboard same ship

→ Camillo tells Polixenes of their flight and together they pursue them

Reunion, revelation, and reconciliation in Sicilia

Paulina reveals statue of Hermione → **comes to life!**