

## **The Winter's Tale abbreviated**

Act 3, Scene 2

### **Wife to Husband**

**Situation:** Hermione acknowledges in court that “For Polixenes, I loved him as in honor he required with such a kind of love as might become a lady like me.” By this time Leontes has opened the delivered message from Apollo, the oracle of Delphos.

HERMIONE: Sir, spare your threats.

#### **Hermione to Leontes, No. 2**

**Can life for me have such benefit? I  
Claim as lost the crown and comfort of my  
Life, your favor, knowing not how it went.  
I am barred like one infectious from my  
Second comfort, the first fruit the gods sent,  
My son. My third joy's been taken, and I  
By sheriffs proclaimed a strumpet; lastly  
Hurried here to this place for all to see  
Without bed rest from childbirth. Now, tell me  
What blessings have I here alive that I  
Should fear to die? Mistake not that I be  
Here to prize life; rather my honor. My  
Good lords all. To end this personal woe  
I'll submit to the word from Apollo.**

LORD: This your request is altogether just. Therefore bring forth, and in Apollo's name, his oracle.  
Officers exit.

HERMIONE: The Emperor of Russia was my father. O, that he were alive and here beholding his daughter's trial.

Cleomenes and Dion enter with officers. An Officer presents a sword.

OFFICER: You here shall swear upon this sword of justice that you, Cleomenes and Dion, have been both at Delphos, and from thence have brought this sealed-up oracle, by the hand delivered of great Apollo's priest, and that since have not dared to break the holy seal nor read the secrets in 't.

CLEOMENES AND DION: All this we swear.

LEONTES: Break up the seals and read.

OFFICER READS: Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, his innocent babe truly begotten; and the King shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found.

LORDS: Now blessed be the great Apollo!

LEONTES: Hast thou read truth?

