

The Winter's Tale abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 2

Jealousy

Situation: Leontes is the king of Sicily and Hermione is his wife. The two of them are hosting his long-time friend Polixenes, the king of Bohemia. Leontes becomes jealous and angry with his wife during Polixenes' visit, believing she has crossed the line and become too close to Polixenes.

LEONTES: Why, that was when three harsh months before I could make thee open thy hand; then didst thou utter "I am yours forever."

HERMIONE: 'Tis grace indeed. Why I have spoke to th' purpose twice. The one forever earned a royal husband, th' other for some while a friend.

She gives Polixenes her hand.

Leontes to Himself

**I have a trembling heart that dances, but
Not for joy; her actions may not be what
They seem. I grant it may be a free face
Put on; a fertile heartiness from a
Generous heart, but the way she doth race
To playfully touch his hand as she doth say
Much too freely. Women say we are as
Like as one egg is to another. Has
She become as false as the inconstant
Wind; false as dice are to be wished by
One who sees 'twixt us no difference? Can't
She see the boundary? Methinks I keep my
Dagger muzzled lest I let it bite us
And prove as weapons do too dangerous.**

POLIXENES: What means Sicilia?

HERMIONE: He something seems unsettled.

POLIXENES: How, my lord?

LEONTES: How is 't with you, best brother?

HERMIONE: You look as if you held a barrow of much distraction.