

The background of the cover features a classical marble statue of a woman, likely a personification of a virtue or a deity, with her hand near her head. To the left, there is a vertical decorative border with a repeating floral and scrollwork pattern. The overall color palette is warm, with yellows, browns, and greys.

RSC

Thou *met'st*
with things
DYING,
I *with* things
NEWBORN

William
Shakespeare

THE WINTER'S
TALE

EDITED BY JONATHAN BATE
AND ERIC RASMUSSEN

THE WINTER'S TALE

The RSC Shakespeare

Edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen

Chief Associate Editor: Héloïse Sénéchal

Associate Editors: Trey Jansen, Eleanor Lowe, Lucy Munro, Dee Anna
Phares, Jan Sewell

The Winter's Tale

Textual editing: Eric Rasmussen

Introduction and Shakespeare's Career in the Theatre: Jonathan Bate

Commentary: Charlotte Scott and Héloïse Sénéchal

Scene-by-Scene Analysis: Esme Miskimmin

In Performance: Clare Smout (RSC stagings) and Jan Sewell (overview)

The Director's Cut (interviews by Jonathan Bate and Kevin Wright):

Adrian Noble, Barbara Gaines, Dominic Cooke

Editorial Advisory Board

Gregory Doran, Chief Associate Director,
Royal Shakespeare Company

Jim Davis, Professor of Theatre Studies, University of Warwick, UK
Charles Edelman, Senior Lecturer, Edith Cowan University,
Western Australia

Lukas Erne, Professor of Modern English Literature,
Université de Genève, Switzerland

Akiko Kusunoki, Tokyo Woman's Christian University, Japan

Jacqui O'Hanlon, Director of Education, Royal Shakespeare Company

Ron Rosenbaum, author and journalist, New York, USA

James Shapiro, Professor of English and Comparative Literature,
Columbia University, USA

Tiffany Stern, Professor and Tutor in English, University of Oxford, UK

The RSC Shakespeare

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THE WINTER'S
TALE

Edited by
Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen

Introduced by Jonathan Bate

Macmillan

© The Royal Shakespeare Company 2009

Published by arrangement with Modern Library, an imprint of The Random House Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc.

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

‘Royal Shakespeare Company’, ‘RSC’ and the RSC logo are trade marks or registered trade marks of The Royal Shakespeare Company.

The right of Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen to be identified as the authors of the editorial apparatus to this work by William Shakespeare has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Published 2009 by
MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS LTD
registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills,
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS. Companies and representatives
throughout the world.

ISBN 978-0-230-57616-2 ISBN 978-1-137-00472-7 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-137-00472-7

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	09

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Old Tales	1
Affection, Infection, Expression	2
A Scandal in Bohemia – or in Sicily?	5
Living Art	9
About the Text	14
Key Facts	19
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	21
Textual Notes	118
Scene-by-Scene Analysis	120
<i>The Winter's Tale</i> in Performance:	
The RSC and Beyond	132
Four Centuries of <i>The Winter's Tale</i> : An Overview	133
At the RSC	144
The Director's Cut: Interviews with Adrian Noble, Barbara Gaines and Dominic Cooke	162
Shakespeare's Career in the Theatre	181
Beginnings	181
Playhouses	183
The Ensemble at Work	187
The King's Man	192
Shakespeare's Works: A Chronology	195
Further Reading and Viewing	198
References	201
Acknowledgements and Picture Credits	204

INTRODUCTION

OLD TALES

In about 1590 the dramatist George Peele wrote a play called *The Old Wives' Tale* in which an old woman is asked to tell 'a merry winter's tale' in order to 'drive away the time trimly'. 'Once upon a time,' she begins, as all traditional storytellers do, 'there was a king or a lord or a duke that had a fair daughter, the fairest that ever was, as white as snow and as red as blood: and once upon a time his daughter was stolen away.' An old wives' or a winter's tale is like a fairy story: it is not supposed to be realistic and it is bound to have a happy ending. Along the way, there will be magic, dreams, coincidences, children lost and found. This is the style of play to which Shakespeare turned some twenty years after Peele, in the final phase of his career.

Shakespeare's late plays have come to be known as 'romances'. Although neither the dramatist himself nor the compilers of the First Folio used this generic classification, the term is helpful because it gestures towards the origin of such stories in ancient Greek prose romance, which was peopled by wanderers, separated lovers, oracles, shepherds, and heroes who undergo narrow escapes from disaster. The story of Apollonius of Tyre, the ultimate source for Shakespeare's co-written play *Pericles*, is a classic example of the genre. Robert Greene, another dramatist who was prominent in the early 1590s, wrote several prose romances in this tradition, among them *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*, the story that is dramatized in *The Winter's Tale*. We do not know exactly what led Shakespeare, some time after writing the tragedies of *Lear* and *Macbeth*, to turn back to the style of Peele and Greene. Always attuned to changes in the wind, perhaps he sensed that a gentler mode of tragi-comedy and pastoral romance, with a distinctly royalist agenda, suited the

times: the King's Men seem to have had notable successes in these years with several dramas of this kind, including a revival of the old anonymous play of *Mucedorus*, which even featured an encounter with a bear.

The Winter's Tale does not, however, begin in the world of romance. The Sicilian opening of the story is full of court intrigue in the manner of *King Lear* and sexual jealousy reminiscent of *Othello*. There are accusations of conspiracy, a queen is tried for treason and a king behaves like a tyrant. Only in the second half is there a redemptive movement from court to country: the structure is similar to that of *Cymbeline*, another Shakespearean tragi-comedy written around the same time. In contrast to Sicilia, Bohemia is a place of benign chance, where the flight of a falcon leads a prince to his future bride and a thieving trickster inadvertently helps the plot towards its happy resolution. The arts of the court give way to the harmonies of nature. Though this is to over-simplify: Polixenes relies on 'intelligence' and disguise, then threatens physical violence against Perdita. She is a princess assumed to be a shepherdess, who dresses up as a queen and speaks of the need to intermingle art and nature in the grafting of flowers: complex layers of illusion are at work.

AFFECTION, INFECTION, EXPRESSION

Critics have been much exercised by Leontes' explosion of anger when Hermione succeeds in persuading Polixenes to prolong his visit to Sicilia after he himself has failed to do so. Why does her courtesy lead instantly to a false accusation of adultery? Has Leontes' jealousy been festering for a long time? Is he angry because a woman has come between two close male friends? The theme was certainly a Shakespearean obsession which ran from the early *Two Gentlemen of Verona* through the sonnets to his last play, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Such questions are the prerogative of the reader more than the spectator in the playhouse. An audience watching a play can only work out a limited amount about the events that are imagined to have occurred before the action begins, and in the theatrical experience such events do not exist.

Theatrical attention is concentrated more on Leontes as he is than on how he got there. In a puzzling, tortuous self-analysis concerning the 'infection' of his brains, he says that as mental states may be affected by things unreal, such as dreams, so they may also be affected by things that are real:

... Can thy dam, may't be
 Affection?— Thy intention stabs the centre.
 Thou dost make possible things not so held,
 Communicat'st with dream — how can this be? —
 With what's unreal thou coactive art,
 And fellow'st nothing. Then 'tis very credent
 Thou mayst co-join with something, and thou dost,
 And that beyond commission, and I find it,
 And that to the infection of my brains
 And hard'ning of my brows.

Both syntax and semantics are crabbed. Leontes' fragmented sentences are symptoms of his mental disintegration. The referent of the key word 'affection' is unstable: does it refer to the relationship between Hermione and Polixenes or to Leontes' own mental state? 'Affection' could denote their sexual desire or his strong feeling in response to it, but the word could also signify delusion, sickness. The ambiguity is revelatory precisely because Leontes can no longer distinguish between what is going on in his own mind and the reality observed by everyone else on stage. Hermione speaks truer than she knows when, in the trial scene, she says 'My life stands in the level of your dreams'.

The logical conclusion of Leontes' analysis ought to be that the thing that is exercising him, namely the supposed affair between his wife and his best friend, is nothing but a bad dream. But he obstinately draws the opposite conclusion. The irrationality of this move is itself a sign of the 'infection' that is afflicting him. Honest Camillo sees this, but, for the very reason that he is 'infected', Leontes himself cannot. His 'distraction' makes him misinterpret every action, even as his very language becomes infected with dark, sexual double entendre: 'stabs', 'nothing' and 'co-join' anticipate the subsequent grossness of 'No barricado for a belly' and 'she has been sluiced in's absence / And his pond fished by his next neighbour'.

Whatever the origin of Leontes' suspicion, the dramatic interest is in the effect, the tendency of human beings who have fallen into holes to dig themselves ever deeper. No argument, not even the supposedly divine 'truth' of the oracle, will convince Leontes of his error. Accordingly, what does persuade him to change his mind is an effect of emotion rather than reason: the shock, the raw grief, of his son's and wife's sudden death. The boy Mamillius is the one who has said that 'A sad tale's best for winter' when his mother offers to tell him a story, and he it is who becomes victim of the winter-bound first half of the play. Leontes metaphorically freezes his wife out of his affections, with the unintended result that his son catches a literal chill and dies. Only after this can the action move to the regenerative world of romance. 'Thou met'st with things dying, I with things newborn', remarks the Old Shepherd at the play's pivotal point when he scoops up the baby Perdita as Antigonus is torn to pieces by the bear.

The forms of Shakespeare's verse loosened and became more flexible as he matured as a writer. His early plays have a higher proportion of rhyme and a greater regularity in rhythm, the essential pattern being that of iambic pentameter (ten syllables, five stresses, the stress on every second syllable). In the early plays, lines are very frequently end-stopped: punctuation marks a pause at the line-ending, meaning that the movement of the syntax (the grammatical construction) falls in with that of the metre (the rhythmical construction). In the later plays, there are far fewer rhyming couplets (sometimes rhyme only features as a marker to indicate that a scene is ending) and the rhythmic movement has far greater variety, freedom and flow. Mature Shakespearean blank (unrhymed) verse is typically not end-stopped but 'run on' (a feature known as 'enjambment'): instead of pausing heavily at the line ending, the speaker hurries forward, the sense demanded by the grammar working in creative tension against the holding pattern of the metre. The heavier pauses migrate to the middle of the lines, where they are known as the 'caesura' and where their placing varies. Much more often than in the early plays a single line of verse is shared between two speakers. And the pentameter itself becomes a more subtle

instrument: the iambic beat is broken up, there is often an extra ('redundant') unstressed eleventh syllable at the end of the line (this is known as a 'feminine ending'). There are more modulations between verse and prose. Occasionally the verse is so loose that neither the original typesetters of the plays when they were first printed nor the modern editors of scholarly texts can be entirely certain whether verse or prose is intended.

Iambic pentameter is the ideal medium for dramatic poetry in English because its rhythm and duration seem to fall in naturally with the speech patterns of the language. In its capacity to combine the ordinary variety of speech with the heightened precision of poetry, the supple, mature Shakespearean 'loose pentameter' is perhaps the most expressive vocal instrument ever given to the actor. The verse can embody both the fragmentation of Leontes' reason and the lyrical abandon of Florizel's passion:

... When you do dance, I wish you
A wave o'th'sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that. Move still, still so,
And own no other function ...

Florizel's wish sweeps him over the line-ending as if it were itself a wave. Across the next line-break, the eternity of 'ever do' is played against 'Nothing but', a negative made positive. Then a heavy pause, momentarily suspending the flow of the words, followed by a dance-like pattern of repetition and reversal in 'Move still, still so'. The caesura darts from place to place, line by line. The verse is the dance.

A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA – OR IN SICILY?

Robert Greene's popular romance *Pandosto* told the story of a King of Bohemia who mistakenly believed that his wife was pregnant by his old friend the King of Sicilia. Shakespeare's boldest alteration of this story when he dramatized it into *The Winter's Tale* was the resurrection of the wronged queen, but his most puzzling change to his source was the inversion of the kingdoms. The jealous fit falls upon Sicilia instead of Bohemia.

The winter weather in Prague is somewhat colder than that in Palermo. Would it not therefore have been better to follow the original by locating the chilly court of Leontes in snowy middle Europe and the summer shepherding in sunny Sicily, which was, besides, the reputed birthplace of Theocritus, father of the 'pastoral' genre on which the play draws so heavily? Hermione is identified as the daughter of the Emperor of Russia. From both a geographical and a dynastic point of view, it would have been more plausible to marry her to the king of nearby Bohemia rather than that of a distant Mediterranean island.

Various explanations have been proffered for Shakespeare's curious reversal. Perhaps he wanted to make Perdita a daughter of Sicily in order to further her resemblance to Proserpina, her mythic prototype. Shakespeare would have read in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of how this lovely princess was snatched away to the underworld when she was gathering flowers in a Sicilian field; her release for half the year was symbolic of the seasonal cycle from winter to spring. Perdita invokes Proserpina in her own flower speech, and she is the figure who symbolically transforms the atmosphere of the play from winter to summer. Or perhaps the alteration was because Sicilians were notoriously hot-blooded and prone to jealousy, whereas Bohemia was often the setting for romantic fables. Perhaps Shakespeare was being deliberately absurd in a conscious act of anti-realism: Sicily was an island, but the play gives no sense of this; Bohemia, by contrast, was landlocked: this makes Perdita's abandonment on its coast either a bad mistake (Ben Jonson's view of the matter) or a deliberate joke.

Although Shakespeare's late plays are 'tales' or fables, they are not wholly divorced from hard questions of history and politics. *The Tempest* is very interested in statecraft and dynastic liaison, while *Cymbeline* is one of Shakespeare's two extended meditations on what political historians call the British Question (the relationship between England and the other parts of the island). *The Winter's Tale* opens, in the exchange between Camillo and Archidamus, with the language of courtiership, diplomacy and royal compliment. The pastoral form, far from being escapist, was often the vehicle for such heavy matter.

Shakespeare wrote all his later plays in the knowledge that the King's Men were required to give more command performances at court than any other theatre company. Court performances were often given in the presence of visiting royals or their ambassadors. In such circumstances, the diplomatic consequences of dramatic locations had to be a consideration. King James' wife was Danish. That must be why in *Macbeth* the traitor Macdonald is in league with a Norwegian force, whereas in the play's source it is a Danish one. It was part of Shakespeare's job not to give offence to the wrong people. However removed from historical reality the action may be, to invoke the kingdoms of Bohemia and Sicily, especially in front of court audiences that might include visiting diplomats, would inevitably create a penumbra of geopolitical associations.

In the time of Shakespeare's father, the difference between the two realms in terms of political association would have been minimal. As Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V ruled the greater part of Europe, including both Sicily and Bohemia. But Shakespeare himself lived after the division of the House of Habsburg into distinct Spanish and Austrian branches. In his time, the two kingdoms fell under separate spheres of influence. Sicilia – or more exactly the kingdom of the two Sicilies, one consisting of the island and the other of southern Italy – was at the heart of the Mediterranean empire of Philip II of Spain, while Bohemia (the western two-thirds of what is now the Czech Republic) became the core of the Holy Roman Empire. When Rudolf II became Emperor in 1576, he moved the seat of his government from Vienna to Prague. In Shakespeare's time, the title King of Sicilia belonged to Spain, while the King of Bohemia was the senior secular Elector of the Habsburg Empery.

The other crucial difference was religious: Sicily was Catholic, whereas for two hundred years the Bohemians had been divided from Rome – the Hussite rising of 1419–20 was perhaps the first enduring religious reformation in Europe. Anti-papal, anti-clerical and highly moralistic, the Bohemians were effectively Protestants before Protestantism was invented.

Fictional and fanciful as *The Winter's Tale* may be, the fact is that when the play was written the King of Sicilia was Philip III of Spain

and the King of Bohemia was the Emperor Rudolf II. There were strong links between the courts of James in London and Rudolf in Prague. Rudolf's court was famously hospitable to English intellectuals, ranging from John Dee the magician to a young woman who became one of the most famous poets in all Europe, Elizabeth Jane Weston. There were also striking resemblances between the two monarchs, especially their interest in magic and their desire for European peacemaking through interdenominational matchmaking. These two preoccupations were closely related: Rudolf's obsession with alchemy, natural magic and Rosicrucianism was not some eccentric aberration of his melancholy personality, but rather – as was also the case with the magical interests of King James – a way to a deeper religious vision and unity beyond the confessional divisions that racked his empire. Magic and royal matchmaking were also, of course, distinctly late Shakespearean subjects. Paulina's awakening of Hermione's statue places an invocation of benign magical arts in the service of the restoration of harmony within and between the play's two ruling families.

Conversely, despite the Catholicism of James' queen and the king's various attempts to match his children to clients of Spain, the residual English hostility to all things Spanish, dating back to the Armada and beyond, had not gone away. In these circumstances, it seems eminently plausible that on deciding to dramatize a story about the kings of Sicilia and Bohemia, and knowing that the play would at some point go into the court repertoire, Shakespeare thought it would be politic to make the monarch with Spanish as opposed to Rudolfinian associations the one who is irrational, cruel and blasphemous. It is not that Leontes is in any sense a representation of Philip or Polixenes of Rudolf, but rather that extreme tact was required in the invocation of the names of European kingdoms.

Shakespeare's tact towards Bohemia, a synecdoche for the Austro-Germanic Habsburg territories, was indeed such that *The Winter's Tale* could be played at court without embarrassment during the 1612–13 festivities in celebration of the wedding of King James' daughter Elizabeth to the Habsburg princeling Frederick the

Elector Palatine – who, as it happens, would later become King of Bohemia. Life imitates art: like Perdita, Elizabeth would become known as the ‘winter queen’ in Bohemia.

Whether or not geopolitical sensitivity lay behind Shakespeare’s transposition of Sicilia and Bohemia, *The Winter’s Tale* can still be thought of as a play that works on a north–south axis. The weird temporal syncretism of the play enacts the early modern rebirth of classical civilization: Apollo thunders and Ovid’s Pygmalion is reborn as Giulio Romano; the setting moves between the temple of the Delphic oracle on a balmy Greek island, a very English-seeming sheep-shearing feast, and a private chapel reached via a picture gallery and housing a Madonna-like statue. The essential geographical structure, meanwhile, is an opposition between a hot-blooded, court-dominated – and perhaps implicitly Catholic – south, and a more relaxed, temperate north in which ordinary people (shepherd and clown) have a voice, as they do in the Protestant world where the Bible is available in the vernacular.

LIVING ART

One of the best ways of discovering Shakespeare’s core concerns in a play is to consider his major additions to his sources: it is a fair assumption that he is most himself when he departs from his originals. As one would expect from *Pandosto*, Leontes is easily the largest role in the play, twice as long as any other. But the next two most sizeable parts – added together, they equal that of Leontes in length – are Camillo and Paulina. The figure of Leontes’ honest counsellor greatly expands the role of the king’s cupbearer in *Pandosto*, while Paulina, Hermione’s preserver and Leontes’ conscience, has no equivalent in the source. The prominence of these roles suggests that the play is especially interested in the relationship between absolute power, with its potential to turn to tyranny, and the role of the wise counsellor. How far can an adviser, or for that matter a playwright whose works are performed at court, go in speaking truths that their rulers might not want to hear? This was a perennial concern in the Elizabethan and Jacobean era.

The court of King James was different from that of Queen Elizabeth, not least because there was a royal family. Negotiations to find the right husband for the king's daughter were ongoing at the time of the play's composition and first court performance. Like the Bohemian connection discussed above, this context is in the hinterland of the play's origin. It should not lead us to read the drama as a direct allegory of contemporary diplomacy. Leontes is in no sense a representation of King James. Besides, among the things that make the play a romance is the delightful representation of paternal informality and intimacy in the exchanges with Mamillius in the opening court scene. Real kings did not publicly mix the roles of patriarch and playmate in this way.

In Greene's *Pandosto*, when the Perdita figure arrives incognito at court near the climax of the story, the desiring eye of her father falls upon her, raising the spectre of royal incest. One of Paulina's roles in *The Winter's Tale* is to divert Leontes from any thought of this kind: 'Your eye hath too much youth in't', she remarks, reminding him that even in middle age his dead queen was more beautiful 'Than what you look on now'. Earlier in the same scene, Paulina has counselled the king against remarriage, eliciting the response:

Thou speak'st truth.

No more such wives: therefore, no wife. One worse,
And better used, would make her sainted spirit
Again possess her corpse, and on this stage —
Where we offenders now — appear soul-vexed,
And begin, 'Why to me?'

These lines brilliantly anticipate the moment when, thanks to the dramaturgical art of Paulina, the 'sainted spirit' of Hermione really does appear to have a soul breathed back into it as she walks again on that same 'stage'.

In *Pandosto* the wronged queen does not return to life. The reanimation of what Leontes takes to be Hermione's statue is Shakespeare's invention. The wonder-filled final scene puts a seemingly life-giving art into the hands of Paulina. That art dramatizes the magical power of theatre itself so that we in the audience, like the characters on stage, awaken our faith. The many-layered quality of the

illusion – a boy-actor pretending to be a female character; Hermione, who is herself pretending to be a statue – takes Shakespeare's art to an extreme level of self-consciousness. Fittingly, the scene is also an allusion to Ovid, the most self-conscious artist among Shakespeare's literary models.

In book ten of the *Metamorphoses*, the artist Pygmalion carves an ivory statue so realistic that it seems to be a real girl, so beautiful that he falls in love with it. He desperately wants to believe it is real and there are moments when the perfection of the art is such that the statue does seem to be struggling into life. With a little assistance from the goddess Venus, a kiss then animates the statue in a striking reversal of the usual Ovidian metamorphic pattern in which people are turned into things or animals. At a profound level, Pygmalion is a figure of Ovid himself: the artist who transforms mere words into living forms.

Shakespeare learned from Ovid's Pygmalion both an idea and a style. If you want something badly enough and you believe in it hard enough, you will eventually get it: though tragedy denies this possibility, comedy affirms it. This is the illusion that theatre can foster. Ovid showed Shakespeare that the way to evoke this leap of faith is through pinpricks of sensation. The progression in the animation of Pygmalion's statue is both precise and sensuous: blood pulses through the veins, the lips respond, the ivory face flushes. Correspondingly, Leontes contrasts the warm life his queen once had with the coldness of the statue, but then he seems to see blood in the veins and warmth upon the lips. And when she descends and embraces him, she *is* warm.

At the beginning of the play Leontes complains that Hermione's body-contact with Polixenes is "Too hot, too hot!" – he wants her to be frigidly chaste, even though she is pregnant. His jealous look is like that of the basilisk or the gorgon Medusa: he turns his wife to stone. In the final act, this metaphor becomes a metamorphosis as Paulina conjures up the illusion of Hermione's depetrification. The transformation is triumphantly realized on stage both linguistically and visually. 'Does not the stone rebuke me / For being more stone than it?' asks Leontes, when confronted with the statue. The

hardened image of his wife forces him to turn his gaze inward upon his own hard heart. The play ends with the melting of that heart and the rekindling of love, with its concordant release of Hermione back into softness, warmth and life.

We know in our heads that we are not really watching a statue coming to life. Yet in a good production, at the moment of awakening we feel in our hearts that we are. The magic of the drama occurs in a strange but deeply satisfying space between the two poles of reality and illusion. Metamorphosis is a kind of translation that occurs in the passage from one state to another. Ovid's world, which is also evoked by Perdita's comparison of herself to Proserpina, goddess of spring, shuttles between human passions and natural phenomena. Shakespeare carried the magic of that world across into the medium of theatre, where everything is illusion, but somehow – as he put it in the alternative title of another of his last plays, *Henry VIII* – 'All is True'.

When Perdita, whose name means 'lost one', is restored to her father, the oracle is fulfilled and there is some atonement for the death of Mamillius. Not, however, full restoration, for Mamillius himself will not return. The boy-actor who played the part would almost certainly have doubled as Perdita in the second half of the play, visually transforming the dead son into a living daughter. Polixenes' son Florizel also stands in for Mamillius: he grows into what Leontes' son might have become. When he and Perdita are joined in marriage, the two kings and their kingdoms are united. Leontes has to accept that he will only live on through the female line. This is an appropriate punishment, given his earlier rejection of the female for having come between him and his 'brother'.

It will perhaps seem harsh to speak of punishment after the delights of the pastoral scene, the benign mischief of Autolycus, and the wonder of the moment when the supposed statue of Hermione is brought back to life. To do so is to resemble the Paulina who browbeats Leontes into maintaining his penance for sixteen years. When she finally softens and lets him into her art gallery, surely we, too, need to let go of our reason and our moral judgement. 'It is required', as Paulina puts it, that we awake our faith. But can so

much suffering evaporate in an instant of theatrical magic? Hermione's face is scarred with the marks of time, the wrinkles accumulated in her sixteen years' seclusion. And not even the joys of the impending union of the two houses can bring back the child whose 'smutched' nose his father has so tenderly wiped in the first act.

ABOUT THE TEXT

Shakespeare endures through history. He illuminates later times as well as his own. He helps us to understand the human condition. But he cannot do this without a good text of the plays. Without editions there would be no Shakespeare. That is why every twenty years or so throughout the last three centuries there has been a major new edition of his complete works. One aspect of editing is the process of keeping the texts up to date – modernizing the spelling, punctuation and typography (though not, of course, the actual words), providing explanatory notes in the light of changing educational practices (a generation ago, most of Shakespeare's classical and biblical allusions could be assumed to be generally understood, but now they can't).

Because Shakespeare did not personally oversee the publication of his plays, with some plays there are major editorial difficulties. Decisions have to be made as to the relative authority of the early printed editions, the pocket format 'Quartos' published in Shakespeare's lifetime and the elaborately produced 'First Folio' text of 1623, the original 'Complete Works' prepared for the press after his death by Shakespeare's fellow-actors, the people who knew the plays better than anyone else. *The Winter's Tale*, however, exists only in a Folio text that is reasonably well printed. The following notes highlight various aspects of the editorial process and indicate conventions used in the text of this edition:

Lists of Parts are supplied in the First Folio for only six plays: *The Winter's Tale* is one of them, so the list here is a lightly edited version of Folio's 'The Names of the Actors'. Capitals indicate that part of the name which is used for speech headings in the script (thus 'LEONTES, King of Sicilia').

Locations are provided by the Folio for only two plays, of which *The Winter's Tale* is not one. Eighteenth-century editors, working in an age of elaborately realistic stage sets, were the first to provide detailed locations ('another part of the palace'). Given that Shakespeare wrote for a bare stage and often an imprecise sense of place, we have relegated locations to the explanatory notes at the foot of the page, where they are given at the beginning of each scene where the imaginary location is different from the one before. In the case of *The Winter's Tale*, the key aspect of location is the movement between Sicilia and Bohemia.

Act and Scene Divisions were provided in the Folio in a much more thoroughgoing way than in the Quartos. Sometimes, however, they were erroneous or omitted; corrections and additions supplied by editorial tradition are indicated by square brackets. Five-act division is based on a classical model, and act breaks provided the opportunity to replace the candles in the indoor Blackfriars playhouse which the King's Men used after 1608, but Shakespeare did not necessarily think in terms of a five-part structure of dramatic composition. The Folio convention is that a scene ends when the stage is empty. Nowadays, partly under the influence of film, we tend to consider a scene to be a dramatic unit that ends with either a change of imaginary location or a significant passage of time within the narrative. Shakespeare's fluidity of composition accords well with this convention, so in addition to act and scene numbers we provide a *running scene* count in the right margin at the beginning of each new scene, in the typeface used for editorial directions. Where there is a scene break caused by a momentary bare stage, but the location does not change and extra time does not pass, we use the convention *running scene continues*. There is inevitably a degree of editorial judgement in making such calls, but the system is very valuable in suggesting the pace of the plays.

Speakers' Names are often inconsistent in Folio. We have regularized speech headings, but retained an element of deliberate inconsistency in entry directions, in order to give the flavour of Folio.

Verse is indicated by lines that do not run to the right margin and by capitalization of each line. The Folio printers sometimes set verse as prose, and vice versa (either out of misunderstanding or for reasons of space). We have silently corrected in such cases, although in some instances there is ambiguity, in which case we have leaned towards the preservation of Folio layout. Folio sometimes uses contraction ('turnd' rather than 'turned') to indicate whether or not the final '-ed' of a past participle is sounded, an area where there is variation for the sake of the five-beat iambic pentameter rhythm. We use the convention of a grave accent to indicate sounding (thus 'turnèd' would be two syllables), but would urge actors not to overstress. In cases where one speaker ends with a verse half-line and the next begins with the other half of the pentameter, editors since the late eighteenth century have indented the second line. We have abandoned this convention, since the Folio does not use it, and nor did actors' cues in the Shakespearean theatre. An exception is made when the second speaker actively interrupts or completes the first speaker's sentence.

Spelling is modernized, but older forms are very occasionally maintained where necessary for rhythm or aural effect.

Punctuation in Shakespeare's time was as much rhetorical as grammatical. 'Colon' was originally a term for a unit of thought in an argument. The semi-colon was a new unit of punctuation (some of the Quartos lack them altogether). We have modernized punctuation throughout, but have given more weight to Folio punctuation than many editors, since, though not Shakespearean, it reflects the usage of his period. In particular, we have used the colon far more than many editors: it is exceptionally useful as a way of indicating how many Shakespearean speeches unfold clause by clause in a developing argument that gives the illusion of enacting the process of thinking in the moment. We have also kept in mind the origin of punctuation in classical times as a way of assisting the actor and orator: the comma suggests the briefest of pauses for breath, the colon a middling one and a full stop or period a longer pause. Semi-colons, by contrast, belong to an era of punctuation