

# The Winter's Tale

## 5.2

*Enter Autolycus and a Gentleman*

**AUTOLYCUS** Beseech you, sir, were you present at this relation?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN** I was by at the opening of the fardel, heard the old shepherd deliver the manner how he found it; whereupon, after a little amazedness, we were all commanded out of the chamber. Only this, methought I heard the shepherd say he found the child. 5

**AUTOLYCUS** I would most gladly know the issue of it.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN** I make a broken delivery of the business, but the changes I perceived in the King and Camillo were very notes of admiration. They seemed almost, with staring on one another, to tear the cases of their eyes. There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture. They looked as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed. A notable passion of wonder appeared in them, but the wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if th'importance were joy or sorrow. But in the extremity of the one, it must needs be. 15

*Enter another Gentleman*

Here comes a gentleman that happily knows more. The news, Ruggiero! 20

**SECOND GENTLEMAN** Nothing but bonfires. The oracle is fulfilled. The King's daughter is found. Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour, that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it. 25

*Enter another Gentleman*

Here comes the Lady Paulina's steward. He can deliver you more.±±How goes it now, sir? This news which is called true is so like an old tale that the verity of it is in strong suspicion. Has the King found his heir?

**THIRD GENTLEMAN** Most true, if ever truth were pregnant by circumstance. That which you hear you'll swear you see, there is such unity in the proofs. The mantle of Queen Hermione's, her jewel about the neck of it, 30

the letters of Antigonus found with it, which they know  
to be his character; the majesty of the creature, in 35  
resemblance of the mother; the affection of nobleness  
which nature shows above her breeding, and many  
other evidences proclaim her with all certainty to be  
the King's daughter. Did you see the meeting of the  
two kings? 40

**SECOND GENTLEMAN** No.

**THIRD GENTLEMAN** Then have you lost a sight which was  
to be seen, cannot be spoken of. There might you have  
beheld one joy crown another, so and in such manner 45  
that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for  
their joy waded in tears. There was casting up of eyes,  
holding up of hands, with countenance of such  
distraction that they were to be known by garment,  
not by favour. Our king being ready to leap out of  
himself for joy of his found daughter, as if that joy 50  
were now become a loss cries, 'O, thy mother, thy  
mother!', then asks Bohemia forgiveness, then  
embraces his son-in-law, then again worries he his  
daughter with clipping her. Now he thanks the old  
shepherd, which stands by like a weather-bitten conduit 55  
of many kings' reigns. I never heard of such another  
encounter, which lames report to follow it, and undoes  
description to do it.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN** What, pray you, became of Anti-  
gonus, that carried hence the child? 60

**THIRD GENTLEMAN** Like an old tale still, which will have  
matter to rehearse though credit be asleep and not an  
ear open. He was torn to pieces with a bear. This  
avouches the shepherd's son, who has not only his  
innocence, which seems much, to justify him, but a 65  
handkerchief and rings of his, that Paulina knows.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN** What became of his barque and his  
followers?

**THIRD GENTLEMAN** Wrecked the same instant of their  
master's death, and in the view of the shepherd; so 70  
that all the instruments which aided to expose the child  
were even then lost when it was found. But O, the  
noble combat that 'twixt joy and sorrow was fought in

Paulina! She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband, another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled. 75  
She lifted the Princess from the earth, and so locks her in embracing as if she would pin her to her heart, that she might no more be in danger of losing.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN** The dignity of this act was worth the audience of kings and princes, for by such was it acted. 80

**THIRD GENTLEMAN** One of the prettiest touches of all, and that which angled for mine eyes±±caught the water, though not the fish±±was when at the relation of the Queen's death, with the manner how she came to't bravely confessed and lamented by the King, how attentiveness wounded his daughter till from one sign of dolour to another she did, with an `Alas', I would fain say bleed tears; for I am sure my heart wept blood. Who was most marble there changed colour. Some swooned, all sorrowed. If all the world could have 90  
seen't, the woe had been universal.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN** Are they returned to the court?

**THIRD GENTLEMAN** No. The Princess, hearing of her mother's statue, which is in the keeping of Paulina, a piece many years in doing, and now newly performed by that rare Italian master Giulio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape. He so near to Hermione hath done Hermione that they say one would speak to her and stand in 100  
hope of answer. Thither with all greediness of affection are they gone, and there they intend to sup.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN** I thought she had some great matter there in hand, for she hath privately twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione, visited that 105  
removed house. Shall we thither, and with our company piece the rejoicing?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN** Who would be thence, that has the benefit of access? Every wink of an eye some new grace will be born. Our absence makes us unthrifty to our 110  
knowledge. Let's along.

*Exeunt Gentlemen*

**AUTOLYCUS** Now, had I not the dash of my former life in

me, would preferment drop on my head. I brought the old man and his son aboard the Prince; told him I heard them talk of a fardel, and I know not what. But<sup>115</sup> he at that time over-fond of the shepherd's daughter<sup>±±</sup> so he then took her to be<sup>±±</sup> who began to be much sea-sick, and himself little better, extremity of weather continuing, this mystery remained undiscovered. But 'tis all one to me, for had I been the finder-out of this <sup>120</sup> secret it would not have relished among my other discredits.

*Enter the Old Shepherd and the Clown, dressed as gentlemen*

Here come those I have done good to against my will, and already appearing in the blossoms of their fortune.

**OLD SHEPHERD** Come, boy; I am past more children, but <sup>125</sup> thy sons and daughters will be all gentlemen born.

**CLOWN** *(to Autolycus)* You are well met, sir. You denied to fight with me this other day because I was no gentleman born. See you these clothes? Say you see them not, and think me still no gentleman born. You <sup>130</sup> were best say these robes are not gentlemen born. Give me the lie, do, and try whether I am not now a gentleman born.

**AUTOLYCUS** I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born.

**CLOWN** Ay, and have been so any time these four hours. <sup>135</sup>

**OLD SHEPHERD** And so have I, boy.

**CLOWN** So you have; but I was a gentleman born before my father, for the King's son took me by the hand and called me brother; and then the two kings called my father brother; and then the Prince my brother and <sup>140</sup> the Princess my sister called my father father; and so we wept; and there was the first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed.

**OLD SHEPHERD** We may live, son, to shed many more.

**CLOWN** Ay, or else 'twere hard luck, being in so pre- <sup>145</sup> posterous estate as we are.

**AUTOLYCUS** I humbly beseech you, sir, to pardon me all the faults I have committed to your worship, and to give me your good report to the Prince my master.

**OLD SHEPHERD** Prithee, son, do, for we must be gentle now <sup>150</sup>

we are gentlemen.

**CLOWN** Thou wilt amend thy life?

**AUTOLYCUS** Ay, an it like your good worship.

**CLOWN** Give me thy hand. I will swear to the Prince thou  
art as honest a true fellow as any is in Bohemia. 155

**OLD SHEPHERD** You may say it, but not swear it.

**CLOWN** Not swear it now I am a gentleman? Let boors  
and franklins say it; I'll swear it.

**OLD SHEPHERD** How if it be false, son?

**CLOWN** If it be ne'er so false, a true gentleman may swear 160  
it in the behalf of his friend, (*to Autolycus*) and I'll  
swear to the Prince thou art a tall fellow of thy hands  
and that thou wilt not be drunk; but I know thou art  
no tall fellow of thy hands and that thou wilt be drunk;  
but I'll swear it, and I would thou wouldst be a tall 165  
fellow of thy hands.

**AUTOLYCUS** I will prove so, sir, to my power.

**CLOWN** Ay, by any means prove a tall fellow. If I do not  
wonder how thou dar'st venture to be drunk, not being  
a tall fellow, trust me not. 170

*[Flourish within]*

Hark, the kings and princes, our kindred, are going to  
see the Queen's picture. Come, follow us. We'll be thy  
good masters.

*Exeunt*