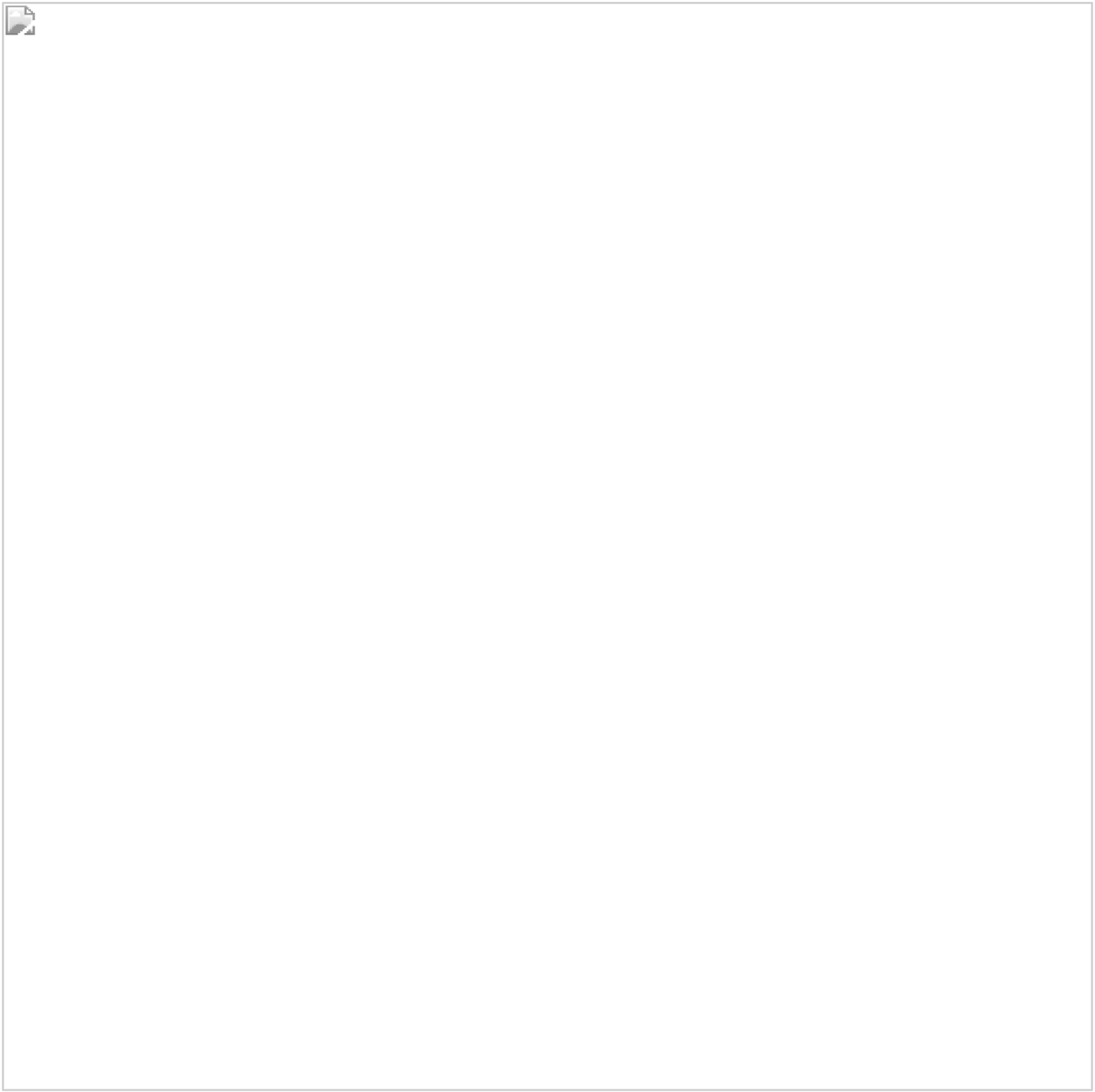
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Winter's Tale

A Play by Shakespeare



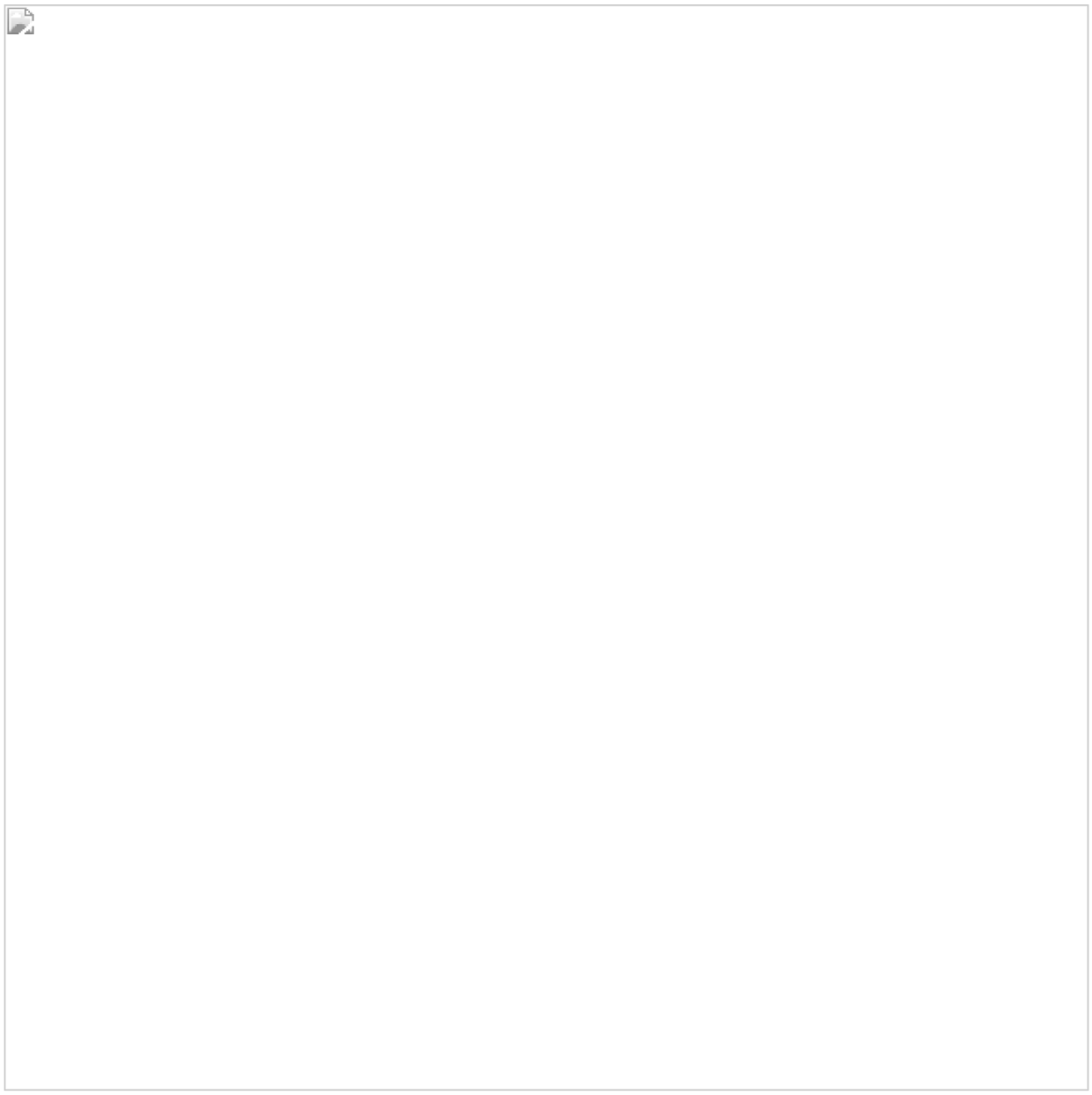
This is a story with a sad part in the middle and a glad part at the end. It begins in the land of Sicilia, with a king, a queen, and their little boy.

TALK ABOUT IT

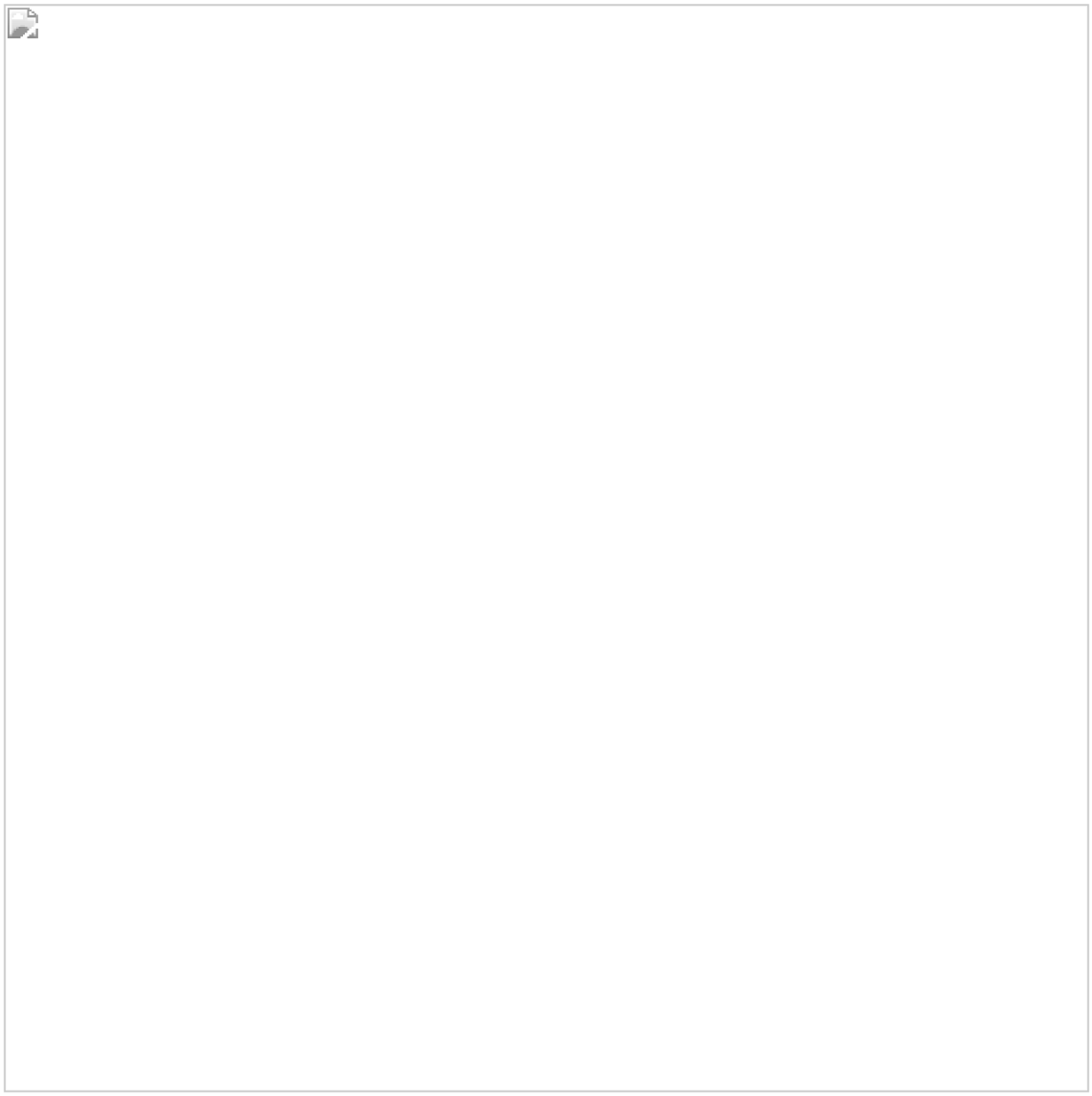
Some stories have sad parts and glad parts. What do you like about a story that has both?

This book belongs to _____

The Winter's Tale · another picture



Two Old Friends



King Leontes of Sicilia had a wife, Queen Hermione, and a small son, Prince Mamillius.

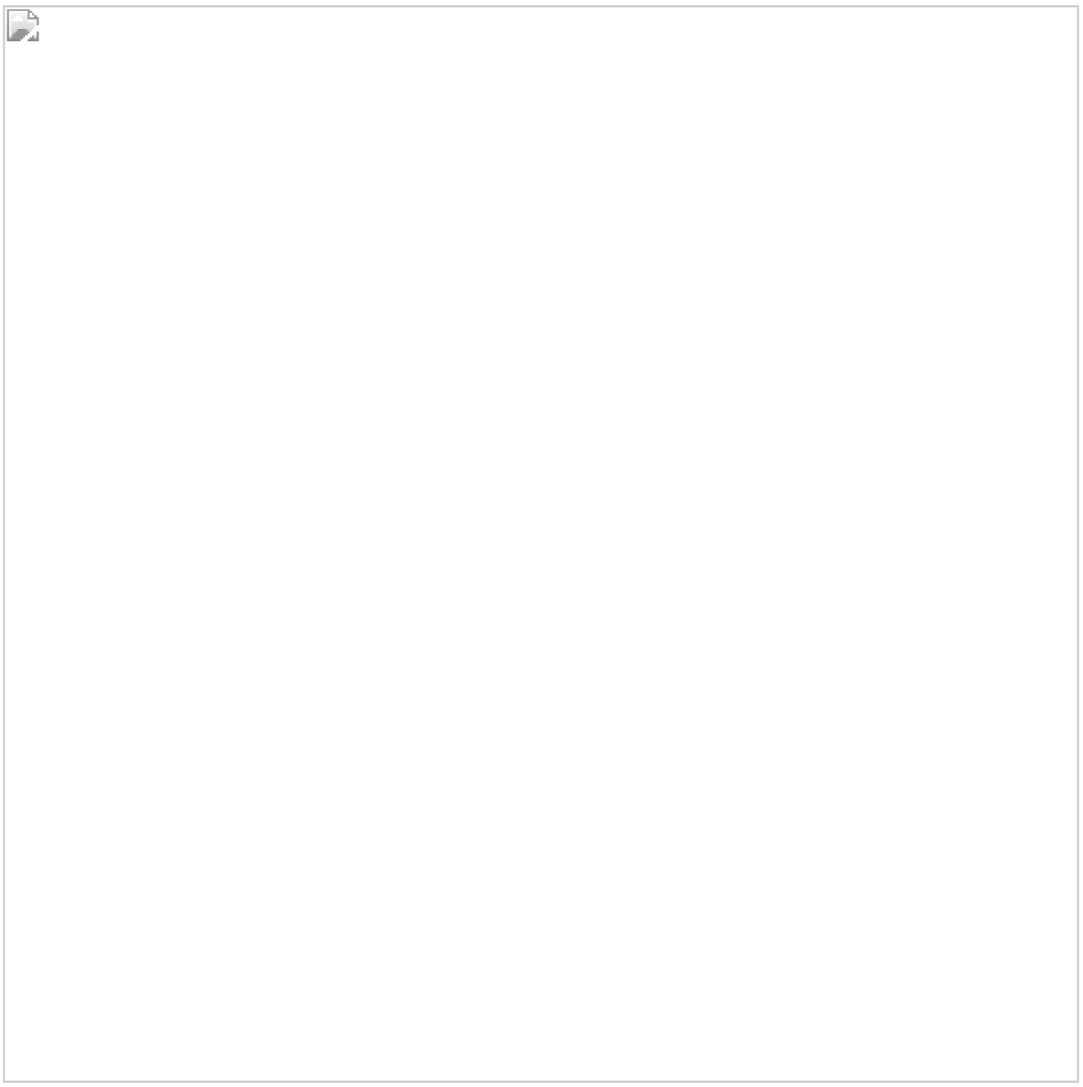
He also had a very old friend: King Polixenes of Bohemia. When they were boys, they had played together every day. Polixenes remembered those days fondly. He said they were “as twinn’d lambs that did frisk i’ th’ sun and bleat the one at th’ other.”

Now Polixenes was visiting Sicilia. He had stayed nine months, and he missed his own home and his own son. It was time to go.

TALK ABOUT IT

Polixenes remembers playing with his friend like two lambs in the sun. Do you have a friend you like to play with? What do you play?

Two Old Friends · another picture

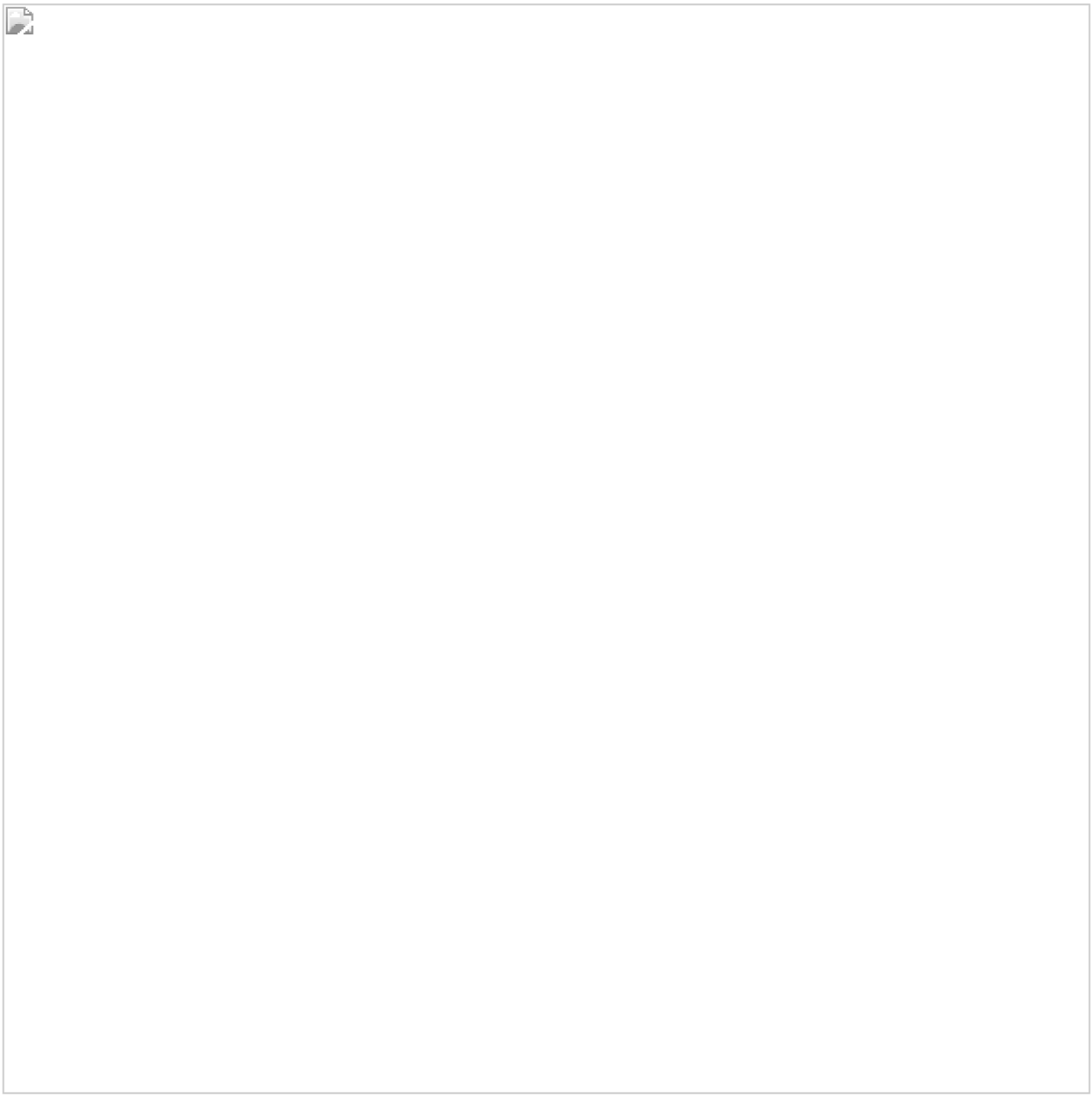


Think about it

1. Who came to visit King Leontes?

- ○ King Polixenes of Bohemia
- ○ A shepherd
- ○ Prince Mamillius

Please Stay



Leontes begged his friend to stay a little longer, but Polixenes said no.

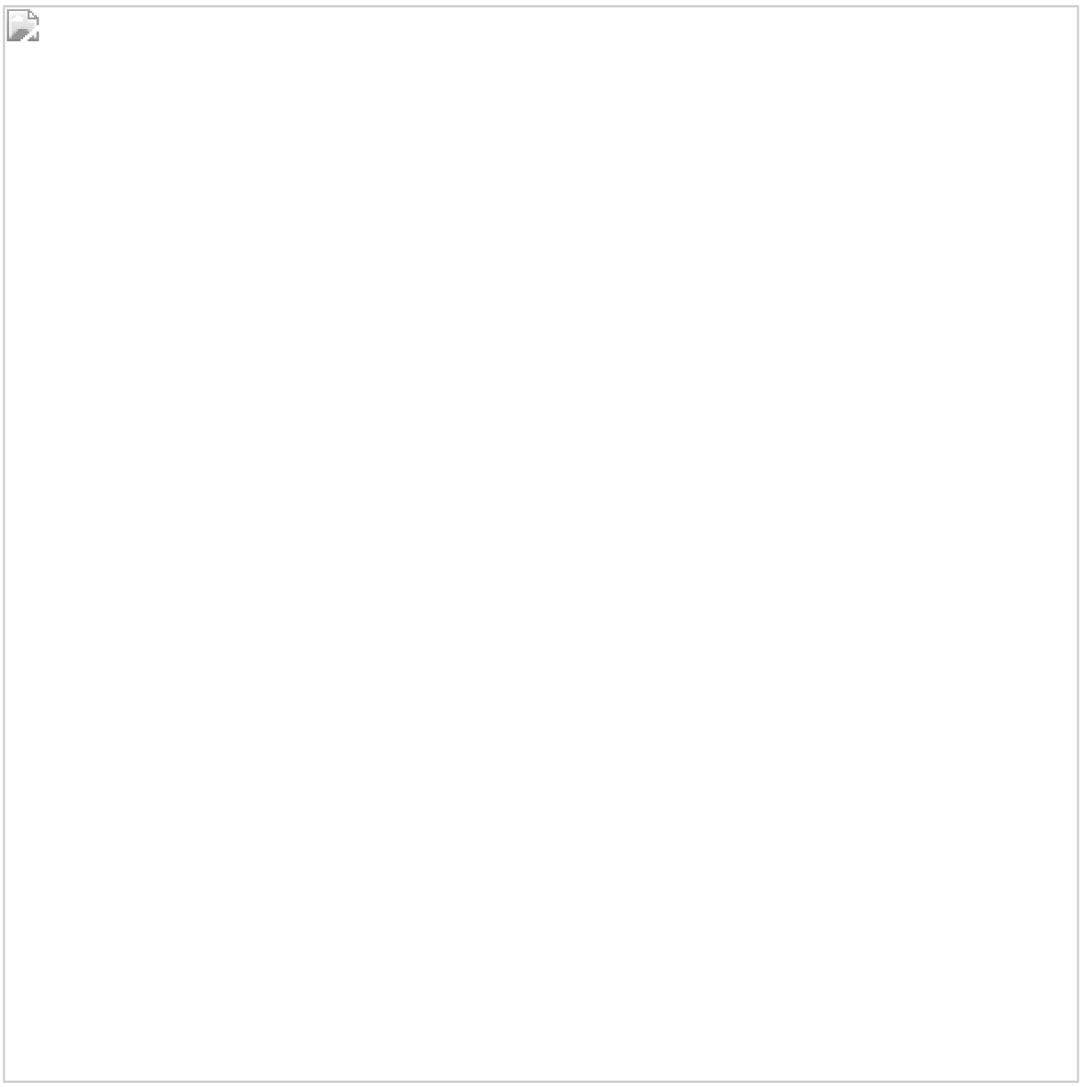
Then Queen Hermione spoke up. She said, kindly and with a smile, that he must stay, and that he would be her guest. “A lady’s verily is as potent as a lord’s,” she told him. She meant that what a lady says is as strong as what a lord says. Polixenes laughed, and said he would stay a while longer.

Leontes watched them. And then something went wrong inside Leontes.

TALK ABOUT IT

Queen Hermione said a lady’s word is as strong as a lord’s. What do you think about that?

Please Stay · another picture

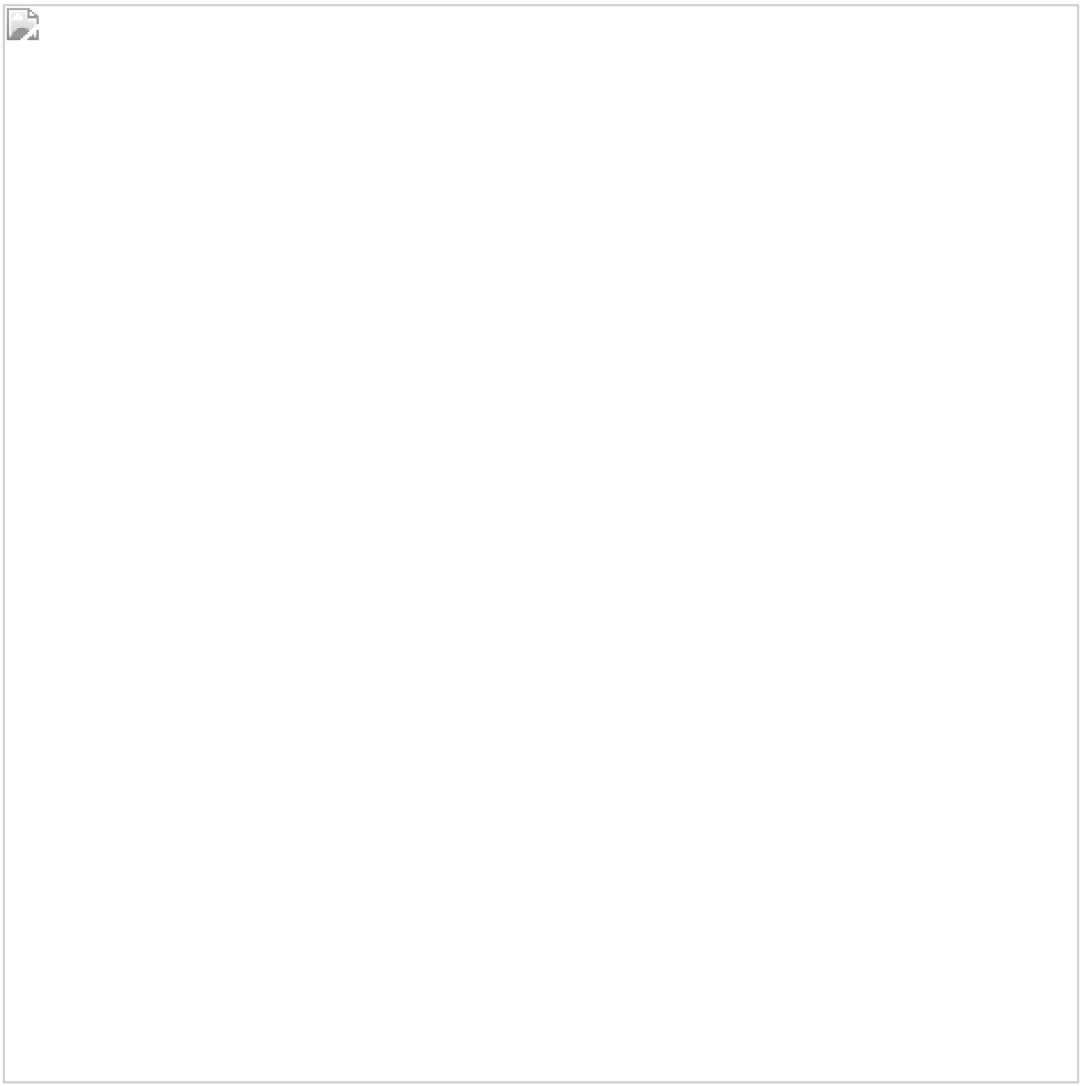


Think about it

1. Who made Polixenes stay a little longer?

- ○ Queen Hermione
- ○ A messenger
- ○ The prince

A Wrong Idea



Leontes got a wrong idea into his head. He began to think that Hermione loved Polixenes more than she loved him.

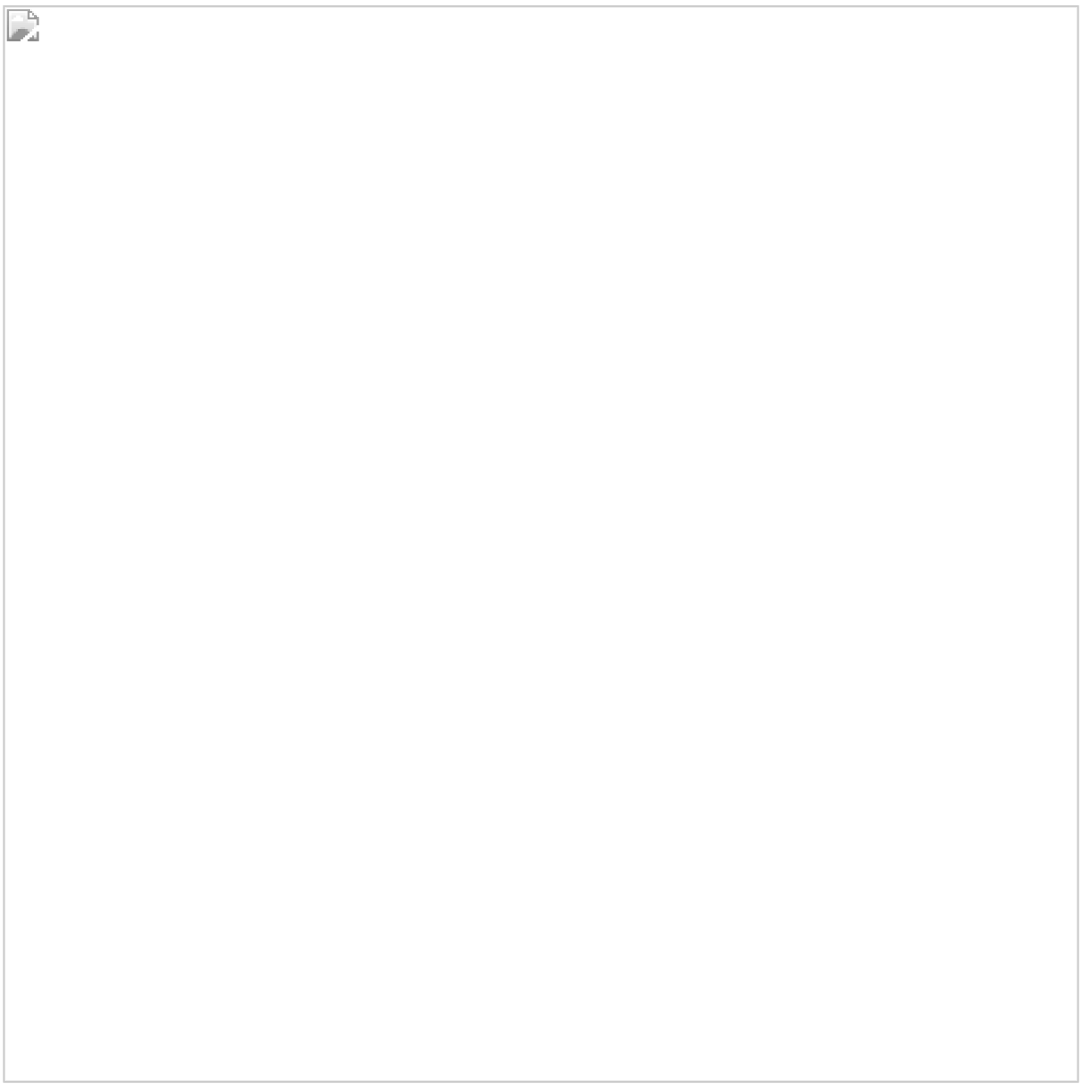
It was not true. Hermione had done nothing wrong. But Leontes could not stop thinking it, and he would listen to nobody who told him he was wrong. He sent the little prince away to play: “Go, play, boy, play.”

Then he told a good man named Camillo to hurt Polixenes. Camillo would not. Instead he warned Polixenes, and the two of them hurried away by night to Bohemia, where Polixenes was king.

Now Leontes was sure that he was right, and he was angrier than ever.

TALK ABOUT IT

Leontes would not listen to anyone who told him he was wrong. Why is it hard to listen when we are sure? Who could Leontes have asked?

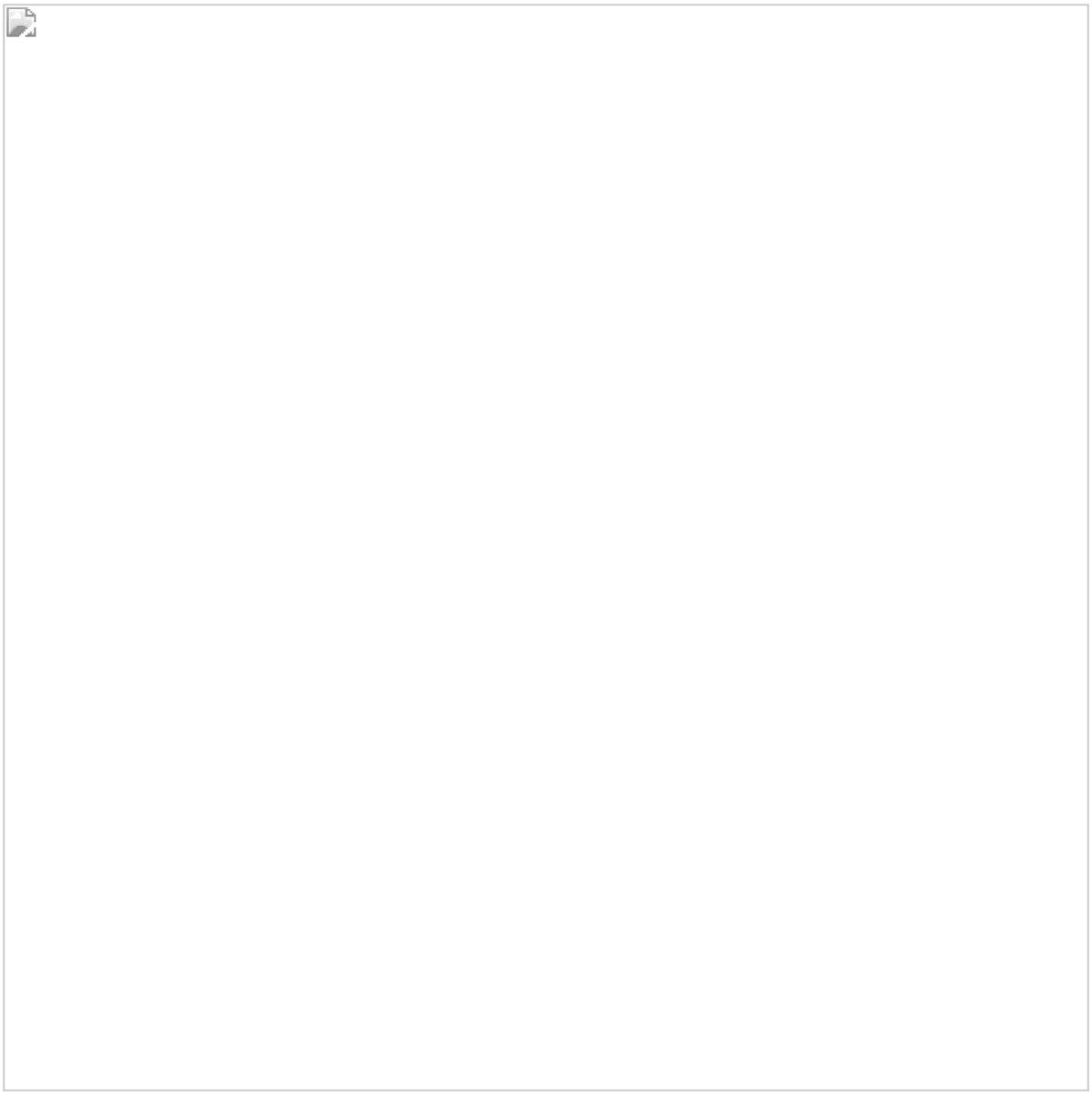


Think about it

1. What did Camillo do when he was told to hurt Polixenes?

- ○ He did it
- ○ He warned Polixenes and went away with him
- ○ He told the queen

A Sad Tale's Best for Winter



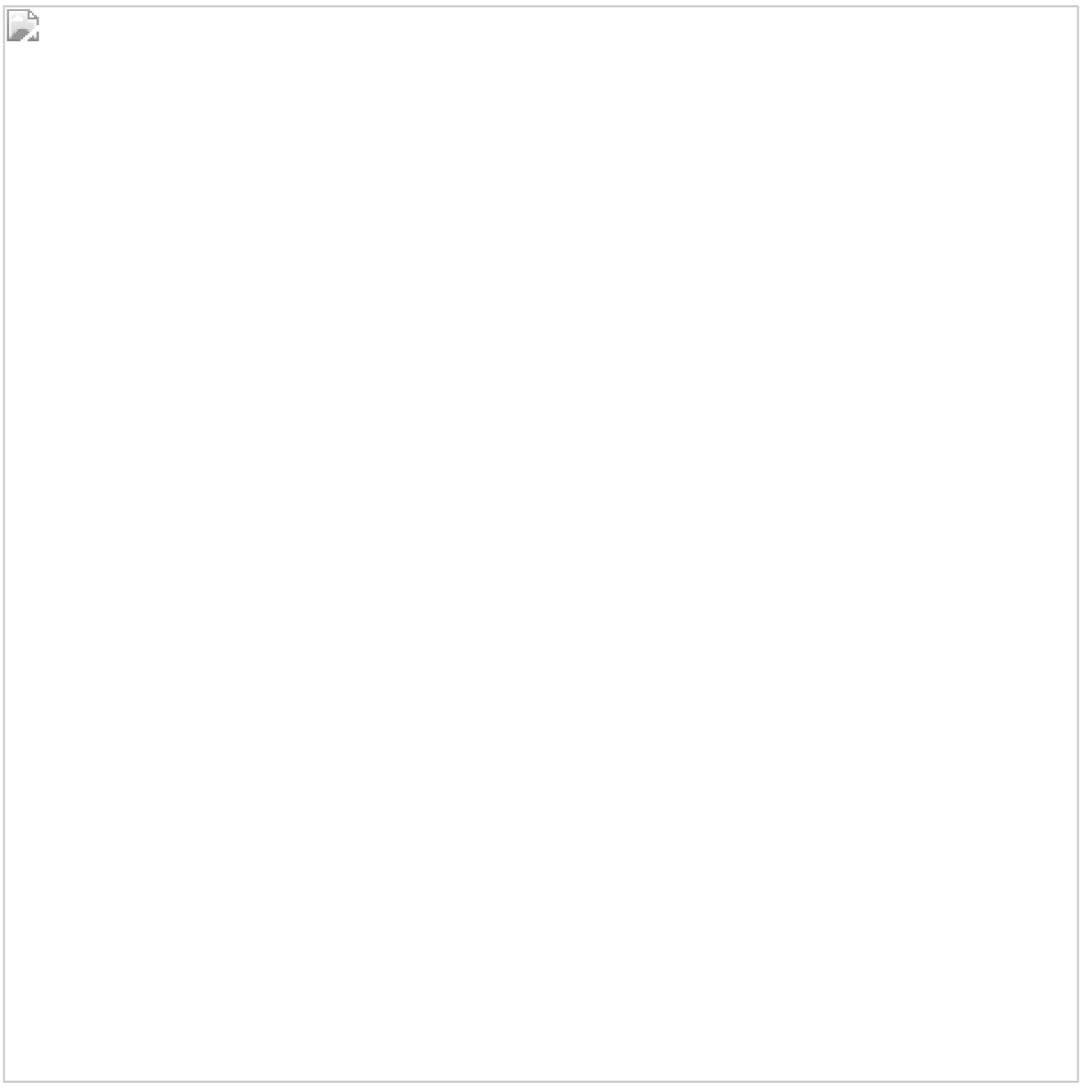
Queen Hermione was sitting with Mamillius. She asked him to tell her a story. The boy said, "A sad tale's best for winter. I have one of sprites and goblins."

He had only just begun when Leontes came in, still very angry. He would not believe the queen. He had her taken away, and he took the boy from her.

The queen was going to have another baby soon. Leontes sent word to the oracle at Delphos, the holy place where the gods answered questions. He wanted to hear what the gods would say.

TALK ABOUT IT

Mamillius had a story to tell his mother, and he never got to finish it. What do you think his story might have been?

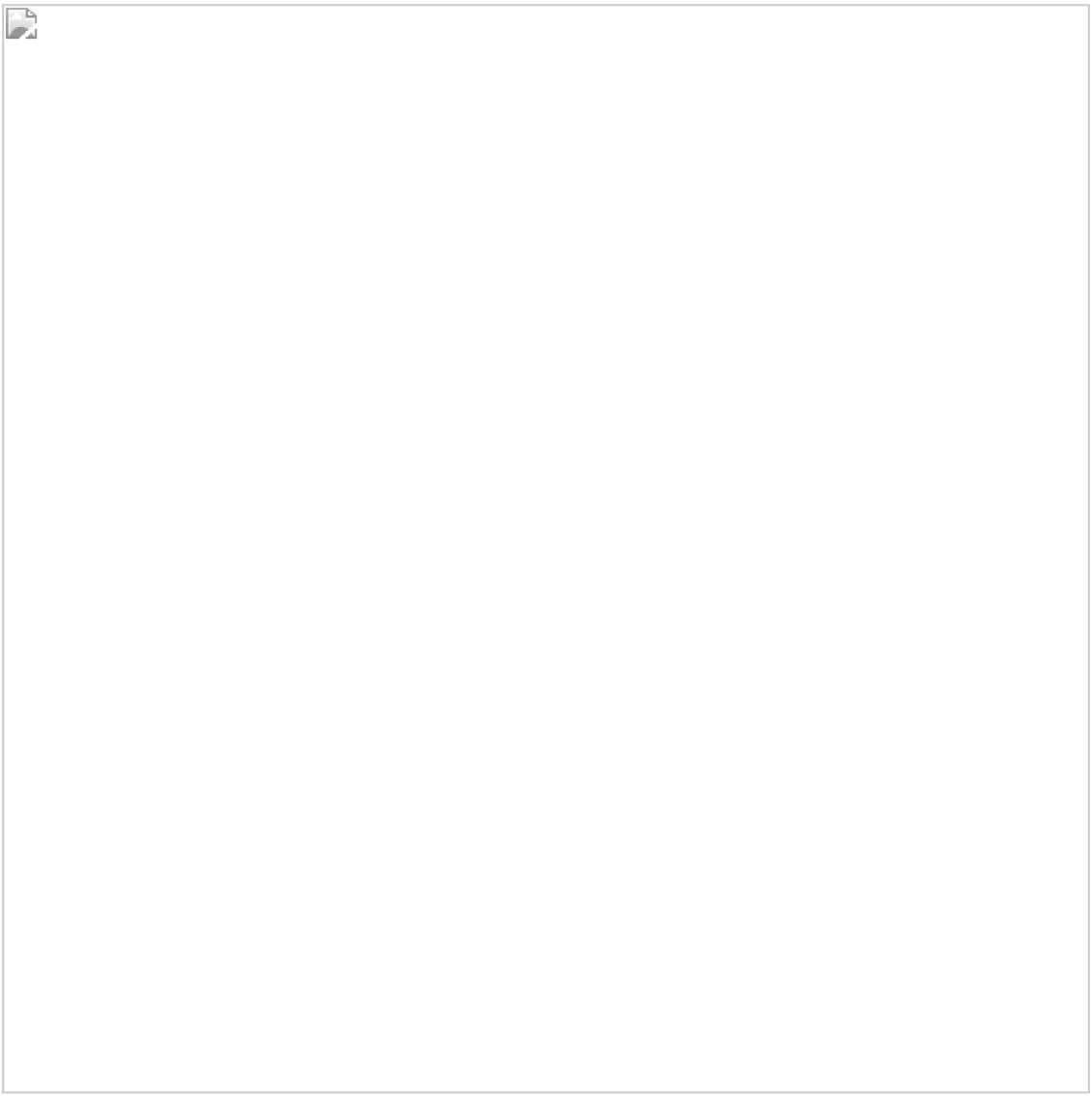


Think about it

1. What story did Mamillius begin?

- ○ A tale of sprites and goblins
- ○ A tale of a ship
- ○ A tale of a lion

A Baby Girl



In the place where the queen was kept, she had her baby: a little girl.

Brave Paulina carried the baby to the king. She said the baby was his own daughter, and the queen a good queen: “good queen, my lord, good queen.” But Leontes would not listen to her either.

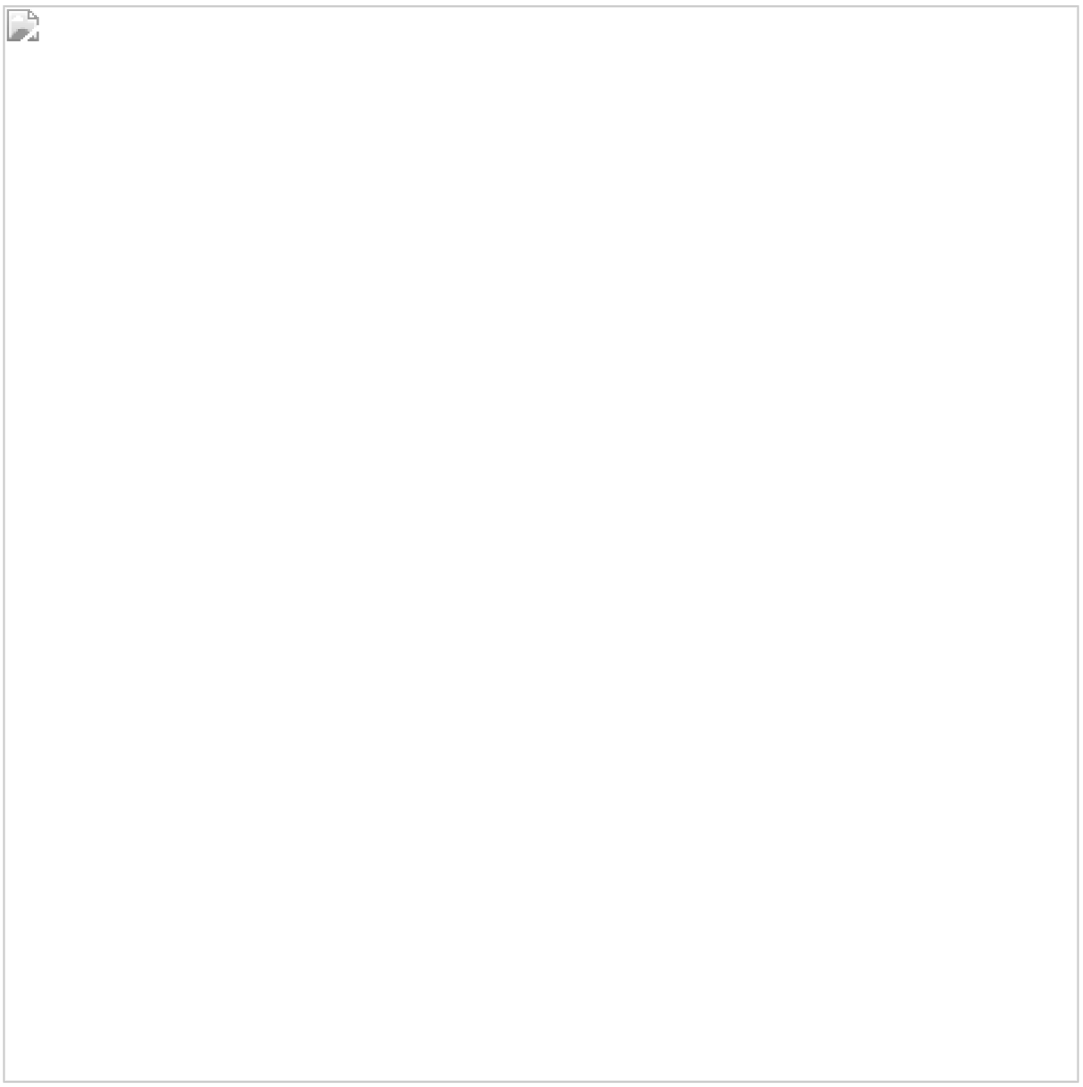
Paulina’s husband, a lord named Antigonus, begged the king to be kind. Instead Leontes ordered him to take the baby far away and leave her in a lonely place.

Antigonus did not want to, but he had promised. “Come on, poor babe,” he said, and he took her.

TALK ABOUT IT

Paulina was brave enough to speak the truth to a king who was angry. Who is brave like that in your life?

A Baby Girl · another picture

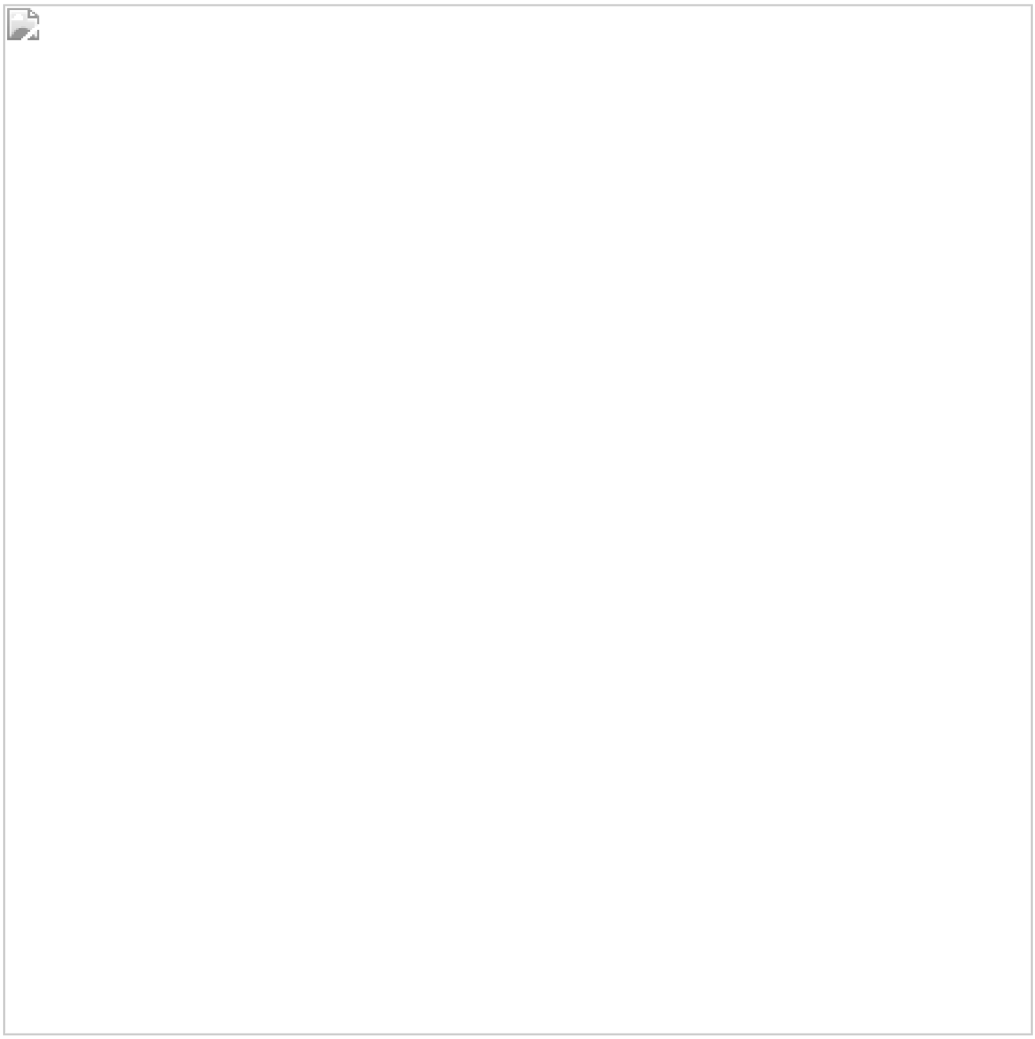


Think about it

1. Who carried the new baby to the king?

- ○ Paulina
- ○ Camillo
- ○ The shepherd

What the Gods Said



The oracle's answer was read out: "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."

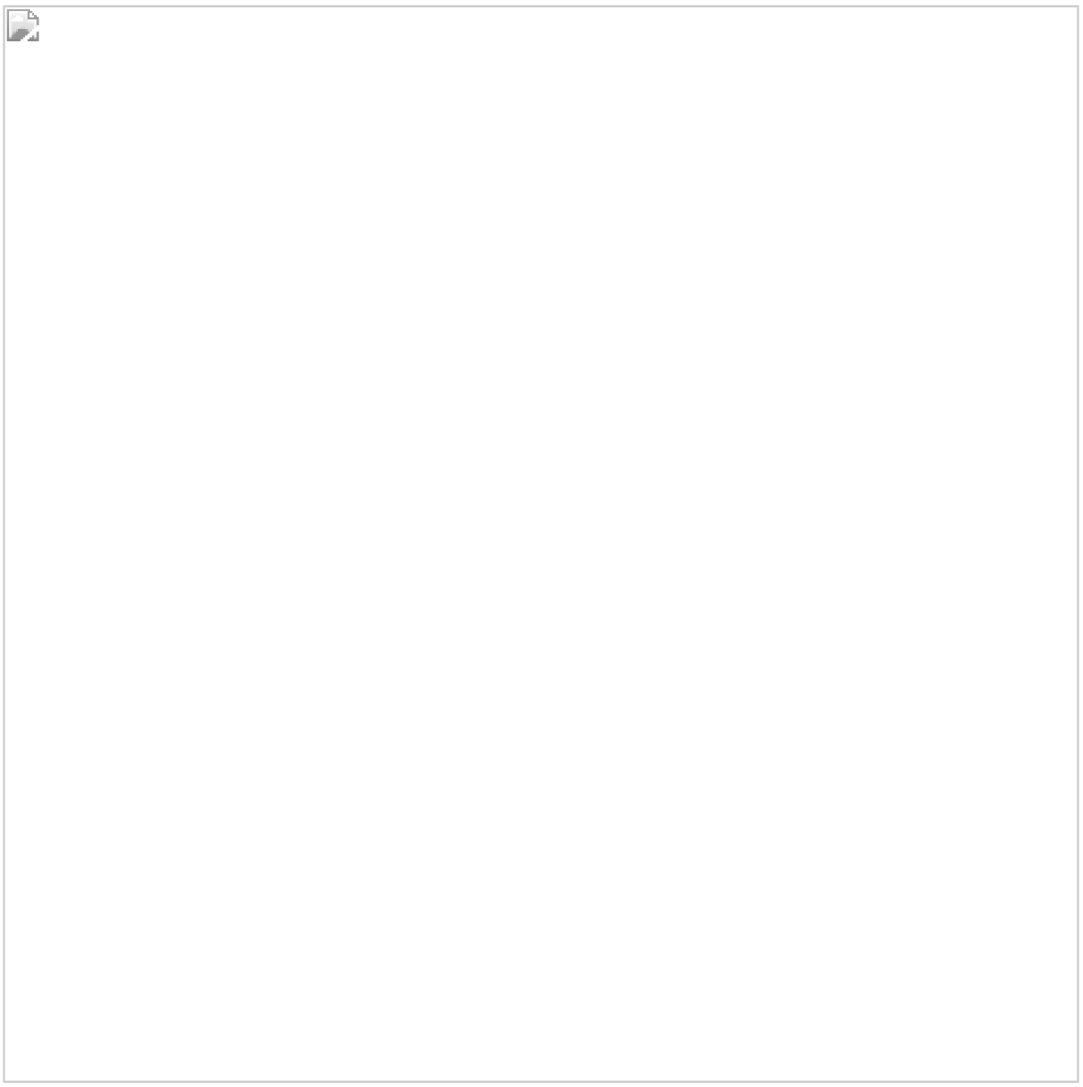
So the queen was good, Leontes was wrong, and no heir would come till what was lost was found.

"There is no truth at all i' th' oracle," said Leontes. At once word came that Mamillius, sick with worry for his mother, had died.

The queen fainted. At last Leontes saw what he had done. Paulina said Hermione was dead. He promised to visit their grave every day.

TALK ABOUT IT

This is the saddest part of the story. What would you like to say, or do, when something sad happens in a story?



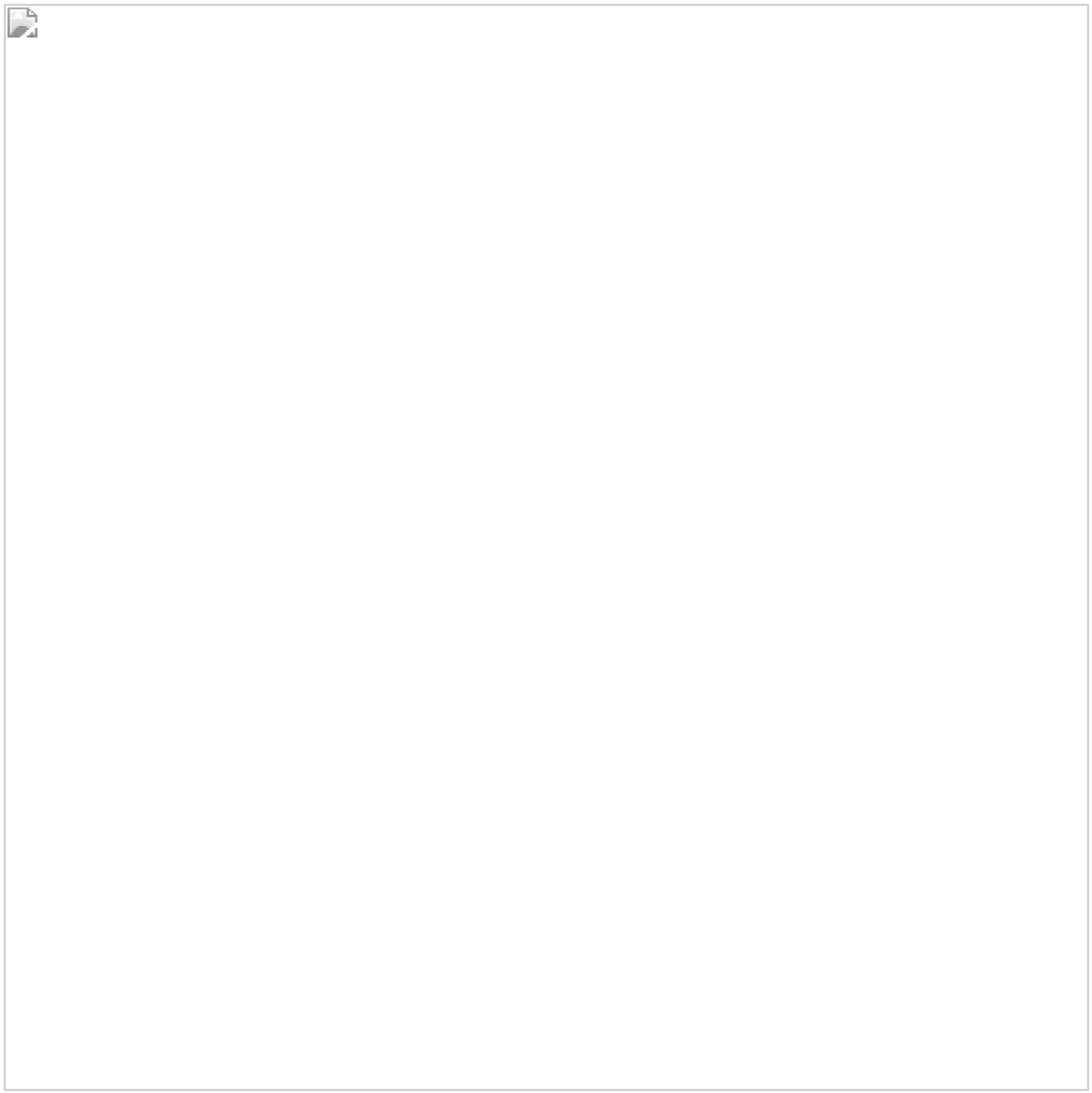
Think about it

1. What did the oracle say about Queen Hermione?

- ○ That she was good
- ○ That she was lost
- ○ That she was a spy

2. Mamillius died, and Leontes was very sorry. Who do you think we should tell when we are very sad?

The Shore of Bohemia



Antigonus sailed away across the sea with the baby. A storm was rising when his ship came to the shore of Bohemia.

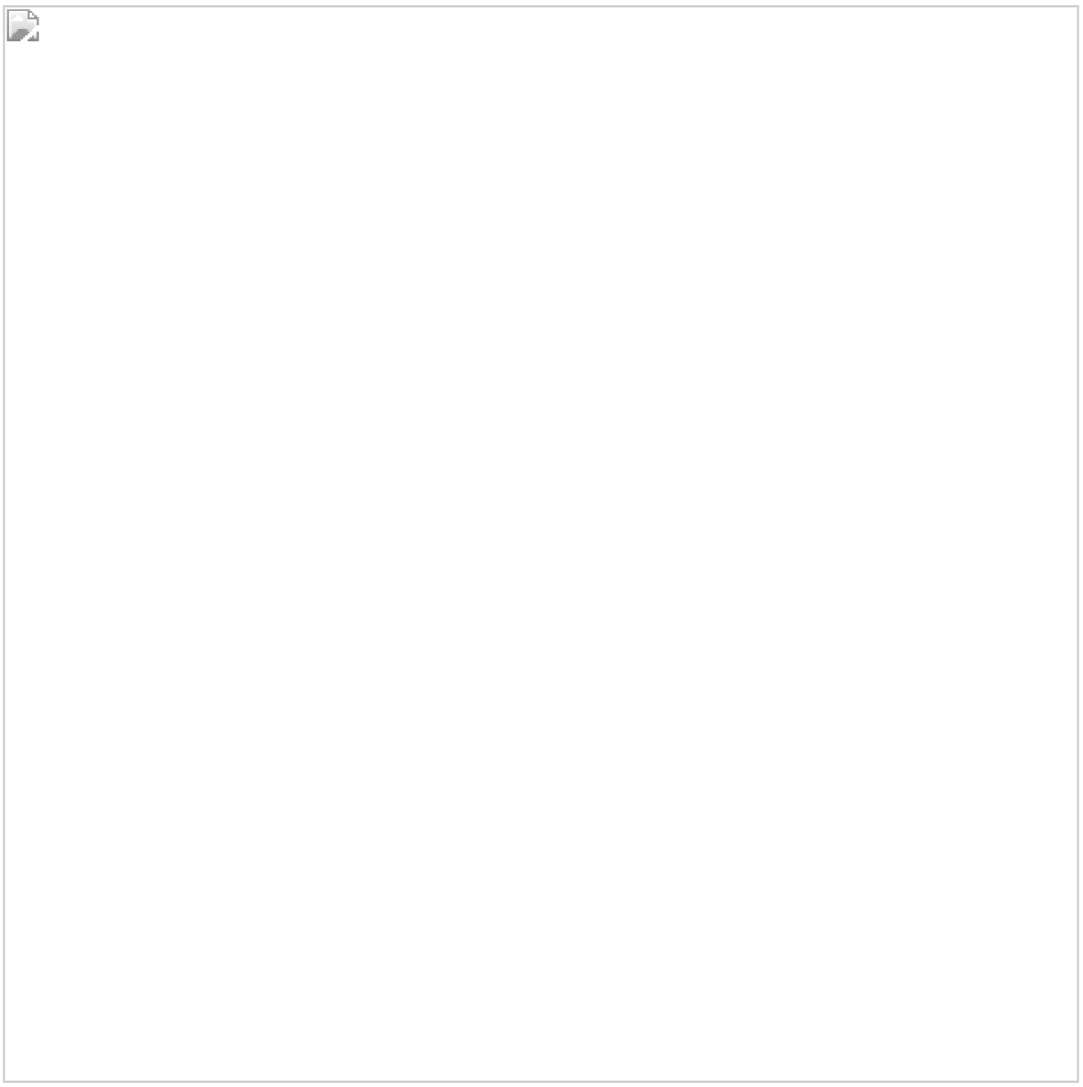
He laid her down on the ground with a bundle of things that belonged to her. He said her name would be Perdita, a name that means lost.

The sky was growing dark and wild. The play has one famous line about what happened next: “Exit, pursued by a bear.” That means Antigonus ran off, and a bear was after him.

Antigonus never came home again.

TALK ABOUT IT

The baby was left all alone. What do you think she needed most right then?

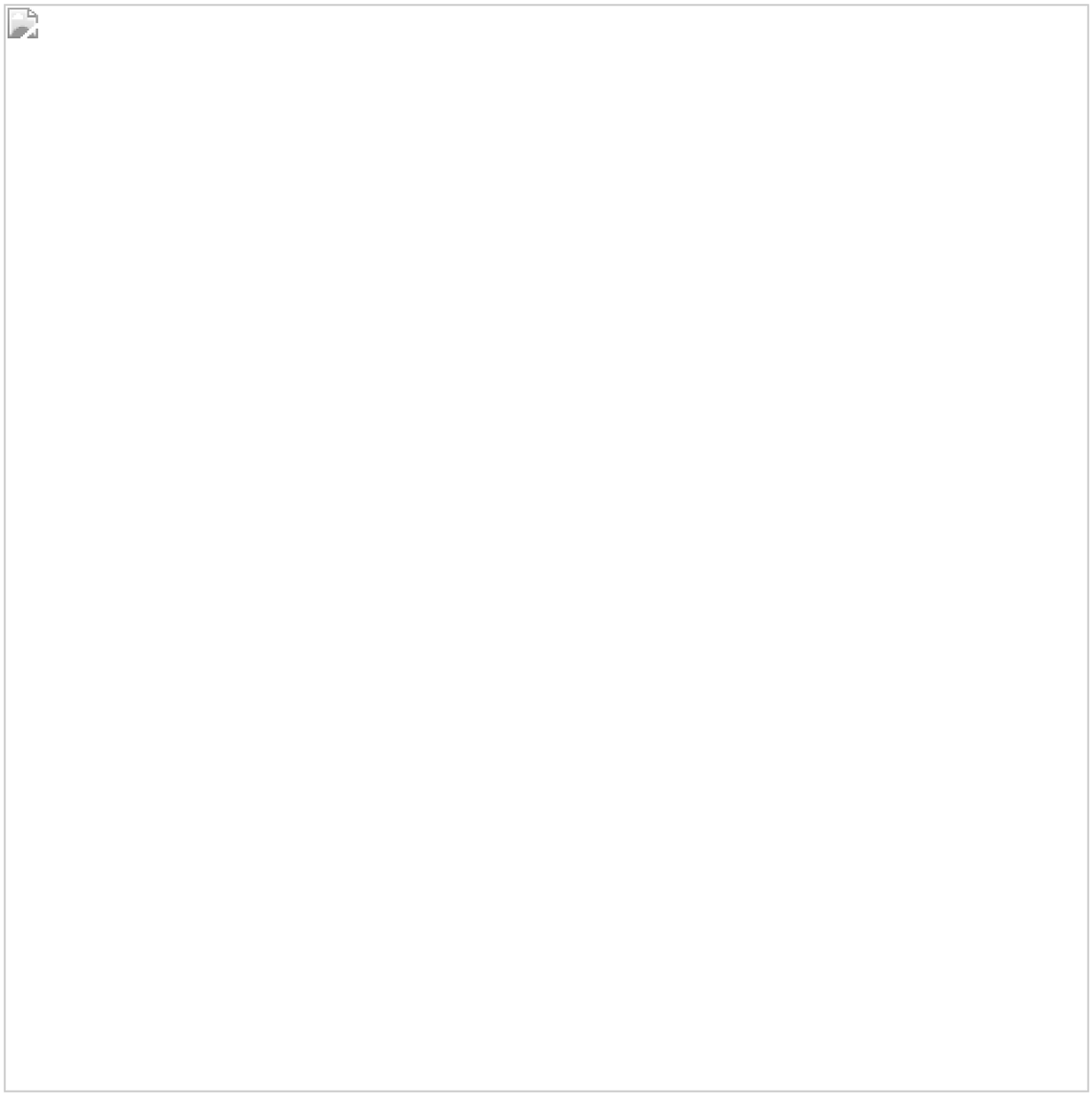


Think about it

1. What was the baby's name?

- ○ Perdita
- ○ Paulina
- ○ Hermione

Found



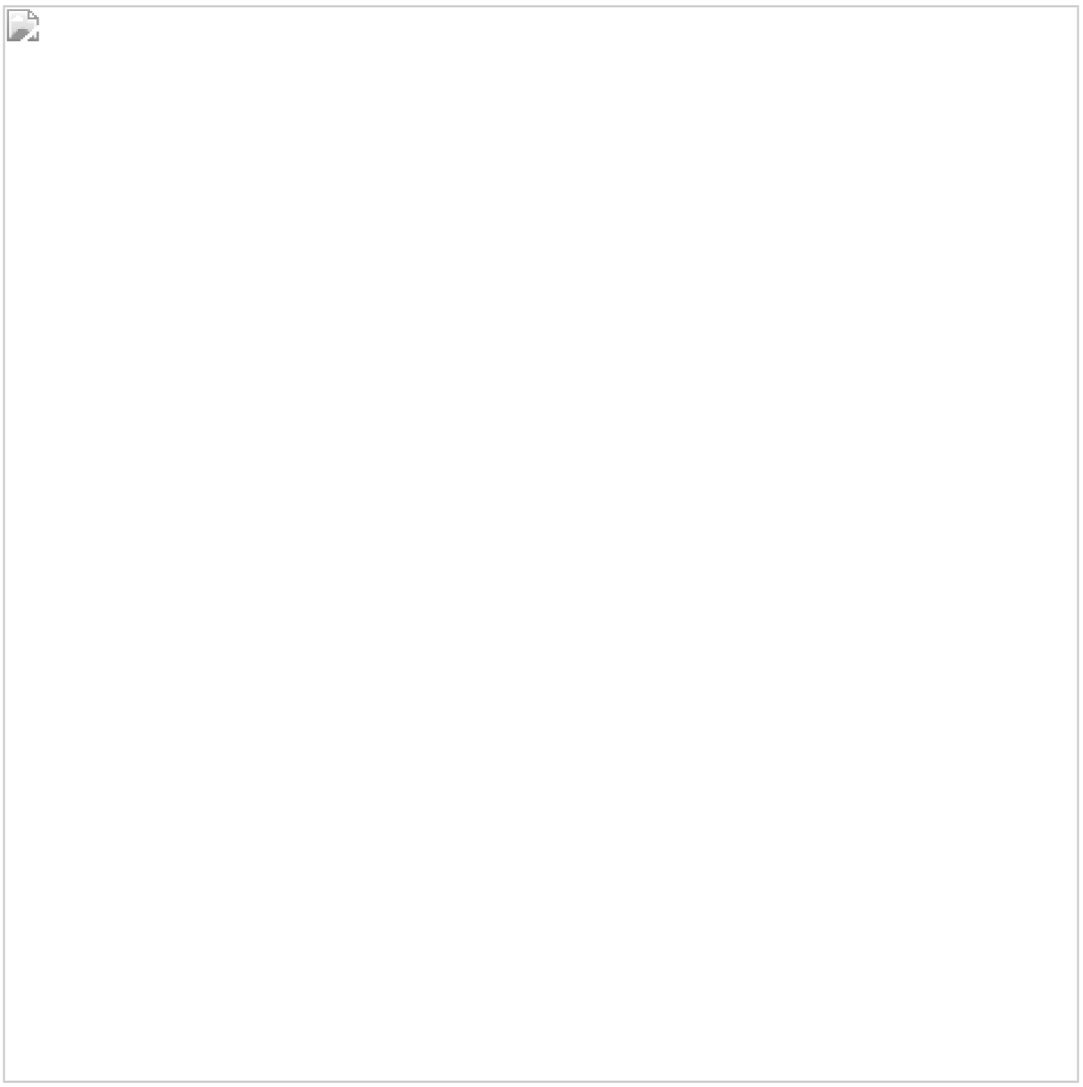
An old shepherd was out on the hills looking for a lost sheep. Instead he found a baby.

He took her home to his own house. He and his son, who was a kind, funny young man, brought her up as their own. In the bundle they found some gold, too, and the old shepherd was able to take good care of her.

Then the play does something clever. Time himself steps out and says that sixteen years will go by. The baby grew up, and the king of Sicilia never stopped being sorry.

TALK ABOUT IT

The shepherd found a baby while he was looking for a sheep. Have you ever found something you were not looking for?

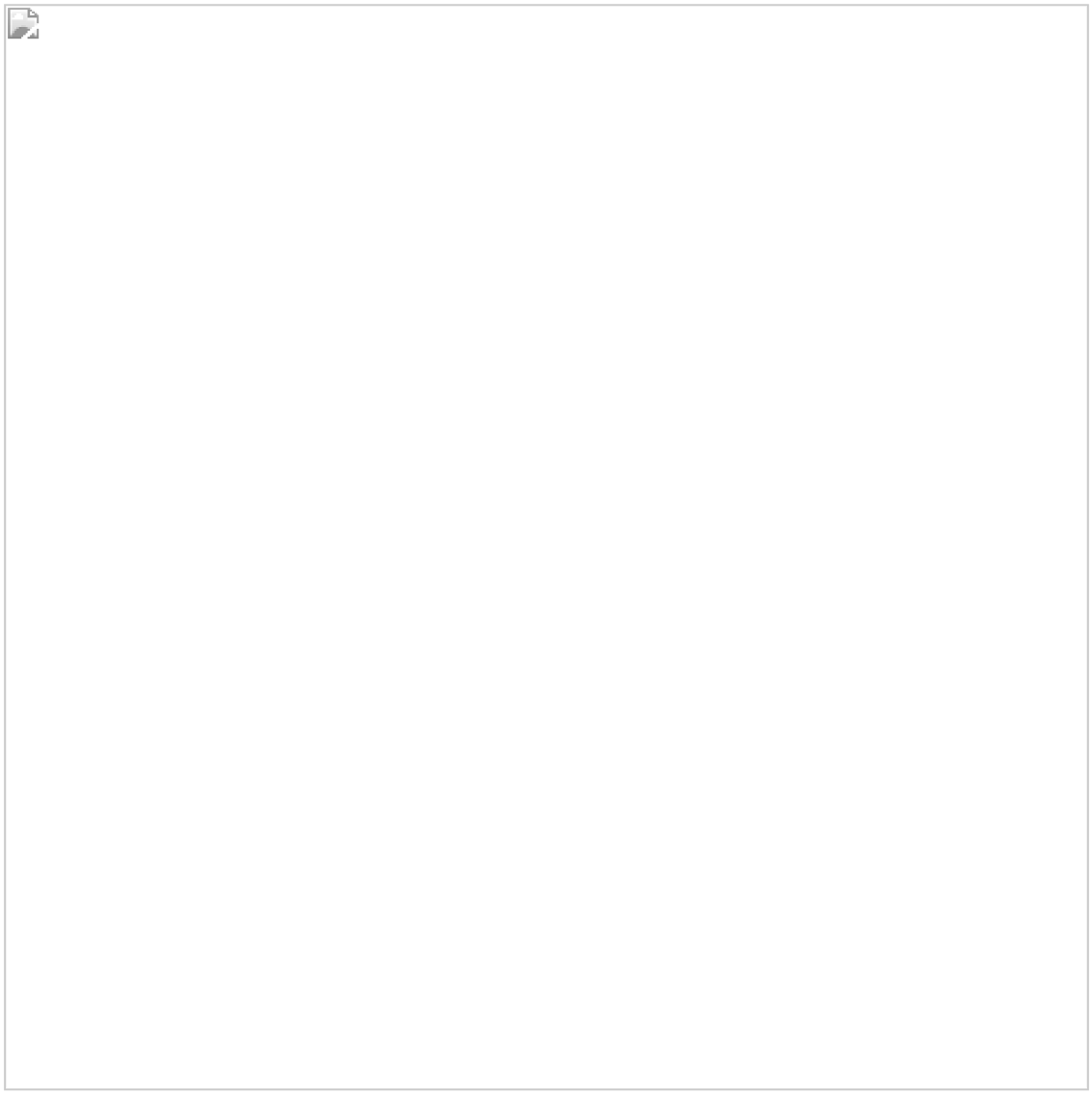


Think about it

1. Who found the baby?

- ○ A fisherman
- ○ A shepherd
- ○ A king

The Peddler and the Sheep-Shearing



Sixteen years later, Perdita was a young woman. She did not know she was a princess. She thought the old shepherd was her father.

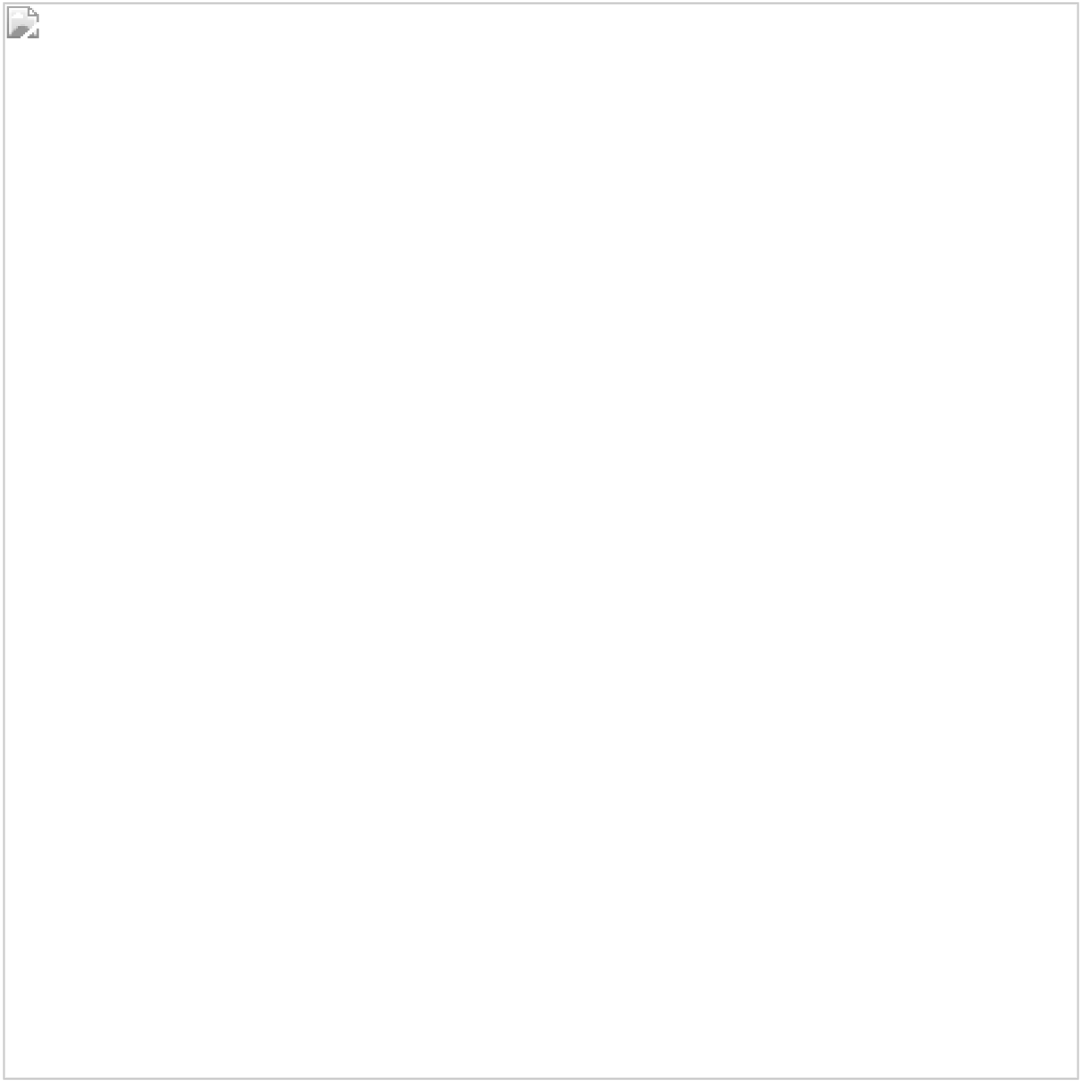
A prince named Florizel, the son of King Polixenes, had met her, and the two of them had fallen in love.

The countryside was full of a cheerful, tricky peddler named Autolycus. He sang songs and sold ribbons, and he picked pockets. He cheated the shepherd's son out of his money.

It was the day of the sheep-shearing feast, and everyone was dancing.

TALK ABOUT IT

Autolycus tricked people so that he could get what he wanted. How do you think the people he tricked felt?

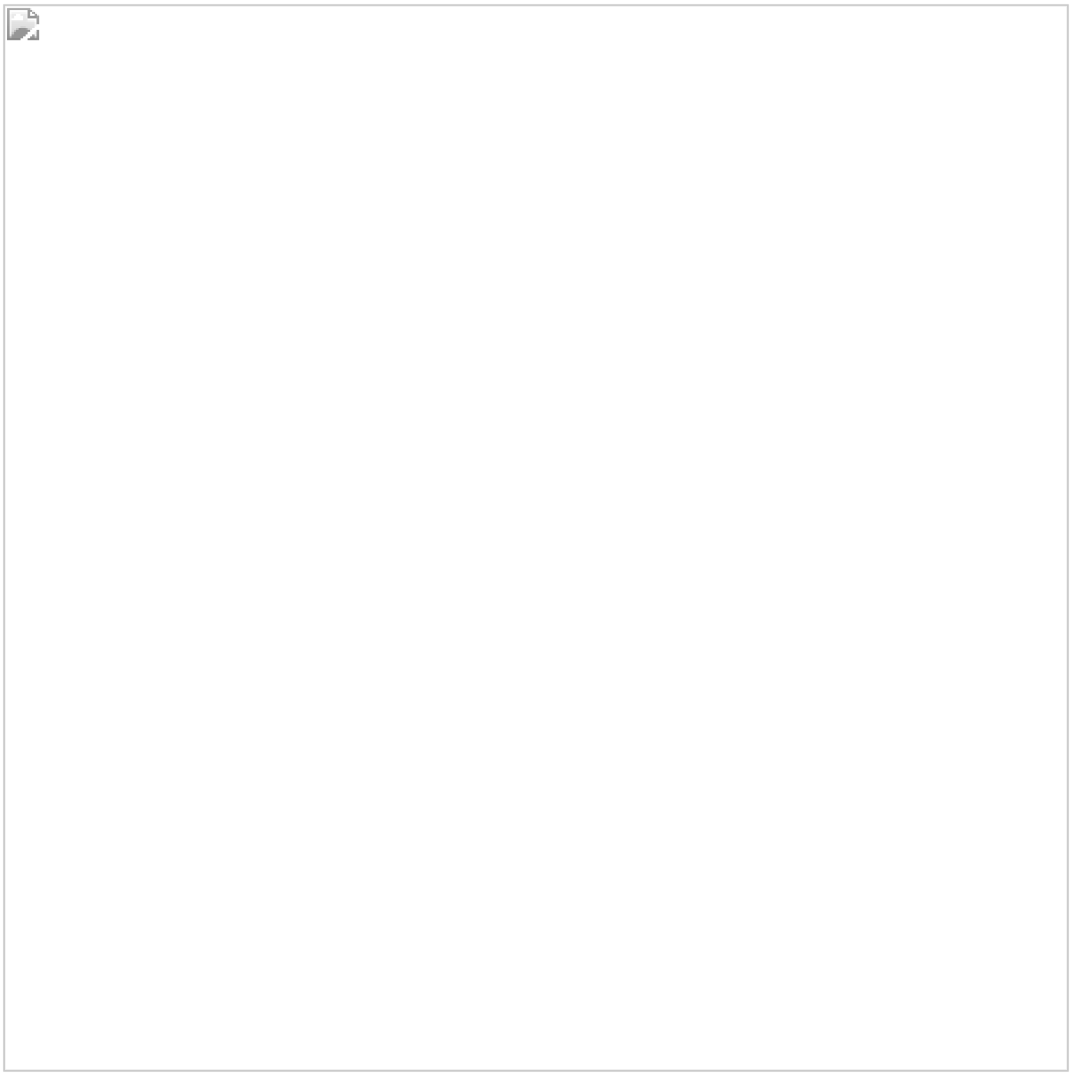


Think about it

1. Who was in love with Perdita?

- ○ Prince Florizel
- ○ Autolycus
- ○ Camillo

Flowers at the Feast



At the feast Perdita gave two older strangers “rosemary and rue; these keep seeming and savour all the winter long.”

The strangers were really King Polixenes and Camillo, in disguise. Right in front of them, Florizel and Perdita promised themselves to each other.

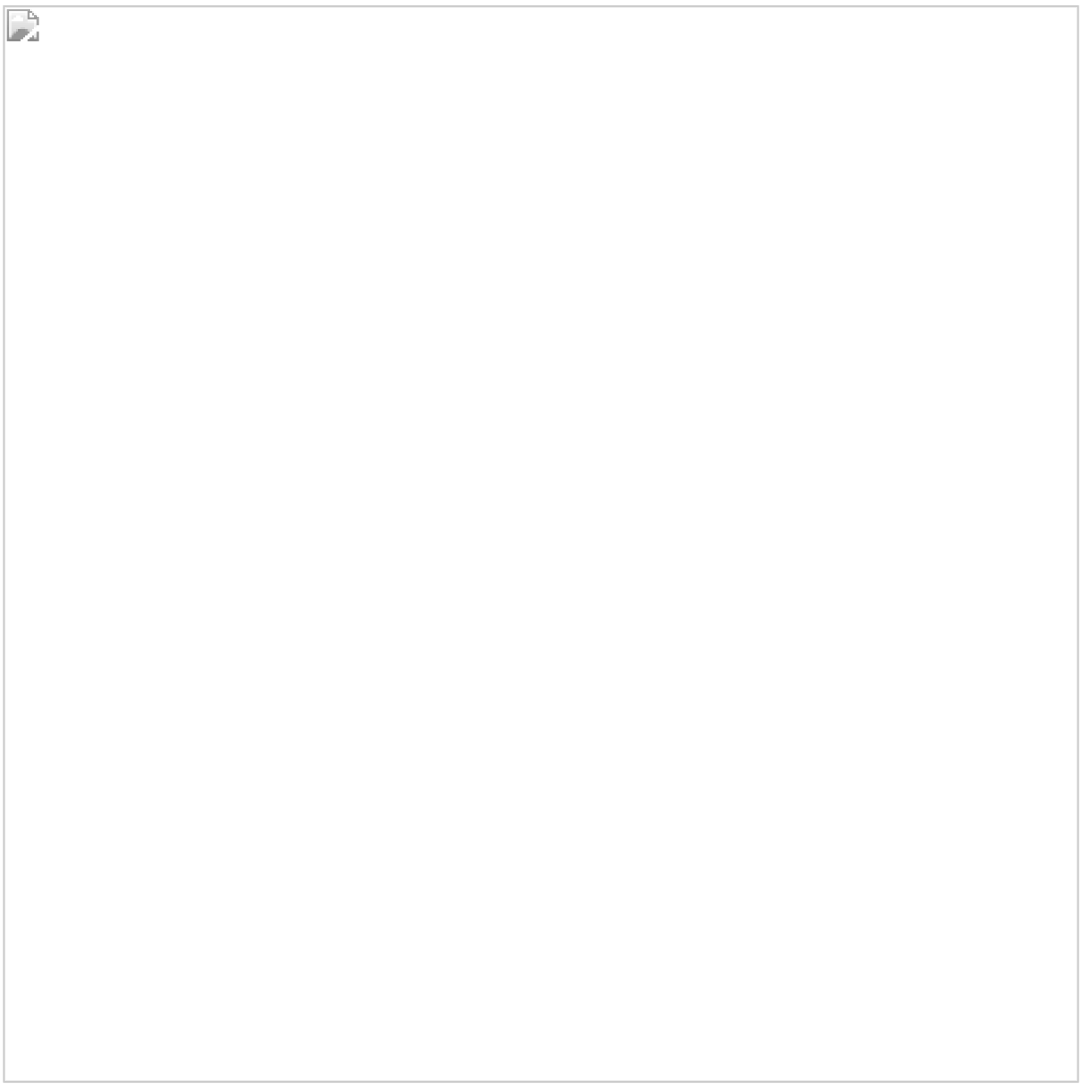
Polixenes threw off his disguise in anger. His son marry a shepherd’s daughter? He would not allow it.

Perdita was brave. “The selfsame sun that shines upon his court hides not his visage from our cottage,” she said. The same sun shines on palace and cottage. And Florizel said that if he could not have her, he would not be his father’s son either.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perdita said the same sun shines on kings and on shepherds. What do you think she meant?

Flowers at the Feast · another picture

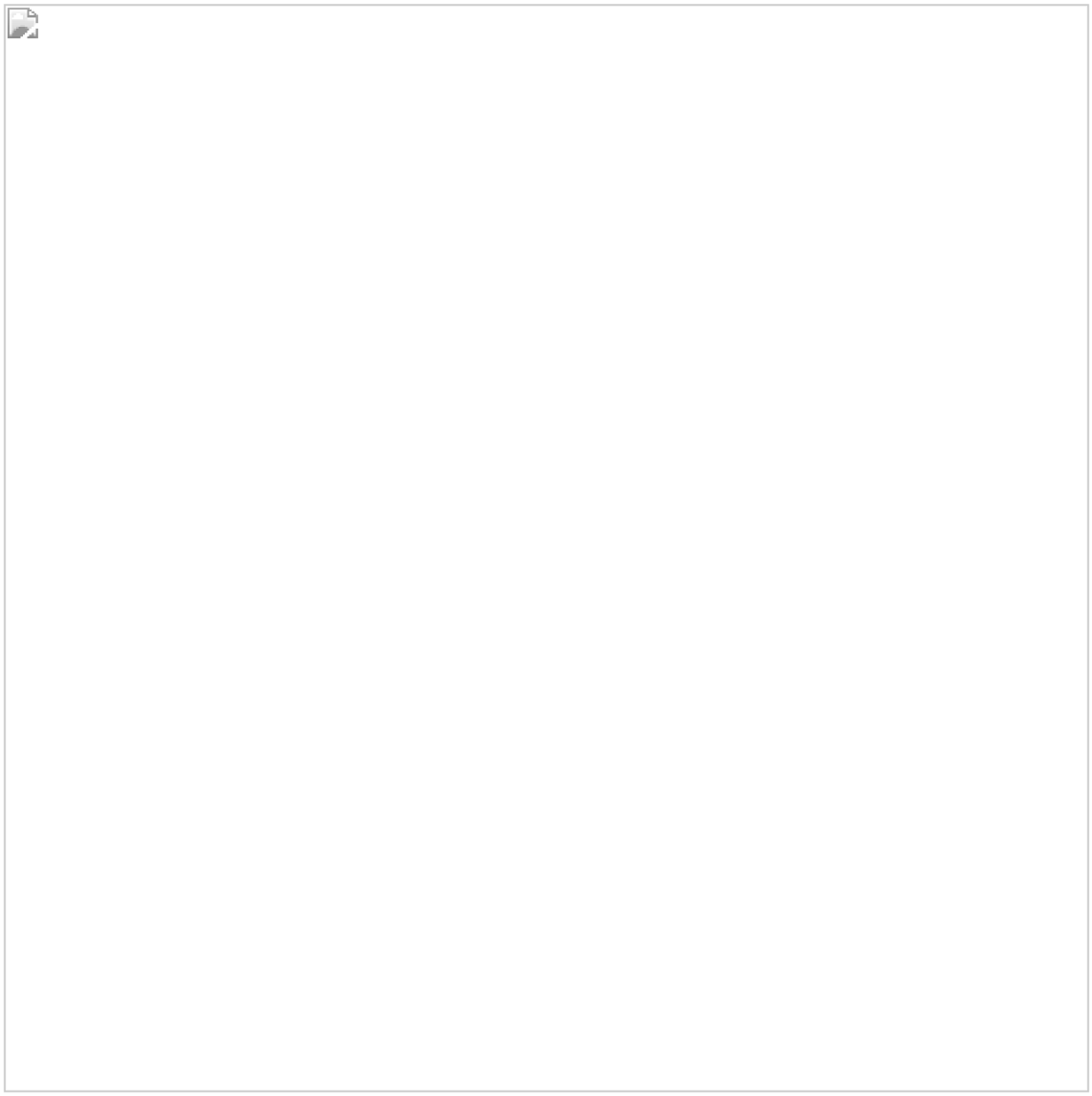


Think about it

1. Who were the two strangers at the feast?

- ○ Two shepherds
- ○ Polixenes and Camillo in disguise
- ○ Two peddlers

Back to Sicilia



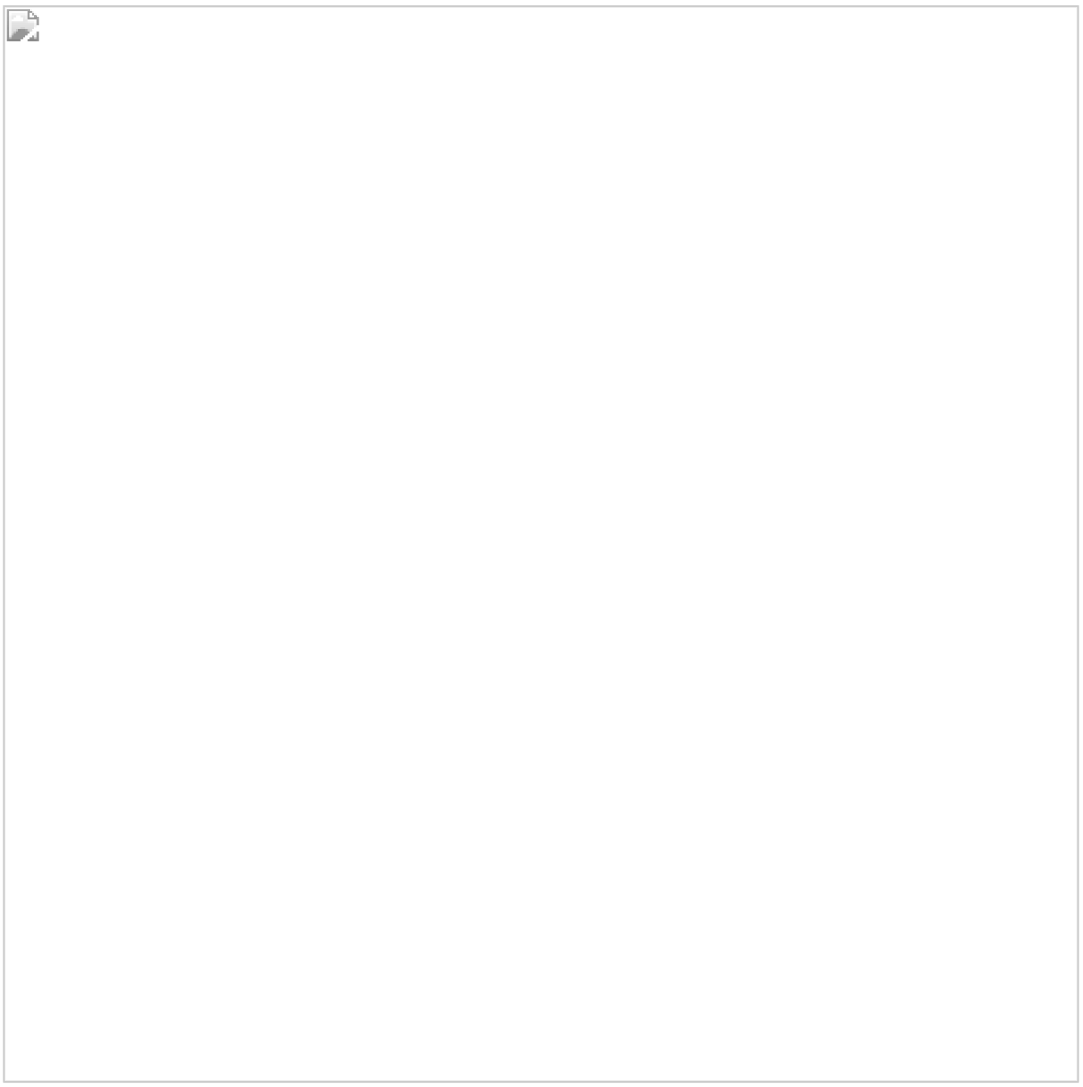
Camillo had been away from Sicilia for sixteen years, and he longed to see it again. He had a plan. He helped Florizel and Perdita sail to the court of King Leontes, and then he set off to follow them with Polixenes.

The shepherd and his son went along, bringing the baby's bundle with them. In Sicilia, everything the shepherd had kept was shown, and everyone could see that Perdita was Leontes's lost daughter.

Leontes cried out: "O, thy mother, thy mother!" He had waited sixteen years. He had been sorry every day, and now at last he saw his daughter.

TALK ABOUT IT

Leontes waited sixteen years to see his daughter. What would you want to say to somebody you had waited that long for?

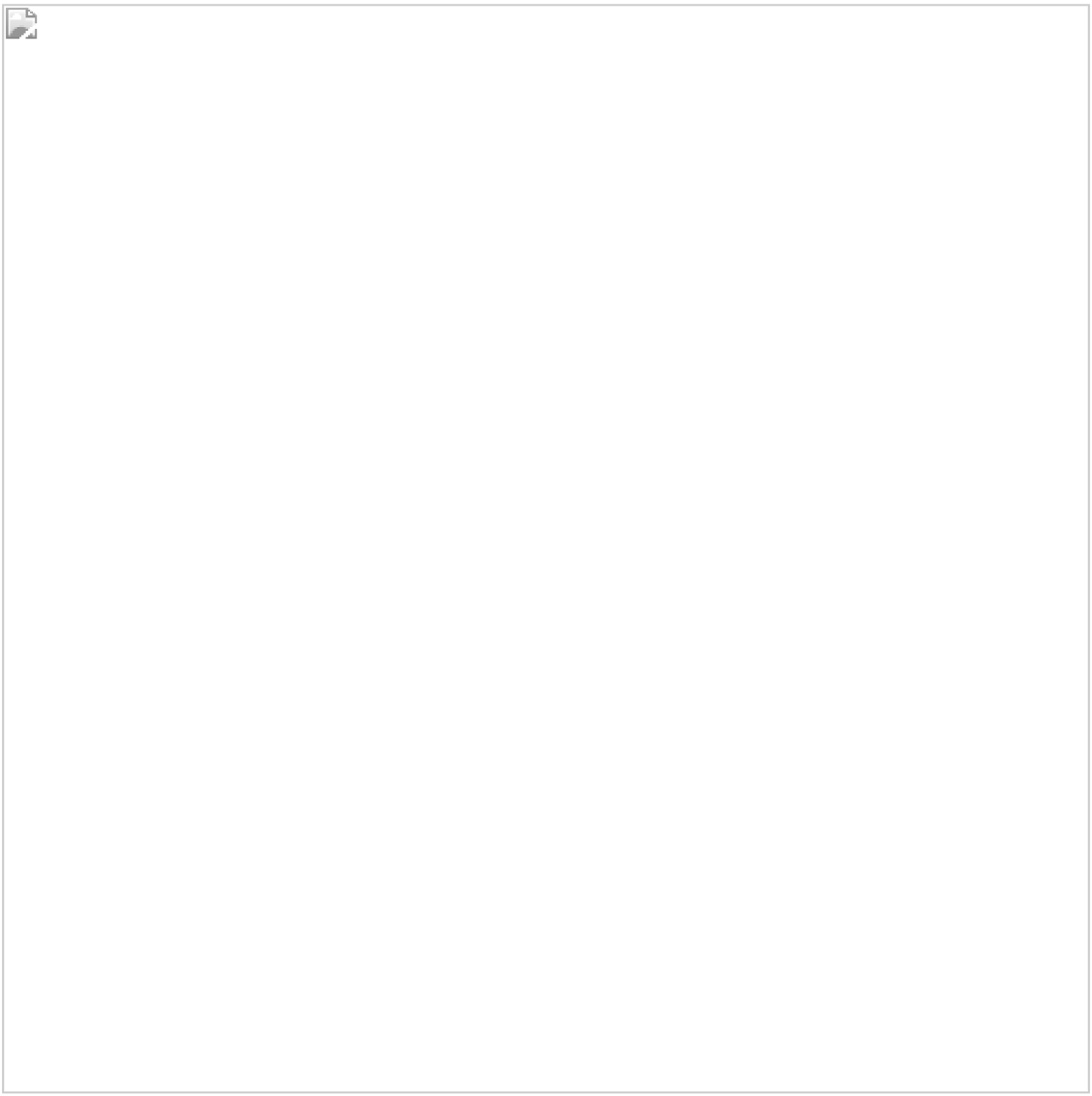


Think about it

1. Who was found to be Leontes's daughter?

- ○ Perdita
- ○ Paulina
- ○ Dorcas

The Statue



Paulina had kept a secret all that time. She invited them all to see a statue of Queen Hermione. It looked so lifelike that it seemed to be breathing.

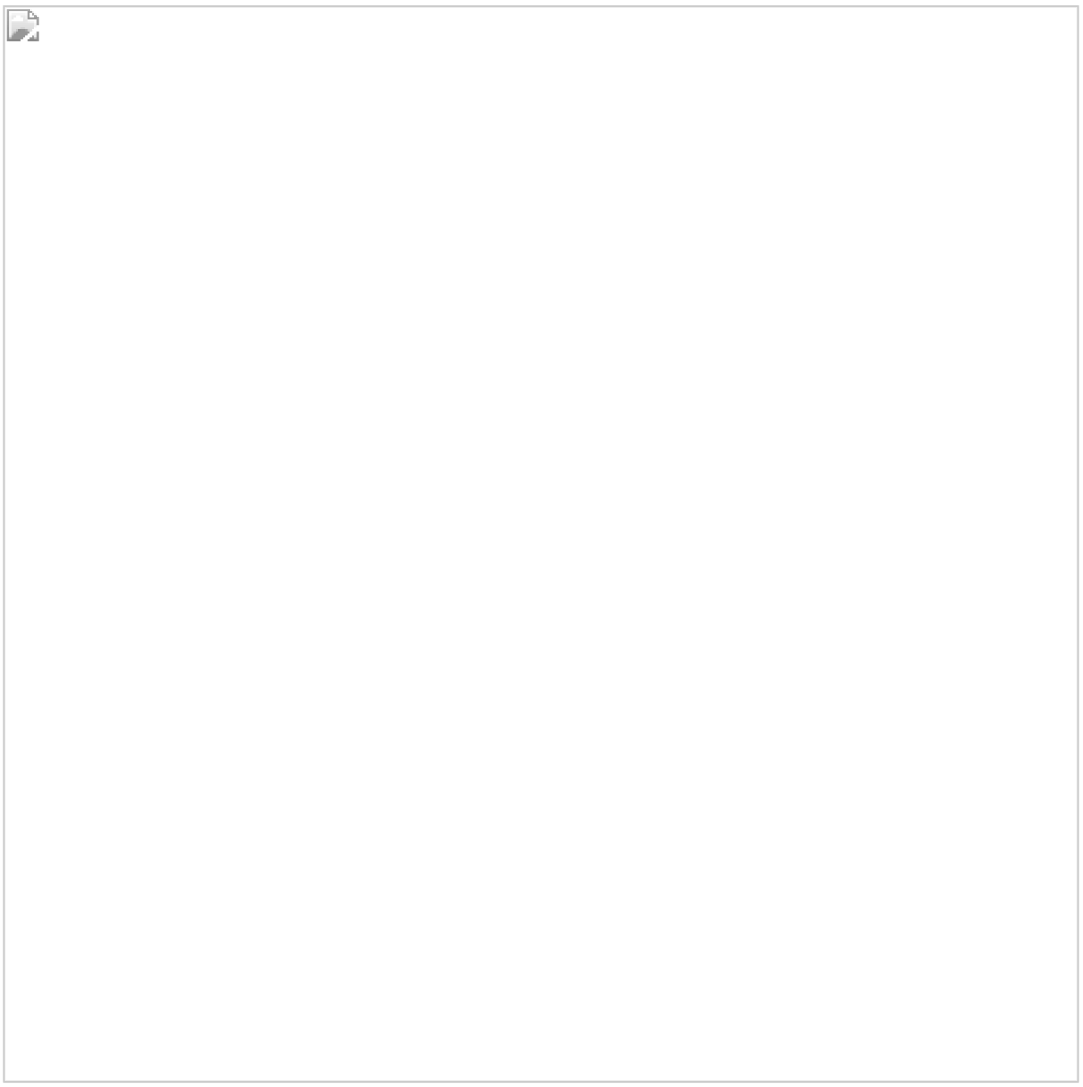
Paulina said, “It is requir’d you do awake your faith.” She called for music. “Music, awake her: strike!” she said. “’Tis time; descend; be stone no more.”

The statue moved. Leontes touched her hand and said, “O, she’s warm!” It was Queen Hermione. She was alive. Paulina had hidden her all those years.

Hermione looked down at her daughter and said, “You gods, look down, and from your sacred vials pour your graces upon my daughter’s head!”

TALK ABOUT IT

Everyone had to wait quietly and believe before the statue moved. What do you think it was like to wait?

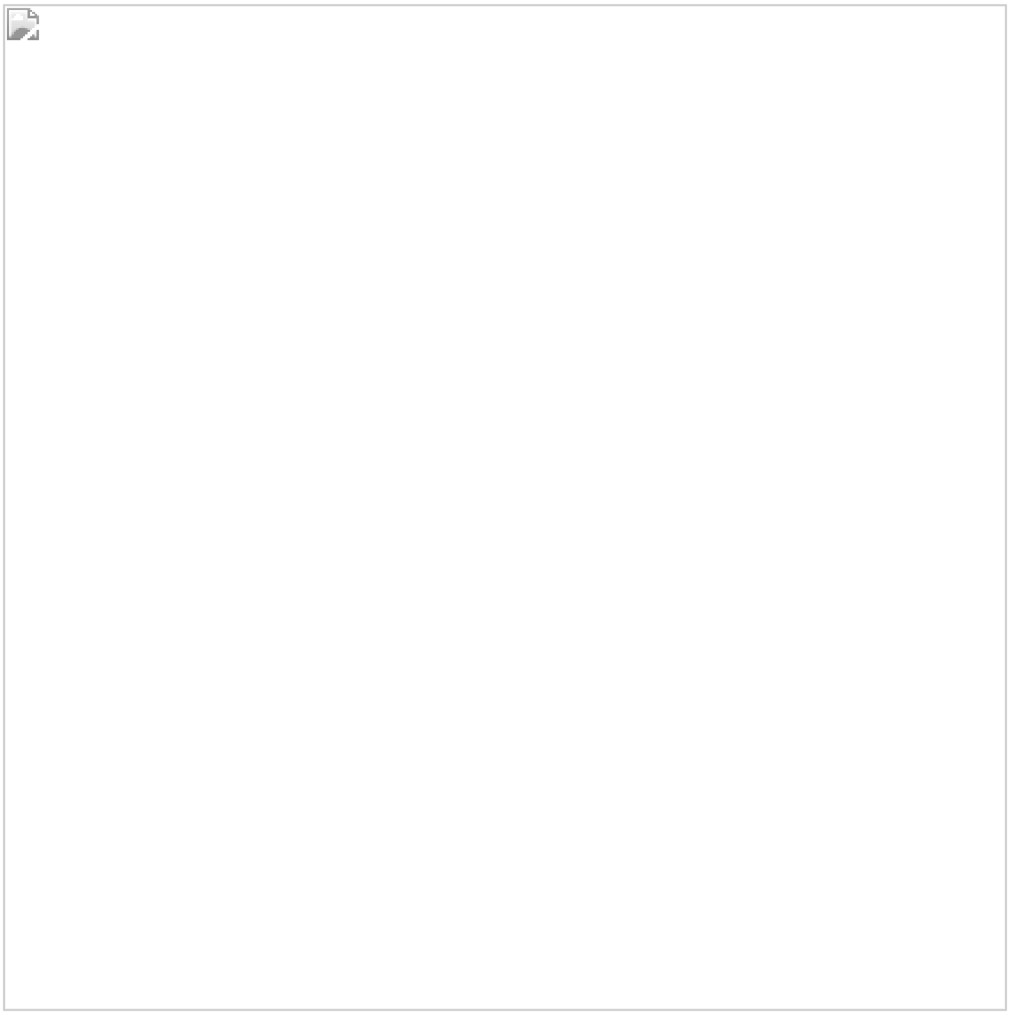


Think about it

1. What was the statue really?

- ○ Queen Hermione, alive
- ○ A new queen
- ○ A stone angel

Together Again



Everyone cried and laughed at once. Leontes asked Hermione and Polixenes to forgive him, and the two old friends were friends again.

Florizel and Perdita would be married, and both kings were glad.

Leontes gave Paulina a good husband too: “Come, Camillo, and take her by the hand.”

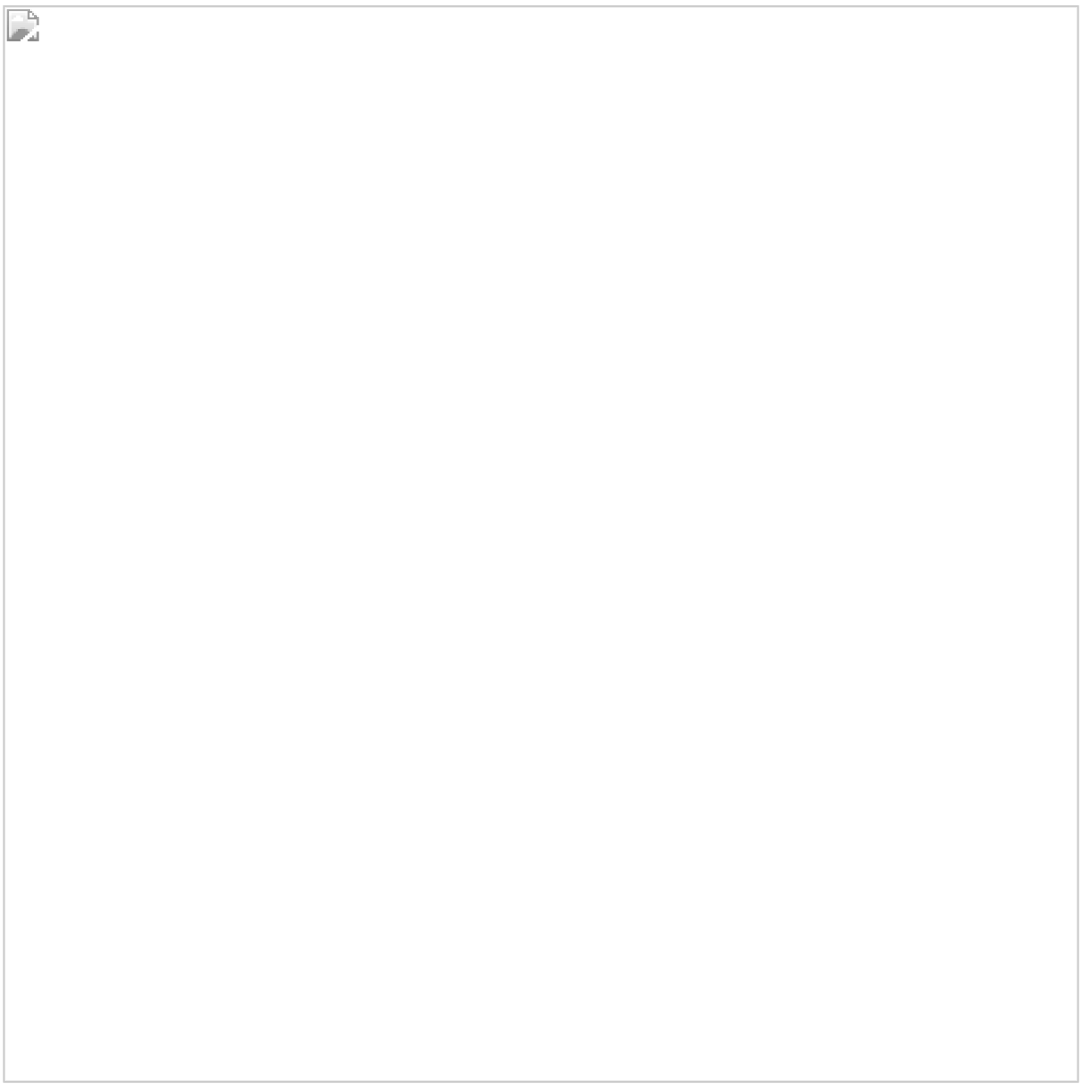
Mamillius was not there, and the play does not pretend he was. Paulina had remembered him, the “Jewel of children,” who would have been just Florizel’s age. But the rest of the family had been found.

Then they all went off to tell each other everything that had happened in the long years apart.

TALK ABOUT IT

Almost everybody in this story was lost for a while, and most of them were found. What do you think it was like to be found?

Together Again · another picture



Think about it

1. Who did Leontes give to Camillo?

- ○ Paulina
- ○ Perdita
- ○ Hermione

2. In this story, a king was sorry for sixteen years. What do you think helped the people forgive him?

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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