

# The Winter's Tale

by William Shakespeare

Act 4, sc. 1 (line 1 - Verse)

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## Time

I, that please some, try all, both joy and terror  
Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error,  
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,  
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime  
To me or my swift passage, that I slide  
O'er sixteen years and leave the growth untried  
Of that wide gap, since it is in my power  
To o'erthrow law and in one self-born hour  
To plant and o'erwhelm custom. Let me pass  
The same I am, ere ancient'st order was  
Or what is now received: I witness to  
The times that brought them in; so shall I do  
To the freshest things now reigning and make stale  
The glistering of this present, as my tale  
Now seems to it. Your patience this allowing,  
I turn my glass and give my scene such growing  
As you had slept between: Leontes leaving,  
The effects of his fond jealousies so grieving  
That he shuts up himself, imagine me,  
Gentle spectators, that I now may be  
In fair Bohemia, and remember well,  
I mentioned a son o' the king's, which Florizel  
I now name to you; and with speed so pace

To speak of Perdita, now grown in grace  
Equal with wondering: what of her ensues  
I list not prophecy; but let Time's news  
Be known when 'tis brought forth. A shepherd's daughter,  
And what to her adheres, which follows after,  
Is the argument of Time. Of this allow,  
If ever you have spent time worse ere now;  
If never, yet that Time himself doth say  
He wishes earnestly you never may.