Investigate! The Winter’s Tale: Act II

♥ Act II, Scene i:
  ➢ Look back over Act I scene ii and this scene – the two scenes in which Mamillius appears
    • What character has Shakespeare established for him?
    • Why is it important for the audience to remember him with affection, and as an innocent?
  ➢ Read again the speeches of Leontes and Hermione, from Leontes ‘You my lords, Look on her’ to Hermione’s exit
    • How do Shakespeare’s language choices reflect Leontes’ violence and Hermione’s dignity?
  ➢ Antigonus is to have a crucial, though unwilling, role in the outcome of events
    • What do you make of his character in this scene?
    • How does Shakespeare present him, and by what means?
    • Consider how an actor might portray him.

♥ Act II, Scene ii:
  ➢ This scene introduces the audience to Paulina, who is to play a key role in the play.
  ➢ What characteristics of Paulina are evident in this scene?
  ➢ Why might Shakespeare have waited until Act II to introduce her, when she could presumably have appeared with Hermione in Act I, scene ii?

♥ Act II, Scene iii:
  ➢ Shakespeare uses juxtaposition to great effect in the structure of the scene
    • Look at the arrival of Paulina and of the news of Cleomenes and Dion
      ▪ How do these change the mood and the course of the action?
    • Begin to make a list of other significant moments of juxtaposition in the structure of the play
      ▪ See also Texts in detail > The Winter’s Tale > The structure of the play: Juxtaposition.
    • Make a list of key words used by Paulina in this scene (e.g. honour, honest, good, innocent)
      • Compare them with Leontes’ violent and abusive vocabulary.