

Love in The Winter's Tale

Love Itself - the most potent force in the play, as it heals and is shown in familial, brotherly and romantic ways. It conveys forgiveness

Florizel and Perdita

- Their love mirrors the peaceful and idyllic pastures around them
- Young, innocent first love and devotion symbolises spring, and therefore new beginnings and regeneration (love thaws the heartbreak of winter) – connected with Perdita and flowers
- Shakespeare is showing that unconditional love is a uniting, all-inclusive force that eventually heals

Leontes and Hermione

- Leontes destructive rage is caused by jealousy, stemming from his love for Hermione – the idea that she would choose another destroys him, and later he is destroyed again when he realises he was wrong
- Hermione still loves Leontes despite his accusations and waits for him: “I must be patient till the heavens look with an aspect more favourable”
- Shakespeare uses them to illustrate the contrasting nature of love – destructive/forgiving
- Hermione represents forgiveness and Leontes destruction
- Without Leontes love for Hermione and his care for Polixenes, then the conflict would not have occurred – it's because he cares so much that jealousy consumes him

Polixenes and Florizel

- Controlling, protective love: “...worthy enough a herdsman” – rejects idea of his son marrying a peasant, is disappointed more than angry
- Shakespeare shows the influence love has over social classes – causes Florizel and Perdita to defy notions
- Polixenes opposes Perdita at first but is trying to do what is best for his son
- Does not learn from Leontes mistakes with his children

Mamillius

- Gets ill around the same time as his mother, who wanes during her trial
- Dies of a wasting sickness showing that not even love can save him from Leontes rage, though it is an indirect death

Leontes and Polixenes

- Loyalty and friendship, mirrors Hermione's friendship with Paulina
- “we were as twinned lambs” – deep trust broken by Leontes addled mind, despite his heart and jealousy twists his views of reality and what he actually feels