

Letter Writing

In the play Paulina goes to the prison where Hermione is and takes the baby she has just given birth to. Paulina then shows the baby to King Leontes because she thinks that seeing the child will change his mind.

But Leontes still believes Hermione has had an affair and that the child's father is Polixenes, the King of Bohemia. Leontes orders Antigonus to take the baby away and abandon it in 'some desert place'.

Antigonus sails on a ship to Bohemia, thinking that if the child is the result of an affair between Hermione and Polixenes, it will be the best place to leave the baby. In a dream Antigonus sees Hermione and she asks him to call the child Perdita. He leaves the child wrapped in a cloak with a box that contains gold coins, a necklace belonging to her mother, and **a letter written by Antigonus**.



The Winter's Tale, Directed by David Farr, 2009
Photo by Alessandro Evangelista © RSC

ACTIVITY

Imagine that you are Antigonus; what would you write in the letter and why?

Would the letter be addressed to Perdita, or to the person who might find the baby? What would you want them to know?

How much would you tell the reader about the baby's mother and father, and why she has been left? Perdita does not find out who her mother and father are until the end of the play; was the information in the letter, or not...you decide!

Adapting the task:

- Draw your letter as a picture
- Say your letter aloud instead of writing it down