Winter's Tale: Audition Side, Mamillius

ACT II

SCENE I. A room in LEONTES' palace.

Enter HERMIONE, MAMILLIUS, and Ladies

HERMIONE
Take the boy to you: he so troubles me,
'Tis past enduring.

First Lady
Come, my gracious lord,
Shall I be your playfellow?

MAMILLIUS
No, I'll none of you.

First Lady
Why, my sweet lord?

MAMILLIUS
You'll kiss me hard and speak to me as if
I were a baby still. I love you better.

Second Lady
And why so, my lord?

MAMILLIUS
Not for because
Your brows are blacker; yet black brows, they say,
Become some women best, so that there be not

Too much hair there, but in a semicircle
Or a half-moon made with a pen.

Second Lady
Who taught you this?

MAMILLIUS
I learnt it out of women's faces. Pray now,
What colour are your eyebrows?

First Lady
Blue, my lord.

MAMILLIUS
Nay, that's a mock: I have seen a lady's nose
That has been blue, but not her eyebrows.

First Lady
Hark ye;
The queen your mother rounds apace: we shall
Present our services to a fine new prince
One of these days; and then you'ld wanton with us,
If we would have you.

HERMIONE
What wisdom stirs amongst you? Come, sir, now
I am for you again: pray you, sit by us,
And tell 's a tale.

MAMILLIUS
Merry or sad shall't be?

HERMIONE
As merry as you will.

MAMILLIUS
A sad tale's best for winter: I have one
Of sprites and goblins.

HERMIONE

Let's have that, good sir.
Come on, sit down: come on, and do your best
To fright me with your sprites; you're powerful at it.

MAMILLIUS
There was a man—

HERMIONE
Nay, come, sit down; then on.

MAMILLIUS
Dwelt by a churchyard: I will tell it softly;
Yond crickets shall not hear it.

HERMIONE
Come on, then,
And give't me in mine ear.