

## STORY FOUR *Deep Dark Waves*

In *The Winter's Tale*, King Leontes of Sicilia unjustly accuses his wife, Hermione, of infidelity and throws her in prison where she gives birth to Perdita. Leontes orders the baby taken away and abandoned. He goes into mourning after his son, Mamillius, dies of heartbreak, Hermione is reported dead, and an oracle tells him Hermione was innocent. Sixteen years later Perdita is found and a statue of Hermione comes to life. The family—minus one son—reunites. *Deep Dark Waves* begins sixteen years after Sona's husband Brian took their newborn daughter, Nicole, and disappeared. Through narrative and Sona's own testimony at a fundraiser for women's shelters, we learn of the years that led up to that event and the life that Sona has constructed for herself since.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

*If you're into Shakespeare*

1. *The Winter's Tale* ends by giving its characters the promise of forgiveness and a fresh start. To what extent is that the case with *Deep Dark Waves*?
2. Hermione's innocence is never in doubt. What about Sona's?
3. Is the statue of Hermione real or an illusion? Is the image Sona presents to the women at the fundraising breakfast real or an illusion? Why or why not?
4. Why might Hermione want to reconcile with Leontes? Why might Sona consider reconciling with Brian?

*If you're not*

1. How does your impression of Brian change as the story progresses? Why do you think he took Nicole?
2. Sona tells much of the story in her own words to an audience. How well do we get to know her? How well does she know herself? Characterize the tone of her talk: is it strategic or open and engaging?
3. What is the role of the woman in the black pantsuit at the breakfast?
4. Why do you suppose Sona has difficulty remembering her son's name?
5. By the end of the story, to what extent do you have sympathy for Sona and Brian or view them as villains?
6. What does the hourglass symbolize in *Deep Dark Waves*? Why did receiving it make Sona feel both honoured and violated?
7. Why might Sona consider reconciling with Brian?
8. How does *Deep Dark Waves* challenge your view of domestic abuse?