

TIME FLIES!



NOW, I KNOW THAT, WHEN YOU STARTED READING THIS, NOBODY WARNED YOU THAT THERE'D BE TIME TRAVEL INVOLVED. HOWEVER, IF YOU WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, YOU ARE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO TRUST ME AND STEP INTO THIS TOP-OF-THE-RANGE ELIZABETHAN TIME MACHINE. THE REASON WE HAVE TO GET INTO THIS NOT VERY SAFE LOOKING MACHINE IS THAT WE NEED TO JOURNEY **SIXTEEN YEARS** INTO THIS STORY'S FUTURE! THAT'S RIGHT - WE ARE ABOUT TO SKIP A WHOLE **SIXTEEN YEARS**! GET IN, SHUT THE DOOR AND LET'S HAVE A LOOK THROUGH THE WINDSCREEN AS WE START THE ENGINE, HOLD TIGHT!!!



LEONTES

HERE'S LEONTES SHUTTING HIMSELF AWAY IN HIS CASTLE OUT OF SHAME AND GRIEF - PAULINA IS HIS CHIEF COMPANION NOW.

PERDITA

AND LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENED TO **BABY PERDITA**. THE KIND SHEPHERD HAS BROUGHT HER UP LIKE HIS OWN DAUGHTER, AND NOW SHE'S GROWN INTO A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN.

FLORIZEL

LAST OF ALL, A NEW ADDITION TO OUR STORY. POLIXENES HAS HAD A SON, HIS NAME IS **FLORIZEL**. YOU MAY NOTICE THAT HE'S QUITE HANDSOME AND CHARMING LOOKING. OTHER PEOPLE IN THIS STORY (PERDITA) HAVE NOTICED THIS TOO!



NOW, WHILE WE'RE TRAVELLING THROUGH TIME AND SPACE THERE SEEMS TO BE A WEIRD KIND OF SONG FILLING THE AIR. I'M NOT SURE EXACTLY WHERE IT'S COMING FROM, BUT SOMETHING TELLS ME THE VOICE IS ACTUALLY TIME ITSELF. I CAN'T REALLY EXPLAIN IT, BUT LET'S HAVE A LISTEN...

.....
TAKE UPON
ME IN THE NAME OF TIME TO USE MY WINGS,
SPEED MY SWIFT PASSAGE AS I SLIDE O'ER SIXTEEN YEARS.
GENTLE SPECTATORS, THAT I NOW MAY BE, IN FAIR BOHEMIA....

AND JUST AS THE SONG SAYS THE WORDS "FAIR BOHEMIA" - HERE WE ARE, ARRIVED SIXTEEN LONG YEARS LATER (LONG FOR THEM, NOT FOR US!) IN BOHEMIA ITSELF. NOW BOHEMIA IS A VERY DIFFERENT PLACE FROM SICILIA WHERE LEONTES LIVES...



SICILIA IS ALL TALL BUILDINGS AND PALACES AND WALLED GARDENS, WHILE BOHEMIA IS FULL OF ROLLING HILLS AND VILLAGES. AND SHEEP. THOUSANDS OF SHEEP. SHEEP ARE PRETTY IMPORTANT IN BOHEMIA...

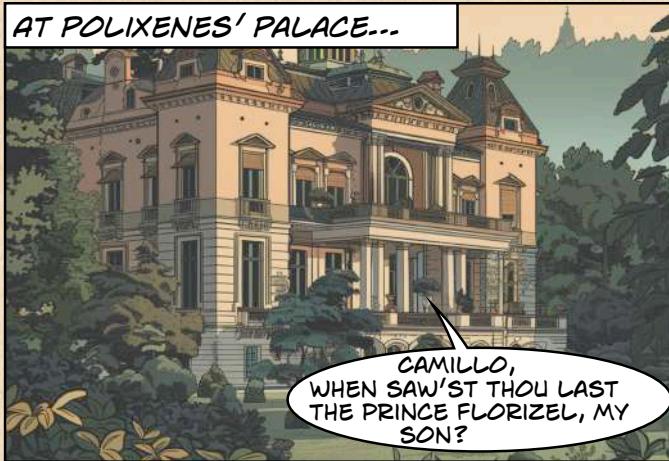


OK, WE'VE REACHED OUR DESTINATION AND IT'S TIME TO STOP THE MACHINE AND GET OUT. WE NOW FIND OURSELVES IN POLIXENES' ROYAL COURT. REMEMBER CAMILLO? AFTER HELPING POLIXENES ESCAPE, HE DIDN'T DARE GO HOME AGAIN, SO HE'S STAYED RIGHT HERE AND BECOME POLIXENES' RIGHT HAND MAN - JUST LIKE HE WAS WITH LEONTES. JUST AS WELL BECAUSE POLIXENES HAS QUITE A PROBLEM ON HIS MIND. NOW, ON WITH THE STORY; HERE COMES ACT FOUR...

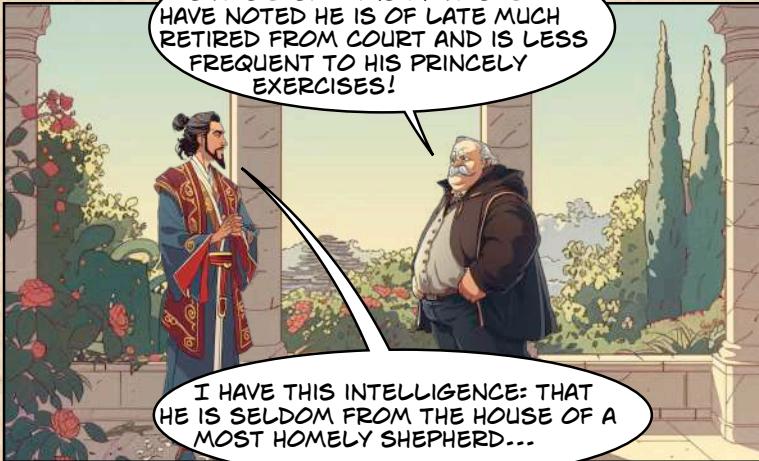
ACT IV

IN FAIR BOHEMIA

AT POLIXENES' PALACE...



CAMILLO,
WHEN SAW'ST THOU LAST
THE PRINCE FLORIZEL, MY
SON?



SIR, IT IS THREE DAYS
SINCE I SAW THE PRINCE. I
HAVE NOTED HE IS OF LATE MUCH
RETIR'D FROM COURT AND IS LESS
FREQUENT TO HIS PRINCELY
EXERCISES!

I HAVE THIS INTELLIGENCE: THAT
HE IS SELDOM FROM THE HOUSE OF A
MOST HOMELY SHEPHERD...

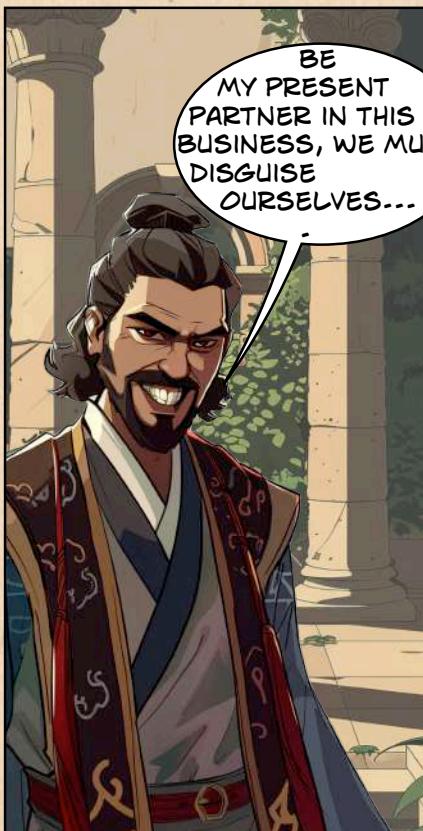


...WHO HATH
A DAUGHTER OF MOST RARE
NOTE!



THAT'S LIKEWISE PART OF
MY INTELLIGENCE! BUT, I
FEAR THE ANGLE THAT PLUCKS
OUR SON THITHER!

SO POLIXENES' SON
FLORIZEL HAS BEEN
IGNORING HIS DUTIES TO GO
AND HANG OUT AT AN OLD
SHEPHERD'S HOUSE! THE
REASON? IT'S THE GIRL WHO
LIVES THERE. CAN YOU GUESS
WHO THE GIRL IS? THAT'S
RIGHT! PERDITA! SO THESE
TWO MEN ARE GOING TO GO
TO THAT SHEPHERD'S HOME -
IN DISGUISE!!!



BE
MY PRESENT
PARTNER IN THIS
BUSINESS, WE MUST
DISGUISE
OURSELVES...



FIVE MINUTES LATER...

PERFECT DISGUISES

MEANWHILE, IN THE
BOHEMIAN COUNTRYSIDE,
WE FIND THE SON OF THAT
'HOMELY SHEPHERD' (AND
PERDITA'S BROTHER)
ON HIS WAY TO MARKET
AND HOLDING THE ONLY
SHOPPING LIST EVER TO BE
FOUND IN SHAKESPEARE...



LET ME
SEE: WHAT AM I TO
BUY FOR OUR SHEEP-
SHEARING FEAST? THREE
POUND OF SUGAR, FIVE POUND
OF CURRENTS, RICE -
NUTMEGS... GINGER...
PRUNES.

WHEN SUDDENLY...



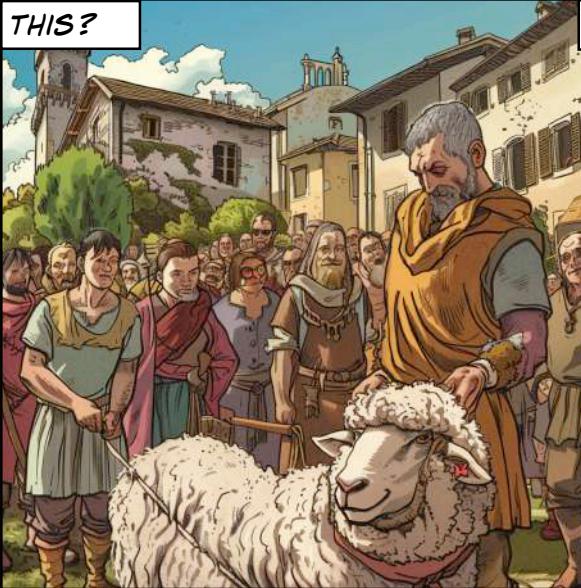
NO! OH, YOUNG SHEPHERD, DON'T! YOU SEE, THIS IS NOT SOME POOR VICTIM, THIS IS BOHEMIA'S TRICKIEST TRICKSTER, CON-MAN EXTRAORDINAIRE - AUTOLYCUS. AND, WHILST AUTOLYCUS IS SHARP AS A RAZOR, OUR POOR SHEPHERD IS AS SHARP AS A SOCK-FULL OF SOUP. LOVELY, KIND, GENTLE, BUT HE DOESN'T REALISE HE'S ABOUT TO BE ROBBED...



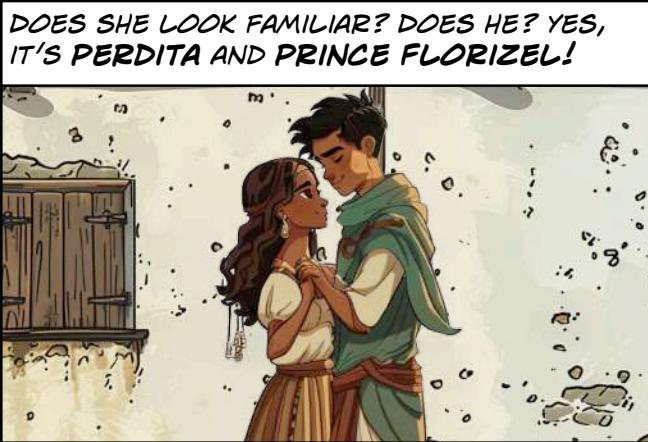
BUT AS HE IS HELPED UP, HIS HAND DIPS INTO THE SHEPHERD BOY'S BASKET...



NOW, WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORDS 'SHEEP-SHEARING FESTIVAL', DOES YOUR HEART SKIP A BEAT WITH EXCITEMENT? I THOUGHT NOT. HOWEVER, ON THIS OCCASION, YOU ARE WRONG! PERHAPS THIS IS THE PICTURE YOU HAVE IN YOUR HEAD....



THE FESTIVITIES WILL START SOON, BUT IN THE MEANTIME, THE MISTRESS OF THE FEAST AND HER PARTNER ARE GETTING READY, REHEARSING ONE OF THE SLOWER DANCES.



A FEW MONTHS AGO, HE GOT LOST WHILST HUNTING AND, STRAYING INTO THE FIELDS OWNED BY THE OLD SHEPHERD, SAW, AND FELL IN LOVE WITH, PERDITA. SINCE THEN, HE'S KEPT COMING BACK, DAY AFTER DAY, DISGUIISING HIMSELF AS A SHEPHERD CALLED DORICLES. HE'S TOLD PERDITA WHO HE REALLY IS, BUT EVERYONE ELSE THINKS HE'S A POOR SHEPHERD

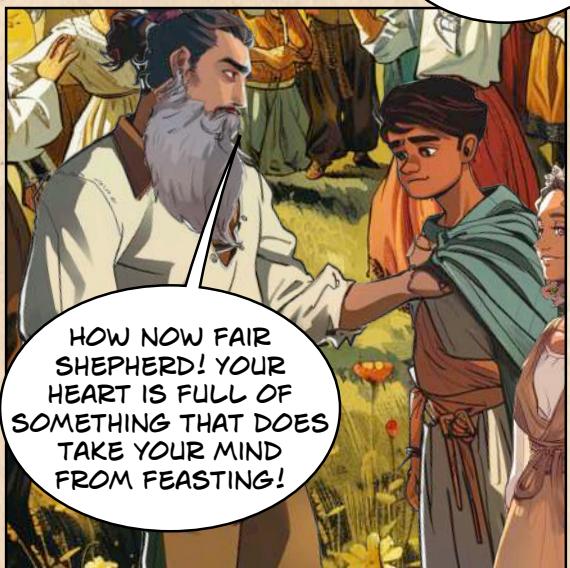


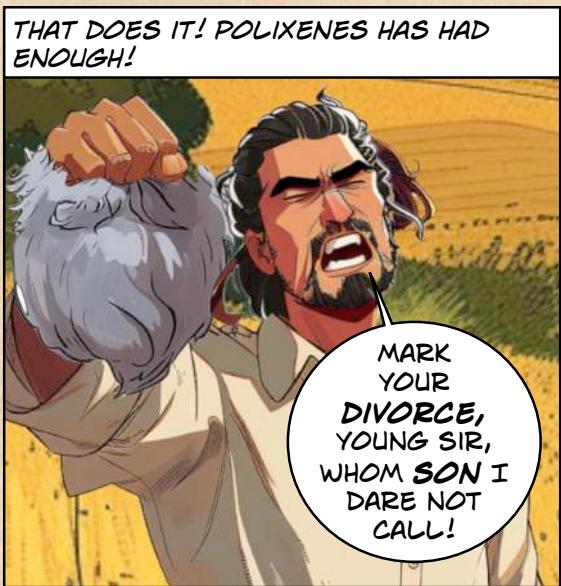


WELL DONE! YES, POLIXENES AND CAMILLO, ARE HERE TO CHECK UP ON FLORIZEL AND THEY WASTE NO TIME IN BEGINNING TO SPY...



POLIXENES IS NOT HAPPY AT ALL. FLORIZEL SHOULD BE MEETING PRINCESSES AND BEING CHARMED BY THEIR DANCING -CERTAINLY NOT DANCING WITH A COMMON SHEPHERD'S DAUGHTER, HE'LL HAVE TO PUT A STOP TO THIS...



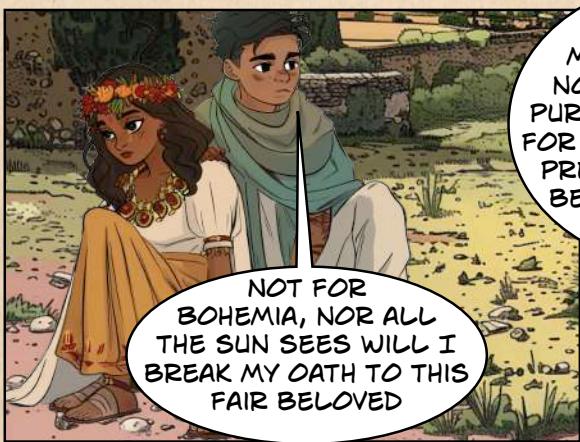
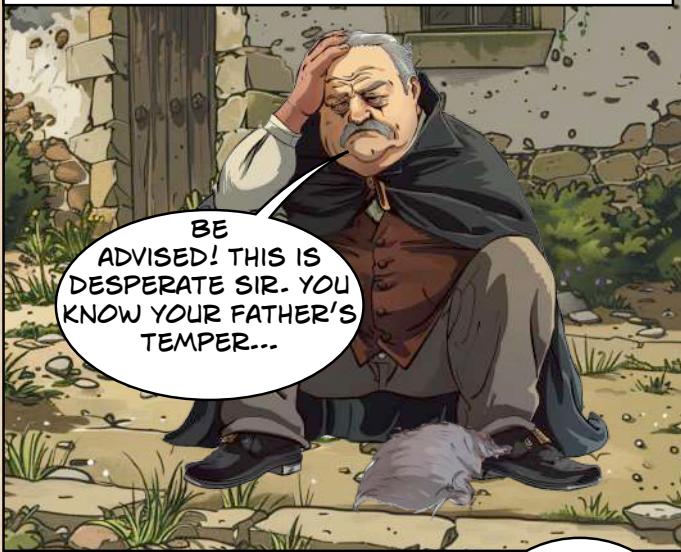


NOW PERDITA'S BROTHER TURNS ON HER...



THIS IS AWFUL! AND JUST WHEN IT LOOKED LIKE THE STORY WAS TAKING A TURN FOR THE BETTER! THE OLD SHEPHERD TO BE KILLED, PERDITA'S BEAUTY RUINED AND FLORIZEL NEVER TO BE KING? AND ALL FOR LOVE? POLIXENES IS MAKING A TERRIBLE MISTAKE! HANG ON... DIDN'T ANOTHER KING MAKE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE ABOUT 16 YEARS AGO? IS THERE A PATTERN HERE?

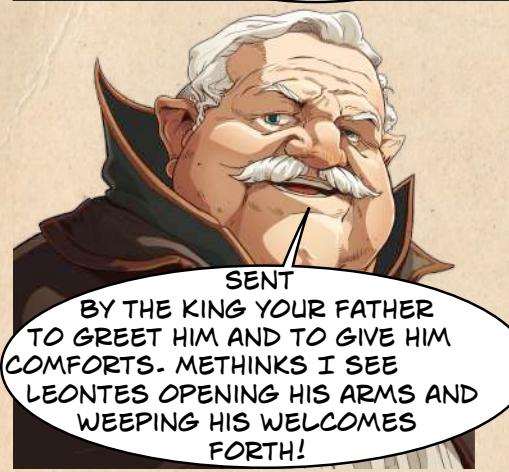
POOR CAMILLO DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...



THEN LIST TO ME, IF YOU WILL NOT CHANGE YOUR PURPOSE, THEN MAKE FOR SICILIA AND THERE PRESENT YOURSELF BEFORE LEONTES!



WHAT COLOUR FOR MY VISITATION SHALL I HOLD UP BEFORE HIM?



WHAT! SURELY THIS IS CRAZY TALK! LEONTES AND POLIXENES HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO EACH OTHER FOR 16 YEARS AND - LET'S FACE IT - THE LAST TIME, LEONTES TRIED TO HAVE POLIXENES KILLED! SO WHY ON EARTH SHOULD HE WELCOME POLIXENES' SON? ALSO, HOW IS FLORIZEL TO ESCAPE BOHEMIA WITHOUT HIS FATHER NOTICING? IF ONLY THERE WAS SOME WAY TO DISGUISE HIM...

UH OH...

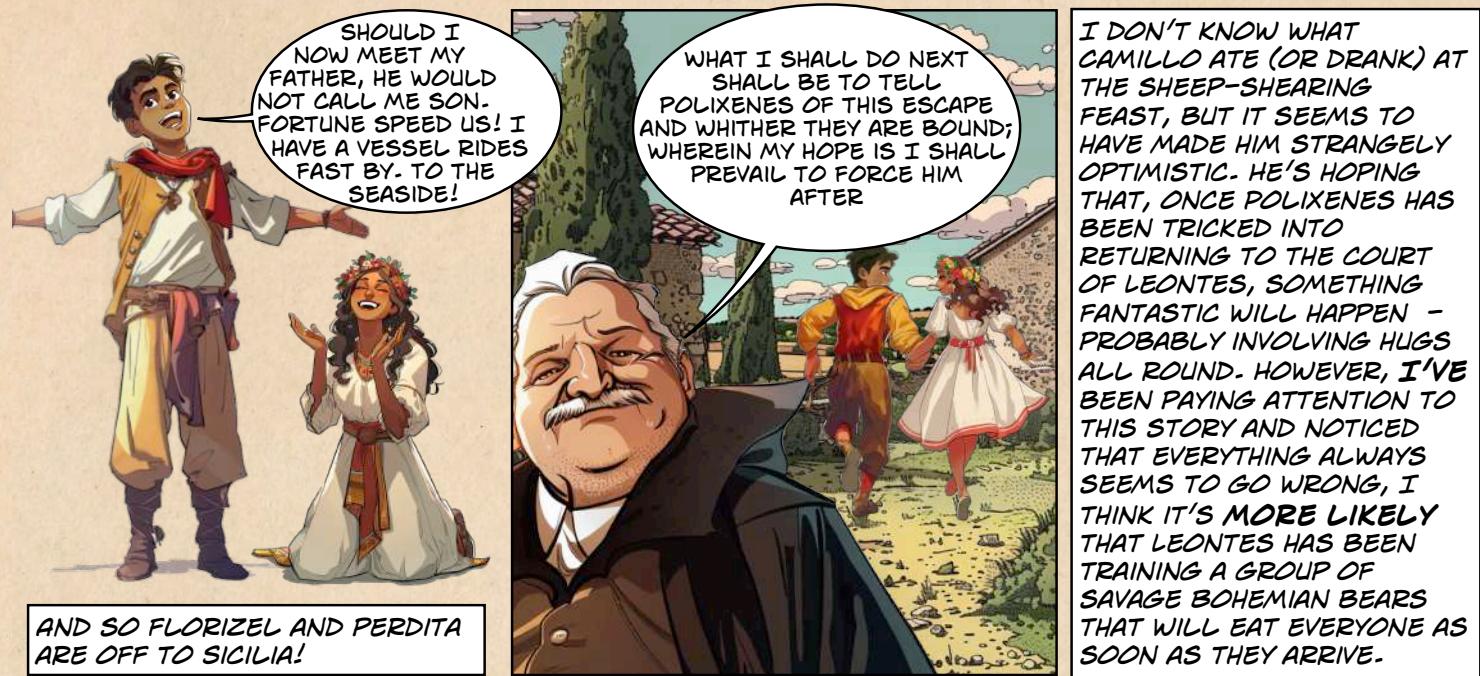


AUTOLYCUS HAS DONE VERY WELL AT THE FESTIVAL. HE GOT BUSY SELLING ALL SORTS OF STUFF: RIBBONS, LACE, GLOVES, SONGS. AND THE GUESTS COULDN'T GET ENOUGH OF IT! SO, NOW, HE'S ABOUT TO GO HOME, BUT MAYBE THERE'S ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOME CASH...

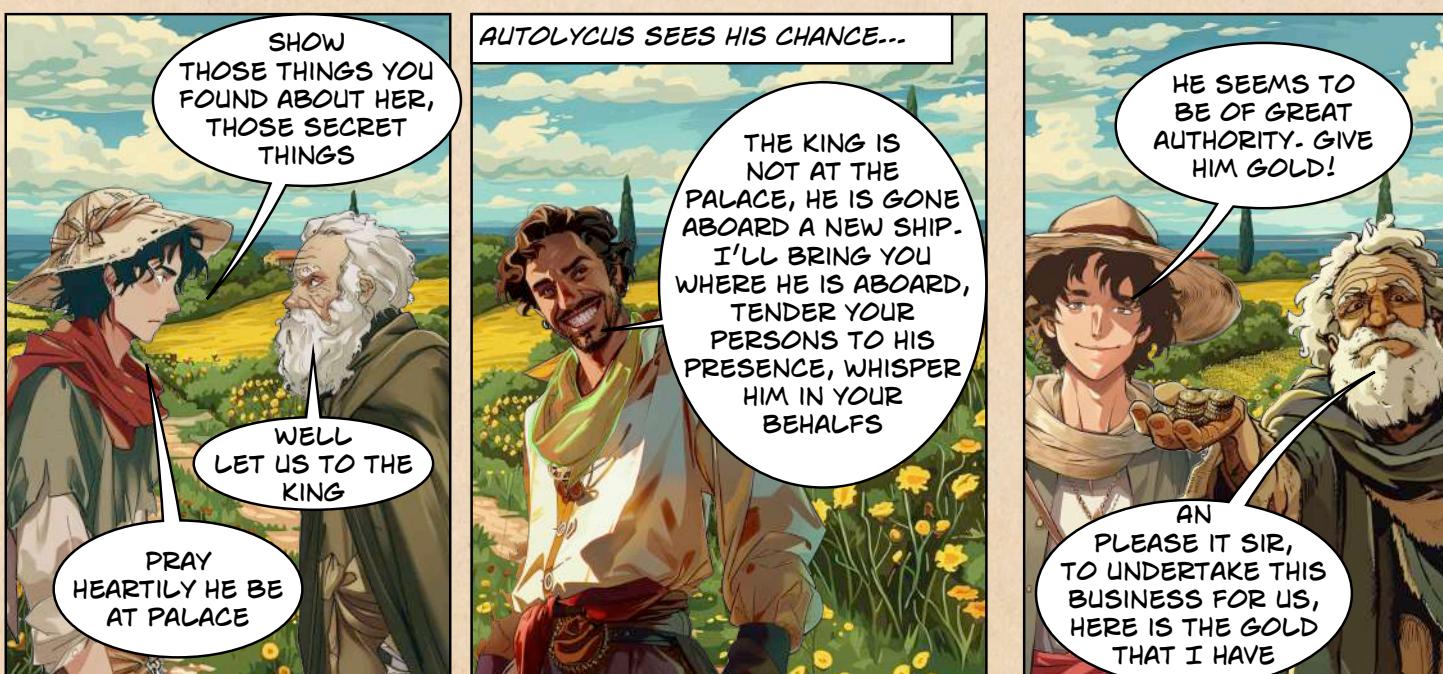
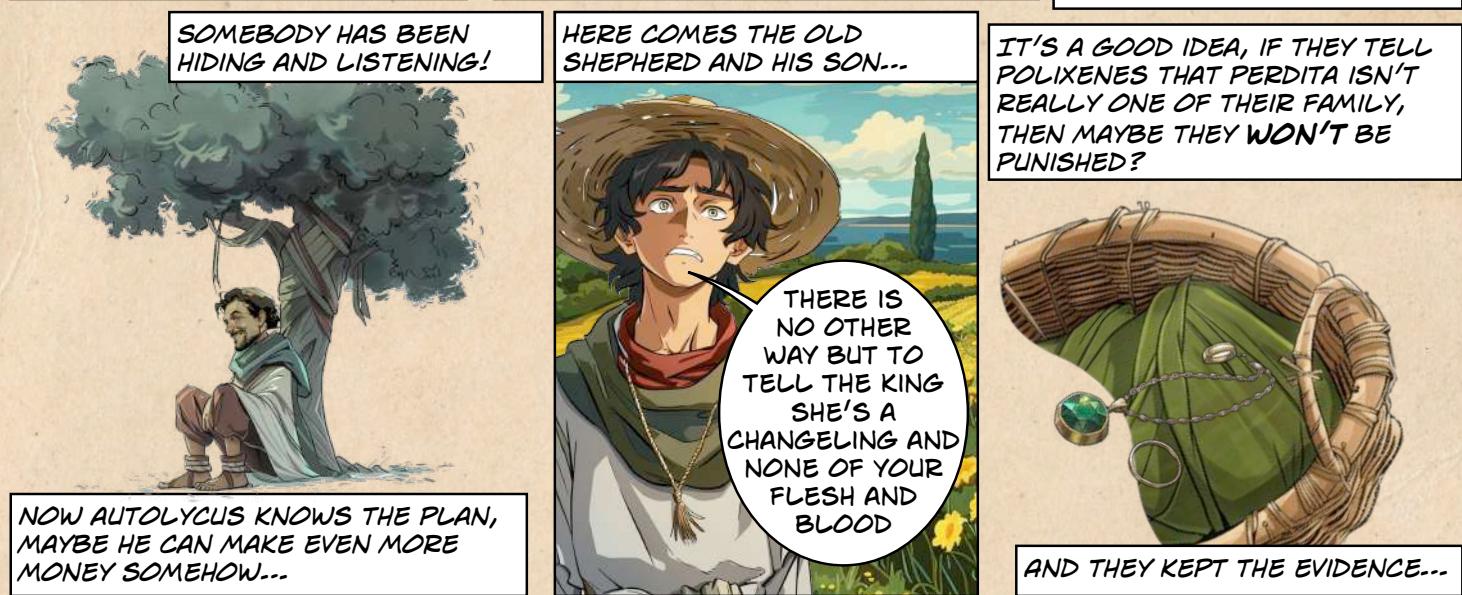


DEFINITELY A WEIRD REQUEST...





I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAMILLO ATE (OR DRANK) AT THE SHEEP-SHEARING FEAST, BUT IT SEEMS TO HAVE MADE HIM STRANGELY OPTIMISTIC. HE'S HOPING THAT, ONCE POLIXENES HAS BEEN TRICKED INTO RETURNING TO THE COURT OF LEONTES, SOMETHING FANTASTIC WILL HAPPEN - PROBABLY INVOLVING HUGS ALL ROUND. HOWEVER, I'VE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION TO THIS STORY AND NOTICED THAT EVERYTHING ALWAYS SEEMS TO GO WRONG, I THINK IT'S MORE LIKELY THAT LEONTES HAS BEEN TRAINING A GROUP OF SAVAGE BOHEMIAN BEARS THAT WILL EAT EVERYONE AS SOON AS THEY ARRIVE.



AUTOLYCUS HAS DONE IT AGAIN! AND SO AS WE SAIL INTO ACT FIVE, WHAT CAN POSSIBLY HAPPEN NEXT? WILL LEONTES FORGIVE EVERYONE, WILL THEY FORGIVE HIM? WILL THE SHEPHERDS BE PUNISHED? WILL FLORIZEL AND PERDITA BE ALLOWED TO MARRY? SO MANY QUESTIONS...