


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.

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!

FLORIZEL



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...

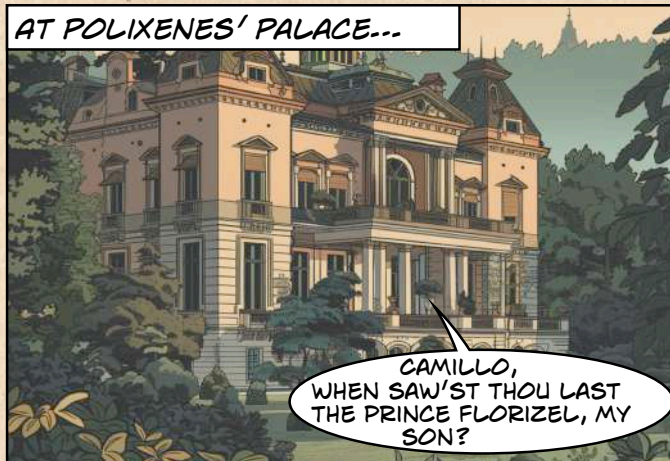


OK, WE'VE REACHED OUR DESTINATION AND IT'S TIME TO STOP THE MACHINE AND GET OUT. WE NOW FIND OURSELVES IN POLIXENES' ROYAL COURT. REMEMBER **CAMILLO**? AFTER HELPING POLIXENES ESCAPE, HE DIDN'T DARE GO HOME AGAIN, SO HE'S STAYED RIGHT HERE AND BECOME POLIXENES' RIGHT HAND MAN - JUST LIKE HE WAS WITH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

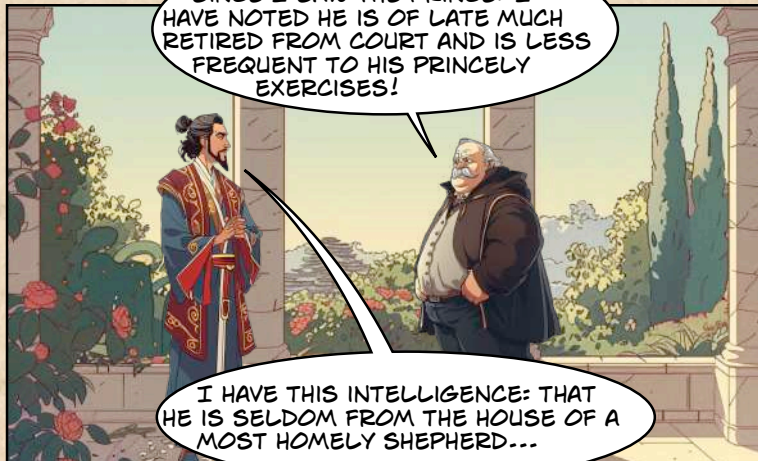
ACT IV

IN FAIR BOHEMIA

AT POLIXENES' PALACE...

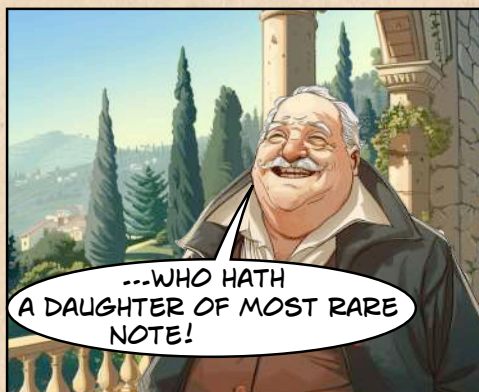


CAMILLO,
WHEN SAW'ST THOU LAST
THE PRINCE FLORIZEL, MY
SON?



SIR, IT IS THREE DAYS
SINCE I SAW THE PRINCE. I
HAVE NOTED HE IS OF LATE MUCH
RETIRED 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 CURRANTS, RICE -
NUTMEGS... GINGER...
PRUNES.

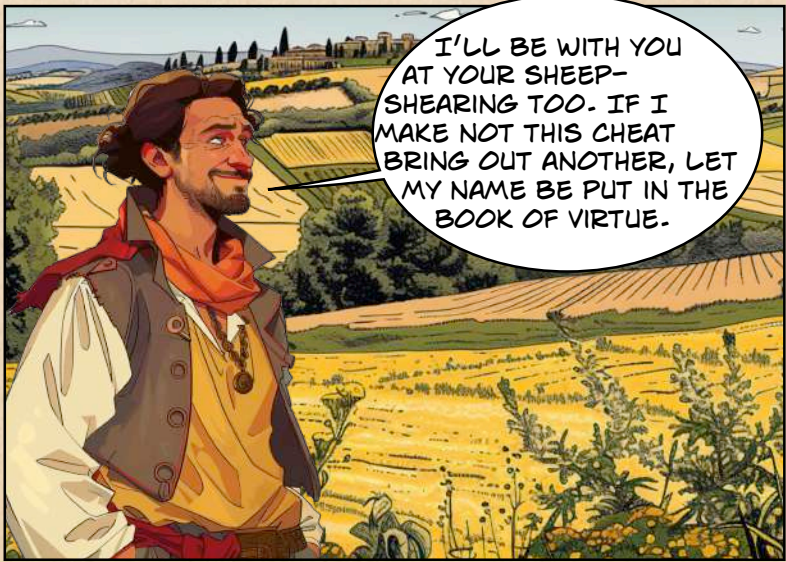
WHEN SUDDENLY...



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....

THIS?



WHEN IT'S ACTUALLY MORE LIKE THIS...

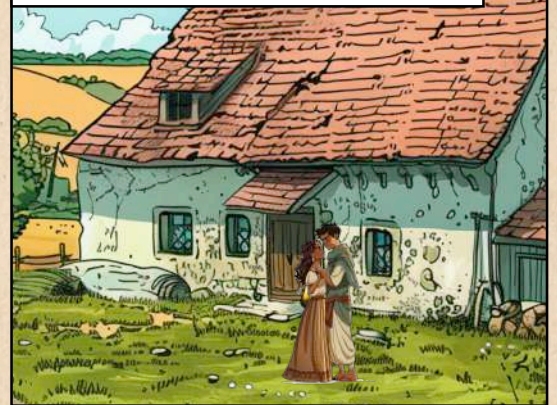


THE FESTIVITIES WILL START SOON, BUT IN THE MEANTIME, THE MISTRESS OF THE FEAST AND HER PARTNER ARE GETTING READY, REHEARSING ONE OF THE SLOWER DANCES.

DOES SHE LOOK FAMILIAR? DOES HE? YES, IT'S PERDITA AND PRINCE FLORIZEL!



SO, THIS IS WHERE HE'S BEEN!



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



I BLESS THE TIME WHEN MY GOOD FALCON MADE HER FLIGHT ACROSS THY FATHER'S GROUND.

PERDITA IS TERRIFIED THAT KING POLIXENES WILL FIND OUT



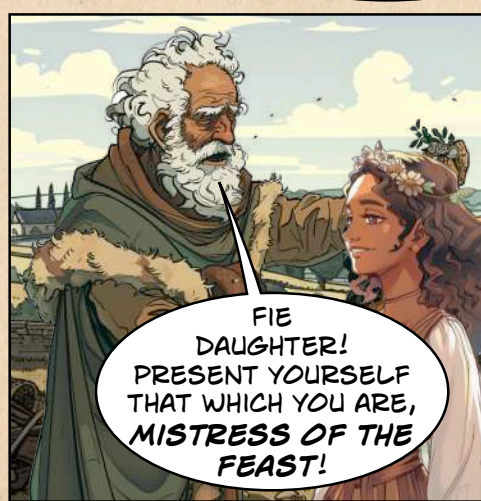
EVEN NOW I TREMBLE TO THINK YOUR FATHER BY SOME ACCIDENT SHOULD PASS THIS WAY.



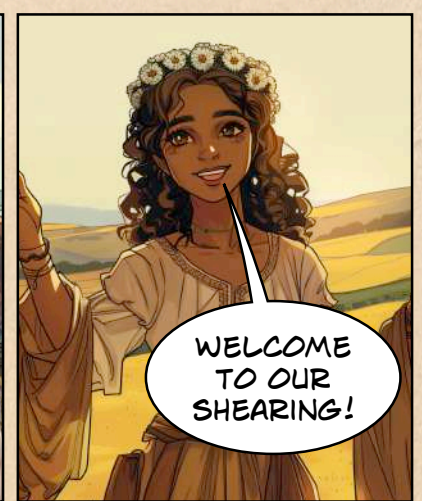
I'LL BE THINE, MY FAIR, NOT MY FATHER'S



YOUR GUESTS ARE COMING!



FIE DAUGHTER! PRESENT YOURSELF THAT WHICH YOU ARE, MISTRESS OF THE FEAST!



WELCOME TO OUR SHEARING!



COME, STRIKE UP



A CROWD WATCHES AS THE BAND PLAYS AND PEOPLE BEGIN TO DANCE. HANG ON....

RECOGNISE ANYONE?

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

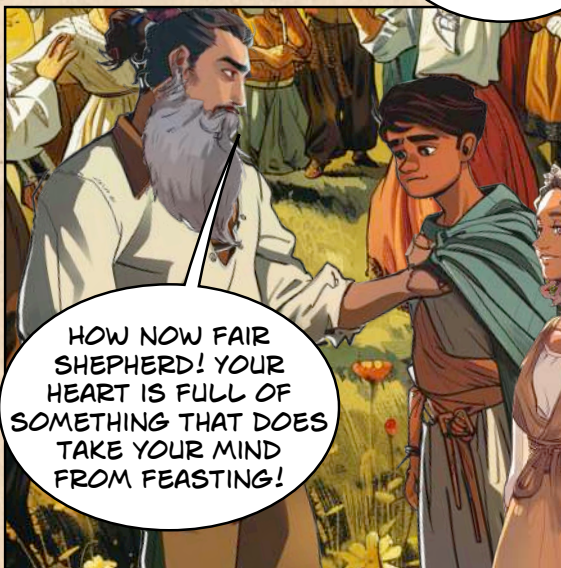


WHAT FAIR SWAIN IS THIS WHICH DANCES WITH YOUR DAUGHTER?



THEY CALL HIM DORICLES! HE SAYS HE LOVES MY DAUGHTER, I THINK SO TOO!

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...



HOW NOW FAIR SHEPHERD! YOUR HEART IS FULL OF SOMETHING THAT DOES TAKE YOUR MIND FROM FEASTING!



FLORIZEL WHISPERS SOMETHING TO PERDITA...



IT'S ALL MAKING POLIXENES PRETTY ANGRY...

LET ME HEAR WHAT YOU PROFESS

DO, AND BE WITNESS TO IT AND HE, AND MORE THAN HE, AND MEN; THE EARTH, THE HEAVENS AND ALL CONTRACT US FORE THESE WITNESSES!



OMG - FLORIZEL IS PROPOSING TO PERDITA! POLIXENES IS MAD! HOW DARE HIS SON DO THIS WITHOUT HIS PERMISSION!



I HAVE, BUT WHAT OF HIM?

SOFT SWAIN, AWHILE, BESEECH YOU. HAVE YOU A FATHER?

KNOWS HE OF THIS?



HE NEITHER DOES, NOR SHALL!



METHINKS
A FATHER IS AT THE
NUPTIAL OF HIS SON A
GUEST THAT BEST
BECOMES THE TABLE

I YIELD
THIS; BUT FOR SOME OTHER
REASONS, MY GRAVE SIR, WHICH 'TIS
NOT FIT YOU KNOW, I NOT ACQUAINT MY
FATHER OF THIS BUSINESS.



LET HIM KNOW IT!

HE **MUST NOT**.
MARK OUR CONTRACT!

THAT DOES IT! POLIXENES HAS HAD
ENOUGH!



MARK
YOUR
DIVORCE,
YOUNG SIR,
WHOM **SON** I
DARE NOT
CALL!

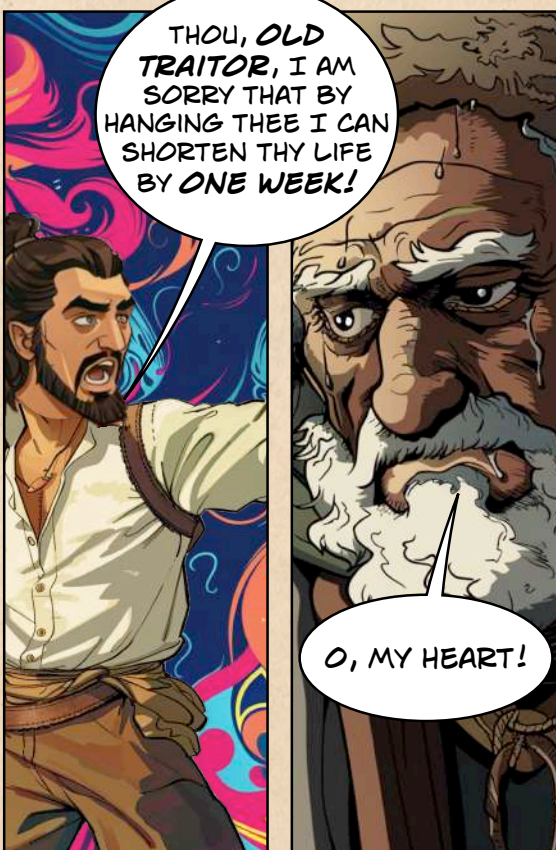
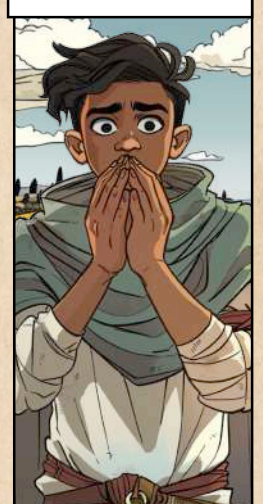
IT'S THE KING!
EVERYONE IS SHOCKED
AND AFRAID!



EVERYONE!



FLORIZEL IS
SPEECHLESS



THOU, OLD
TRAITOR, I AM
SORRY THAT BY
HANGING THEE I CAN
SHORTEN THY LIFE
BY **ONE WEEK!**



O, MY HEART!



THOU,
FRESH PIECE
OF EXCELLENT
WITCHCRAFT -
I'LL HAVE THY
BEAUTY
SCRATCHED WITH
BRIERS



EVEN HERE
UNDONE! I
TOLD YOU WHAT
WOULD COME
OF THIS!



FOR
THEE, WE'LL
BAR THEE FROM
SUCCESSION!

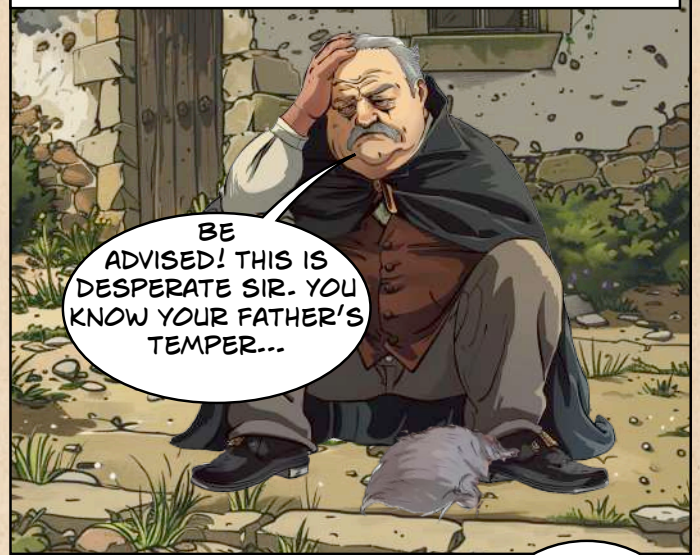
NOW PERDITA'S BROTHER
TURNS ON HER...



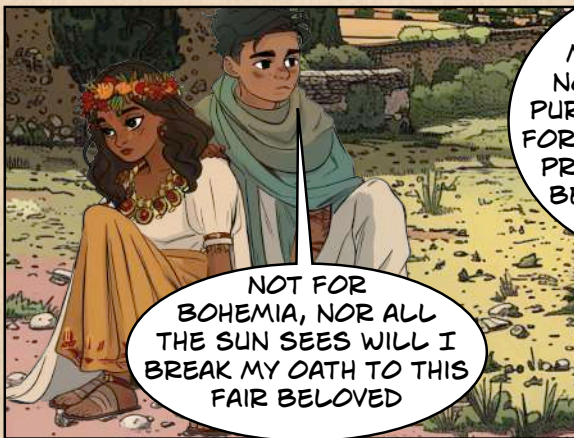
O CURSED
WRETCH THAT
KNEW THIS WAS
THE PRINCE!

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...



BE
ADVISED! THIS IS
DESPERATE SIR. YOU
KNOW YOUR FATHER'S
TEMPER...

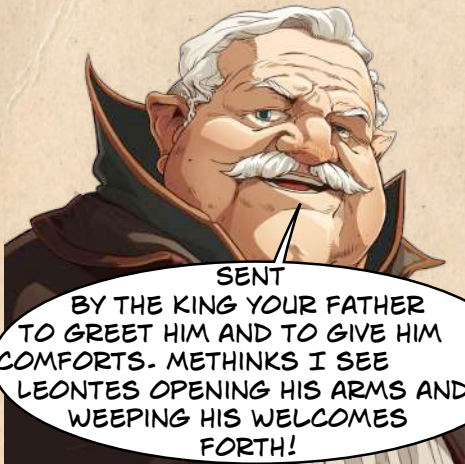


NOT FOR
BOHEMIA, NOR ALL
THE SUN SEES WILL I
BREAK MY OATH TO THIS
FAIR BELOVED

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?



SENT
BY THE KING YOUR FATHER
TO GREET HIM AND TO GIVE HIM
COMFORTS. METHINKS I SEE
LEONTES OPENING HIS ARMS AND
WEEPING HIS WELCOMES
FORTH!

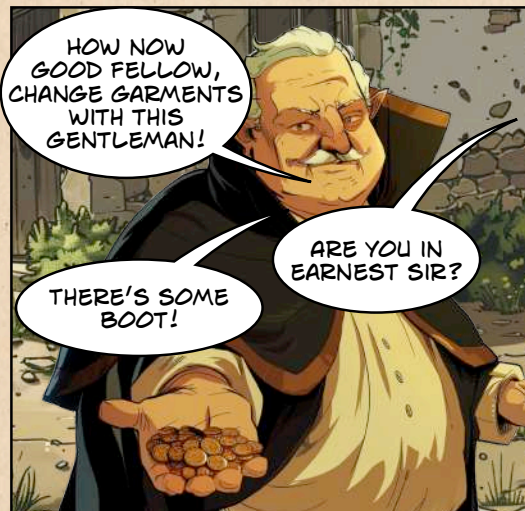
WHAT! SURELY THIS IS
CRAZY TALK! LEONTES AND
POLIXENES HAVEN'T
SPOKEN TO EACH OTHER
FOR 16 YEARS AND - LET'S
FACE IT - THE LAST TIME,
LEONTES TRIED TO HAVE
POLIXENES KILLED! SO
WHY ON EARTH SHOULD HE
WELCOME POLIXENES'
SON? ALSO, HOW IS
FLORIZEL TO ESCAPE
BOHEMIA WITHOUT HIS
FATHER NOTICING? IF
ONLY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

UH OH...



GUESS WHO'S BACK...

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...

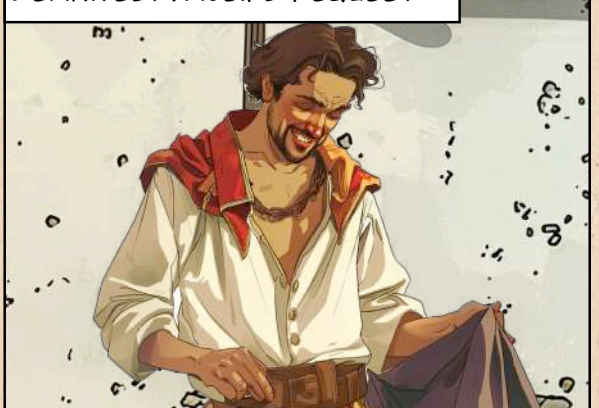


HOW NOW
GOOD FELLOW,
CHANGE GARMENTS
WITH THIS
GENTLEMAN!

THERE'S SOME
BOOT!

ARE YOU IN
EARNEST SIR?

DEFINITELY A WEIRD REQUEST...

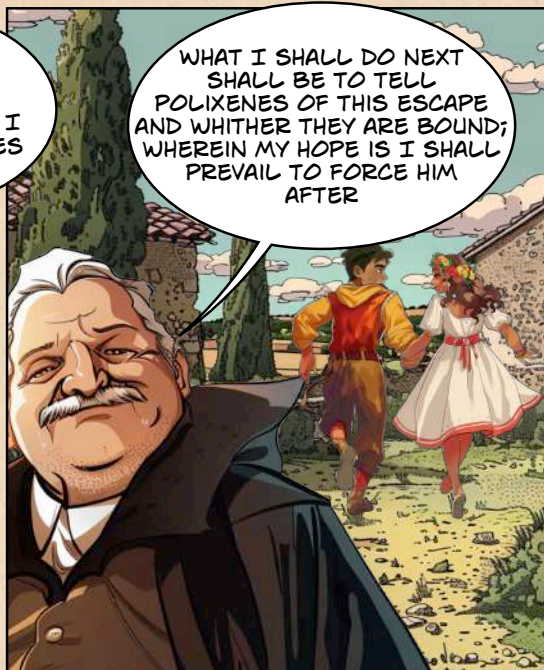


BUT IF THERE'S MONEY IN IT, WHAT'S NOT
TO LIKE!



SHOULD I NOW MEET MY FATHER, HE WOULD NOT CALL ME SON. FORTUNE SPEED US! I HAVE A VESSEL RIDES FAST BY. TO THE SEASIDE!

AND SO FLORIZEL AND PERDITA ARE OFF TO SICILIA!



WHAT I SHALL DO NEXT SHALL BE TO TELL POLIXENES OF THIS ESCAPE AND WHITHER THEY ARE BOUND; WHEREIN MY HOPE IS I SHALL PREVAIL TO FORCE HIM AFTER

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.

SOMEBODY HAS BEEN HIDING AND LISTENING!



NOW AUTOLYCUS KNOWS THE PLAN, MAYBE HE CAN MAKE EVEN MORE MONEY SOMEHOW...

HERE COMES THE OLD SHEPHERD AND HIS SON...



THERE IS NO OTHER WAY BUT TO TELL THE KING SHE'S A CHANGELING AND NONE OF YOUR FLESH AND BLOOD

IT'S A GOOD IDEA, IF THEY TELL POLIXENES THAT PERDITA ISN'T REALLY ONE OF THEIR FAMILY, THEN MAYBE THEY WON'T BE PUNISHED?



AND THEY KEPT THE EVIDENCE...



SHOW THOSE THINGS YOU FOUND ABOUT HER, THOSE SECRET THINGS

WELL LET US TO THE KING

PRAY HEARTILY HE BE AT PALACE

AUTOLYCUS SEES HIS CHANCE...



THE KING IS NOT AT THE PALACE, HE IS GONE ABOARD A NEW SHIP. I'LL BRING YOU WHERE HE IS ABOARD, TENDER YOUR PERSONS TO HIS PRESENCE, WHISPER HIM IN YOUR BEHALFS



HE SEEMS TO BE OF GREAT AUTHORITY. GIVE HIM GOLD!

AN PLEASE IT SIR, TO UNDERTAKE THIS BUSINESS FOR US, HERE IS THE GOLD THAT I HAVE

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...