

The Winter's Gale

By
William Shakespeare



The
Primary
Shakespeare
Company

WRITTEN BY LUKE HOLLOWELL-WILLIAMS
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WWW.PRIMARYSHAKESPEARECOMPANY.ORG

Prologue A sad tale's best for winter

WELCOME! PLEASE, PLEASE, COME IN AND CLOSE THE DOOR. YOU POOR THING, YOU MUST BE FROZEN! PEOPLE ARE SAYING IT'S THE WORST BLIZZARD THEY CAN REMEMBER. WELL, THERE'S ONE THING FOR SURE - WE'RE GOING TO BE SNOWED IN! SO, SHAKE OFF YOUR BOOTS AND SIT BY THE FIRE. WOULD YOU LIKE TO BORROW MY CLOAK? NO? PERHAPS, YOU'D PREFER TO TAKE A BLANKET? NOW, I'LL CLOSE THE SHUTTERS, AND LIGHT THE CANDLES. AND, SEEING AS WE'RE GOING TO BE STUCK HERE AWHILE, WE COULD PASS THE TIME WITH A STORY. YOU'D LIKE THAT? EXCELLENT! AH... BUT WHICH ONE? LET ME SEE.... OF COURSE - I'LL TELL YOU THE WINTER'S TALE. AND OH, WHAT A TALE! PREPARE YOURSELF FOR STATUES THAT COME TO LIFE, FOR BABIES LOST AND BABIES FOUND, KINGS AND SHIPWRECKS AND BEARS. BUT, BEFORE WE GET TO ANY OF THAT, WE NEED TO GO BACK TO BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF OUR STORY...

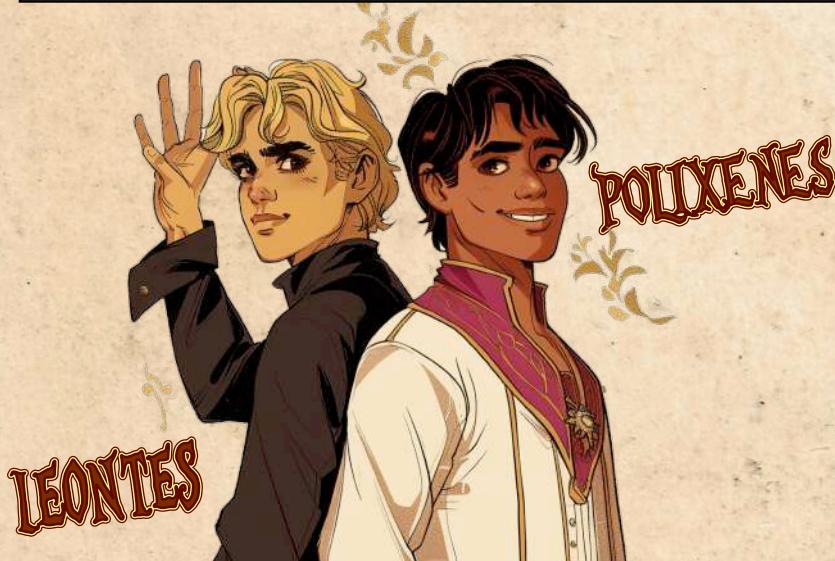
TO A CASTLE IN THE LAND OF SICILIA

WHERE TWO BABIES HAVE JUST BEEN BORN...

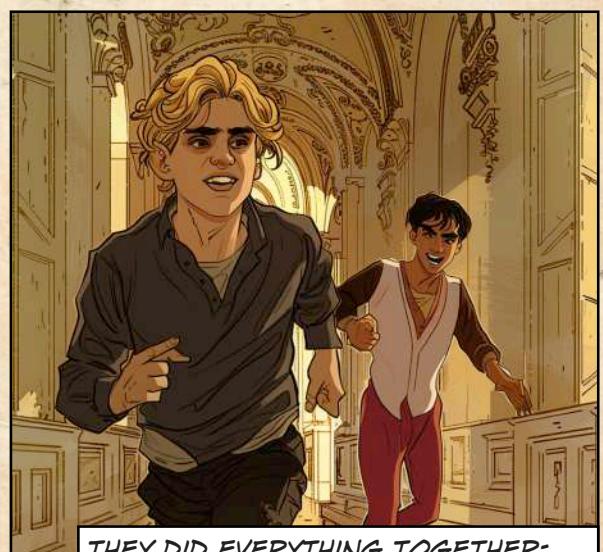


IN FACT THOSE BABIES WERE PRINCES. ONE WAS CALLED POLIXENES (SAY IT LIKE PO-LICKS - EH - KNEES!) AND THE OTHER WAS NAMED LEONTES. (SAY IT LIKE LEE-ON-TEAS!) THEY GREW UP TOGETHER, LOVING EACH OTHER LIKE BROTHERS - THOUGH EACH WAS DESTINED TO RULE A DIFFERENT KINGDOM. LET'S GROW THEM UP A BIT...

THAT'S BETTER! YOUNG POLIXENES' SMILE WAS LIKE THE SUN, LIGHTING UP EVERY ROOM HE ENTERED



WHILST LEONTES - ALWAYS AT HIS FRIEND SIDE - WAS MORE LIKE THE SHADOW THAT THE SUN CASTS.



THEY DID EVERYTHING TOGETHER: RUNNING WILDLY THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF THE PALACE...

STEALING BISCUITS FROM THE KITCHEN...



AND POLIXENES WOULD LAUGH SO HARD THAT LEONTES COULD NOT HELP BUT JOIN IN - THE SHADOWS LIFTING AND HIS OWN FACE LIGHTING UP. THEY WERE EVERYTHING THAT BEST FRIENDS SHOULD BE.

PAINTING ON THE STATUES IN THE GARDEN!

AS THEY GREW OLDER, THEY HAD TO LEARN ALL THAT PRINCES MUST KNOW...



HOW TO HUNT...



HOW TO COMMAND AND RULE...



HOW TO FIGHT...



AND STILL POLIXENES MANAGED, SOMEHOW, TO BRING LAUGHTER AND LIGHTNESS TO ALL THEY DID TOGETHER

BUT AT LAST, THE TIME CAME FOR THEM BOTH TO BECOME KINGS



AND LEONTES HAD TO WAVE A SAD FAREWELL TO HIS DEAREST FRIEND.

MANY YEARS LATER, LONGING TO SEE POLIXENES AGAIN, LEONTES SENT AN INVITATION TO THE LAND OF BOHEMIA, ASKING POLIXENES TO COME AND VISIT HIM ...



POLIXENES
Land of Bohemia
Bohemia

HE VERY MUCH HOPED HIS FRIEND WOULD SAY YES...

ACT I

Too Hot, Too Hot!

OUTSIDE LEONTES' CASTLE, THE SNOW IS FALLING...



...AND ALL IS QUIET

INSIDE IT COULDN'T BE MORE DIFFERENT!



A PARTY IS IN FULL SWING...

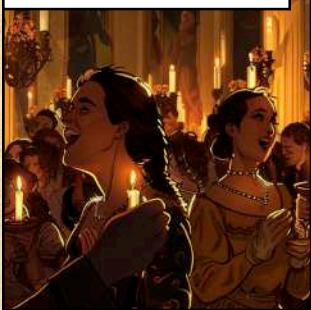
MUSICIANS ARE PLAYING...



GUESTS ARE FEASTING ON THE FINEST FOODS...



PEOPLE ARE SINGING...



AND EVERYONE IS HAVING THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES!!!

THERE'S MUCH DANCING GOING ON, TOO - NOT ALL OF IT BRILLIANT....



BUT RIGHT IN THE CENTRE OF THE THRONG THERE ARE TWO KINGS WHO ARE GIVING IT ALL THEY'VE GOT.

SO, YES, NOT ONLY DID POLIXENES ACCEPT HIS GREAT FRIEND'S INVITATION, BUT HE'S ALSO ACTUALLY STAYED FOR NINE WHOLE MONTHS! NINE MONTHS! SOME OF US MIGHT FEEL THIS WAS A BIT ON THE LONG SIDE.... BUT NOT LEONTES! HE HAS LOVED EVERY MINUTE OF HAVING HIS FRIEND THERE AND IS THROWING THIS PARTY IN HIS HONOUR. POLIXENES DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO THANK HIS DEAR FRIEND FOR ALL THE HOSPITALITY

I MULTIPLY WITH ONE "WE THANK YOU" MANY THOUSANDS MORE THAT GO BEFORE IT



POLIXENES KNOWS HE MUST GO HOME AND THAT HIS FRIEND WILL BE SAD



SIR, THAT'S TOMORROW!

POLIXENES! ONE SEV'N NIGHT LONGER

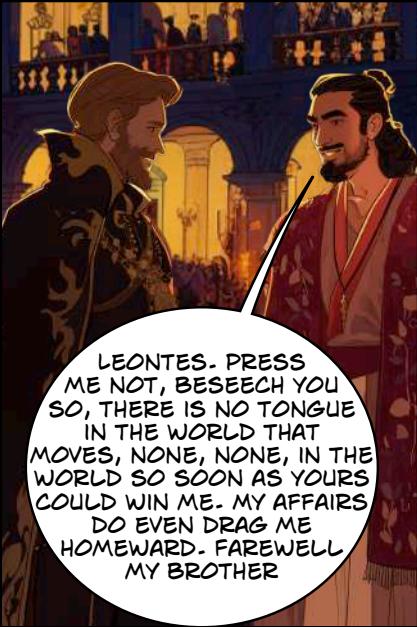
LEONTES WON'T GIVE UP, IF HE WON'T STAY A WEEK, HALF A WEEK!



VERY SOOTH, TOMORROW

WE'LL PART THE TIME BETWEEN'S THEN!

BUT THE KINGDOM OF BOHEMIA HAS BEEN WITHOUT A RULER FOR TOO LONG...



BUT LEONTES STILL HASN'T GIVEN UP, AFTER ALL HE HAS A SECRET WEAPON, A VERY PERSUASIVE PERSON, HIS WIFE HERMIONE! WHO IS SOON TO HAVE A BABY!



IF ONLY HE COULD GET HER TO SPEAK TO POLIXENES, SHE COULD DEFINITELY GET HIM TO STAY

AND AT THAT VERY MOMENT, SHE APPEARED AT HIS SIDE!



HERMIONE NOW UNDERSTANDS THAT IT'S HER JOB TO TRY TO GET POLIXENES TO STAY A BIT LONGER. HERMIONE LOVES LEONTES. SHE'S VERY FOND OF POLIXENES TOO, BUT SHE ESPECIALLY LIKES HOW HAPPY HE MAKES HER KING. SO, SHE'S DETERMINED TO USE ALL HER SKILL WITH WORDS, AND ALL HER CHARM TO GET HIM TO STAY. SHE'LL START WITH HER SMILE, WHICH IS... DAZZLING.

THE MUSIC STARTS AGAIN, AND LEONTES IS CONTENT TO STAND TO ONE SIDE, WATCHING HIS BELOVED QUEEN AND HIS DEAREST FRIEND TALKING AS THEY JOIN THE DANCE.

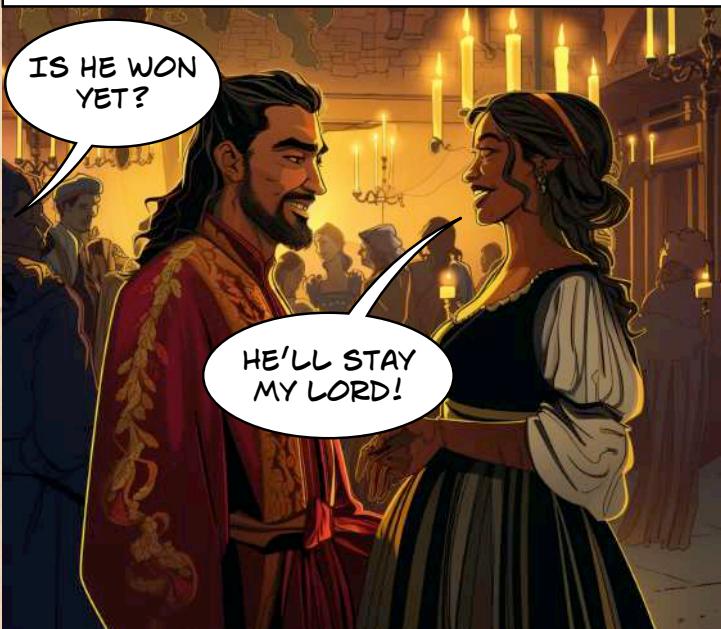


LEONTES CALLS OVER HIS YOUNG SON, MAMILLIUS, WHOM HE LOVES DEARLY



IT'S CLOSE TO CHRISTMAS AND LEONTES HAS A PRESENT FOR HIM...

WHEN LEONTES LOOKS BACK AGAIN, HERMIONE AND POLIXENES ARE ALL SMILES, LEONTES CALLS ACROSS TO THEM...



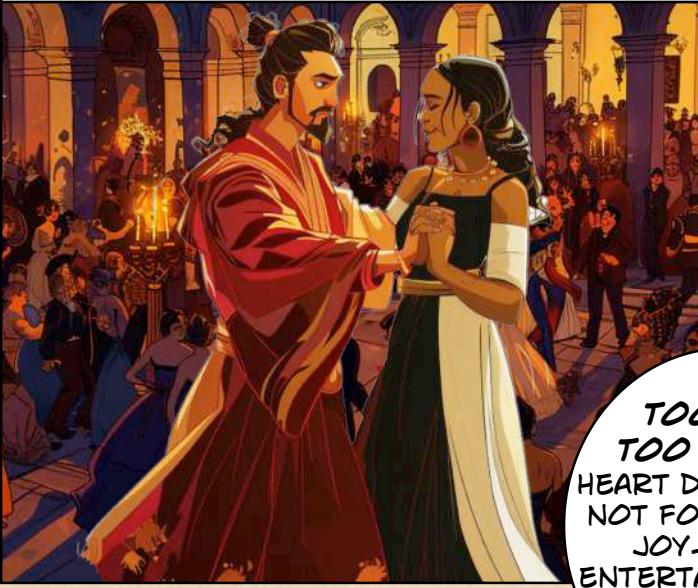
FOR A MOMENT LEONTES' FACE LIGHTS UP. HIS FRIEND WILL STAY!



A SUSPICION. LIKE A DROP OF BLOOD IN A GLASS OF MILK...



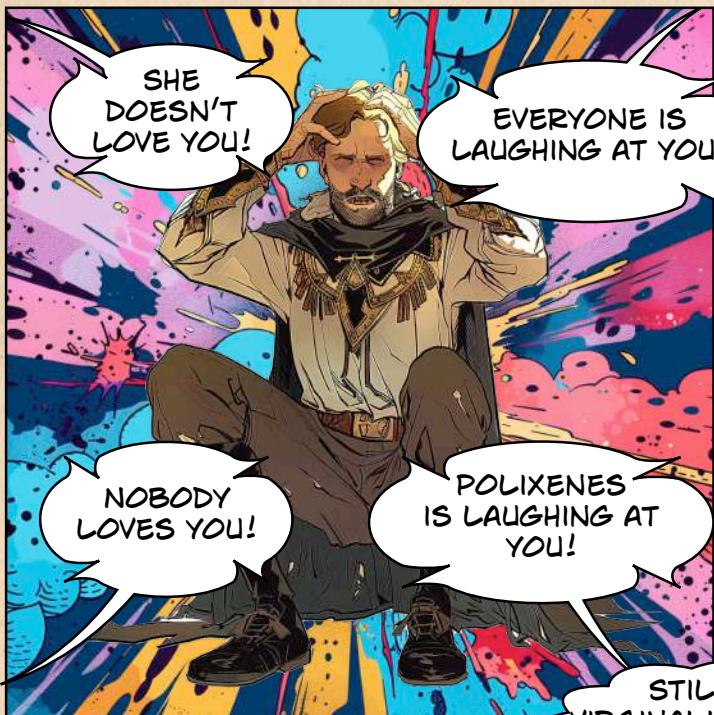
IS IT POSSIBLE, HE THINKS, THAT POLIXENES LIKES HERMIONE MORE THAN HIM? AND WHAT IF HERMIONE LIKES POLIXENES MORE THAN LEONTES! HE TRIES TO SHAKE OFF THE JEALOUS THOUGHTS THAT WOULD SWARM INTO HIS MIND AND REMINDS HIMSELF THAT HE'S GOT WHAT HE WANTED.



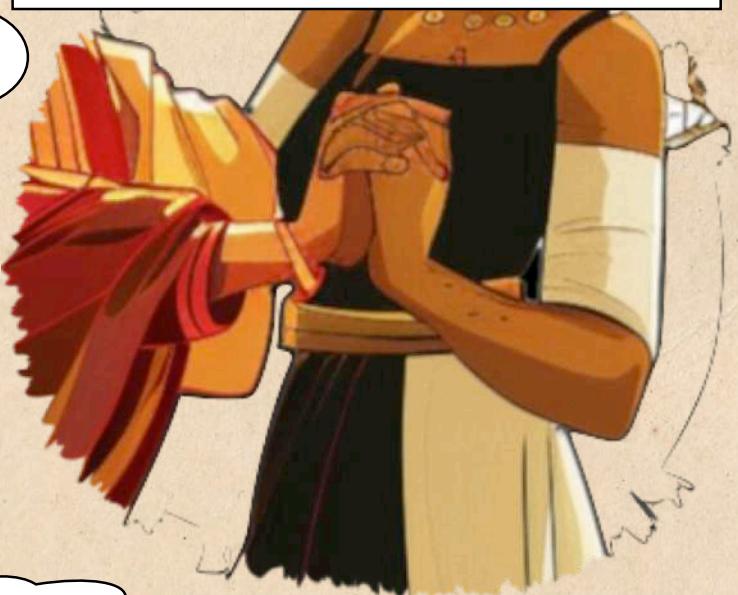
HE CAN'T STAND TO LOOK AND TURNS AWAY, BUT THE THOUGHTS COME THICK AND FAST, AS IF VOICES ARE WHISPERING

TOO HOT!
TOO HOT! MY
HEART DANCES, BUT
NOT FOR JOY, NOT
JOY. THAT IS
ENTERTAINMENT MY
HEART LIKES
NOT!

EVERYONE ELSE IN THE ROOM SEES TWO FRIENDS DANCING AND HOLDING HANDS - AS FRIENDS SOMETIMES DO - BUT THE POISONED MIND OF LEONTES SEES SOMETHING ELSE: HOLDING HANDS? THAT'S FOR HUSBANDS AND WIVES!



LEONTES MAKES HIMSELF LOOK AGAIN. HE SEES THEIR HANDS, HELD, AS THEY DANCE...



STILL
VIRGINALLING UPON
HIS PALM?

A VIRGINAL WAS
LIKE A VERY EARLY
KIND OF PIANO, SO,
HERE, LEONTES IS SAYING
THAT HERMIONE'S
FINGERS ARE PLAYING
ON POLIXENES HAND
LIKE A KEYBOARD.



AND NOW HIS MIND SLIPS INTO ...

WHERE POLIXENES AND HERMIONE ARE MARRIED!

HANG ON, HE THINKS, THAT WOULD MEAN MAMILLIUS WAS THEIR SON, NOT HIS! HE HAS TO CHECK...

MADNESS

IT'S AS IF HE'S SLIPPED INTO A PARALLEL UNIVERSE...

BUT MAMILLIUS DOESN'T UNDERSTAND...

YES! IF YOU WILL MY LORD

HE THINK'S IT'S A GAME WHERE HE HAS TO PRETEND TO BE AN ANIMAL!

LEONTES STARES AND STARES AS HIS SON GALLOPS AROUND HIM, WONDERING IF HE IS HIS SON

ARE YOU MY CALF?

AND THERE'S SOMETHING SO INTENSE ABOUT HIS STARE...

POLIXENES WONDERS WHAT'S GOING ON...

IN THIS SHORT SPACE OF TIME, LEONTES HAS BECOME COMPLETELY CONVINCED THAT HERMIONE AND POLIXENES ARE IN LOVE AND SO ARE NOW HIS ENEMIES- ENEMIES MUST BE DEFEATED- BUT THEY MUST ALSO NOT SUSPECT ANYTHING. SO, LEONTES SMILES AS IF TO PROVE NOTHING IS WRONG.

THAT EVERYONE STOPS TALKING AND LOOKS AT LEONTES

HOW NOW MY LORD! WHAT CHEER?
ARE YOU MOVED MY LORD?

LEONTES TELLS THEM TO DO WHAT THEY LIKE

SO LEONTES SMILES TO PROVE NOTHING IS WRONG...

NO, IN GOOD EARNEST

HAPPY THAT HE'S OK, HERMIONE SAYS...

IF YOU WOULD SEEK US, WE ARE YOURS IN THE GARDEN. SHALL'S ATTEND YOU THERE?

TO YOUR OWN BENTS DISPOSE YOU

BUT AS THEY LEAVE...



AND STILL, NO-ONE ELSE HAS ANY IDEA
WHAT IS GOING THROUGH LEONTES' HEAD.
HOW COULD THEY?

AS THEY WALK AWAY,
HERMIONE SIMPLY TURNS TO
LISTEN TO POLIXENES - WHICH
IS ALL ANYONE ELSE SEES -



HE TURNS ON MAMILLIUS,
HIS VOICE ROARING...



MAMILLIUS STARTS TO CRY...



THE SIGHT OF MAMILLIUS IN TEARS
MOMENTARILY BRINGS LEONTES TO HIS
SENSES. HE'S ALWAYS LOVED HIS SON.



LOOKING AT HIS SON, HE REMEMBERS
HIS OWN CHILDHOOD, WHEN HE AND
POLIXENES WERE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS



WHAT!
CAMILLO
THERE!

CAMILLO IS LEONTES' RIGHT HAND MAN;
LONG-SERVING, HONEST AND NOBLE.
HE IS LOYAL TO BOTH THE KING AND HIS
QUEEN.

DOES THOU
NOT THINK MY
WIFE IS
SLIPPERY?

CAMILLO WASTES NO TIME IN
TELLING HIM OFF...

I WOULD NOT BE A
STANDER-BY TO HEAR MY
SOVEREIGN MISTRESS CLOUDED
SO! YOU NEVER SPOKE WHAT DID
BECOME YOU LESS THAN THIS!

IS
WHISPERING
NOTHING? IS
LEANING CHEEK
TO CHEEK? IS
MEETING NOSES?
WHY, THEN THE
WORLD AND ALL
THAT'S IN IT IS
NOTHING!

GOOD MY
LORD, BE
CURED!

TIS TRUE!

NO, NO MY
LORD!

CAMILLO IS ASTONISHED,
IS LEONTES ILL?





CAMILLO'S HEAD IS SPINNING. CAN LEONTES BE RIGHT? IF SO, WITH WHOM HAS HERMIONE BETRAYED HIM?

IT IS. YOU LIE, YOU LIE! I SAY THOU LIEST CAMILLO AND I HATE THEE!

WHO DOES INFECT HER?

POLIXENES!

MY LORD!!!

NOW HE KNOWS FOR SURE THAT LEONTES IS DELUSED. THE ONLY PERSON TO LOVE LEONTES AS MUCH AS HERMIONE IS POLIXENES. NEITHER WOULD EVER DO ANYTHING TO HURT HIM. WHAT LEONTES HAS SAID SO FAR HAS WORRIED CAMILLO DEEPLY, BUT WHAT LEONTES DOES NEXT, TERRIFIES HIM...

FROM HIS POCKET, LEONTES PRODUCES AN EVIL-LOOKING BOTTLE OF POISON HOLDING IT OUT TO CAMILLO.



BESPICE A CUP TO GIVE MINE ENEMY A LASTING WINK



DO IT AND THOU HAST THE ONE HALF OF MY HEART; DO IT NOT, THOU SPLIT'ST THINE OWN.

WHAT A HORRIBLE CHOICE TO HAVE TO MAKE! EITHER TO KILL POLIXENES OR TO BE KILLED HIMSELF... CAMILLO DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, BUT HE KNOWS THAT, IF HE REFUSES NOW, LEONTES WILL HAVE HIM EXECUTED ON THE SPOT



I'LL DO IT, MY LORD

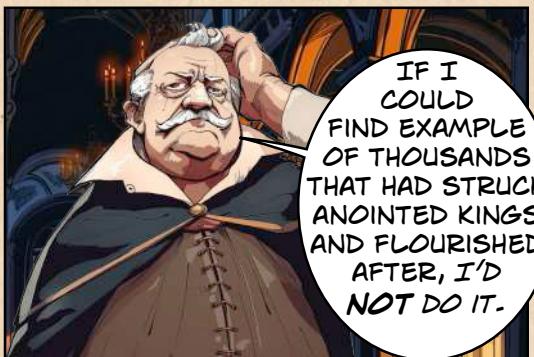


O MISERABLE LADY

BUT FOR ME, WHAT CASE STAND I IN? AND MY GROUND TO DO IT IS THE OBEDIENCE TO A MASTER

TO DO THIS DEED PROMOTION FOLLOWS

WAIT A MINUTE, CAN GOOD CAMILLO BE THINKING OF CARRYING THIS OUT???



IF I COULD FIND EXAMPLE OF THOUSANDS THAT HAD STRUCK ANOINTED KINGS AND FLOURISHED AFTER, I'D NOT DO IT.

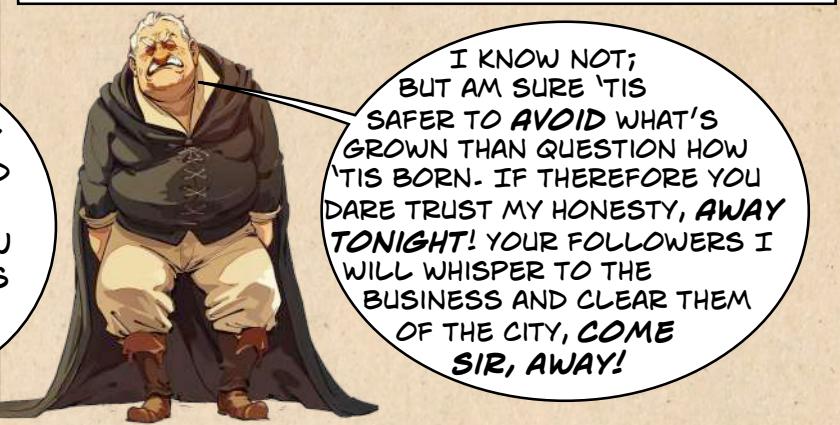
OF COURSE NOT! HE'S GOOD CAMILLO, THE BEST! EVEN IF KILLING POLIXENES MADE HIM A BILLIONAIRE, HE'D STILL REFUSE. BUT HOW IS HE TO ESCAPE LEONTES' FURY WHEN THE KING FINDS OUT HE'S BEEN DISOBEDIED? THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO... HE'S GOING TO HAVE TO SAVE POLIXENES AND MAKE A RUN FOR IT. QUICK, HERE COMES POLIXENES NOW...



CAMILLO KNOWS THAT THERE IS VERY LITTLE TIME AND THAT, IF THEY ARE TO SAVE THEIR LIVES, HE MUST BE BLUNT



BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS, NOW IS THE TIME TO RUN...



AND SO THEY RAN, THROUGH THE CITY, TO THE BOATS WAITING FOR POLIXENES AND HIS FOLLOWERS. WOW, WE'VE COME TO THE END OF ACT 1 - I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. MAYBE WE NEED TO CHECK WHERE EVERYONE IS AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING...



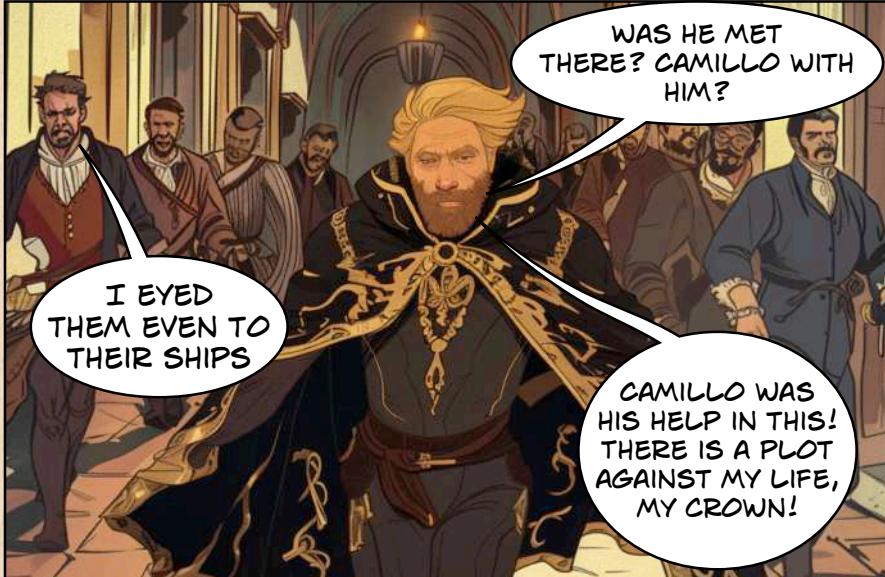
WILL THEY MAKE IT? WILL HERMIONE LEARN WHAT'S GOING ON? WILL LEONTES CATCH AND KILL POLIXENES? YOU'LL HAVE TO READ ON TO FIND OUT!!!

JAGO II

You Do But Mistake

HAD LEONTES BECOME A WEREWOLF HE COULD NOT BE MORE CHANGED! FROM LOVING TO SAVAGE, FROM WISE TO FOOLISH, FROM HAPPY TO A CREATURE POSSESSED BY A MAD FURY.

IT'S BEEN A LONG EVENING AND HERMIONE NEEDS A REST, SHE'S WITH PAULINA A LADY OF THE COURT AND HER GREATEST FRIEND AND MAMILLIUS. IT'S NEARLY BED TIME...



BUT AT THAT MOMENT THE DOOR FLIES OPEN...

HERMIONE HAS NO IDEA WHAT IS GOING ON. CAN IT BE SOME SORT OF JOKE?



AT FIRST NO-ONE MOVES...

THE GUARDS ARE AS PUZZLED AS HERMIONE AT THIS COMMAND; WHY SHOULD THEY TAKE THE BOY AWAY FROM HIS MOTHER - THEIR DEAR QUEEN? BUT LEONTES ROUNDS ON THEM AND SCREAMS HIS ORDER SO FIERCELY THAT THEY FEAR FOR THEIR OWN LIVES



AS ONE OF THE GUARDS LEADS HIM GENTLY AWAY, HERMIONE AND PAULINA LOOK ON, SPEECHLESS WITH SHOCK.



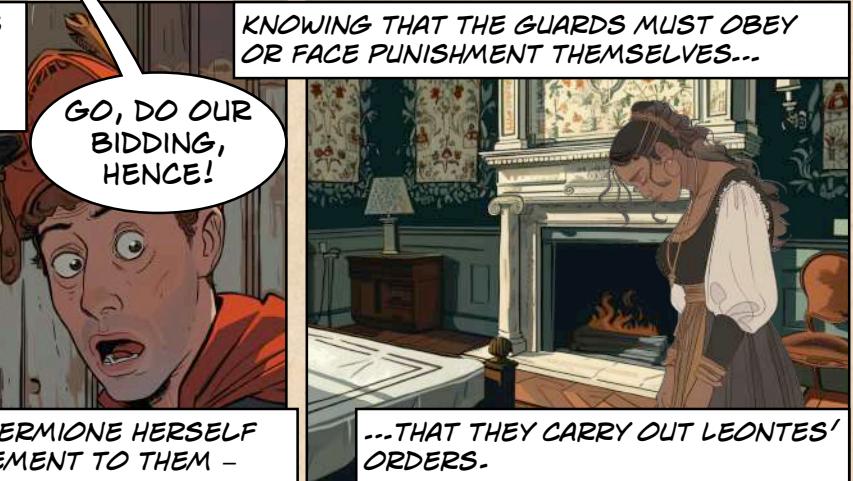


AND SO, NO-ONE SPEAKS. EVERYONE WOULD SPEAK FOR HERMIONE, THEIR MISTRESS, BUT FOR FEAR OF LEONTES. THEY KNOW HER TO BE KIND AND FAIR AND NOT A SINGLE PERSON IN THAT ROOM CAN BELIEVE SHE HAS DONE ANYTHING TO DESERVE PRISON. EVEN A FURIOUS LEONTES CANNOT MAKE THEM MOVE.

LEONTES WANTS HIS GUARDS TO TAKE HERMIONE TO THE DUNGEON!



GO, DO OUR BIDDING, HENCE!



THE LORDS LEFT ARE BEWILDERED. LEONTES' ACTIONS SEEM LIKE THOSE OF A MADMAN AND DESTINED TO HAVE TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES.



BUT LEONTES WON'T LISTEN TO SENSE, HE'S ON A DIFFERENT PLANET TO EVERYONE ELSE...



SO CONFIDENT IS LEONTES THAT HE IS RIGHT AND EVERYONE ELSE - AND I MEAN EVERYONE - IS WRONG, THAT HE HAS DONE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

YET FOR A GREATER CONFIRMATION I HAVE DISPATCHED IN POST TO THE ORACLE AT SACRED DELPHOS, TO APOLLO'S TEMPLE



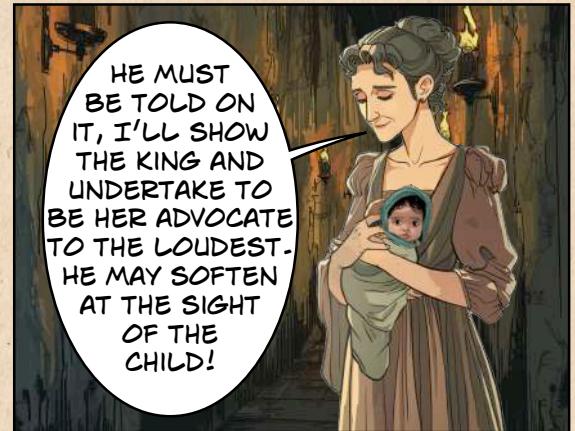
LEONTES HAS SENT SERVANTS TO THE DELPHIC (SAY DEL-FIC) ORACLE TO ASK WHETHER HERMIONE IS GUILTY OR INNOCENT. THE ORACLE LIVED AT DELPHI IN GREECE AND THROUGH HER, PEOPLE COULD TALK TO THE GOD APOLLO, ASKING HIM QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. BECAUSE THE ANSWERS THE ORACLE GAVE CAME FROM A GOD, THEY WERE THE ULTIMATE TRUTH. LEONTES IS CONVINCED THE ORACLE WILL BE ON HIS SIDE, AND THEN EVERYONE WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT HE IS RIGHT!



WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HERMIONE? LEONTES' BEHAVIOUR SEEMS TO HAVE TERRIFIED THE WHOLE COURT INTO SILENCE. IF NO-ONE WILL SPEAK UP FOR HER - IS SHE DOOMED? WELL, NOT IF PAULINA HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT...

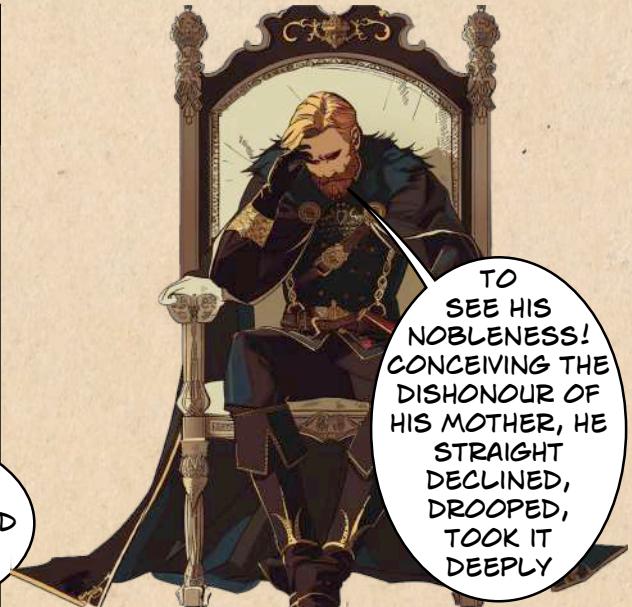


SO HERMIONE HAS GIVEN BIRTH TO HER BABY DAUGHTER WHILE IN THE DUNGEON!!! THANK GOODNESS THE BABY IS OK. MAYBE PAULINA CAN TURN THIS SITUATION TO HERMIONE'S ADVANTAGE AND GET HER SET FREE!



ALL IS NOT YET LOST! PAULINA IS BRAVE AND WISE - A WARRIOR IN SPIRIT, SHE'S LIKE THE FIERCEST HEAD TEACHER YOU'VE EVER MET, AND WITH HER ON YOUR SIDE, YOU SHOULD NEVER GIVE UP.

SINCE HE WAS SNATCHED FROM HIS MOTHER, AND SHE WAS THROWN INTO PRISON, POOR MAMILLIUS HAS BEEN ILL, FEVERISH.



LEONTES CHOOSES TO THINK THAT MAMILLIUS'S ILLNESS IS A REACTION TO HIS MOTHER'S BEHAVIOUR AND THAT THIS SHOWS WHAT A NOBLE BOY HE IS! JUST AT THIS MOMENT, THOUGH, THERE IS A POUNDING AT THE DOOR, AND IT IS FLUNG WIDE. THERE STANDS PAULINA WITH THE BABY.



A MAN RUSHES TO THE DOOR TO STOP PAULINA FROM ENTERING. IT IS ANTIGONUS, LEONTES' TRUSTED ADVISOR - AND PAULINA'S HUSBAND!!!



LET ME PASS!
YOU MUST NOT ENTER!

HE'S TRYING TO STOP HER COMING IN TO PROTECT HER FROM LEONTES...



AWAY WITH THAT AUDACIOUS LADY! ANTIGONUS, I CHARGE THEE THAT SHE SHOULD NOT COME ABOUT ME!



BUT PAULINA WILL NOT BE STOPPED...

I COME FOR YOUR GOOD QUEEN

GOOD QUEEN?

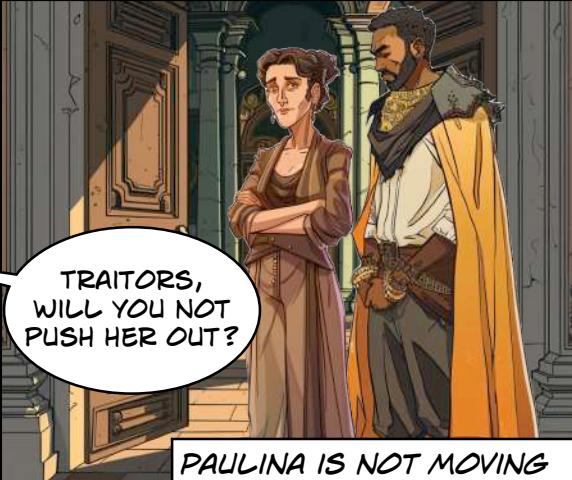
FORCE HER HENCE!

GOOD QUEEN MY LORD, I SAY GOOD QUEEN!

BUT FIRST I'LL DO MY ERRAND



LEONTES IS FILLED WITH RAGE...



TRAITORS, WILL YOU NOT PUSH HER OUT?

PAULINA IS NOT MOVING



TAKE UP THE BRAT! TAKE'T UP I SAY!

NO-ONE ELSE IS HELPING LEONTES EITHER...



A NEST OF TRAITORS!!!

NO-ONE HAS EVER DARED TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE KING BEFORE, BUT AS THEY LOOK AROUND AT EACH OTHER, THEY CAN'T BELIEVE HOW HE IS BEHAVING AND THEY START TO GET BRAVER...

ANTIGONUS SPEAKS FIRST...



THEN THE OTHER NOBLES...

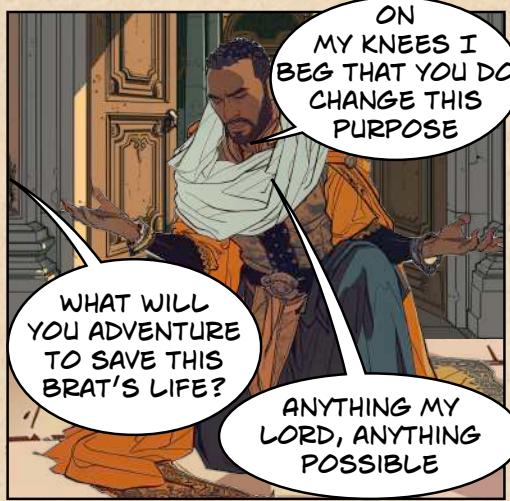


THEN PAULINA...



EVERY SINGLE PERSON IN THAT ROOM, EXCEPT LEONTES, FEELS THEIR BLOOD TURN TO ICE. CAN THE KING TRULY BE ASKING THEM TO HAVE HERMIONE AND THE BABY BURNT? IT'S TOO HORRIBLE TO THINK ABOUT.

FINALLY ANTIGONUS LEADS HIS WIFE AWAY...



SUDDENLY A SERVANT ARRIVES...



AT LAST THINKS LEONTES, NOW EVERYONE WILL KNOW HE WAS RIGHT...



WE'RE AT THE END OF ACT 2 AND THINGS SEEM TERRIBLE! HOW DID WE GET FROM TWO BFFS DANCING AT A PARTY, TO THIS?? ONE FRIEND RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE, THE OTHER SEEMS TO HAVE GONE MAD WITH JEALOUSY, PUTTING HIS WIFE IN PRISON, SENDING HIS BABY DAUGHTER TO BE ABANDONED IN SOME OTHER LAND... AND HIS SON'S NOT TOO WELL EITHER. AND DID YOU KNOW THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A COMEDY??!! I'M TELLING YOU, THERE'D BETTER BE SOME LAUGHS IN ACT 3...

Act 3

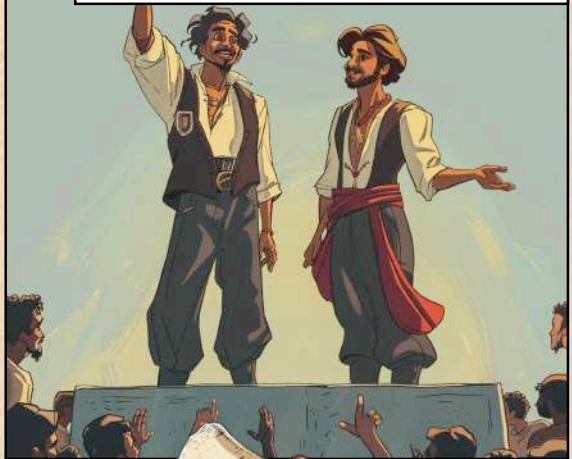
APOLLO BE MY JUDGE

CLEOMENES AND DION - LORDS OF THE COURT OF LEONTES - HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM THEIR LONG JOURNEY ACROSS THE SEA TO GREECE



THEIR FRIENDS CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR WHAT VISITING THE ORACLE WAS LIKE - THEY'RE ALL A LITTLE BIT JEALOUS THAT THEY DIDN'T GET TO GO ON THIS IMPORTANT TRIP!

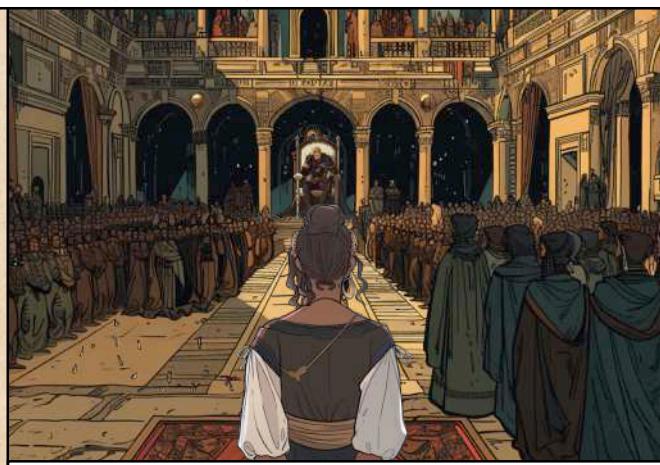
CLEOMENES TELLS THEM HOW BEAUTIFUL EVERYTHING WAS!



DION WAS SUPER-IMPRESSED BY THE HUGE STATUE OF APOLLO. BUT WHAT REALLY BLEW THEM BOTH AWAY WAS THE ORACLE HERSELF - HOW LOUD SHE WAS!

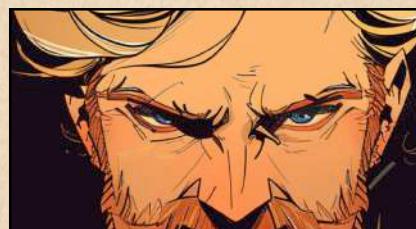
IT'S A BIT LIKE THEY'VE COME BACK FROM A HOLIDAY, TILL EVERYONE NOTICES THE SEALED SCROLL THAT DION IS CARRYING, AND THEY ALL FALL SILENT. SUDDENLY EVERYONE REMEMBERS WHAT MESSAGE IS HIDDEN INSIDE, AND HOW SERIOUS THIS MOMENT IS. WHAT IS THE TRUTH THAT THE ORACLE WILL REVEAL? WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO HERMIONE?

THE ROOM IS FULL FOR THE TRIAL OF HERMIONE. EVERY MEMBER OF THE COURT IS THERE, YET, HERMIONE STANDS ALONE TO FACE HER ACCUSER.

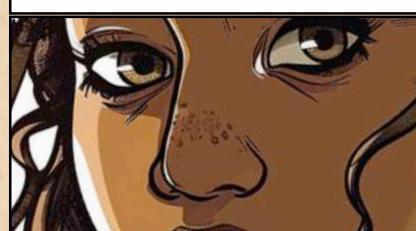


ALL BUT LEONTES BELIEVE HER TO BE INNOCENT, ALTHOUGH NO-ONE DARES SPEAK FOR HER.

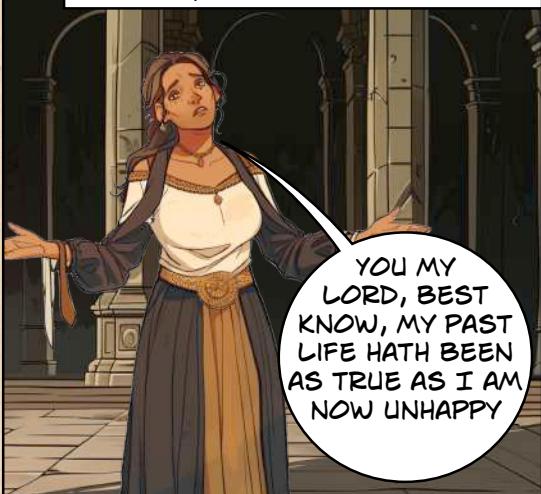
AN OFFICER READS THE CHARGES AGAINST HERMIONE...



LEONTES STARES AT HIS WIFE -ONCE THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE- WITH HATRED. BUT THERE IS NO HATRED IN THE LOOK THAT HERMIONE RETURNS TO HIM - ONLY SORROW.



FINALLY, HERMIONE SPEAKS...

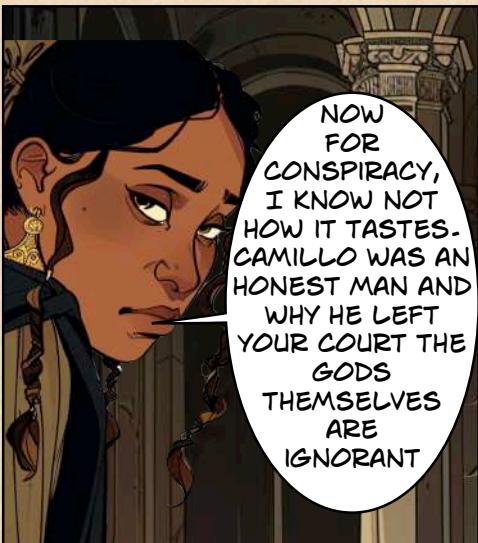


YOU MY LORD, BEST KNOW, MY PAST LIFE HATH BEEN AS TRUE AS I AM NOW UNHAPPY



FOR POLIXENES, WITH WHOM I AM ACCUSED, I DO CONFESS I LOVED HIM AS IN HONOUR HE REQUIRED: WITH SUCH KIND AS YOU YOURSELF COMMANDED

LEONTES SHOULD KNOW HOW FAITHFUL HERMIONE HAD ALWAYS BEEN UP UNTIL THE POINT AT WHICH HE ACCUSED HER. SHE LOVED POLIXENES ONLY IN THE WAY THAT A QUEEN **SHOULD** LOVE A VISITING KING AND FRIEND TO HER HUSBAND. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WRONG FOR HER **NOT** TO LOVE HIM LIKE THIS. AND ANYWAY, IT WAS LEONTES WHO TOLD HER TO GET POLIXENES TO STAY!



NOW FOR CONSPIRACY, I KNOW NOT HOW IT TASTES. CAMILLO WAS AN HONEST MAN AND WHY HE LEFT YOUR COURT THE GODS THEMSELVES ARE IGNORANT



YOU KNEW OF HIS DEPARTURE!



SIR, YOU SPEAK A LANGUAGE THAT I UNDERSTAND NOT.

AT THAT MOMENT, THERE IS A NOISE AND EVERYONE TURNS TOWARDS THE GREAT DOORS...



THERE STAND CLEOMENES AND DION, HOLDING THE SCROLL...

THE SCROLL CONTAINING THE WORDS OF THE ORACLE...



THE CROWD HOLDS ITS BREATH...

THE SCROLL IS HANDED TO THE OFFICER. THIS IS IT! THESE ARE THE WORDS THE ORACLE SPOKE - EVERYONE STRAINS TO HEAR, IT'S AS IF THEY WERE ALL TRANSPORTED TO THAT TEMPLE IN DELPHI...



...HERMIONE IS CHASTE!



...POLIXENES BLAMELESS



...CAMILLO A TRUE SUBJECT!



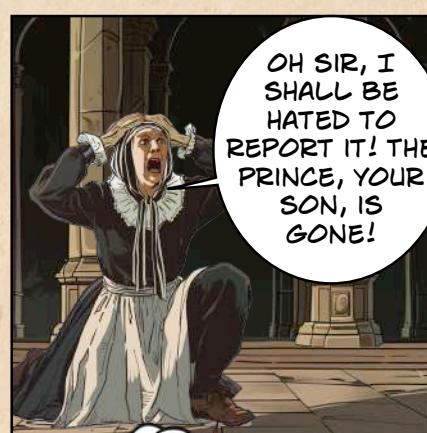
...LEONTES A JEALOUS TYRANT!



WOW! LET'S THINK
ABOUT THE ORACLE'S
WORDS FOR A MINUTE-
HERMIONE HAS DONE
NOTHING WRONG,
NOR HAS POLIXENES,
NOR HAS CAMILLO -
BUT LEONTES HAS -
HE'S A JEALOUS
TYRANT - AND - HE
SHALL LIVE WITHOUT
AN HEIR? WHAT COULD
THAT MEAN? ANYWAY,
THE ORACLE HAS
SPOKEN, THERE CAN BE
NO DOUBT NOW...



WAIT, WHAT?
EVERYONE FREEZES.
THIS IS THE GREATEST
BLASPHEMY. LEONTES
HAS JUST CALLED THE
ORACLE, THE VOICE OF
THE GOD APOLLO, A
LIAR. THIS HAS NEVER
HAPPENED BEFORE-
ONCE APOLLO
SPEAKS, THAT'S IT,
YOU LISTEN. YOU
DON'T QUESTION THE
WORD OF A GOD.
EVERYONE LOOKS AT
EACH OTHER,
WONDERING WHAT TO
DO NEXT, WHEN
SUDDENLY....



LIKE A TREE
FELLED BY AN AXE,
LEONTES FALLS
TO HIS KNEES. IT
SEEMS THAT
APOLLO IS
ALREADY
PUNISHING HIM FOR
QUESTIONING THE
WORD OF A GOD
AND NOW POOR
MAMILLIUS IS
GONE! BUT THERE
IS STILL MORE TO
COME FOR
LEONTES...

HERMIONE FAINTS!



LEONTES SLUMPS BACK ON HIS THRONE...



BUT THE WORST IS YET TO COME...

FAR AWAY FROM HERE, ANTIGONUS IS ABOUT TO CARRY OUT THE TERRIBLE TASK THAT LEONTES HAS SET HIM. HIS BOAT HAS LANDED ON THE SEA-COAST OF BOHEMIA AND A STORM LOOMS ON THE HORIZON...



ANTIGONUS IS ALSO IN A HURRY TO GET AWAY, BESIDES THE STORM, THIS COASTLINE IS A WILD DESOLATE PLACE PLAGUED BY WOLVES AND BEARS...



PERDITA MEANS
'SHE WHO HAS BEEN
LOST' IN LATIN. I THINK
WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT,
AT THIS POINT IN THE PLAY,
IN THIS LONELY PART OF
THE WORLD, THIS POOR
BABY IS WELL AND
TRULY LOST!

ANTIGONUS PLACES SOME GOLD
AND SOME OF HERMIONE'S JEWELS
IN THE BASKET...



ANTIGONUS IS ABOUT TO
RETURN TO HIS SHIP, WHEN
SUDDENLY...

A HUGE BEAR EMERGES FROM AMONGST
THE TREES!



POOR PERDITA! HOW CAN SHE POSSIBLY
SURVIVE - A NEW-BORN BABY
ABANDONED IN A STORM IN THE MIDDLE
OF NOWHERE, SURROUNDED BY
FEARSOME CARNIVOROUS BEASTS? HOW
CAN SHAKESPEARE DO THIS TO US?! I
CAN ONLY SEE THIS STORY ENDING ONE
WAY - IN TRAGEDY AND DESPAIR! I MUST
BE RIGHT - AFTER ALL, EVERYTHING
THAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR HAS BEEN
DISASTROUS; THERE'S NO HOPE. OH,
HANG ON, WHAT'S THIS? OR RATHER,
WHO'S THIS...?

SUDDENLY TWO FIGURES APPROACH...



IT'S AN OLD
SHEPHERD
AND HIS
YOUNG SON,
BATTLING
THROUGH
THE RAIN
AND WIND,
TRYING TO
GET HOME
BEFORE
NIGHTFALL...



WELL, I MUST
ADMIT, I WAS
WRONG. AND SO, AS
ACT 3 DRAWS TO A
CLOSE, FOR THE
FIRST TIME,
SOMETHING SEEMS
TO HAVE GONE
RIGHT. BABY PERDITA
HAS BEEN FOUND
AND A SHEPHERD HAS
GOT HIMSELF SOME
GOLD! STILL NO
JOKES, THOUGH....

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...

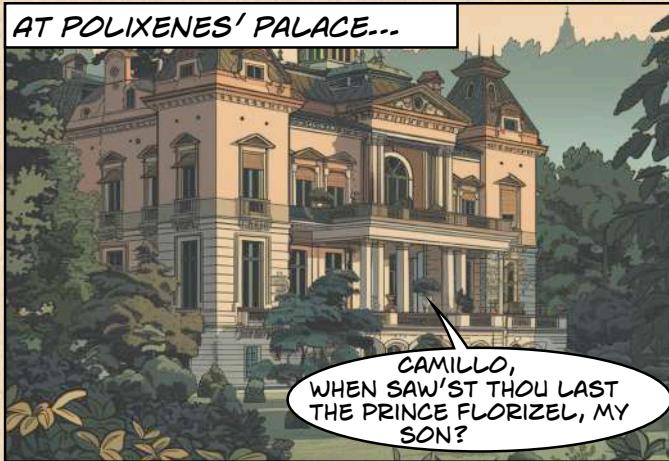


OK, WE'VE REACHED OUR DESTINATION AND IT'S TIME TO STOP THE MACHINE AND GET OUT. WE NOW FIND OURSELVES IN POLIXENES' ROYAL COURT. REMEMBER CAMILLO? AFTER HELPING POLIXENES ESCAPE, HE DIDN'T DARE GO HOME AGAIN, SO HE'S STAYED RIGHT HERE AND BECOME POLIXENES' RIGHT HAND MAN - JUST LIKE HE WAS WITH LEONTES.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

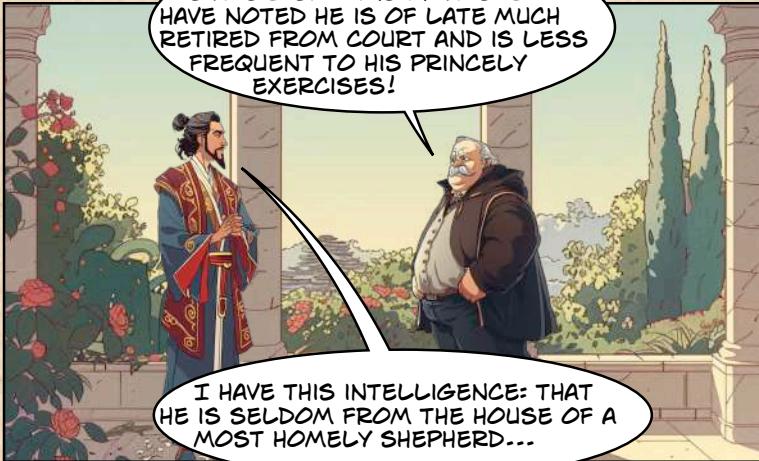
ACT IV

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...

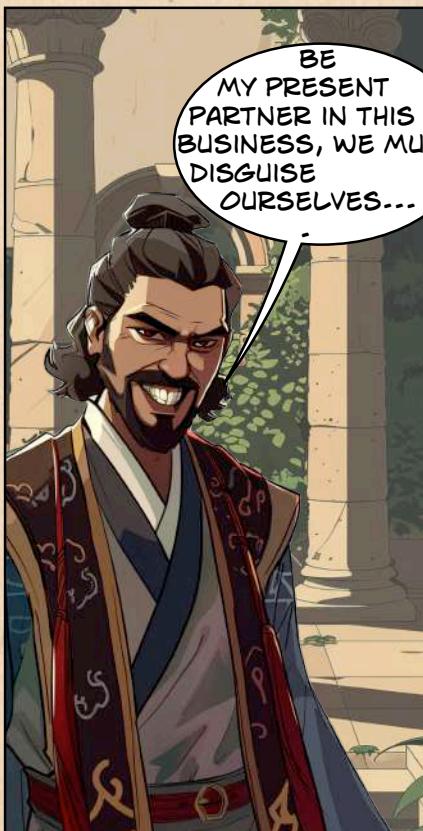


...WHO HATH
A DAUGHTER OF MOST RARE
NOTE!

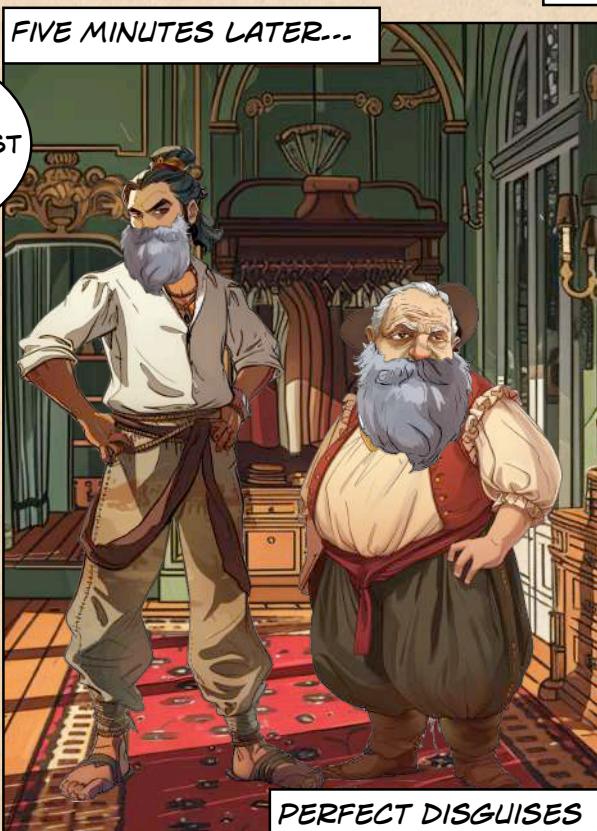


THAT'S LIKEWISE PART OF
MY INTELLIGENCE! BUT, I
FEAR THE ANGLE THAT PLUCKS
OUR SON THITHER!

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...



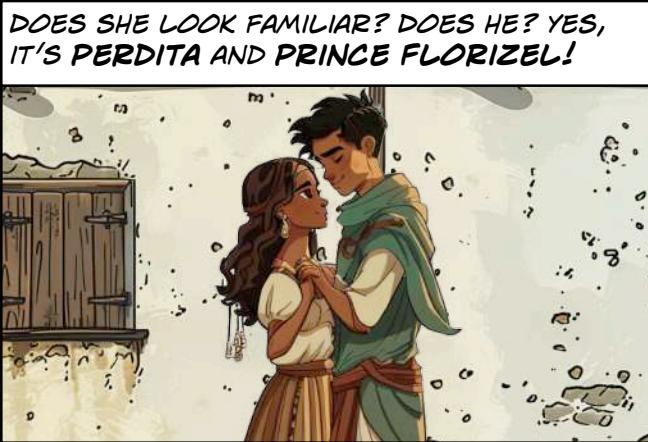
BUT AS HE IS HELPED UP, HIS HAND DIPS INTO THE SHEPHERD BOY'S BASKET...



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





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



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...



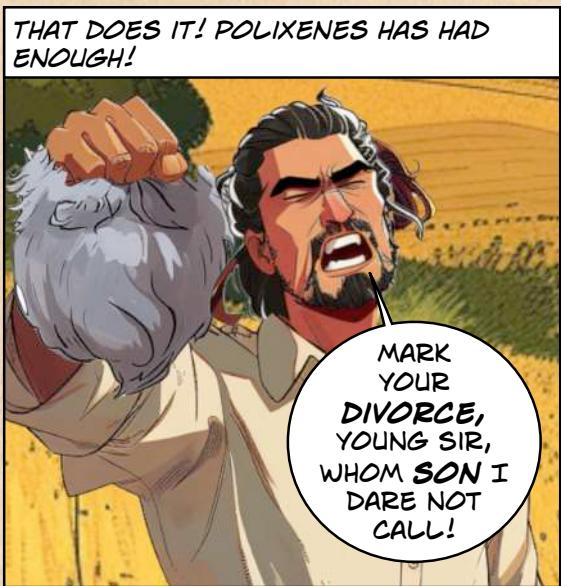
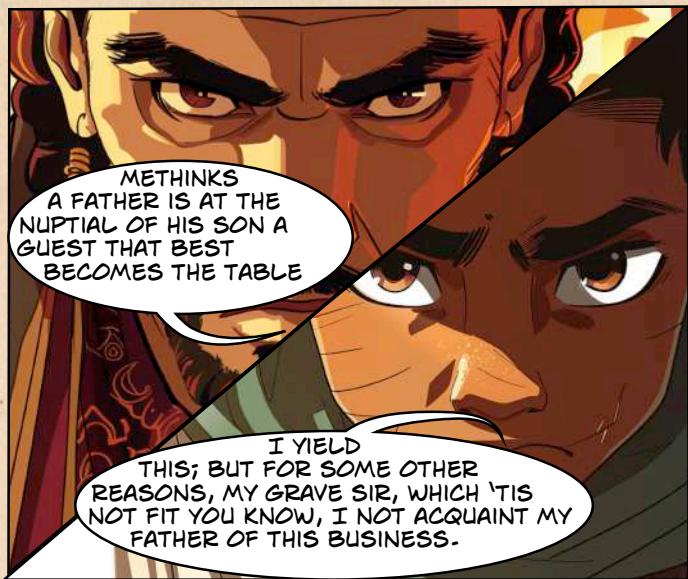
IT'S ALL MAKING POLIXENES PRETTY ANGRY...



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!



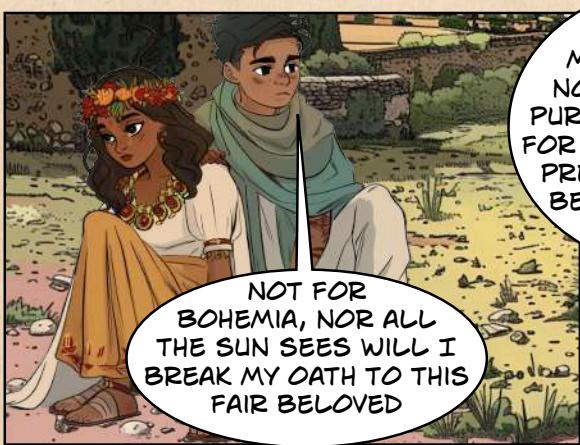
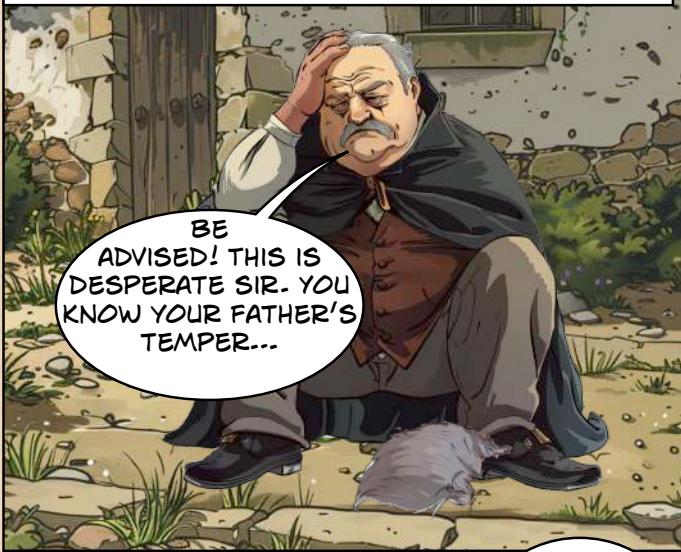


NOW PERDITA'S BROTHER TURNS ON HER...



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! 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...

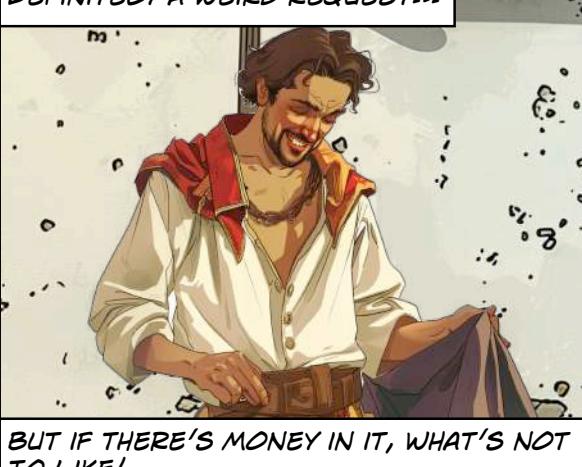
UH OH...

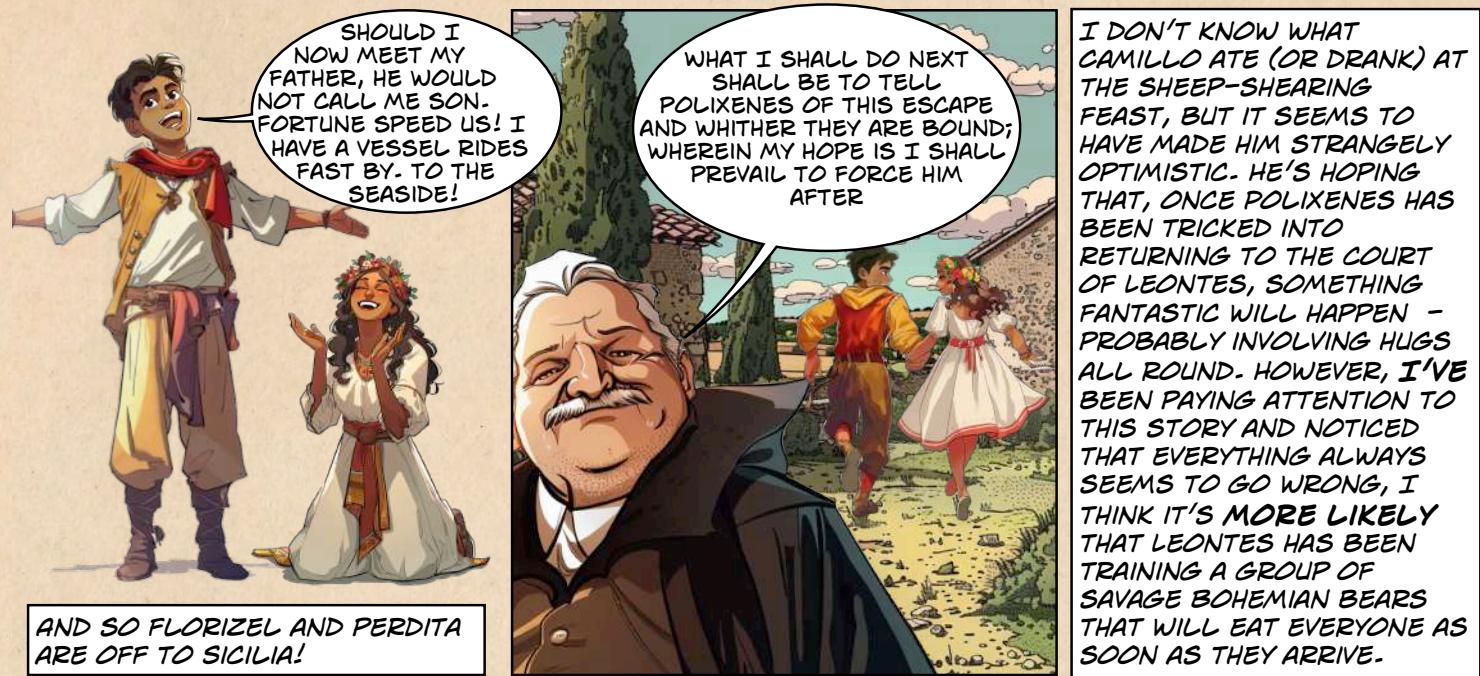


AUTOLYCUS HAS DONE VERY WELL AT THE FESTIVAL. HE GOT BUSY SELLING ALL SORTS OF STUFF: RIBBONS, LACE, GLOVES, SONGS. AND THE GUESTS COULDN'T GET ENOUGH OF IT! SO, NOW, HE'S ABOUT TO GO HOME, BUT MAYBE THERE'S ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOME CASH...



DEFINITELY A WEIRD REQUEST...





AND SO FLORIZEL AND PERDITA ARE OFF TO SICILIA!

SOMEBODY HAS BEEN HIDING AND LISTENING!

HERE COMES THE OLD SHEPHERD AND HIS SON...

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?

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

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



AND THEY KEPT THE EVIDENCE...

SHOW THOSE THINGS YOU FOUND ABOUT HER, THOSE SECRET THINGS

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!

PRAY HEARTILY HE BE AT PALACE

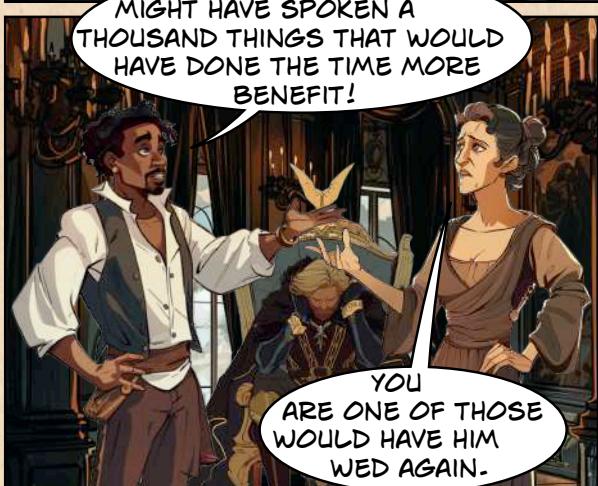
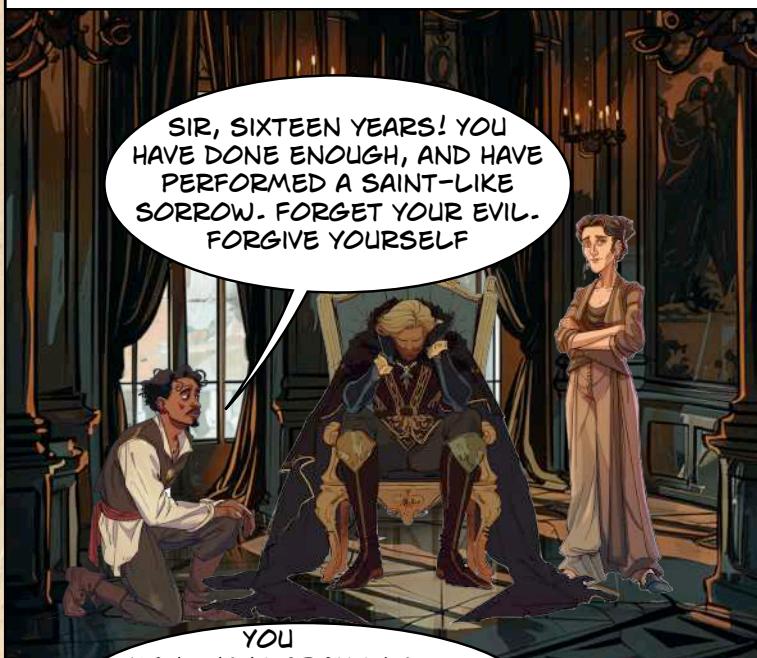
AN PLEASE IT SIR, TO UNDERTAKE THIS BUSINESS FOR US, HERE IS THE GOLD THAT I HAVE

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...

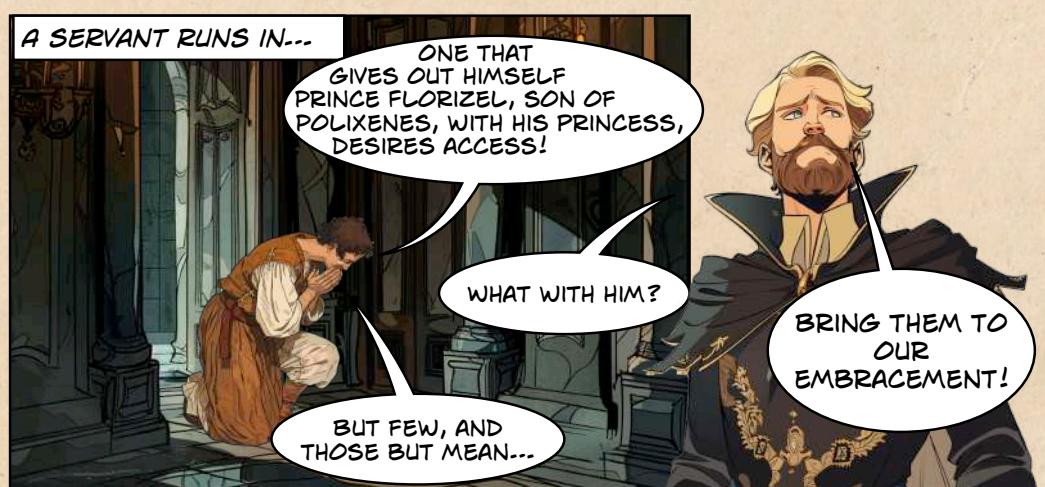
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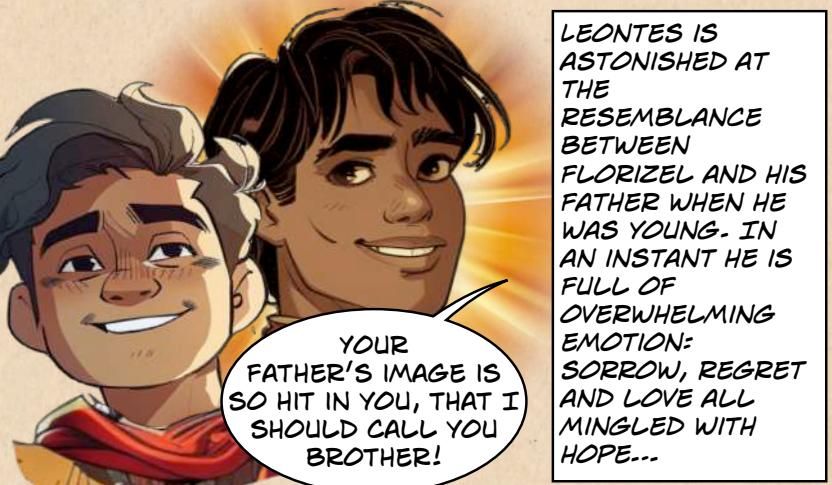
DEAR LIFE REDEEMS you

SIXTEEN YEARS HAVE SEEMED A VERY LONG TIME IN THE COURT OF SICILIA. LET'S PAY LEONTES A VISIT...



AND THERE YOU HAVE WHAT IS WORRYING SO MANY IN LEONTES' COURT. IF HE DOESN'T MARRY AGAIN, IF THERE ARE NO MORE CHILDREN, THERE WILL BE NO HEIR TO THE THRONE - WHICH MIGHT WELL LEAD TO WAR!





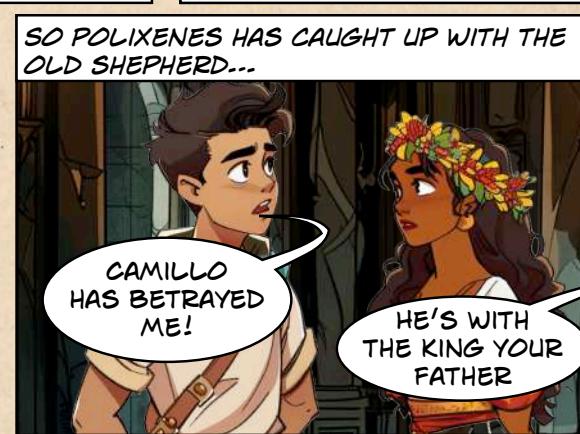
LEONTES IS
ASTONISHED AT
THE
RESEMBLANCE
BETWEEN
FLORIZEL AND HIS
FATHER WHEN HE
WAS YOUNG. IN
AN INSTANT HE IS
FULL OF
OVERWHELMING
EMOTION:
SORROW, REGRET
AND LOVE ALL
MINGLED WITH
HOPE...



FLORIZEL IS
TELLING A
BIT OF A LIE,
HE'S NOT
HERE TO
SEND
GREETINGS
FROM
POLIXENES
IS HE? QUITE
THE
OPPOSITE,
HE'S ON THE
RUN FROM
HIM! HE'S
HOPING THIS
LITTLE LIE
WON'T GET
FOUND OUT...

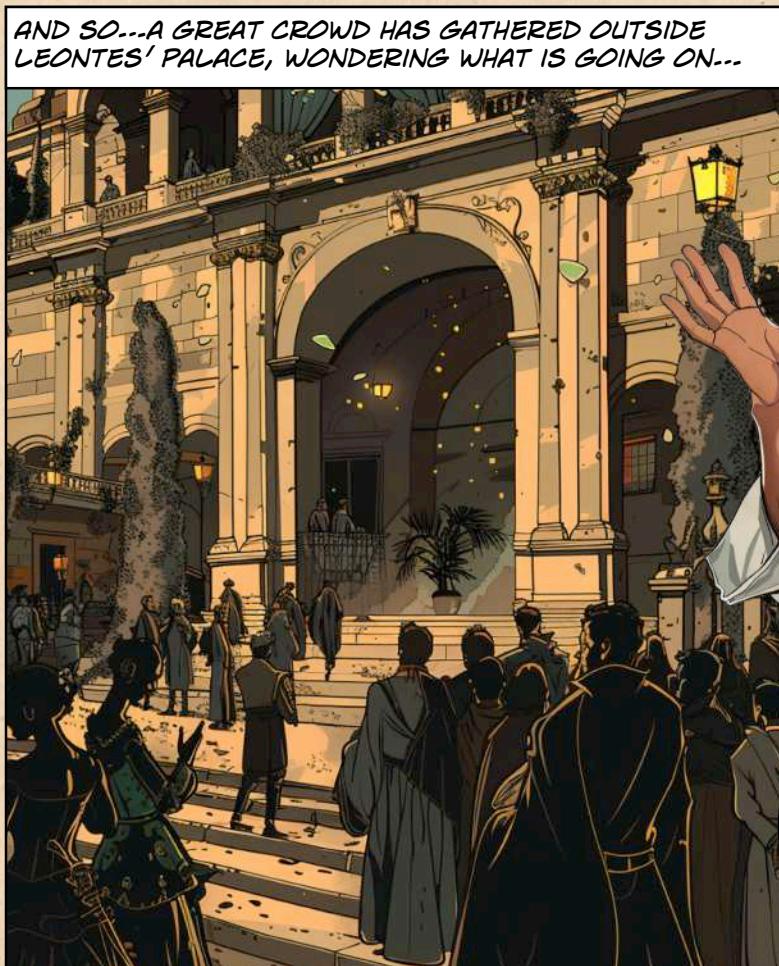
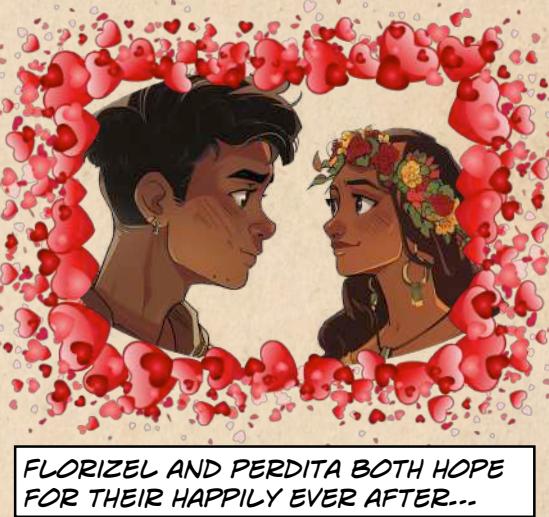


OOPS! WELL FLORIZEL'S STORY
DIDN'T HOLD UP FOR LONG..





STEP FORTH MINE ADVOCATE? WOW, HE'S ASKING LEONTES TO SPEAK TO POLIXENES ON HIS BEHALF! WE'VE ALREADY ESTABLISHED: PRINCES SHOULD MARRY PRINCESSES AND THEY SHOULD MARRY TO MAKE THEIR KINGDOMS MORE POWERFUL, NOT FOR LOVE. LEONTES IS A KING, HE UNDERSTANDS THIS. BUT HE IS ALSO A MAN, AND ONE WHO HAS SPENT THE LAST 16 YEARS THINKING ABOUT HOW MUCH HE LOVED HIS OWN WIFE AND HOW HE DID HER WRONG...



SO, THE SHEPHERD SHOWED LEONTES ALL THE STUFF IN THE FARDEL THAT WAS LEFT WITH PERDITA - WHICH, OF COURSE, LEONTES RECOGNISED BECAUSE IT HAD BELONGED TO HERMIONE BEFORE!



AS NEWS SPREADS ROUND THE CROWD, YOU CAN FEEL THE EXCITEMENT IN THE AIR. SICILIA IS SAVED! AN HEIR TO THE THRONE! THE KING REUNITED WITH PERDITA, HIS LONG-LOST CHILD! IT'S LIKE A FAIRYTALE! AND OF COURSE, NOW THAT PERDITA IS PROVED A PRINCESS, SHE AND FLORIZEL CAN MARRY!

DID YOU SEE THE MEETING OF THE TWO KINGS? THEN YOU HAVE LOST A SIGHT WHICH WAS TO BE SEEN...



OUR KING, BEING READY TO LEAP OUT OF HIMSELF FOR JOY OF HIS FOUND DAUGHTER CRIES...

THEN ASKS POLIXENES FORGIVENESS

THEN EMBRACES FLORIZEL

NOW HE THANKS THE OLD SHEPHERD

O THY MOTHER, THY MOTHER!

OK, OK. BEFORE ANYBODY POINTS THIS OUT, YES, CAMILLO WAS RIGHT AT THE END OF ACT 4, AND I WAS WRONG. IT WOULD SEEM THAT THERE HAVE BEEN HUGS ALL ROUND... AND THE SHEPHERDS ARE SAFE!

ARE THEY RETURNED TO COURT?

NO! THE PRINCESS HEARING OF HER MOTHER'S STATUE - WHICH IS IN THE KEEPING OF PAULINA - THITHER ARE THEY GONE...

WAIT A MINUTE, WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT A STATUE OF HERMIONE? WHY AM I ONLY HEARING ABOUT THIS NOW?

A PIECE MANY YEARS IN THE DOING AND NOW NEWLY PERFORMED BY THAT ITALIAN MASTER, JULIO ROMANO

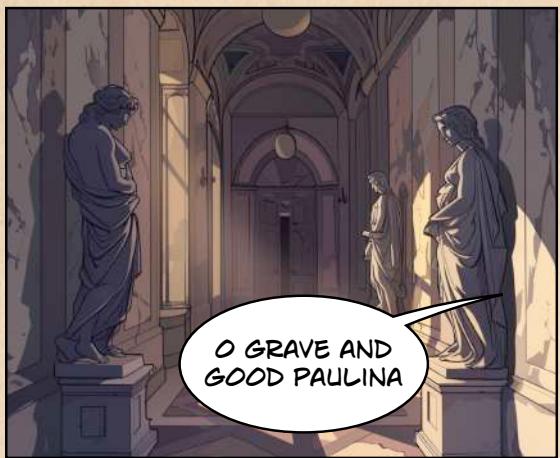
OH, RIGHT. SO IT'S A STATUE THAT THIS JULIO ROMANO HAS BEEN WORKING ON FOR A LONG TIME, I JUST HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT IT. AND PAULINA'S BEEN LOOKING AFTER IT?



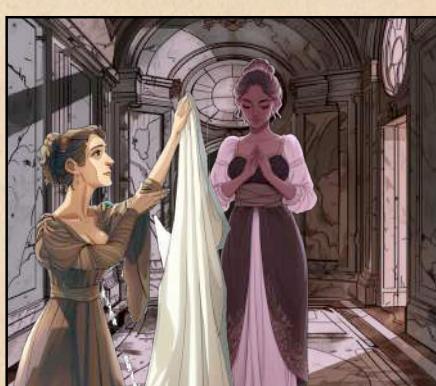
OK! THANKS VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP, WE'D BETTER GO AND HAVE A LOOK FOR OURSELVES. THIS IS THE PLACE THAT PAULINA HAS KEPT SECRET FOR ALL THESE YEARS...



SO, HERE WE ARE INSIDE, AND THE GANG'S ALL HERE: LEONTES, POLIXENES, CAMILLO, FLORIZEL AND PERDITA. THEY ARE ALL **SO** HAPPY TO BE BACK TOGETHER. THERE ARE MANY STATUES TO LOOK AT, BUT THEY REALLY ONLY CARE ABOUT ONE IN PARTICULAR...



THE STATUE LOOKS JUST LIKE THE QUEEN. MAYBE IT'S THE WAY THAT IT'S HIT BY THE LIGHT, BUT IT LOOKS SO LIFELIKE. AND IT BRINGS ALL THOSE MEMORIES FROM SIXTEEN YEARS AGO BACK FOR LEONTES.

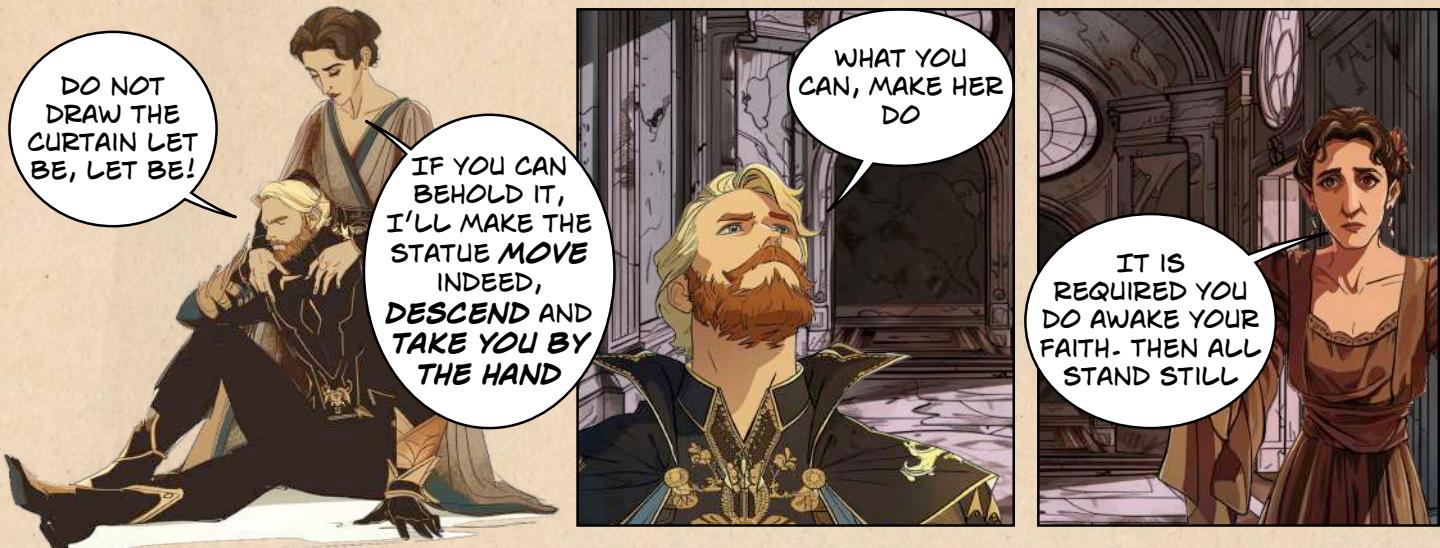


DO NOT
DRAW THE
CURTAIN LET
BE, LET BE!

IF YOU CAN
BEHOLD IT,
I'LL MAKE THE
STATUE MOVE
INDEED,
DESCEND AND
TAKE YOU BY
THE HAND

WHAT YOU
CAN, MAKE HER
DO

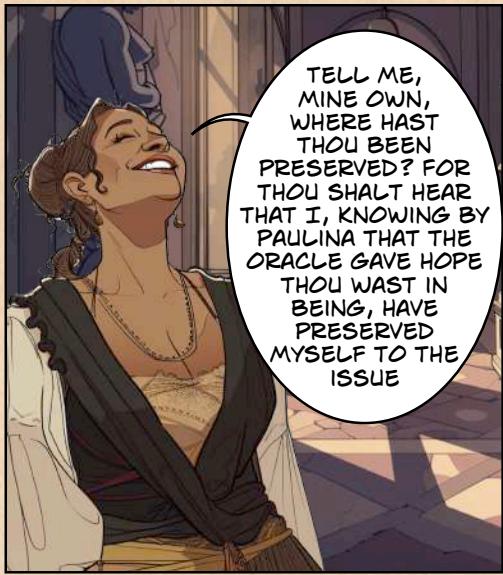
IT IS
REQUIRED YOU
DO AWAKE YOUR
FAITH. THEN ALL
STAND STILL



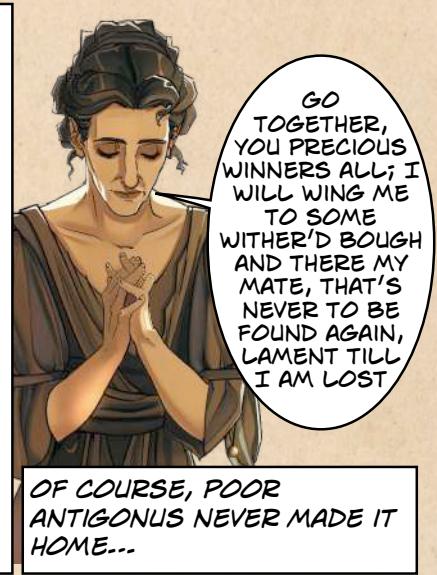
O, SHE'S
WARM! IF THIS BE
MAGIC, LET IT BE AN
ART AS LAWFUL AS
EATING!

TURN, GOOD
LADY; OUR
PERDITA IS
FOUND





WAIT, I'M A BIT CONFUSED HERE.... I THINK THE STATUE HAS JUST SAID THAT SHE HAS STAYED ALIVE BECAUSE PAULINA TOLD HER THAT THE ORACLE SAID THAT HER BABY - PERDITA - HAD SURVIVED. BUT STATUES CAN'T HAVE BABIES, CAN THEY? AND IF THEY DID, WOULDN'T THEY BE STATUE BABIES? HMM. COULD THIS POSSIBLY BE THE REAL HERMIONE! WHAT? YOU'VE ALREADY WORKED THAT OUT? GREAT. RIGHT, SO PAULINA HAS PRETENDED THAT SHE'S BEEN HAVING A STATUE OF HERMIONE MADE, TO KEEP THE REAL HERMIONE SAFE ALL THIS TIME, AND TO MAKE SURE THAT LEONTES IS PROPERLY SORRY. I GET IT NOW...



OF COURSE, POOR ANTIGONUS NEVER MADE IT HOME...



SO, THAT'S IT, EVERYONE'S OFF, PROBABLY TO HAVE LUNCH, AND CERTAINLY TO TELL EACH OTHER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED IN THE LAST SIXTEEN YEARS. WE DON'T GET TO HEAR THAT, THOUGH, AS THIS IS WHERE THE STORY ENDS FOR US - MUCH MORE HAPPILY THAN I HAD THOUGHT IT WOULD HALF WAY THROUGH! WHAT A WINTER'S TALE IT WAS! SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED AND SO MUCH TIME HAS PASSED. THINGS WORKED OUT FOR EVERYONE IN THE END - APART FROM POOR ANTIGONUS. MAYBE ONE OF THE MORALS OF THE STORY IS DON'T GO TO A BEACH WHERE THERE ARE BEARS? OR MAYBE, THE MAIN THING TO LEARN IS THAT JEALOUSY CAN RUIN EVERYTHING, BUT LOVE WILL ALWAYS WIN IN THE END! OH LOOK, THE BLIZZARD OUTSIDE SEEMS TO HAVE STOPPED AND IT'S TIME TO LEAVE THE LAND OF SICILIA. SAFE JOURNEY, PERHAPS WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOMEDAY?

THE END!