

The Winter's Tale abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 2

Joy

Situation: Leontes welcomes Florizell and Perdita to Sicily. We quickly learn that Florizell's father has also just arrived in Sicily. We learn that Florizell is upset, having now become aware that his father is there, saying "Camillo has betrayed us." We learn that Florizell and Perdita are not married and that Leontes has "found his heir." The two kings graciously greet each other. It was sixteen years ago that Leontes had acted irrationally, thinking Polixenes "had touched his wife forbiddenly."

SECOND GENTLEMAN: Here comes the Lady Paulina's steward. He can deliver you more. This news which is called true is so like an old tale that the verity of it is in strong suspicion. Has the king found his heir?

THIRD GENTLEMAN: Most true, if ever truth were pregnant by circumstance. That which you hear you'll swear you see, there is such unity in the proofs. The majesty of the creature in resemblance of the mother, and other evidences proclaim her with all certainty to be the King's daughter. Did you see the meeting of the two kings?

SECOND GENTLEMAN: No.

Third Gentleman to the Second Gentleman

'Twas a sight to be seen, not to hear of.
There you would have beheld one joy above
Another, in such a rare manner where
Sorrow seeming took its leave of them, for
Their joy waded in tears. They cast up their
Eyes, held up their hands, known by what they wore,
Not by faces. Our king, being ready
To leap out of his happy self for glee
Of his found daughter, cries "O thy mother,"
As if that joy had become a loss. He
Then attacks his daughter with hugging her,
Embraces Florizell for all to see,
And thanks the shepherd for the help he's been;
The man weeping like a worn-through fountain.

THIRD GENTLEMAN: I never heard of such another encounter, which makes weak the report to follow it and ruins description's attempt to describe it.

SECOND GENTLEMAN: What, pray you, became of Antigonus, that carried hence the child?

THIRD GENTLEMAN: He was torn to pieces with a bear. This avouches the shepherd's son, who has not only his innocence, but a handkerchief and rings of his that Paulina knows.