

The Winter's Tale abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 1

Counsel

Situation: Camillo, Florizell and Perdita are on their way to Sicily. The Shepherd's Son suggests to his father that "there is no other way but to tell the king she's a child left by the fairies and none of your flesh and blood." In Sicily, Paulina gives the guilt-ridden Leontes some good advice: it is best he not marry.

PAULINA: True, too true, my lord. If one by one you wedded all the world, she you killed would be unparalleled.

LEONTES: She I killed? I did so, but thou strik'st me sorely to say I did.

CLEOMENES: You might have spoken a thousand things that would have done the time more benefit and graced your kindness better.

PAULINA: You are one of those would have him wed again.

DION: If you would not so, you consider little what dangers by his Highness' fail of issue may drop upon his kingdom and devour uncertain lookers-on.

Paulina to Others

In respect to Hermione, there's none
Worthy. Besides, we must honor the one
Who's gone, the gods having demanded their
Secret purposes be fulfilled, for 'twas
Apollo who said there shall be no heir
To the King till his child be found, and does
That not defy our human reason as
If my husband broke from his grave and has
Come again to me, who, on my life, did
Perish with the infant. 'Tis your plan, sir,
To be contrary to heaven's wills. Bid
Your crown to find an heir. Alexander
The Great left his crown to the worthiest;
That his successor be seen as the best.