

The Winter's Tale abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 2

Fear

Situation: Leontes has let his distorted imagination concerning his misguided belief of an intimate relationship between his wife and Polixenes get out of hand. In an almost delusional way he blames his aide and friend Camillo for not telling him what he wants to believe and wants to hear: that his wife has been unfaithful. Camillo becomes seriously frightened.

LEONTES: Satisfy? Th' entreaties of your mistress? Satisfy? Let that suffice. I have trusted thee, Camillo, but we have been deceived regarding thy integrity, deceived in that which seems so.

CAMILLO: Be it forbid, my lord!

LEONTES: To dwell upon it: thou art not honest; or thou art a coward; or else thou must be counted a servant completely in my confidence and therein negligent; or else a fool that seest a game played home, the rich stake drawn, and tak'st it all in jest.

Camillo to Leontes

**My gracious lord, I may negligent be,
And foolish, but in these no man is free,
For in the fears and folly that here lie
Among the infinite doings of the
World, his weaknesses sometimes appear. My
Lord, it was my folly if I willfully
Were ever negligent. If purposely
I was being negligent, it was me
Playing the fool, not weighing the end. Men
Are sometimes hesitant to do a thing. 'Tis
A fear that oft infects the wisest when
An issue is doubted. Honesty is
Ne'er free of these allowed infirmities.
Be plainer with me with what your Grace sees.**

LEONTES: Have you not seen, Camillo? If thou wilt confess, then say my wife deserves a name as rank as any lower class worker. Say it and justify it.

CAMILLO: You never spoke what did become you less than this.

LEONTES: Is whispering nothing? Is leaning cheek to cheek? Is meeting noses? Stopping the course of laughter with a sigh? Horsing foot on foot? Is this nothing? Why, then the world and all that's in 't is nothing.

CAMILLO: Good my lord, be cured of this diseased opinion, for 'tis most dangerous.