

# Winter's Tale

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## SCENE II. Bohemia. The palace of POLIXENES.

*Enter POLIXENES and CAMILLO*

### POLIXENES

I pray thee, good Camillo, be no more importunate:  
'tis a sickness denying thee any thing; a death to  
grant this.

### CAMILLO

It is fifteen years since I saw my country: though  
I have for the most part been aired abroad, I  
desire to lay my bones there. Besides, the penitent  
king, my master, hath sent for me; to whose feeling  
sorrows I might be some allay, or I o'erween to  
think so, which is another spur to my departure.

### POLIXENES

As thou lovest me, Camillo, wipe not out the rest of  
thy services by leaving me now: the need I have of  
thee thine own goodness hath made; better not to  
have had thee than thus to want thee: thou, having  
made me businesses which none without thee can  
sufficiently manage, must either stay to execute  
them thyself or take away with thee the very  
services thou hast done; which if I have not enough  
considered, as too much I cannot, to be more  
thankful to thee shall be my study, and my profit  
therein the heaping friendships. Of that fatal  
country, Sicilia, prithee speak no more; whose very  
naming punishes me with the remembrance of that  
penitent, as thou callest him, and reconciled king,  
my brother; whose loss of his most precious queen  
and children are even now to be afresh lamented.  
Say to me, when sawest thou the Prince Florizel, my  
son? Kings are no less unhappy, their issue not  
being gracious, than they are in losing them when  
they have approved their virtues.

### CAMILLO

Sir, it is three days since I saw the prince. What  
his happier affairs may be, are to me unknown: but I  
have missingly noted, he is of late much retired

from court and is less frequent to his princely exercises than formerly he hath appeared.

## **POLIXENES**

I have considered so much, Camillo, and with some care; so far that I have eyes under my service which look upon his removedness; from whom I have this intelligence, that he is seldom from the house of a most homely shepherd; a man, they say, that from very nothing, and beyond the imagination of his neighbours, is grown into an unspeakable estate.

## **CAMILLO**

I have heard, sir, of such a man, who hath a daughter of most rare note: the report of her is extended more than can be thought to begin from such a cottage.

## **POLIXENES**

That's likewise part of my intelligence; but, I fear, the angle that plucks our son thither. Thou shalt accompany us to the place; where we will, not appearing what we are, have some question with the shepherd; from whose simplicity I think it not uneasy to get the cause of my son's resort thither. Prithce, be my present partner in this business, and lay aside the thoughts of Sicilia.

## **CAMILLO**

I willingly obey your command.

## **POLIXENES**

My best Camillo! We must disguise ourselves.

*Exeunt*