

The Winter's Tale

Week 8

4.4 (cont.)

325-42 A Servant enters with news that 9 (or 12...?) country men have arrived all dressed as “men of hair”¹ [satyrs/leapers...? (“Saltiers”)] – “wenches” claim that their dance consists of a jumble (“gallimaufry”) of gambols and jumping. The dancers believe that their dance will “please plentifully”, if it isn’t too rough a sport for those with a taste for more genteel pastimes (“bowling”) [**Since Satyrs were associated with sexually uninhibited behaviour Shep. may be nervous of this aspect of their performance and fear blatant vulgarity**];

Shep. is anxious to dismiss the dancers, fearing that the gentlemen strangers have already witnessed too much “homely (rustic) foolery” but Pol. requests that they see “these **four**(?) threes of herdsmen”;

Serv. adds further encouragement by urging various recommendations of the dancers’ skill & reputation and Shep. is prevailed upon to agree “since these good men are pleased”.

s.d. *Here a dance of twelve Satyrs*²

During the dance Shep. & Pol. have been in serious conversation – as also indicated at 311 (“sad talk”) – to which Pol. refers with “you’ll know more of that hereafter” (343);

Pol. is clearly concerned that the relationship between Per. & Flor. has “too far gone” and determines that “’Tis time to part them” – Shep., being “simple” (naïve), has spoken frankly and revealed all that Pol. needed to know about his son’s feelings for Per. and the progress of their love;

345-57 Addressing Flor., Pol. enquires whether some important matter distracts his attention from the feast – he observes that when he (Pol.) was young and “handed (handled) love” (**i.e. with Flor.’s mother, presumably...?**) he would overwhelm his beloved with knick-knacks and

¹ These beings were supposed to be the companions of Dionysus or Bacchus; in Greek art they were originally represented as having the form of a man with a horse’s ears and tail, often with large genitals, and later sometimes as having some goat-like features; the more usual representation in Roman art was of a man with a goat’s ears, tail, legs, and (sometimes only budding) horns (cf. FAUN *n.*), and it is in this form that satyrs are now usually represented. They have generally been associated with drunkenness and (especially sexually) uninhibited behaviour [*OED*].

² The **s.d.** is given in F1.

all the pedlar's "silken treasury" (351) whereas Flor. has let him depart without trading with him; if his beloved should misinterpret this negligence she could accuse him of "lack of love or bounty (generosity)" – in which case Flor. would find it difficult to respond, if, indeed, he really cares for her and wishes to keep her.

Flor. responds that Per. does not value such fripperies but values the more substantial "gifts" that he can offer her – such as are "pack'd and lock'd/ Up in my heart" [**The imagery is of a box or trunk for building a trousseau.**]³ – he has "given already" as expressions and promises of love but not yet "deliver'd" in the form of a betrothal or marriage;⁴

Addressing Per., Flor. solemnly ("O hear me ...) makes vows of lifelong love, taking her hand in words which emphasise its softness & pure whiteness ("dove's down ... "Ethiopian's tooth ... fann'd snow");

Astonished by the earnestness and solemnity of his son's words Pol. wonders "What follows next?" since the hand that was already white has been rendered even more so by extravagant comparisons;

However, he apologises for interrupting Flor. and urges him to continue;

If Flor.'s previous speech had contained elements of a formal betrothal, his urging Pol. to "be **witness** to't" – together with Cam./Shep....? ("my neighbour") gives an additional formality;

Flo. Calls upon "men, the earth, the heavens, and all" to witness that he "would not prize" temporal power, physical beauty nor knowledge "Without her love" (377) – all of these he would commit either "to her service,/ Or to their own perdition";⁵

In spite of their instinctive opposition to a marriage between two young people of such (apparently) unequal rank Pol. & Cam. are nevertheless impressed by the seriousness of Flor.'s declaration;

Shep. asks for Per.'s response:

Modestly, Per. replies – using a metaphor of cutting material to a "pattern" – that she cannot speak as well as the educated Flor. but that she judges the purity of his intentions like her own – i.e. their feelings are the same.

³ The Italian word was 'cassone'.

⁴ Perdita's inherent high-born qualities distinguish her again from Mopsa and Dorcas, country rustics who clearly craved the fripperies that Perdita despises.

⁵ "**imperial monarch**" (373) – when Florizel and Perdita are ruling Sicily and Bohemia they will be imperial monarchs, with Perdita granddaughter of the Emperor of Russia.

Hearing this the Shep. proposes a formal civil marriage between the lovers: he urges them to “take hands” and before witnesses – including Pol. & Cam., the “friends unknown” (385) – undertakes to “give my daughter to him” and to make Per.’s dowry equal to Flor’s..

Flor. observes that any ‘equality’ between their dowries – he being a crown prince – must be made up with Per.’s virtue rather than material wealth; enigmatically, he observes that “one being dead” (i.e. his father, the king) his own ‘dowry’ will be “Enough then for your wonder” (390) and calls upon Shep. to “Contract us ‘fore witnesses”;

Before(?) the lovers can take hands Pol. asks if Flor. has a father, observing that the man’s father should be present as a guest at the wedding feast; again he asks if Flor.’s father is “incapable/ Of reasonable affairs” – i.e. is he mentally or physically incapable (senile);

Flor. has to confess that his father is in robust health – indeed, better than most men of his age;

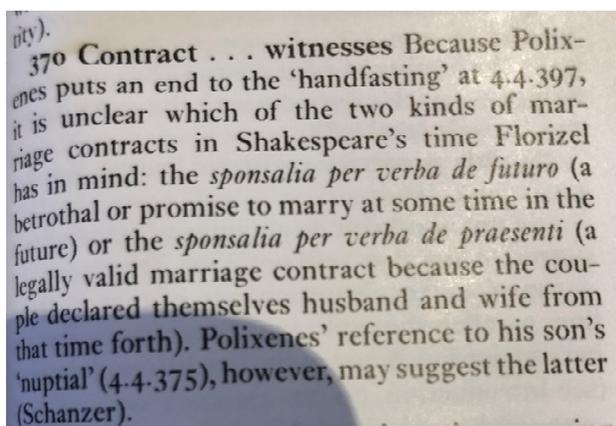
In that case, says Pol. Flor. will wrong his father, indeed, he will be “unfilial” – a son should choose a wife using reason (i.e. not be unduly swayed by feelings/emotions) and since the father’s own happiness will depend on a reputable lineage he should “hold some counsel” in the matter;

Flor. concedes all of these observations but “for some other reasons” he will not acquaint his father with his intentions;

There follows a brief exchange in which Flor. remains defiant – even Per.’s ‘father’ adds his voice that Flor.’s father “shall not need to grieve” when he knows his son’s choice;

Still Flor. remains adamant and insists that he should “Mark our **contract**” (i.e. bear witness to it);

N.B. To clarify (sort of) the meaning of the “**contract**” referred to here:



ity).
 370 Contract . . . witnesses Because Polixenes puts an end to the ‘handfasting’ at 4.4.397, it is unclear which of the two kinds of marriage contracts in Shakespeare’s time Florizel has in mind: the *sponsalia per verba de futuro* (a betrothal or promise to marry at some time in the future) or the *sponsalia per verba de praesenti* (a legally valid marriage contract because the couple declared themselves husband and wife from that time forth). Polixenes’ reference to his son’s ‘nuptial’ (4.4.375), however, may suggest the latter (Schanzer).

[New Cambridge edition (ed. Snyder etc), p. 194.]

Clearly recognising that his son's mind is fixed Pol. dramatically removes his disguise as he insists "Mark your divorce, young sir..." (418).

Instantaneously, Pol. seems to be transformed into the archetypal tyrant – just as, in the first part of the play, Leon. was transformed by an inexplicable jealousy:

Pol.'s language is now cruel and calculatedly offensive: Flor. is "too base/To be acknowledg'd"; Per. is characterised as "a sheep-hook"; Shep. an "old traitor" with additional talk of "hanging" & "witchcraft";

Per. is threatened physically (426-47) and called a "knack" – i.e. like one of the trifles that Aut. sells – while Flor. will be disowned ("not hold thee of our blood") and barred from succeeding to the throne – **i.e. just as Per. was by Leon. when he believed she was illegitimate.**

However, **also like Leon.** Pol. shows himself capable of ultimate redemption by **quickly reversing the threat of hanging he had earlier pronounced** on Shep. (433-34) – though he still uses the insulting "churl"; yet he still threatens Per. with "a death as cruel for thee/ As thou art tender to it" if she ever again embraces Flor.. **He exits abruptly and alone.**

Even the retiring Per. had been about to remind the king that the sun shines on all and not the court alone – but nevertheless seems resigned to losing Flor. – she had warned him of his father's reaction and refers to her earlier "dream" – she will "queen it no inch farther" but be content with her role as a common milk maid.

430-42 Cam. & Shep. both seem to have forgotten that Pol. had reprieved (434-35) Shep. from the sentence of death – **or perhaps Shak. added the reprieve after this exchange...?**

Shep. laments his fate, apparently resigned to the fact that the hangman will dispose of his remains rather than the humble but dignified death he had expected. He rebukes both Flor and Per. who knew of Flor.'s high birth but still risked "To mingle faith with him" – his only wish now is to die "within this hour" and so be spared the indignities he had referred to earlier. **Shep exits.**

463-67 Addressing Cam., Flor. states his determination to hold to his previous course – he is not cowed by his father's threats – indeed, he is

now more determined and eager having encountered his father's opposition.

Cam. reminds Flor. of his father's temper – he would not even agree to see his son in his present mood. [**Pol.'s temper is the equivalent of Leon.'s jealousy – sudden, extreme and not susceptible of reasoning.**]

Only at this moment – “I think – Camillo?” – does Flor. recognise Cam. under his disguise.

Per. again reminds Flor. that she had warned him “twould be thus” – her notional high rank (“dignity”) would last only until the king found out;

Again Flor. reassures her, reasserting his faith in his own feelings – so sure, in fact, that posits the destruction of the world when he should break that faith (477-82);

Cam's advice of caution brings Flor.'s assertion that he is ‘advised’ by his love (“fancy”); if his reason will agree with his love then he will keep sane; if not, his senses will prefer and welcome madness (483-86);

He reaffirms his oath by referencing not only the “pomp” of the crown of Bohemia but everything on and under the earth and the sea before “I will break my oath/ To this fair belov'd” (492-93).

Flor. now appeals to Cam.: when his father realises that his son has left – and Flor. never intends to see him again – he asks Cam. to use his “good counsels” to moderate the king's passion; for the present let him (Flor.) contend with chance over what happens in the future;

Flor. tells Cam. that he will set sail with Per. when a vessel he has anchored “fast by” is equipped for sea – what course he intends to sail he does not intend to inform Cam. while Cam. wishes that Flor.'s spirit were more receptive to advice and steadier for what he needs to do.

As Flor. takes Per. aside, Cam. confides to the audience that he could work to his own advantage, protect and serve Flor., direct him towards Sicilia and Leontes “whom/ I so much thirst to see”;

Turning back to Cam. Flor.'s mind is so troubled by matters requiring great care that he will “leave out ceremony” – he acknowledges the service that Cam. has done for the king, serves which Pol. has acknowledged and rewarded;

That being the case, Cam. proposes his own plan which he commends to Flor.:

Tactfully – and in courtly language (525-27) – Cam. realises that Flor. has no plan and recommends a course of action in which Flor. will be received in a manner suited to his rank, where he will “Enjoy your mistress” from whom Flor. will never be separated without causing his ruin. He urges Flor. to “marry her” and Cam. will do his best to pacify the angry Pol. and to reconcile him with his son.

Amazed, Flor. regards such a prospect as a “miracle” – if it could be done – in which case Cam. may be regarded as a god (535-37).

Flor. confesses he has no idea where he and Per. might go – ‘Because unexpected misfortune is responsible for what we’re doing now so haphazardly (“wildly”) we see ourselves utterly in the power of chance, like flies carried along by every wind’ [Arden3, p. 293];

542-73 Cam. elaborates on his own plan: to make for Sicilia and present Per. – “your fair princess” whom Flor. is determined to marry and make a princess – to Leontes. By that time Per. will be dressed appropriately befitting his wife (“The partner of your bed”). Cam. believes that the guilt-ridden Leon. will welcome them and greet them, asking forgiveness “As ‘twere in’th’ father’s person” and alternating between his former evil behaviour (to Pol.) and present affection (for both Pol. & Flor.); the one he consigns to hell and the other he hopes will prosper and flourish;

The pretext for Flor.’s visit will be as an ambassador from his father to greet and comfort Leon.. Cam. will write down how Flor. should conduct himself and what to say at each audience so that Leon. will not suspect anything other than that he comes with Pol.’s approval and speaks for the king.

Cam. elaborates on his “more promising” plan than Flor.’s vague one to “undreamed shores” where the only certainty will be the each random anchorage “where you’ll be loath to be” (573).

Moreover, say Cam. – alluding to the proverbial saying ‘Prosperity gets friends, but adversity tries them’ – adversity (hardship/suffering?) may change for the worse the “fresh complexion” of love.

Silent for some time Per. agrees that adversity may, indeed, diminish one physically but not subdue the soul;

Cam. (to Flor...?) is impressed, observing that even one (infant?) born into the royal household (of royal blood) would be a rarity compared with the nobility of Per.;

Flor. agrees that Per.'s personal qualities place her as far beyond her family origins as she falls short of her royal birth;

Cam. confirms that even though Per. has lacked formal education she could be the instructress of the instructors.

Flor. is now impatient to put Cam.'s plan into action (Prov. 'to sit/stand upon thorns'). He acknowledges Cam. as being like a physician providing "medicine" first for his father and now for himself and asks how they should proceed since he is not dressed like the son of a king and cannot appear as he is at Leon.'s court. [It seems that the sound, practical advice of Cam. has begun to have some effect on Flor. whose awareness of practicalities is in contrast to his earlier impulsiveness.]

Again Cam. has a practical solution: his own fortune/wealth remains in Sicilia and he will provide the funds to ensure that Flor. (and Per.) "royally appointed" – the "scene" that Flor. will play before Leon. will be Camillo's in the sense that he will have written the script – and also provided the costumes.

They continue their conversation *aside* as Aut. enters:

596-620 In prose now he is scornful of "Honesty ... Trust" and gloats that he has sold all of his "trumpery" – he lists the items he has sold and mocks the eagerness of his rustic customers who regard his wares like holy relics that will bring them some blessing ("benediction");

An added bonus was that when they opened their purses to pay for the goods he could see which were ripe for robbing at a later date.

The Clown was so attracted by the song of Mop. & Dor. that his enthusiasm "drew the rest of the herd" whose senses of hearing and feeling were so engrossed that both women and men became numb and unaware of Aut.'s robbing their persons (AND/OR fiddling with their private parts...?); he could even have taken a file to their household keys hanging from a chain around the waist. While they were in this "lethargy" he could have picked the pockets or cut the purses of everyone present had not the Shep. arrived creating a great hubbub about his daughter and the king's son and distracted Aur.'s "choughs".

Cam., Flor. & Per. enter in mid-conversation:

The letters having reached Sicily "by this means" (unexplained at this stage) will be there when Flor. arrives to resolve any doubt that Leon. may have – while Cam. will procure letters from Leon. that will "satisfy" Pol..

As Per. thanks Cam. and is optimistic of success (“shows fair”).

Seeing Aut. Cam. sees that he may be used to further the success of their own plot (626):

Becoming aware of the others Aut. hopes desperately that they have not overheard him – his shaking may be genuine, fearing a hanging.

Cam. reassures Aut. that they mean him no harm and will not steal from him. However, of necessity, they must make use of “the outside of thy poverty” and order him to undress and change clothes with Flor. – even though Flor. will get the worst of the bargain there will still be something extra for Aut. (“boot”) – Cam. gives Aut. some money here...?

Aut. plays along with this strange request, though his *asides* make it clear that he understands very well that they want to make a disguise and because he has already accepted some money (“earnest”) from Cam. to purchase his co-operation his “conscience” will not allow him to take more – though he no doubt accepts more...

While Aut. and Flor. exchange clothes Cam. instructs Per. to “retire yourself” to some hiding place and disguise her own beauty so that she will not be recognised aboard ship – “For I do fear eyes over” (654) suggests that Cam. is wary of Pol.’s spies.

655-59 The transformation of identities is swiftly accomplished and “Adieu” bid to Aut. (though he remains onstage).

Flor. draws Per. aside while Cam. informs us [audience] that he must tell Pol. of the escape and encourage him to follow his son to Sicilia, a place that Cam. longs to see again. *Exeunt Flor., Per. & Cam.*

As the three hurry away Aut. (in prose again) remains to confirm that he fully understands what is going on – having a “quick eye and nimble hand” and other alert faculties are essential for a cut-purse; he is optimistic that the time has come when “the unjust man (i.e. himself) doth thrive” (674) [a notion with several biblical examples: Psalm 37.35, 73.3 etc].

He rejoices that the change of clothes alone would have been to his benefit even without the tip; he concludes that the gods themselves are on his side and he and his like can get away with anything without even planning it.

He understands that even the prince is “stealing” away with his encumbrance (“clog” – i.e. Perdita) – he argues that if it could be regarded as an ‘honest’ thing for him to inform Pol. (for profit...?) and so

prevent the scheme from success he would not do so – he will remain ‘faithful’ to his profession/vocation (i.e. knavery) by concealing it.

Seeing Clo. & Shep. approaching he stands aside and reflects that (the gods being on his side) every place where people congregate gives him the chance to prosper. He listens...

Clo. argues that since Per. is not Clo.’s natural sister (“blood”) he, personally, can have given the king no offence and therefore will not be punished – particularly when they reveal that Per. is a “changeling”. Clo. should show the “secret things” (696) – i.e. **clothes, letters and box left with the infant Per.** – and then the law will not be able to penalise him;

Shep. confirms he will tell Pol. everything – including Flor.’s mischievous tricks; he is indignant that Flor. is “no honest man” to bring himself into danger by making him “the king’s brother-in-law” – which would clearly increase the monetary value of Shep.’s blood [**Shep. is confused, thinking that Flor.’s marrying Per. would make him the king’s brother at least; Clo. seems confused between ‘blood’ in one’s veins and ‘blood’ as aristocratic status**].

As Shep. & Clo. anticipate going to the palace Aut. considers his position – he considers that the bundle of objects may impede “the flight of my master” (i.e. Flor. – **N.B. we were told that Aut. had formerly been one of his servants**).

Aut. is now in a dilemma of his own and has to concede that “Though I am not naturally honest, I am so sometimes by chance” (712-13) and removing and concealing his false beard (“excrement”) he announces himself to the “rustics”.

Learning that they are bound for the palace he impertinently demands to be told all the details of their business (717-20). He counters Shep.’s claim of their being “plain fellows” with a charge of lying – which would be appropriate for tradesmen who “give us the lie” [**Is it likely that Aut. would ever have been a soldier? He may, of course, have tried to get favourable treatment from tradesmen by claiming to have been a soldier.**]

728–30 **give . . . lie** deceive us **soldiers** (by overcharging or giving short measure), but we pay them with genuine money, not sword thrusts (*steel*, a pun on steal, cheat): therefore they don't *give* us the lie, or a dishonest reckoning (they sell it us). To give the lie also meant to call a gentleman a liar, grounds for a duel or an immediate sword-thrust (see *Oth* 3.4.5–6). By pretending to be a courtier, Autolycus gets out of fighting the Clown, his 'inferior'.

Arden3, p.304.

Clo. observes that Aut. would have been guilty of telling them a lie had he not corrected himself in time – i.e. the self-correction “they ... give us the lie ... they do not give us the lie” (723-26):

731–2 **had . . . manner** would probably have lied to us if you hadn't caught your mistake in time; 'in the manner' was a legal phrase (Latin *a manu*, in the act), used of thieves caught red-handed (cf. Dent, M633; *LLL* 1.1.199–207). For other legal language see 4.3.93–4n., 5.2.125n. The Clown spots Autolycus' correcting himself: first he said tradesmen give **soldiers** the lie (728), then that they *don't* give it them (729–30).

Arden3, p. 304.

Aut. affirms that he is a courtier, referencing his courtly clothes (i.e. that belong to Flor.), his “gait” and fragrance (“court-odour”) – he claims to have some influence at court able to further or impede their business there – and demands that they fully reveal to him their business.

Shep. is cautious – his business is to the king.

Aut. asks if they have an “advocate” at court to further their cause [**The equivalent, perhaps, of a parliamentary lobbyist today...?**] and suggests that the best ‘advocate’ is a “pheasant” – i.e. a bribe.

N.B. 746-48 Claiming to be a gentleman, Aut. now assumes blank verse that would be dramatically suitable for one of his rank. He gives thanks that he was born a gentlemen and not “simple men ... as these are”.

Clearly impressed, Shep. acknowledges that Aut.'s clothes are “rich” – yet they clearly do not fit properly – Clo., however, is convinced by “the

picking on's teeth" (753-54) [**Toothpicks were often affected by travellers to appear stylish, though this was a practice unfamiliar to these rustics.**].

757-60 Shep. is still hesitant about revealing the bundle's contents and will do so only to the king; Aut. assures him (**falsely**) that Pol. has "gone abroad" to cure his melancholy [**It is Flor. who has gone abroad, of course.**];

Shep. says he knows that the king is sad because he found that his son was intent on marrying a shepherd's daughter;

769-801 Aut. replies – keeping the pretence that he does not recognise the pair – that if the Shep. is not under arrest "let him fly" and proceeds to catalogue the variety of torments that will be done to him and his son: hanging, stoning, flaying together with ingenious means of prolonging and intensifying their suffering.

Condescendingly, Aut. undertakes to "effect your suits" (800);

Clo. – clearly unnerved by Aut.'s lurid account of torture – is convinced that Aut. is "of great authority" and urges his father to "shoe the inside of your purse" – ironically Clo. speaks of Aut. as being "led by the nose" whereas it is themselves who are duped;

Shep. does offer gold to Aut., promising to "make it as much more" and leaving Clo. "in pawn" (810) until he fetches it.

Aut. is content to have half ("a moiety") and the rest "After I have done what I promised" – Clo. is still fearful of being flayed, though Aut. offers him 'comfort' by explaining that it is the Shep.'s son who will be flayed and not Clo. [**Aut. pretends not to know that the person he addresses and Clo. are one and the same.**]

Clo. is encouraged and urges his father that they should go to the king and reveal their "strange sights" (821), though he remains anxious to impress on the king that "'tis none of your daughter nor my sister" – and promises more money to Aut. "when the business is performed";

Aut. urges them to go ahead while he relieves himself ("look upon the hedge", 827) – they do so, congratulating themselves in having come across Aut. to assist them.

832-43 Aut. in soliloquy reverts to his own character (speaking now in prose):

Fortune, he argues, will not allow him to be "honest" since she drops prizes in his way (like manna from heaven...?) – not only money but the

opportunity to “do the prince my master (Florizel) good” – and that may well bring him further profit;

Shep. & Clo.’s naiveté he compares to the blindness of moles and determines to take them aboard Flor.’s ship (heading for Bohemia); if Flor. decides to put them ashore again because what they have for the king is not important to him then Aut. can hardly be blamed for being excessively diligent in trying to help him – and if she should be called ‘rogue’ he is impervious to being called such a name.

He will present the rustics to the prince – there may well be profit in it for himself – in addition to what he has already been given (and promised) by Shep. & Clo..

