

# THE WINTER'S TALE

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LEONTES, King of Sicilia.  
MAMILLIUS, young Prince of Sicilia.  
CAMILLO,  
ANTIGONUS,  
CLEOMENES, } Lords of Sicilia.  
DION,  
POLIXENES, King of Bohemia.  
FLORIZEL, his Son.  
ARCHIDAMUS, a Lord of Bohemia.  
A Mariner.  
A Gaoler.  
An old Shepherd, reputed Father of Perdita.  
Clown, his Son.  
Servant to the old Shepherd.

AUTOLYCUS, a Rogue.

HERMIONE, Queen to Leontes.  
PERDITA, Daughter to Leontes and Hermione.  
PAULINA, Wife to Antigonus.  
EMILIA, a Lady, } attending the Queen.  
Other Ladies, }  
MOPSA, } Shepherdesses.  
DORCAS, }

Sicilian Lords and Ladies, Attendants, Guards,  
Satyrs, Shepherds, Shepherdesses, &c.

Time, as Chorus.

SCENE.—*Sometimes in Sicilia, sometimes in Bohemia.*

## ACT I

SCENE I.—*Sicilia. An Antechamber in LEONTES' Palace.*

*Enter CAMILLO and ARCHIDAMUS.*

*Arch.* If you shall chance, Camillo, to visit Bohemia, on the like occasion whereon my services are now on foot, you shall see, as I have said, great difference betwixt our Bohemia and your Sicilia.

*Cam.* I think, this coming summer, the King of Sicilia means to pay Bohemia the visitation which he justly owes him.

*Arch.* Wherein our entertainment shall shame us we will be justified in our loves: for, indeed,—

*Cam.* Beseech you,—  
*Arch.* Verily, I speak it in the freedom of my knowledge: we cannot with such magnificence—in so rare—I know not what to say. We will give you sleepy drinks, that your senses, unintelligent of our insufficiency, may, though they cannot praise us, as little accuse us.

*Cam.* You pay a great deal too dear for what's given freely.

*Arch.* Believe me, I speak as my understanding instructs me, and as mine honesty puts it to utterance.

*Cam.* Sicilia cannot show himself over-kind to Bohemia. They were trained together in their childhoods; and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now. Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made separation of their society, their encounters, though not personal, have been royally attorneyed with interchange of gifts, letters, loving embassies; that they have seemed to be together, though absent, shook hands, as over a vast, and embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds. The heavens continue their loves!

*Arch.* I think there is not in the world either malice or matter to alter it. You have an unspeakable comfort of your young Prince Mamil-

lius: it is a gentleman of the greatest promise that ever came into my note.

*Cam.* I very well agree with you in the hopes of him. It is a gallant child; one that indeed physics the subject, makes old hearts fresh; they that went on crutches ere he was born desire yet their life to see him a man.

*Arch.* Would they else be content to die?

*Cam.* Yes; if there were no other excuse why they should desire to live.

*Arch.* If the king had no son, they would desire to live on crutches till he had one.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Same. A Room of State in the Palace.*

*Enter LEONTES, POLIXENES, HERMIONE, MAMILLIUS, CAMILLO, and Attendants.*

*Pol.* Nine changes of the watery star have been  
The shepherd's note since we have left our throne

Without a burden: time as long again  
Would be fill'd up, my brother, with our thanks;  
And yet we should for perpetuity  
Go hence in debt: and therefore, like a cipher,  
Yet standing in rich place, I multiply  
With one 'We thank you' many thousands moe  
That go before it.

*Leon.* Stay your thanks awhile,  
And pay them when you part.

*Pol.* Sir, that's to-morrow.  
I am question'd by my fears, of what may chance  
Or breed upon our absence; that may blow  
No sneaping winds at home, to make us say,  
'This is put forth too truly!' Besides, I have  
stay'd  
To tire your royalty.

*Leon.* We are tougher, brother,  
Than you can put us to't.

*Pol.* No longer stay.

ACT I, SCENE II]

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*Leon.* One seven-night longer.

*Pol.* Very sooth, to-morrow.

*Leon.* We'll part the time between's then;  
and in that

I'll no gainsaying.

*Pol.* Press me not, beseech you, so.  
There is no tongue that moves, none, none i' the world,

So soon as yours could win me: so it should now,  
Were there necessity in your request, although  
'Twere needful I denied it. My affairs  
Do even drag me homeward; which to hinder  
Were in your love a whip to me; my stay  
To you a charge and trouble: to save both,  
Farewell, our brother.

*Leon.* Tongue-tied, our queen? speak you.

*Her.* I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until

You had drawn oaths from him not to stay.  
You, sir,

Charge him too coldly: tell him, you are sure  
All in Bohemia's well: this satisfaction  
The by-gone day proclaim'd: say this to him, 32  
He's beat from his best ward.

*Leon.* Well said, Hermione.

*Her.* To tell he longs to see his son were strong;

But let him say so then, and let him go;  
But let him swear so, and he shall not stay, 36  
We'll thwack him hence with distaffs.

[*To POLIXENES.*] Yet of your royal presence I'll adventure

The borrow of a week. When at Bohemia  
You take my lord, I'll give him my commission  
To let him there a month behind the gest  
Prefix'd for's parting: yet, good deed, Leontes,  
I love thee not a jar o' the clock behind  
What lady she her lord. You'll stay?

*Pol.* No, madam.

*Her.* Nay, but you will?

*Pol.* I may not, verily.

*Her.* Verily!

You put me off with limber vows; but I,  
Though you would seek to unsphere the stars  
with oaths,

Should yet say, 'Sir, no going.' Verily,  
You shall not go: a lady's 'verily' 's

As potent as a lord's. Will you go yet?  
Force me to keep you as a prisoner,

Not like a guest; so you shall pay your fees  
When you depart, and save your thanks. How  
say you?

My prisoner, or my guest? by your dread  
'verily,'

One of them you shall be.

*Pol.* Your guest, then, madam: 56  
To be your prisoner should import offending;  
Which is for me less easy to commit  
Than you to punish.

*Her.* Not your gaoler then,  
But your kind hostess. Come, I'll question you  
Of my lord's tricks and yours when you were  
boys:

You were pretty lordings then.

*Pol.* We were, fair queen,  
Two lads that thought there was no more behind

But such a day to-morrow as to-day, 64  
And to be boy eternal.

*Her.* Was not my lord the verier wag o' the two?

*Pol.* We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk  
i' the sun,

And bleat the one at the other: what we  
chang'd

Was innocence for innocence; we knew not  
The doctrine of ill-doing, no nor dream'd

That any did. Had we pursu'd that life,  
And our weak spirits ne'er been higher rear'd 72  
With stronger blood, we should have answer'd

heaven  
Boldly, 'not guilty;' the imposition clear'd  
Hereditary ours.

*Her.* By this we gather  
You have tripp'd since.

*Pol.* O! my most sacred lady, 76  
Temptations have since then been born to's; for  
In those unfledg'd days was my wife a girl;  
Your precious self had then not cross'd the eyes  
Of my young playfellow.

*Her.* Grace to boot! 80  
Of this make no conclusion, lest you say  
Your queen and I are devils; yet, go on:  
The offences we have made you do we'll answer;  
If you first sinn'd with us, and that with us 84  
You did continue fault, and that you slipp'd not  
With any but with us.

*Leon.* Is he won yet?

*Her.* He'll stay, my lord.

*Leon.* At my request he would not.  
Hermione, my dearest, thou never spok'st 88  
To better purpose.

*Her.* Never?

*Leon.* Never, but once.

*Her.* What! have I twice said well? when  
was't before?

I prithee tell me; cram's with praise, and make's  
As fat as tame things: one good deed, dying  
tongueless,

Slaughters a thousand waiting upon that.  
Our praises are our wages: you may ride's  
With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere  
With spur we heat an acre. But to the goal: 96  
My last good deed was to entreat his stay:  
What was my first? it has an elder sister,  
Or I mistake you: O! would her name were  
Grace.

But once before I spoke to the purpose: when?  
Nay, let me have't; I long.

*Leon.* Why, that was when  
Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves  
to death,

Ere I could make thee open thy white hand  
And clap thyself my love: then didst thou  
utter,

'I am yours for ever.'

*Her.* 'Tis grace indeed.

Why, lo you now, I have spoke to the purpose  
twice:

The one for ever earn'd a royal husband,  
The other for some while a friend. 108  
[*Giving her hand to POLIXENES.*]

*Leon.* [Aside.] Too hot, too hot!



To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.  
I have *tremor cordis* on me: my heart dances;  
But not for joy; not joy. This entertainment 112  
May a free face put on, derive a liberty  
From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,  
And well become the agent: 't may I grant:  
But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,  
As now they are, and making practis'd smiles, 117  
As in a looking-glass; and then to sigh, as 'twere  
The mort o' the deer; O! that is entertainment  
My bosom likes not, nor my brows. Mamillius,  
Art thou my boy?

Mam. Ay, my good lord.

Leon. I fecks? 121  
Why, that's my bawcock. What! hast smutch'd  
thy nose?

They say it is a copy out of mine. Come, captain,  
We must be neat; not neat, but cleanly, captain:  
And yet the steer, the heifer, and the calf, 125  
Are all call'd neat. Still virginalling  
Upon his palm! How now, you wanton calf!  
Art thou my calf?

Mam. Yes, if you will, my lord. 128

Leon. Thou want'st a rough pash and the  
shoots that I have,  
To be full like me: yet they say we are  
Almost as like as eggs; women say so,  
That will say anything: but were they false 132  
As o'er-dy'd blacks, as wind, as waters, false  
As dice are to be wish'd by one that fixes  
No bourn 'twixt his and mine, yet were it true  
To say this boy were like me. Come, sir page,  
Look on me with your welkin eye: sweet villain!  
Most dear'st! my collop! Can thy dam?—may't  
be?

Affection! thy intention stabs the centre:  
Thou dost make possible things not so held, 140  
Communicat'st with dreams;—how can this  
be?

With what's unreal thou co-active art,  
And fellow'st nothing; then, 'tis very credent  
Thou mayst co-join with something; and thou  
dost, 144

And that beyond commission, and I find it,  
And that to the infection of my brains  
And hardening of my brows.

Pol. What means Sicilia?

Her. He something seems unsettled.

Pol. How, my lord! 148

What cheer? how is't with you, best brother?  
Her. You look  
As if you held a brow of much distraction:  
Are you mov'd, my lord?

Leon. No, in good earnest.  
How sometimes nature will betray its folly, 152  
Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime  
To harder bosoms! Looking on the lines  
Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil  
Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreech'd,  
In my green velvet coat, my dagger muzzled,  
Lest it should bite its master, and so prove,  
As ornaments oft do, too dangerous:  
How like, methought, I then was to this kernel,  
This squash, this gentleman. Mine honest  
friend, 161  
Will you take eggs for money?

Mam. No my lord, I'll fight.  
Leon. You will? why, happy man be his dole!

My brother,  
Are you so fond of your young prince as we 164  
Do seem to be of ours?

Pol. If at home, sir,  
He's all my exercise, my mirth, my matter,  
Now my sworn friend and then mine enemy;  
My parasite, my soldier, statesman, all: 168  
He makes a July's day short as December,  
And with his varying childness cures in me  
Thoughts that would thicken my blood.

Leon. So stands this squire  
Offic'd with me. We two will walk, my lord, 172  
And leave you to your graver steps. Hermione,  
How thou lov'st us, show in our brother's wel-  
come:

Let what is dear in Sicily be cheap:  
Next to thyself and my young rover, he's 176  
Apparent to my heart.

Her. If you would seek us,  
We are yours i' the garden: shall's attend you  
there?

Leon. To your own bents dispose you: you'll  
be found,

Be you beneath the sky.—[*Aside.*] I am angling  
now, 180

Though you perceive me not how I give line.  
Go to, go to!  
How she holds up the neb, the bill to him!  
And arms her with the boldness of a wife 184  
To her allowing husband!

[*Exeunt POLIXENES, HERMIONE, and  
Attendants.*]

Gone already!  
Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a  
fork'd one!

Go play, boy, play; thy mother plays, and I  
Play too, but so disgrac'd a part, whose issue  
Will hiss me to my grave: contempt and  
clamour 189

Will be my knell. Go play, boy, play. There  
have been,

Or I am much deceiv'd, cuckolds ere now;  
And many a man there is even at this present,  
Now, while I speak this, holds his wife by the  
arm, 193

That little thinks she has been sluic'd in's  
absence,

And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by  
Sir Smile, his neighbour: nay, there's comfort  
in't, 196

Whiles other men have gates, and those gates  
open'd,

As mine, against their will. Should all despair  
That have revolted wives the tenth of man-  
kind

Would hang themselves. Physic for't there is  
none; 200

It is a bawdy planet, that will strike  
Where 'tis predominant; and 'tis powerful,  
think it,

From east, west, north, and south: be it con-  
clud'd,

No barricado for a belly: know't; 204  
It will let in and out the enemy

With bag and baggage. Many a thousand on's  
Have the disease, and feel't not. How now, boy!

Mam. I am like you, they say.  
Leon. Why, that's some comfort. 208

What! Camillo there?  
Cam. Ay, my good lord.

Leon. Go play, Mamillius; thou'rt an honest  
man. [Exit MAMILLIUS.]

Camillo, this great sir will yet stay longer. 212  
Cam. You had much ado to make his anchor  
hold:

When you cast out, it still came home.  
Leon. Didst note it?

Cam. He would not stay at your petitions;  
made

His business more material.  
Leon. Didst perceive it? 216

[*Aside.*] They're here with me already, whisper-  
ing, rounding

'Sicilia is a so-forth.' 'Tis far gone,  
When I shall gust it last. How came't, Camillo,  
That he did stay?

Cam. At the good queen's entreaty. 220  
Leon. At the queen's, be't: 'good' should be  
pertinent;

But so it is, it is not. Was this taken  
By any understanding pate but thine?

For thy conceit is soaking; will draw in 224  
More than the common blocks: not noted, is't,  
But of the finer natures? by some severals

Of head-piece extraordinary? lower messes  
Perchance are to this business purblind? say.

Cam. Business, my lord! I think most under-  
stand 229

Bohemia stays here longer.  
Leon. Ha!

Cam. Stays here longer.  
Leon. Ay, but why?

Cam. To satisfy your highness and the en-  
treaties 232

Of our most gracious mistress.  
Leon. Satisfy!

The entreaties of your mistress! satisfy!  
Let that suffice. I have trusted thee, Camillo,  
With all the nearest things to my heart, as  
well

My chamber-councils, wherein, priest-like, thou  
Hast cleans'd my bosom: I from thee departed  
Thy penitent reform'd; but we have been  
Deceiv'd in thy integrity, deceiv'd 240

In that which seems so.  
Cam. Be it forbid, my lord!

Leon. To bide upon't, thou art not honest; or,  
If thou inclin'st that way, thou art a coward,  
Which hoxes honesty behind, restraining 244

From course requir'd; or else thou must be  
counted

A servant grafted in my serious trust,  
And therein negligent; or else a fool  
That seest a game play'd home, the rich stake  
drawn, 248

And tak'st it all for jest.  
Cam. My gracious lord,

I may be negligent, foolish, and fearful;  
In every one of these no man is free,  
But that his negligence, his folly, fear, 252

Among the infinite doings of the world,  
Sometime puts forth. In your affairs, my lord,  
If ever I were wilful-negligent,

It was my folly; if industriously 256  
I play'd the fool, it was my negligence,  
Not weighing well the end; if ever fearful  
To do a thing, where I the issue doubted,  
Whereof the execution did cry out 260

Against the non-performance, 'twas a fear  
Which oft infects the wisest: these, my lord,  
Are such allow'd infirmities that honesty  
Is never free of: but, beseech your Grace, 264

Be plainer with me; let me know my trespass  
By its own visage; if I then deny it,  
'Tis none of mine.

Leon. Ha' not you seen, Camillo,—  
But that's past doubt; you have, or your eye-  
glass 268  
Is thicker than a cuckold's horn,—or heard,—  
For to a vision so apparent rumour  
Cannot be mute,—or thought,—for cogitation  
Resides not in that man that does not think,—  
My wife is slippery? If thou wilt confess,— 273  
Or else be impudently negative,  
To have nor eyes, nor ears, nor thought,—then  
say

My wife's a hobby-horse; deserves a name 276  
As rank as any flax-wench that puts to  
Before her troth-plight: say't and justify't.

Cam. I would not be a stander-by, to hear  
My sovereign mistress clouded so, without 280  
My present vengeance taken: 'shrew my heart,  
You never spoke what did become you less  
Than this; which to reiterate were sin  
As deep as that, though true.

Leon. Is whispering nothing? 284  
Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?  
Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career  
Of laughter with a sigh?—a note infallible  
Of breaking honesty,—horsing foot on foot? 288  
Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?  
Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? and all eyes  
Blind with the pin and web but theirs, theirs  
only,

That would unseen be wicked? is this nothing?  
Why, then the world and all that's in't is no-  
thing; 293  
The covering sky is nothing; Bohemia nothing;  
My wife is nothing; nor nothing have these  
nothings,  
If this be nothing.

Cam. Good my lord, be cur'd 296  
Of this diseas'd opinion, and betimes;  
For 'tis most dangerous.

Leon. Say it be, 'tis true.

Cam. No, no, my lord.

Leon. It is; you lie, you lie:  
I say thou liest, Camillo, and I hate thee; 300  
Pronounce thee a gross lout, a mindless slave,  
Or else a hovering temporizer, that  
Canst with thine eyes at once see good and  
evil,  
Inclining to them both: were my wife's liver 304  
Infected as her life, she would not live  
The running of one glass.

Cam. Who does infect her?



*Leon.* Why, he that wears her like her medal,  
hanging  
About his neck, Bohemia: who, if I 308  
Had servants true about me, that bare eyes  
To see alike mine honour as their profits,  
Their own particular thrifts, they would do that  
Which should undo more doing: ay, and thou,  
His cup-bearer,—whom I from meaner form 313  
Have bench'd and rear'd to worship, who mayst  
see  
Plainly, as heaven sees earth, and earth sees  
heaven,  
How I am galled,—mightst bespice a cup, 316  
To give mine enemy a lasting wink;  
Which draught to me were cordial.

*Cam.* Sir, my lord,  
I could do this, and that with no rash potion,  
But with a lingering dram that should not work  
Maliciously like poison: but I cannot 321  
Believe this crack to be in my dread mistress,  
So sovereignly being honourable.  
I have lov'd thee,—

*Leon.* Make that thy question, and go rot!  
Dost think I am so muddy, so unsettled, 325  
To appoint myself in this vexation; sully  
The purity and whiteness of my sheets,  
Which to preserve is sleep; which being spotted  
Is goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps? 329  
Give scandal to the blood o' the prince my son,  
Who I do think is mine, and love as mine,  
Without ripe moving to't? Would I do this?  
Could man so blench?

*Cam.* I must believe you, sir: 333  
I do; and will fetch off Bohemia for't;  
Provided that when he's remov'd, your high-  
ness 335  
Will take again your queen as yours at first,  
Even for your son's sake; and thereby for sealing  
The injury of tongues in courts and kingdoms  
Known and allied to yours.

*Leon.* Thou dost advise me  
Even so as I mine own course have set down:  
I'll give no blemish to her honour, none. 341

*Cam.* My lord,  
Go then; and with a countenance as clear  
As friendship wears at feasts, keep with Bohemia,  
And with your queen. I am his cupbearer; 345  
If from me he have wholesome beverage,  
Account me not your servant.

*Leon.* This is all:  
Do't, and thou hast the one half of my heart;  
Do't not, thou split'st thine own.

*Cam.* I'll do't, my lord. 349  
*Leon.* I will seem friendly, as thou hast  
advise'd me. [Exit.]

*Cam.* O miserable lady! But, for me,  
What case stand I in? I must be the poisoner  
Of good Polixenes; and my ground to do't 353  
Is the obedience to a master; one  
Who, in rebellion with himself will have  
All that are his so too. To do this deed 356  
Promotion follows. If I could find example  
Of thousands that had struck anointed kings,  
And flourish'd after, I'd not do't; but since  
Nor brass nor stone nor parchment bears not  
one, 360

Let villany itself forswear't. I must  
Forsake the court: to do't, or no, is certain  
To me a break-neck. Happy star reign now!  
Here comes Bohemia.

Re-enter POLIXENES.

*Pol.* This is strange: methinks 364  
My favour here begins to warp. Not speak?—  
Good day, Camillo.

*Cam.* Hail, most royal sir!  
*Pol.* What is the news i' the court?  
*Cam.* None rare, my lord.  
*Pol.* The king hath on him such a counte-  
nance 368

As he had lost some province and a region  
Lov'd as he loves himself: even now I met him  
With customary compliment, when he,  
Wafting his eyes to the contrary, and falling 372  
A lip of much contempt, speeds from me and  
So leaves me to consider what is breeding  
That changes thus his manners.

*Cam.* I dare not know, my lord. 376  
*Pol.* How! dare not! do not! Do you know,  
and dare not

Be intelligent to me? 'Tis thereabouts;  
For, to yourself, what you do know, you must,  
And cannot say you dare not. Good Camillo,  
Your chang'd complexions are to me a mirror  
Which shows me mine chang'd too; for I must  
be

A party in this alteration, finding  
Myself thus alter'd with't.

*Cam.* There is a sickness 384  
Which puts some of us in distemper; but  
I cannot name the disease, and it is caught  
Of you that yet are well.

*Pol.* How! caught of me?  
Make me not sighted like the basilisk: 388  
I have look'd on thousands, who have sped the  
better

By my regard, but kill'd none so. Camillo,—  
As you are certainly a gentleman, thereto  
Clerk-like experienc'd, which no less adorns 392  
Our gentry than our parents' noble names,  
In whose success we are gentle,—I beseech you,  
If you know aught which does behove my  
knowledge

Thereof to be inform'd, imprison it not 396  
In ignorant concealment.

*Cam.* I may not answer.

*Pol.* A sickness caught of me, and yet I well!  
I must be answer'd. Dost thou hear, Camillo;  
I conjure thee, by all the parts of man 400  
Which honour does acknowledge,—whereof  
the least

Is not this suit of mine,—that thou declare  
What incidency thou dost guess of harm  
Is creeping toward me; how far off, how near;  
Which way to be prevented if to be; 405  
If not, how best to bear it.

*Cam.* Sir, I will tell you;  
Since I am charg'd in honour and by him  
That I think honourable. Therefore mark my  
counsel, 408

Which must be even as swiftly follow'd as

I mean to utter it, or both yourself and me  
Cry 'lost,' and so good night!

*Pol.* On, good Camillo.  
*Cam.* I am appointed him to murder you. 412  
*Pol.* By whom, Camillo?

*Cam.* By the king.  
*Pol.* For what?  
*Cam.* He thinks, nay, with all confidence he  
swears,

As he had seen't or been an instrument  
To vice you to't, that you have touch'd his queen  
Forbiddenly.

*Pol.* O, then my best blood turn 417  
To an infected jelly, and my name  
Be yok'd with his that did betray the Best!  
Turn then my freshest reputation to 420  
A savour, that may strike the dullest nostril  
Where I arrive; and my approach be shunn'd,  
Nay, hated too, worse than the great'st infec-  
tion

That e'er was heard or read!

*Cam.* Swear his thought over  
By each particular star in heaven and 425  
By all their influences, you may as well  
Forbid the sea for to obey the moon  
As or by oath remove or counsel shake 428  
The fabric of his folly, whose foundation  
Is pil'd upon his faith, and will continue  
The standing of his body.

*Pol.* How should this grow?  
*Cam.* I know not; but I am sure 'tis safer to  
Avoid what's grown than question how 'tis  
born. 433

If therefore you dare trust my honesty,  
That lies enclosed in this trunk, which you  
Shall bear along impawn'd, away to-night! 436  
Your followers I will whisper to the business,  
And will by twos and threes at several posterns  
Clear them o' the city. For myself, I'll put  
My fortunes to your service, which are here 440  
By this discovery lost. Be not uncertain;  
For, by the honour of my parents, I  
Have utter'd truth, which, if you seek to prove,  
I dare not stand by; nor shall you be safer 444  
Than one condemn'd by the king's own mouth,  
thereon  
His execution sworn.

*Pol.* I do believe thee:  
I saw his heart in's face. Give me thy hand:  
Be pilot to me and thy places shall 448  
Still neighbour mine. My ships are ready and  
My people did expect my hence departure  
Two days ago. This jealousy  
Is for a precious creature: as she's rare 452  
Must it be great, and, as his person's mighty  
Must it be violent, and, as he does conceive  
He is dishonour'd by a man which ever  
Profess'd to him, why, his revenges must 456  
In that be made more bitter. Fear o'er shades  
me:

Good expedition be my friend, and comfort  
The gracious queen, part of his theme, but no-  
thing

Of his ill-ta'en suspicion! Come, Camillo; 460  
I will respect thee as a father if  
Thou bear'st my life off hence: let us avoid.

*Cam.* It is in mine authority to command  
The keys of all the posterns: please your high-  
ness 464  
To take the urgent hour. Come, sir, away!  
[Exeunt.]

## ACT II

SCENE I.—Sicilia. A Room in the Palace.

Enter HERMIONE, MAMILLIUS, and Ladies.

*Her.* Take the boy to you: he so troubles me,  
'Tis past enduring.

*First Lady.* Come, my gracious lord,  
Shall I be your playfellow?

*Mam.* No, I'll none of you.  
*First Lady.* Why, my sweet lord? 4

*Mam.* You'll kiss me hard and speak to me  
as if

I were a baby still. I love you better.  
*Sec. Lady.* And why so, my lord?

*Mam.* Not for because  
Your brows are blacker; yet black brows, they  
say, 8

Become some women best, so that there be not  
Too much hair there, but in a semicircle,  
Or a half-moon made with a pen.

*Sec. Lady.* Who taught you this?  
*Mam.* I learn'd it out of women's faces. 12

Pray now,  
What colour are your eyebrows?

*First Lady.* Blue, my lord.  
*Mam.* Nay, that's a mock: I have seen a  
lady's nose

That has been blue, but not her eyebrows.  
*Sec. Lady.* Hark ye;

The queen your mother rounds apace; we shall  
Present our services to a fine new prince 17  
One of these days; and then you'd wanton with  
us,

If we would have you.

*First Lady.* She is spread of late  
Into a goodly bulk: good time encounter her! 20

*Her.* What wisdom stirs amongst you? Come  
sir, now

I am for you again: pray you, sit by us,  
And tell's a tale.

*Mam.* Merry or sad shall't be?  
*Her.* As merry as you will.

*Mam.* A sad tale's best for winter. 24  
I have one of sprites and goblins.

*Her.* Let's have that, good sir.  
Come on, sit down: come on, and do your best  
To fright me with your sprites; you're power-  
ful at it.

*Mam.* There was a man,—  
*Her.* Nay, come, sit down; then on, 28

*Mam.* Dwelt by a churchyard. I will tell it  
softly;

Yond crickets shall not hear it.

*Her.* Come on then,  
And give't me in mine ear.

Enter LEONTES, ANTIGONUS, Lords, and Others.

*Leon.* Was he met there? his train? Camillo  
with him? 32



*First Lord.* Behind the tuft of pines I met them: never  
Saw I men scour so on their way: I ey'd them  
Even to their ships.

*Leon.* How blest am I  
In my just censure, in my true opinion! 36  
Alack, for lesser knowledge! How accurs'd  
In being so blest! There may be in the cup  
A spider steep'd, and one may drink, depart,  
And yet partake no venom, for his knowledge 40  
Is not infected; but if one present  
The abhorr'd ingredient to his eye, make known  
How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his  
sides,

With violent hefts. I have drunk, and seen the  
spider. 44

Camillo was his help in this, his pandar:  
There is a plot against my life, my crown;  
All's true that is mistrusted: that false villain  
Whom I employ'd was pre-employ'd by him: 48  
He has discover'd my design, and I  
Remain a pinch'd thing; yea, a very trick  
For them to play at will. How came the posterns  
So easily open?

*First Lord.* By his great authority; 52  
Which often hath no less prevail'd than so  
On your command.

*Leon.* I know't too well.  
[To HERMIONE.] Give me the boy: I am glad  
you did not nurse him: 55

Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you  
Have too much blood in him.

*Her.* What is this? sport?  
*Leon.* Bear the boy hence; he shall not come  
about her;

Away with him!—[Exit MAMILLIUS, attended.]  
and let her sport herself

With that she's big with; for 'tis Polixenes 60  
Has made thee swell thus.

*Her.* But I'd say he had not,  
And I'll be sworn you would believe my saying,  
Howe'er you lean to the nayward.

*Leon.* You, my lords,  
Look on her, mark her well; be but about 64  
To say, 'she is a goodly lady,' and  
The justice of your hearts will thereto add  
'Tis pity she's not honest, honourable:'

Praise her but for this her without-door form,—  
Which, on my faith deserves high speech,—and  
straight 69

The shrug, the hum or ha, these petty brands  
That calumny doth use,—O, I am out!—  
That mercy does, for calumny will sear 72  
Virtue itself: these shrugs, these hums and ha's,  
When you have said 'she's a goodly,' come be-  
tween,

Ere you can say 'she's honest.' But be't known,  
From him that has most cause to grieve it  
should be, 76

She's an adulteress.

*Her.* Should a villain say so,  
The most replenish'd villain in the world,  
He were as much more villain: you, my lord,  
Do but mistake.

*Leon.* You have mistook, my lady, 80  
Polixenes for Leontes. O thou thing!

Which I'll not call a creature of thy place,  
Lest barbarism, making me the precedent,  
Should a like language use to all degrees, 84  
And mannerly distinguishment leave out  
Betwixt the prince and beggar: I have said  
She's an adulteress; I have said with whom: 88  
More, she's a traitor, and Camillo is  
A federary with her, and one that knows  
What she should shame to know herself  
But with her most vile principal, that she's  
A bed-swarver, even as bad as those 92  
That vulgars give bold'st titles; ay, and privy  
To this their late escape.

*Her.* No, by my life,  
Privy to none of this. How will this grieve you  
When you shall come to clearer knowledge that  
You thus have publish'd me! Gentle my lord, 97  
You scarce can right me thoroughly then to say  
You did mistake.

*Leon.* No; if I mistake  
In those foundations which I build upon, 100  
The centre is not big enough to bear  
A schoolboy's top. Away with her to prison!  
He who shall speak for her is afar off guilty  
But that he speaks.

*Her.* There's some ill planet reigns: 104  
I must be patient till the heavens look  
With an aspect more favourable. Good my  
lords,

I am not prone to weeping, as our sex  
Commonly are; the want of which vain dew 108  
Perchance shall dry your pities; but I have  
That honourable grief lodg'd here which burns  
Worse than tears drown. Beseech you all, my  
lords,

With thoughts so qualified as your charities 112  
Shall best instruct you, measure me; and so  
The king's will be perform'd!

*Leon.* [To the Guards.] Shall I be heard?  
*Her.* Who is't that goes with me? Beseech  
your highness,

My women may be with me; for you see 116  
My plight requires it. Do not weep, good fools;  
There is no cause: when you shall know your  
mistress  
Has deserv'd prison, then abound in tears  
As I come out: this action I now go on 120  
Is for my better grace. Adieu, my lord:  
I never wish'd to see you sorry; now  
I trust I shall. My women, come; you have  
leave.

*Leon.* Go, do our bidding: hence! 124  
[Exit Queen guarded, and Ladies.  
*First Lord.* Beseech your highness call the  
queen again.  
*Ant.* Be certain what you do, sir, lest your  
justice  
Prove violence: in the which three great ones  
suffer,  
Yourself, your queen, your son.

*First Lord.* For her, my lord, 128  
I dare my life lay down, and will do't, sir,  
Please you to accept it,—that the queen is spot-  
less  
I' the eyes of heaven and to you: I mean,  
In this which you accuse her.

*Ant.* If it prove 132  
She's otherwise, I'll keep my stables where  
I lodge my wife; I'll go in couples with her;  
Than when I feel and see her no further trust  
her;

For every inch of woman in the world, 136  
Ay, every dram of woman's flesh is false,  
If she be.

*Leon.* Hold your peaces!  
*First Lord.* Good my lord,—

*Ant.* It is for you we speak, not for ourselves.  
You are abus'd, and by some putter-on 140  
That will be damn'd for't; would I knew the  
villain,

I would land-damn him. Be she honour-  
flaw'd,—

I have three daughters; the eldest is eleven,  
The second and the third, nine and some five; 144  
If this prove true, they'll pay for't: by mine  
honour,

I'll geld them all; fourteen they shall not see,  
To bring false generations: they are co-heirs;  
And I had rather glib myself than they 148  
Should not produce fair issue.

*Leon.* Cease! no more.  
You smell this business with a sense as cold  
As is a dead man's nose; but I do see't and feel't,  
As you feel doing thus, and see withal 152  
The instruments that feel.

*Ant.* If it be so,  
We need no grave to bury honesty:  
There's not a grain of it the face to sweeten  
Of the whole dungy earth.

*Leon.* What! lack I credit? 156  
*First Lord.* I had rather you did lack than I,  
my lord,

Upon this ground; and more it would content  
me  
To have her honour true than your suspicion,  
Be blam'd for't how you might.

*Leon.* Why, what need we 160  
Commune with you of this, but rather follow  
Our forceful instigation? Our prerogative  
Calls not your counsels, but our natural good-  
ness

Imparts this; which if you,—or stupified 164  
Or seeming so in skill,—cannot or will not  
Relish a truth like us, inform yourselves  
We need no more of your advice: the matter,  
The loss, the gain, the ordering on't, is all 168  
Properly ours.

*Ant.* And I wish, my liege,  
You had only in your silent judgment tried it,  
Without more overture.

*Leon.* How could that be?  
Either thou art most ignorant by age, 172  
Or thou wert born a fool. Camillo's flight,  
Added to their familiarity,  
Which was as gross as ever touch'd conjecture,  
That lack'd sight only, nought for approba-  
tion

But only seeing, all other circumstances 177  
Made up to the deed, doth push on this pro-  
ceeding:

Yet, for a greater confirmation,—  
For in an act of this importance 'twere 180

Most piteous to be wild,—I have dispatch'd in  
post  
To sacred Delphos, to Apollo's temple,  
Cleomenes and Dion, whom you know  
Of stuff'd sufficiency. Now, from the oracle 184  
They will bring all; whose spiritual counsel had,  
Shall stop or spur me. Have I done well?

*First Lord.* Well done, my lord.  
*Leon.* Though I am satisfied and need no  
more 188  
Than what I know, yet shall the oracle  
Give rest to the minds of others, such as he  
Whose ignorant credulity will not  
Come up to the truth. So have we thought it  
good 192  
From our free person she should be confin'd,  
Lest that the treachery of the two fled hence  
Be left her to perform. Come, follow us:  
We are to speak in public; for this business 196  
Will raise us all.

*Ant.* [Aside.] To laughter, as I take it,  
If the good truth were known. [Exit.

SCENE II.—The Same. The outer Room of a  
Prison.

Enter PAULINA and Attendants.

*Paul.* The keeper of the prison, call to him;  
Let him have knowledge who I am.—[Exit an  
Attendant.] Good lady,  
No court in Europe is too good for thee;  
What dost thou then in prison?

Re-enter Attendant with the Gaoler.

Now, good sir, 4  
You know me, do you not?

*Gaol.* For a worthy lady  
And one whom much I honour.

*Paul.* Pray you then,  
Conduct me to the queen.

*Gaol.* I may not, madam: to the contrary 8  
I have express commandment.

*Paul.* Here's ado,  
To lock up honesty and honour from  
The access of gentle visitors! Is't lawful, pray  
you,

To see her women? any of them? Emilia? 12  
*Gaol.* So please you, madam,  
To put apart these your attendants, I  
Shall bring Emilia forth.

*Paul.* I pray now, call her.  
Withdraw yourselves. [Exit Attendants.  
*Gaol.* And madam, 16  
I must be present at your conference.

*Paul.* Well, be't so, prithee. [Exit Gaoler.  
Here's such ado to make no stain a stain,  
As passes colouring.

Re-enter Gaoler, with EMILIA.

Dear gentlewoman, 20  
How fares our gracious lady?

*Emil.* As well as one so great and so forlorn  
May hold together. On her frights and griefs,—  
Which never tender lady hath borne greater,—  
She is something before her time deliver'd. 25



*Paul.* A boy?  
*Emil.* A daughter; and a goodly babe,  
 Lusty and like to live: the queen receives  
 Much comfort in't; says, 'My poor prisoner, 28  
 I am innocent as you.'

*Paul.* I dare be sworn:  
 These dangerous unsafe lures i' the king, be-  
 shrew them!  
 He must be told on't, and he shall: the office  
 Becomes a woman best; I'll take't upon me. 32  
 If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister,  
 And never to my red-look'd anger be  
 The trumpet any more. Pray you, Emilia,  
 Commend my best obedience to the queen: 36  
 If she dares trust me with her little babe,  
 I'll show it to the king and undertake to be  
 Her advocate to the loud'st. We do not know  
 How he may soften at the sight of the child: 40  
 The silence often of pure innocence  
 Persuades when speaking fails.

*Emil.* Most worthy madam,  
 Your honour and your goodness is so evident  
 That your free undertaking cannot miss 44  
 A thriving issue: there is no lady living  
 So meet for this great errand. Please your lady-  
 ship

To visit the next room, I'll presently  
 Acquaint the queen of your most noble offer, 48  
 Who but to-day hammer'd of this design,  
 But durst not tempt a minister of honour,  
 Lest she should be denied.

*Paul.* Tell her, Emilia,  
 I'll use that tongue I have: if wit flow from't 52  
 As boldness from my bosom, let it not be  
 doubted  
 I shall do good.

*Emil.* Now be you blest for it!  
 I'll to the queen. Please you, come something  
 nearer.

*Gaol.* Madam, if't please the queen to send  
 the babe, 56  
 I know not what I shall incur to pass it,  
 Having no warrant.

*Paul.* You need not fear it, sir:  
 The child was prisoner to the womb, and is  
 By law and process of great nature thence 60  
 Freed and enfranchis'd; not a party to  
 The anger of the king, nor guilty of,  
 If any be, the trespass of the queen.

*Gaol.* I do believe it. 64  
*Paul.* Do not you fear: upon mine honour, I  
 Will stand betwixt you and danger. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—The Same. A Room in the  
 Palace.

Enter LEONTES, ANTIGONUS, Lords, and other  
 Attendants.

*Leon.* Nor night, nor day, no rest; it is but  
 weakness  
 To bear the matter thus; mere weakness. If  
 The cause were not in being,—part o' the cause,  
 She the adulteress; for the harlot king 4  
 Is quite beyond mine arm, out of the blank  
 And level of my brain, plot-proof; but she

I can hook to me: say, that she were gone,  
 Given to the fire, a moiety of my rest 8  
 Might come to me again. Who's there?

*First Atten.* [Advancing.] My lord?

*Leon.* How does the boy?

*First Atten.* He took good rest to-night;

'Tis hop'd his sickness is discharg'd.

*Leon.* To see his nobleness! 12

Conceiving the dishonour of his mother,  
 He straight declin'd, droop'd, took it deeply,  
 Fasten'd and fix'd the shame on't in himself,  
 Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep, 16  
 And downright languish'd. Leave me solely:

go,  
 See how he fares. [Exit Attendant.]—Fie, fie!  
 no thought of him;

The very thought of my revenges that way  
 Recoil upon me: in himself too mighty, 20  
 And in his parties, his alliance; let him be  
 Until a time may serve: for present vengeance,  
 Take it on her. Camillo and Polixenes  
 Laugh at me; make their pastime at my sor-  
 row: 24

They should not laugh, if I could reach them, nor  
 Shall she within my power.

Enter PAULINA, with a Child.

*First Lord.* You must not enter.  
*Paul.* Nay, rather, good my lords, be second  
 to me:

Fear you his tyrannous passion more, alas, 28  
 Than the queen's life? a gracious innocent soul,  
 More free than he is jealous.

*Ant.* That's enough.

*Sec. Atten.* Madam, he hath not slept to-  
 night; commanded

None should come at him.

*Paul.* Not so hot, good sir; 32

I come to bring him sleep. 'Tis such as you,

That creep like shadows by him and do sigh

At each his needless heavings, such as you 36

Nourish the cause of his awaking: I

Do come with words as med'cinal as true,

Honest as either, to purge him of that humour

That presses him from sleep.

*Leon.* What noise there, ho? 40

*Paul.* No noise, my lord; but needful confer-  
 ence

About some gossips for your highness.

*Leon.* How!

Away with that audacious lady! Antigonus,

I charg'd thee that she should not come about

me:

I knew she would.

*Ant.* I told her so, my lord, 44

On your displeasure's peril, and on mine,

She should not visit you.

*Leon.* What! canst not rule her?

*Paul.* From all dishonesty he can: in this,

Unless he take the course that you have done,

Commit me for committing honour, trust it, 49

He shall not rule me.

*Ant.* La you now! you hear;

When she will take the rein I let her run;

But she'll not stumble.

*Paul.* Good my liege, I come, 52

And I beseech you, hear me, who professes  
 Myself your loyal servant, your physician,  
 Your most obedient counsellor, yet that dares  
 Less appear so in comforting your evils 56  
 Than such as most seem yours: I say, I come  
 From your good queen.

*Leon.* Good queen!

*Paul.* Good queen, my lord, good queen; I  
 say, good queen;

And would by combat make her good, so were I  
 A man, the worst about you.

*Leon.* Force her hence. 61

*Paul.* Let him that makes but trifles of his  
 eyes

First hand me: on mine own accord I'll off;  
 But first I'll do my errand. The good queen, 64

For she is good, hath brought you forth a  
 daughter:

Here 'tis; commends it to your blessing.

[Laying down the Child.]

*Leon.* Out!

A mankind witch! Hence with her, out o' door:

A most intelligencing bawd!

*Paul.* Not so; 68

I am as ignorant in that as you

In so entitling me, and no less honest

Than you are mad; which is enough, I'll

warrant,

As this world goes, to pass for honest.

*Leon.* Traitors! 72

Will you not push her out? Give her the

bastard.

[To ANTIGONUS.] Thou dotard! thou art woman-  
 tir'd, unroosted

By thy dame Partlet here. Take up the bastard;

Take't up, I say; give't to thy crone.

*Paul.* For ever 76

Unvenerable be thy hands, if thou

Tak'st up the princess by that forced baseness

Which he has put upon't!

*Leon.* He dreads his wife.

*Paul.* So I would you did; then, 'twere past

all doubt, 80

You'd call your children yours.

*Leon.* A nest of traitors!

*Ant.* I am none, by this good light.

*Paul.* Nor I; nor any

But one that's here, and that's himself; for he

The sacred honour of himself, his queen's, 84

His hopeful son's, his babe's, betrays to slander,

Whose sting is sharper than the sword's; and

will not,—

For, as the case now stands, it is a curse

He cannot be compell'd to't,—once remove 88

The root of his opinion, which is rotten

As ever oak or stone was sound.

*Leon.* A callat

Of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her

husband

And now baits me! This brat is none of mine;

It is the issue of Polixenes: 93

Hence with it; and, together with the dam

Commit them to the fire!

*Paul.* It is yours;

And, might we lay the old proverb to your

charge, 96

'So like you, 'tis the worse.' Behold, my lords,  
 Although the print be little, the whole matter  
 And copy of the father; eye, nose, lip,

The trick of's frown, his forehead, nay, the

valley, 100

The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek, his

smiles,

The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger:

And thou, good goddess Nature, which hast

made it

So like to him that got it, if thou hast 104

The ordering of the mind too, 'mongst all

colours

No yellow in't; lest she suspect, as he does,

Her children not her husband's.

*Leon.* A gross hag!

And, lozel, thou art worthy to be hang'd, 108

That wilt not stay her tongue.

*Ant.* Hang all the husbands

That cannot do that feat, you'll leave yourself

Hardly one subject.

*Leon.* Once more, take her hence.

*Paul.* A most unworthy and unnatural lord

Can do no more.

*Leon.* I'll ha' thee burn'd.

*Paul.* I care not:

It is a heretic that makes the fire,

Not she which burns in't. I'll not call you

tyrant;

But this most cruel usage of your queen,— 116

Not able to produce more accusation

Than your own weak-hing'd fancy,—something

savours

Of tyranny, and will ignoble make you,

Yea, scandalous to the world.

*Leon.* On your allegiance, 120

Out of the chamber with her! Were I a tyrant,

Where were her life? she durst not call me so

If she did know me one. Away with her!

*Paul.* I pray you do not push me; I'll be

gone. 124

Look to your babe, my lord; 'tis yours: Jove

send her

A better guiding spirit! What need these hands?

You, that are thus so tender o'er his follies,

Will never do him good, not one of you. 128

So, so: farewell; we are gone. [Exit.]

*Leon.* Thou, traitor, hast set on thy wife to

this.

My child! away with't!—even thou, that hast

A heart so tender o'er it, take it hence 132

And see it instantly consum'd with fire:

Even thou and none but thou. Take it up

straight:

Within this hour bring me word 'tis done,—

And by good testimony,—or I'll seize thy life,

With what thou else call'st thine. If thou refuse

And wilt encounter with my wrath, say so;

The bastard brains with these my proper hands

Shall I dash out. Go, take it to the fire; 140

For thou sett'st on thy wife.

*Ant.* I did not, sir:

These lords, my noble fellows, if they please,

Can clear me in't.

*First Lord.* We can, my royal liege,

He is not guilty of her coming hither. 144



*Leon.* You are liars all.  
*First Lord.* Beseech your highness, give us  
 better credit:

We have always truly serv'd you, and beseech  
 you

So to esteem of us; and on our knees we beg, 148  
 As recompense of our dear services  
 Past and to come, that you do change this  
 purpose,

Which being so horrible, so bloody, must  
 Lead on to some foul issue. We all kneel. 152

*Leon.* I am a feather for each wind that blows.  
 Shall I live on to see this bastard kneel  
 And call me father? Better burn it now

Than curse it then. But, be it; let it live: 156  
 It shall not neither.—[To ANTIGONUS.] You,

sir, come you hither;  
 You that have been so tenderly officious  
 With Lady Margery, your midwife there,

To save this bastard's life,—for 'tis a bastard,  
 So sure as thy beard's grey,—what will you  
 adventure 161

To save this brat's life?  
*Ant.* Any thing, my lord,

That thy ability may undergo,  
 And nobleness impose: at least, thus much: 164  
 I'll pawn the little blood which I have left,

To save the innocent: any thing possible.  
*Leon.* It shall be possible. Swear by this  
 sword

Thou wilt perform my bidding.  
*Ant.* I will, my lord. 168

*Leon.* Mark and perform it,—seest thou!—  
 for the fail

Of any point in 't shall not only be  
 Death to thyself, but to thy lewd-tongu'd wife,  
 Whom for this time we pardon. We enjoin thee,

As thou art liegeman to us, that thou carry 173  
 This female bastard hence; and that thou bear it  
 To some remote and desert place quite out

Of our dominions; and that there thou leave it,  
 Without more mercy, to its own protection, 177  
 And favour of the climate. As by strange fortune

It came to us, I do in justice charge thee,  
 On thy soul's peril and thy body's torture, 180  
 That thou commend it strangely to some place,

Where chance may nurse or end it. Take it up.  
*Ant.* I swear to do this, though a present  
 death

Had been more merciful. Come on, poor babe:  
 Some powerful spirit instruct the kites and  
 ravens 185

To be thy nurses! Wolves and bears, they say,  
 Casting their savageness aside have done  
 Like offices of pity. Sir, be prosperous 188

In more than this deed doth require! And  
 blessing

Against this cruelty fight on thy side,  
 Poor thing, condemn'd to loss!

[Exit with the Child.  
*Leon.* No; I'll not rear  
 Another's issue.

*Enter a Servant.*  
*Serv.* Please your highness, posts 192  
 From those you sent to the oracle are come

An hour since: Cleomenes and Dion,  
 Being well arriv'd from Delphos, are both  
 landed,

Hasting to the court.  
*First Lord.* So please you, sir, their speed  
 Hath been beyond account.

*Leon.* Twenty-three days  
 They have been absent: 'tis good speed; foretells  
 The great Apollo suddenly will have 199

The truth of this appear. Prepare you, lords;  
 Summon a session, that we may arraign  
 Our most disloyal lady; for, as she hath

Been publicly accus'd, so shall she have  
 A just and open trial. While she lives 204  
 My heart will be a burden to me. Leave me,

And think upon my bidding. [Exeunt.

## ACT III

## SCENE I.—A Sea-port in Sicilia.

*Enter CLEOMENES and DION.*

*Cleo.* The climate's delicate, the air most  
 sweet,

Fertile the isle, the temple much surpassing  
 The common praise it bears.

*Dion.* I shall report,  
 For most it caught me, the celestial habits,— 4  
 Methinks I so should term them,—and the

reverence  
 Of the grave wearers. O, the sacrifice!  
 How ceremonious, solemn, and unearthly

It was i' the offering!  
*Cleo.* But of all, the burst 8

And the ear-deafening voice o' the oracle,  
 Kin to Jove's thunder, so surpris'd my sense,  
 That I was nothing.

*Dion.* If the event o' the journey  
 Prove as successful to the queen,—O, be't so!—  
 As it hath been to us rare, pleasant, speedy, 13

The time is worth the use on't.  
*Cleo.* Great Apollo  
 Turn all to the best! These proclamations,  
 So forcing faults upon Hermione, 16

I little like.  
*Dion.* The violent carriage of it  
 Will clear or end the business: when the oracle,  
 Thus by Apollo's great divine seal'd up,  
 Shall the contents discover, something rare 20

Even then will rush to knowledge.—Go:—  
 fresh horses! [Exeunt.

And gracious be the issue!

## SCENE II.—Sicilia. A Court of Justice.

LEONTES, Lords, and Officers.

*Leon.* This sessions, to our great grief we  
 pronounce,

Even pushes 'gainst our heart: the party tried  
 The daughter of a king, our wife, and one  
 Of us too much belov'd. Let us be clear'd 4

Of being tyrannous, since we so openly  
 Proceed in justice, which shall have due course,  
 Even to the guilt or the purgation. 8

Produce the prisoner.

*Offi.* It is his highness' pleasure that the  
 queen  
 Appear in person here in court. Silence!

*Enter HERMIONE guarded; PAULINA and  
 Ladies attending.*

*Leon.* Read the indictment. 11  
*Offi.* *Hermione, queen to the worthy Leontes,*

*King of Sicilia, thou art here accused and  
 arraigned of high treason, in committing  
 adultery with Polixenes, King of Bohemia, and  
 conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of*

*our sovereign lord the king, thy royal husband:*  
*the pretence whereof being by circumstances  
 partly laid open, thou, Hermione, contrary to*

*the faith and allegiance of a true subject, didst  
 counsel and aid them, for their better safety, to  
 fly away by night.*

*Her.* Since what I am to say must be but that  
 Which contradicts my accusation, and 24  
 The testimony on my part no other

But what comes from myself, it shall scarce  
 boot me

To say 'Not guilty:' mine integrity  
 Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it,  
 Be so receiv'd. But thus: if powers divine 29

Behold our human actions, as they do,  
 I doubt not then but innocence shall make  
 False accusation blush, and tyranny 32

Tremble at patience. You, my lord, best know,—  
 Who least will seem to do so,—my past life  
 Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,

As I am now unhappy; which is more 36  
 Than history can pattern, though devis'd

And play'd to take spectators. For behold me,  
 A fellow of the royal bed, which owe  
 A moiety of the throne, a great king's daughter,

The mother to a hopeful prince, here standing  
 To prate and talk for life and honour 'fore  
 Who please to come and hear. For life, I prize it

As I weigh grief, which I would spare: for  
 honour, 44

'Tis a derivative from me to mine,  
 And only that I stand for. I appeal  
 To your own conscience, sir, before Polixenes

Came to your court, how I was in your grace, 48  
 How merited to be so; since he came,

With what encounter so uncourteous I  
 Have strain'd, to appear thus: if one jot beyond  
 The bound of honour, or in act or will 52

That way inclining, harden'd be the hearts  
 Of all that hear me, and my near'st of kin  
 Cry fie upon my grave!

*Leon.* I ne'er heard yet  
 That any of these bolder vices wanted 56  
 Less impudence to gainsay what they did

Than to perform it first.  
*Her.* That's true enough;  
 Though 'tis a saying, sir, not due to me.

*Leon.* You will not own it.  
*Her.* More than mistress of 60

Which comes to me in name of fault, I must not  
 At all acknowledge. For Polixenes,—  
 With whom I am accus'd,—I do confess

I lov'd him as in honour he requir'd, 64  
 With such a kind of love as might become

A lady like me; with a love even such,  
 So and no other, as yourself commanded:  
 Which not to have done I think had been in me

Both disobedience and ingratitude 69  
 To you and toward your friend, whose love had

spoke,  
 Even since it could speak, from an infant, freely  
 That it was yours. Now, for conspiracy, 72

I know not how it tastes, though it be dish'd  
 For me to try how: all I know of it  
 Is that Camillo was an honest man;

And why he left your court, the gods themselves,  
 Wotting no more than I, are ignorant. 77

*Leon.* You knew of his departure, as you know  
 What you have underta'en to do in's absence.

*Her.* Sir, 80  
 You speak a language that I understand not:

My life stands in the level of your dreams,  
 Which I'll lay down.

*Leon.* Your actions are my dreams:  
 You had a bastard by Polixenes, 84

And I but dream'd it. As you were past all  
 shame,—

Those of your fact are so,—so past all truth:  
 Which to deny concerns more than avails; for as  
 Thy brat hath been cast out, like to itself, 88

No father owning it,—which is, indeed,  
 More criminal in thee than it,—so thou  
 Shalt feel our justice, in whose easiest passage

Look for no less than death.  
*Her.* Sir, spare your threats: 92

The bug which you would fright me with I seek.  
 To me can life be no commodity:

The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,  
 I do give lost; for I do feel it gone, 96

But know not how it went. My second joy,  
 And first-fruits of my body, from his presence  
 I am barr'd, like one infectious. My third

comfort,  
 Starr'd most unluckily, is from my breast, 100  
 The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth,

Hal'd out to murder: myself on every post  
 Proclaim'd a strumpet: with immodest hatred  
 The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs 104

To women of all fashion: lastly, hurried  
 Here to this place, i' the open air, before  
 I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,

Tell me what blessings I have here alive, 108  
 That I should fear to die? Therefore proceed.

But yet hear this; mistake me not; no life,  
 I prize it not a straw:—but for mine honour,  
 Which I would free, if I shall be condemn'd 112

Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else  
 But what your jealousies awake, I tell you  
 'Tis rigour and not law. Your honours all,

I do refer me to the oracle: 116  
 Apollo be my judge!

*First Lord.* This your request  
 Is altogether just: therefore, bring forth,  
 And in Apollo's name, his oracle.

[Exeunt certain Officers.  
*Her.* The Emperor of Russia was my father:  
 O! that he were alive, and here beholding 121

His daughter's trial; that he did but see  
 The flatness of my misery; yet with eyes  
 Of pity, not revenge! 124