

# *The Winter's Tale*

William Shakespeare

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## Dramatis Personae

LEONTES      *King of Sicilia*  
 HERMIONE    *Queen of Sicilia*  
 MAMILLIUS   *their son*  
 PERDITA     *their daughter*  
 POLIXENES   *King of Bohemia*  
 FLORIZELL   *his son*  
 CAMILLO     *a courtier, friend to Leontes and then to Polixenes*  
 ANTIGONUS   *a Sicilian courtier*  
 PAULINA     *his wife and lady-in-waiting to Hermione*  
 Courtiers in Sicilia:  
     CLEOMENES  
     DION  
 EMILIA      *a lady-in-waiting to Hermione*  
 SHEPHERD    *foster father to Perdita*  
 SHEPHERD'S SON  
 AUTOLYCUS   *former servant to Florizell, now a rogue*  
 ARCHIDAMUS   *a Bohemian courtier*  
 TIME        *as Chorus*  
 TWO LADIES attending on Hermione  
 LORDS, SERVANTS      *and GENTLEMEN attending on Leontes*  
 An OFFICER of the court  
 A MARINER  
 A JAILER  
 Shepherdesses in Bohemia:  
     MOPSA  
     DORCAS  
 SERVANT to the Shepherd  
 SHEPHERDS and SHEPHERDESSES  
 Twelve COUNTRYMEN disguised as satyrs

## Act 1

### Scene 1

*[Enter Camillo and Archidamus.]*

ARCHIDAMUS 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.

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

ARCHIDAMUS Wherein our entertainment shall shame us; we will be justified in our loves. For indeed—

CAMILLO Beseech you—

ARCHIDAMUS 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.

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

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

CAMILLO 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, hath 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.

ARCHIDAMUS I think there is not in the world either

malice or matter to alter it. You have an unspeakable comfort of your young Prince Mamillius. It is a gentleman of the greatest promise that ever came into my note.

CAMILLO 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.

ARCHIDAMUS Would they else be content to die?

CAMILLO Yes, if there were no other excuse why they should desire to live.

ARCHIDAMUS If the King had no son, they would desire to live on crutches till he had one.

*[They exit.]*

## Scene 2

*[Enter Leontes, Hermione, Mamillius, Polixenes, Camillo, and Attendants.]*

POLIXENES

Nine changes of the wat'ry star hath been  
The shepherd's note since we have left our throne  
Without a burden. Time as long again  
Would be filled 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 more  
That go before it.

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

POLIXENES Sir, that's tomorrow.  
I am questioned 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 stayed  
To tire your Royalty.

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

POLIXENES No longer stay.

LEONTES

One sev'nnight longer.

POLIXENES Very sooth, tomorrow.

LEONTES

We'll part the time between 's, then, and in that  
I'll no gainsaying.

POLIXENES Press me not, beseech you, so.

There is no tongue that moves, none, none i' th'  
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.

LEONTES Tongue-tied, our queen?  
Speak you.

HERMIONE

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 bygone day proclaimed. Say this to him,  
He's beat from his best ward.

LEONTES Well said, Hermione.

HERMIONE

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;  
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  
Prefixed for 's parting.—Yet, good deed, Leontes,  
I love thee not a jar o' th' clock behind

What lady she her lord.—You'll stay?

POLIXENES No, madam.

HERMIONE

Nay, but you will?

POLIXENES I may not, verily.

HERMIONE Verily?

You put me off with limber vows. But I,  
Though you would seek t' unsphere the stars with  
oaths,  
Should yet say "Sir, no going." Verily,  
You shall not go. A lady's "verily" is  
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.

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

HERMIONE Not your jailer, 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?

POLIXENES We were, fair queen,  
Two lads that thought there was no more behind  
But such a day tomorrow as today,  
And to be boy eternal.

HERMIONE Was not my lord  
The verier wag o' th' two?

POLIXENES

We were as twinned lambs that did frisk i' th' sun  
And bleat the one at th' other. What we changed  
Was innocence for innocence. We knew not  
The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dreamed  
That any did. Had we pursued that life,  
And our weak spirits ne'er been higher reared  
With stronger blood, we should have answered

heaven  
Boldly "Not guilty," the imposition cleared  
Hereditary ours.

HERMIONE By this we gather  
You have tripped since.

POLIXENES O my most sacred lady,  
Temptations have since then been born to 's, for  
In those unfledged days was my wife a girl;  
Your precious self had then not crossed the eyes  
Of my young playfellow.

HERMIONE Grace to boot!  
Of this make no conclusion, lest you say  
Your queen and I are devils. Yet go on.  
Th' offenses we have made you do we'll answer,  
If you first sinned with us, and that with us  
You did continue fault, and that you slipped not  
With any but with us.

LEONTES Is he won yet?

HERMIONE  
He'll stay, my lord.

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

HERMIONE Never?

LEONTES Never but once.

HERMIONE  
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 th' goal:  
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 th' purpose? When?  
Nay, let me have 't; I long.



LEONTES Why, that was when  
Three crabbed months had soured themselves to  
death  
Ere I could make thee open thy white hand  
And clap thyself my love; then didst thou utter  
“I am yours forever.”

HERMIONE 'Tis grace indeed.  
Why, lo you now, I have spoke to th' purpose twice.  
The one forever earned a royal husband,  
Th' other for some while a friend.  
*[She gives Polixenes her hand.]*

LEONTES *[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  
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 practiced smiles  
As in a looking glass, and then to sigh, as 'twere  
The mort o' th' deer—O, that is entertainment  
My bosom likes not, nor my brows.—Mamillius,  
Art thou my boy?

MAMILLIUS Ay, my good lord.

LEONTES I' fecks!  
Why, that's my bawcock. What, hast smutched 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  
Are all called neat.—Still virginalling  
Upon his palm?—How now, you wanton calf?  
Art thou my calf?

MAMILLIUS Yes, if you will, my lord.

LEONTES  
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

As o'erdyed blacks, as wind, as waters, false  
As dice are to be wished 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 center.  
Thou dost make possible things not so held,  
Communicat'st with dreams—how can this be?  
With what's unreal thou coactive art,  
And fellow'st nothing. Then 'tis very credent  
Thou may'st co-join with something; and thou dost,  
And that beyond commission, and I find it,  
And that to the infection of my brains  
And hard'ning of my brows.

POLIXENES What means Sicilia?

HERMIONE  
He something seems unsettled.

POLIXENES How, my lord?

LEONTES  
What cheer? How is 't with you, best brother?

HERMIONE You look  
As if you held a brow of much distraction.  
Are you moved, my lord?

LEONTES No, in good earnest.  
How sometimes nature will betray its folly,  
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 unbreeched,  
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,  
Will you take eggs for money?

MAMILLIUS No, my lord, I'll fight.

LEONTES  
You will? Why, happy man be 's dole!—My brother,

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

POLIXENES 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.  
He makes a July's day short as December,  
And with his varying childness cures in me  
Thoughts that would thicken my blood.

LEONTES So stands this  
squire  
Officed with me. We two will walk, my lord,  
And leave you to your graver steps.—Hermione,  
How thou lov'st us show in our brother's welcome.  
Let what is dear in Sicily be cheap.  
Next to thyself and my young rover, he's  
Apparent to my heart.

HERMIONE If you would seek us,  
We are yours i' th' garden. Shall 's attend you there?

LEONTES  
To your own bents dispose you. You'll be found,  
Be you beneath the sky. [*Aside.*] I am angling now,  
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  
To her allowing husband!  
*[Exit Hermione, Polixenes, and Attendants.]*

Gone already.  
Inch thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a forked  
one!—  
Go play, boy, play. Thy mother plays, and I  
Play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue  
Will hiss me to my grave. Contempt and clamor  
Will be my knell. Go play, boy, play.—There have  
been,  
Or I am much deceived, cuckolds ere now;  
And many a man there is, even at this present,  
Now while I speak this, holds his wife by th' arm,  
That little thinks she has been sluiced in 's absence,  
And his pond fished by his next neighbor, by  
Sir Smile, his neighbor. Nay, there's comfort in 't  
Whiles other men have gates and those gates  
opened,

As mine, against their will. Should all despair  
That have revolted wives, the tenth of mankind  
Would hang themselves. Physic for 't there's none.  
It is a bawdy planet, that will strike  
Where 'tis predominant; and 'tis powerful, think it,  
From east, west, north, and south. Be it concluded,  
No barricado for a belly. Know 't,  
It will let in and out the enemy  
With bag and baggage. Many thousand on 's  
Have the disease and feel 't not.—How now, boy?

MAMILLIUS

I am like you, they say.

LEONTES Why, that's some comfort.—  
What, Camillo there?

CAMILLO [*coming forward*] Ay, my good lord.

LEONTES

Go play, Mamillius. Thou 'rt an honest man.

[*Mamillius exits.*]

Camillo, this great sir will yet stay longer.

CAMILLO

You had much ado to make his anchor hold.  
When you cast out, it still came home.

LEONTES Didst note it?

CAMILLO

He would not stay at your petitions, made  
His business more material.

LEONTES Didst perceive it?

[*Aside.*] They're here with me already, whisp'ring,  
rounding:

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

CAMILLO At the good queen's entreaty.

LEONTES

“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

More than the common blocks. Not noted, is 't,  
But of the finer natures, by some severals  
Of headpiece extraordinary? Lower messes  
Perchance are to this business purblind? Say.

CAMILLO  
Business, my lord? I think most understand  
Bohemia stays here longer.

LEONTES  
Ha?

CAMILLO Stays here longer.

LEONTES Ay, but why?

CAMILLO  
To satisfy your Highness and the entreaties  
Of our most gracious mistress.

LEONTES Satisfy?  
Th' 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-counsels, wherein, priestlike, thou  
Hast cleansed my bosom; I from thee departed  
Thy penitent reformed. But we have been  
Deceived in thy integrity, deceived  
In that which seems so.

CAMILLO Be it forbid, my lord!

LEONTES  
To bide upon 't: thou art not honest; or,  
If thou inclin'st that way, thou art a coward,  
Which hoxes honesty behind, restraining  
From course required; or else thou must be  
counted  
A servant grafted in my serious trust  
And therein negligent; or else a fool  
That seest a game played home, the rich stake  
drawn,  
And tak'st it all for jest.

CAMILLO 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,

Among the infinite doings of the world,  
Sometime puts forth. In your affairs, my lord,  
If ever I were willful-negligent,  
It was my folly; if industriously  
I played 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  
Against the non-performance, 'twas a fear  
Which oft infects the wisest. These, my lord,  
Are such allowed infirmities that honesty  
Is never free of. But, beseech your Grace,  
Be plainer with me; let me know my trespass  
By its own visage. If I then deny it,  
'Tis none of mine.

LEONTES Ha' not you seen, Camillo—  
But that's past doubt; you have, or your eyeglass  
Is thicker than a cuckold's horn—or heard—  
For to a vision so apparent, rumor  
Cannot be mute—or thought—for cogitation  
Resides not in that man that does not think—  
My wife is slippery? If thou wilt confess—  
Or else be impudently negative  
To have nor eyes nor ears nor thought—then say  
My wife's a hobby-horse, deserves a name  
As rank as any flax-wench that puts to  
Before her troth-plight. Say 't, and justify 't.

CAMILLO  
I would not be a stander-by to hear  
My sovereign mistress clouded so without  
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.

LEONTES Is whispering nothing?  
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?  
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 nothing,  
The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing,

My wife is nothing, nor nothing have these nothings,  
If this be nothing.

CAMILLO Good my lord, be cured  
Of this diseased opinion, and betimes,  
For 'tis most dangerous.

LEONTES Say it be, 'tis true.

CAMILLO  
No, no, my lord.

LEONTES It is. You lie, you lie.  
I say thou liest, Camillo, and I hate thee,  
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  
Infected as her life, she would not live  
The running of one glass.

CAMILLO Who does infect her?

LEONTES  
Why, he that wears her like her medal, hanging  
About his neck—Bohemia, who, if I  
Had servants true about me, that bare eyes  
To see alike mine honor as their profits,  
Their own particular thrifts, they would do that  
Which should undo more doing. Ay, and thou,  
His cupbearer—whom I from meaner form  
Have benched and reared to worship, who mayst see  
Plainly as heaven sees Earth and Earth sees heaven  
How I am galled—mightst bespice a cup  
To give mine enemy a lasting wink,  
Which draft to me were cordial.

CAMILLO Sir, my lord,  
I could do this, and that with no rash potion,  
But with a ling'ring dram that should not work  
Maliciously like poison. But I cannot  
Believe this crack to be in my dread mistress,  
So sovereignly being honorable. I have loved thee—

LEONTES Make that thy question, and go rot!  
Dost think I am so muddy, so unsettled,  
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—  
Give scandal to the blood o' th' 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?

CAMILLO I must believe you, sir.  
I do, and will fetch off Bohemia for 't—  
Provided that, when he's removed, your Highness  
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.

LEONTES Thou dost advise me  
Even so as I mine own course have set down.  
I'll give no blemish to her honor, none.

CAMILLO 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.  
If from me he have wholesome beverage,  
Account me not your servant.

LEONTES This is all.  
Do 't and thou hast the one half of my heart;  
Do 't not, thou splitt'st thine own.

CAMILLO I'll do 't, my lord.

LEONTES  
I will seem friendly, as thou hast advised me.  
*[He exits.]*

CAMILLO  
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  
Is the obedience to a master, one  
Who in rebellion with himself will have  
All that are his so too. To do this deed,  
Promotion follows. If I could find example  
Of thousands that had struck anointed kings  
And flourished after, I'd not do 't. But since  
Nor brass, nor stone, nor parchment bears not one,  
Let villainy itself forswear 't. I must



Forsake the court. To do 't or no is certain  
To me a breakneck. Happy star reign now!  
Here comes Bohemia.

*[Enter Polixenes.]*

POLIXENES *[aside]* This is strange. Methinks  
My favor here begins to warp. Not speak?—  
Good day, Camillo.

CAMILLO Hail, most royal sir.

POLIXENES  
What is the news i' th' court?

CAMILLO None rare, my lord.

POLIXENES  
The King hath on him such a countenance  
As he had lost some province and a region  
Loved as he loves himself. Even now I met him  
With customary compliment, when he,  
Wafting his eyes to th' contrary and falling  
A lip of much contempt, speeds from me, and  
So leaves me to consider what is breeding  
That changes thus his manners.

CAMILLO I dare not know, my  
lord.

POLIXENES  
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 changed complexions are to me a mirror  
Which shows me mine changed too, for I must be  
A party in this alteration, finding  
Myself thus altered with 't.

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

POLIXENES How caught of me?  
Make me not sighted like the basilisk.

I have looked on thousands who have sped the  
better  
By my regard, but killed none so. Camillo,  
As you are certainly a gentleman, thereto  
Clerklike experienced, which no less adorns  
Our gentry than our parents' noble names,  
In whose success we are gentle, I beseech you,  
If you know aught which does behoove my  
knowledge  
Thereof to be informed, imprison 't not  
In ignorant concealment.

CAMILLO I may not answer.

POLIXENES  
A sickness caught of me, and yet I well?  
I must be answered. Dost thou hear, Camillo?  
I conjure thee by all the parts of man  
Which honor 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;  
If not, how best to bear it.

CAMILLO Sir, I will tell you,  
Since I am charged in honor and by him  
That I think honorable. Therefore mark my counsel,  
Which must be e'en as swiftly followed as  
I mean to utter it, or both yourself and me  
Cry lost, and so goodnight.

POLIXENES On, good Camillo.

CAMILLO  
I am appointed him to murder you.

POLIXENES  
By whom, Camillo?

CAMILLO By the King.

POLIXENES For what?

CAMILLO  
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 touched his queen

Forbiddenly.

POLIXENES O, then my best blood turn  
To an infected jelly, and my name  
Be yoked with his that did betray the Best!  
Turn then my freshest reputation to  
A savor that may strike the dullest nostril  
Where I arrive, and my approach be shunned,  
Nay, hated too, worse than the great'st infection  
That e'er was heard or read.

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

POLIXENES How should this grow?

CAMILLO  
I know not. But I am sure 'tis safer to  
Avoid what's grown than question how 'tis born.  
If therefore you dare trust my honesty,  
That lies enclosed in this trunk which you  
Shall bear along impawned, away tonight!  
Your followers I will whisper to the business,  
And will by twos and threes at several posterns  
Clear them o' th' city. For myself, I'll put  
My fortunes to your service, which are here  
By this discovery lost. Be not uncertain,  
For, by the honor of my parents, I  
Have uttered truth—which if you seek to prove,  
I dare not stand by; nor shall you be safer  
Than one condemned by the King's own mouth,  
thereon  
His execution sworn.

POLIXENES I do believe thee.  
I saw his heart in 's face. Give me thy hand.  
Be pilot to me and thy places shall  
Still neighbor 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,  
Must it be great; and as his person's mighty,

Must it be violent; and as he does conceive  
He is dishonored by a man which ever  
Professed to him, why, his revenges must  
In that be made more bitter. Fear o'ershades me.  
Good expedition be my friend, and comfort  
The gracious queen, part of his theme, but nothing  
Of his ill-ta'en suspicion. Come, Camillo,  
I will respect thee as a father if  
Thou bear'st my life off hence. Let us avoid.

CAMILLO

It is in mine authority to command  
The keys of all the posterns. Please your Highness  
To take the urgent hour. Come, sir, away.  
*[They exit.]*

## Act 2

### Scene 1

*[Enter Hermione, Mamillius, and Ladies.]*

HERMIONE

Take the boy to you. He so troubles me  
'Tis past enduring.

FIRST LADY Come, my gracious lord,  
Shall I be your playfellow?

MAMILLIUS

No, I'll none of you.

FIRST LADY Why, my sweet lord?

MAMILLIUS

You'll kiss me hard and speak to me as if  
I were a baby still.—I love you better.

SECOND LADY

And why so, my lord?

MAMILLIUS Not for because

Your brows are blacker—yet black brows, they say,  
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.

SECOND LADY Who taught this?

MAMILLIUS

I learned it out of women's faces.—Pray now,  
What color are your eyebrows?

FIRST LADY Blue, my lord.

MAMILLIUS

Nay, that's a mock. I have seen a lady's nose  
That has been blue, but not her eyebrows.

FIRST LADY Hark ye,

The Queen your mother rounds apace. We shall  
Present our services to a fine new prince  
One of these days, and then you'd wanton with us  
If we would have you.

SECOND LADY She is spread of late  
Into a goodly bulk. Good time encounter her!

HERMIONE  
What wisdom stirs amongst you?—Come, sir, now  
I am for you again. Pray you sit by us,  
And tell 's a tale.

MAMILLIUS Merry or sad shall 't be?

HERMIONE As merry as you will.

MAMILLIUS  
A sad tale's best for winter. I have one  
Of sprites and goblins.

HERMIONE Let's have that, good sir.  
Come on, sit down. Come on, and do your best  
To fright me with your sprites. You're powerful at it.

MAMILLIUS  
There was a man—

HERMIONE Nay, come sit down, then on.

MAMILLIUS  
Dwelt by a churchyard. I will tell it softly,  
Yond crickets shall not hear it.

HERMIONE  
Come on then, and give 't me in mine ear.

*[They talk privately.]*

*[Enter Leontes, Antigonus, and Lords.]*

LEONTES  
Was he met there? His train? Camillo with him?

LORD  
Behind the tuft of pines I met them. Never  
Saw I men scour so on their way. I eyed them  
Even to their ships.

LEONTES How blest am I  
In my just censure, in my true opinion!

Alack, for lesser knowledge! How accursed  
In being so blest! There may be in the cup  
A spider steeped, and one may drink, depart,  
And yet partake no venom, for his knowledge  
Is not infected; but if one present  
Th' abhorred 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.  
Camillo was his help in this, his pander.  
There is a plot against my life, my crown.  
All's true that is mistrusted. That false villain  
Whom I employed was pre-employed by him.  
He has discovered my design, and I  
Remain a pinched thing, yea, a very trick  
For them to play at will. How came the posterns  
So easily open?

LORD By his great authority,  
Which often hath no less prevailed than so  
On your command.

LEONTES I know 't too well.  
[*To Hermione.*] Give me the boy. I am glad you did  
not nurse him.  
Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you  
Have too much blood in him.

HERMIONE What is this? Sport?

LEONTES [*to the Ladies*]  
Bear the boy hence. He shall not come about her.  
Away with him, and let her sport herself  
With that she's big with, [*(to Hermione)*] for 'tis  
Polixenes  
Has made thee swell thus.

[*A Lady exits with Mamillius.*]

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

LEONTES You, my lords,  
Look on her, mark her well. Be but about  
To say "She is a goodly lady," and  
The justice of your hearts will thereto add  
"Tis pity she's not honest, honorable."  
Praise her but for this her without-door form,  
Which on my faith deserves high speech, and

straight

The shrug, the “hum,” or “ha,” these petty brands  
That calumny doth use—O, I am out,  
That mercy does, for calumny will sear  
Virtue itself—these shrugs, these “hum”s and “ha”s,  
When you have said she’s goodly, come between  
Ere you can say she’s honest. But be ’t known,  
From him that has most cause to grieve it should be,  
She’s an adult’ress.

HERMIONE Should a villain say so,  
The most replenished villain in the world,  
He were as much more villain. You, my lord,  
Do but mistake.

LEONTES You have mistook, my lady,  
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,  
And mannerly distinguishment leave out  
Betwixt the prince and beggar.—I have said  
She’s an adult’ress; I have said with whom.  
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-swerver, even as bad as those  
That vulgars give bold’st titles; ay, and privy  
To this their late escape.

HERMIONE 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 published me! Gentle my lord,  
You scarce can right me thoroughly then to say  
You did mistake.

LEONTES No. If I mistake  
In those foundations which I build upon,  
The center 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.

HERMIONE There’s some ill planet reigns.  
I must be patient till the heavens look  
With an aspect more favorable. Good my lords,



I am not prone to weeping, as our sex  
Commonly are, the want of which vain dew  
Perchance shall dry your pities. But I have  
That honorable grief lodged here which burns  
Worse than tears drown. Beseech you all, my lords,  
With thoughts so qualified as your charities  
Shall best instruct you, measure me; and so  
The King's will be performed.

LEONTES Shall I be heard?

HERMIONE

Who is 't that goes with me? Beseech your Highness  
My women may be with me, for you see  
My plight requires it.—Do not weep, good fools;  
There is no cause. When you shall know your  
mistress  
Has deserved prison, then abound in tears  
As I come out. This action I now go on  
Is for my better grace.—Adieu, my lord.  
I never wished to see you sorry; now  
I trust I shall.—My women, come; you have leave.

LEONTES Go, do our bidding. Hence!

*[Hermione exits, under guard, with her Ladies.]*

LORD

Beseech your Highness, call the Queen again.

ANTIGONUS

Be certain what you do, sir, lest your justice  
Prove violence, in the which three great ones suffer:  
Yourself, your queen, your son.

LORD For her, my lord,

I dare my life lay down—and will do 't, sir,  
Please you t' accept it—that the Queen is spotless  
I' th' eyes of heaven, and to you—I mean  
In this which you accuse her.

ANTIGONUS If it prove

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

LEONTES Hold your peaces.

LORD Good my lord—

ANTIGONUS

It is for you we speak, not for ourselves.  
You are abused, and by some putter-on  
That will be damned for 't. Would I knew the  
villain!  
I would land-damn him. Be she honor-flawed,  
I have three daughters—the eldest is eleven;  
The second and the third, nine and some five;  
If this prove true, they'll pay for 't. By mine honor,  
I'll geld 'em all; fourteen they shall not see  
To bring false generations. They are co-heirs,  
And I had rather glib myself than they  
Should not produce fair issue.

LEONTES 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  
The instruments that feel.

ANTIGONUS 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.

LEONTES What? Lack I credit?

LORD

I had rather you did lack than I, my lord,  
Upon this ground. And more it would content me  
To have her honor true than your suspicion,  
Be blamed for 't how you might.

LEONTES Why, what need we  
Commune with you of this, but rather follow  
Our forceful instigation? Our prerogative  
Calls not your counsels, but our natural goodness  
Imparts this, which if you—or stupefied  
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 ord'ring on 't is all  
Properly ours.

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

LEONTES How could that be?  
Either thou art most ignorant by age,  
Or thou wert born a fool. Camillo's flight,  
Added to their familiarity—  
Which was as gross as ever touched conjecture,  
That lacked sight only, naught for approbation  
But only seeing, all other circumstances  
Made up to th' deed—doth push on this  
proceeding.  
Yet, for a greater confirmation—  
For in an act of this importance 'twere  
Most piteous to be wild—I have dispatched in post  
To sacred Delphos, to Apollo's temple,  
Cleomenes and Dion, whom you know  
Of stuffed sufficiency. Now from the oracle  
They will bring all, whose spiritual counsel had  
Shall stop or spur me. Have I done well?

LORD Well done,  
my lord.

LEONTES  
Though I am satisfied and need no more  
Than what I know, yet shall the oracle  
Give rest to th' minds of others, such as he  
Whose ignorant credulity will not  
Come up to th' truth. So have we thought it good  
From our free person she should be confined,  
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  
Will raise us all.

ANTIGONUS [*aside*] To laughter, as I take it,  
If the good truth were known.

[*They exit.*]

## Scene 2

[*Enter Paulina, a Gentleman, and Paulina's Attendants.*]

PAULINA [*to Gentleman*]  
The keeper of the prison, call to him.  
Let him have knowledge who I am.

*[Gentleman exits.]*

Good lady,  
No court in Europe is too good for thee.  
What dost thou then in prison?

*[Enter Jailer, with the Gentleman.]*

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

JAILER For a worthy lady  
And one who much I honor.

PAULINA Pray you then,  
Conduct me to the Queen.

JAILER I may not, madam.  
To the contrary I have express commandment.

PAULINA  
Here's ado, to lock up honesty and honor from  
Th' access of gentle visitors. Is 't lawful, pray you,  
To see her women? Any of them? Emilia?

JAILER So please you, madam,  
To put apart these your attendants, I  
Shall bring Emilia forth.

PAULINA I pray now, call her.—  
Withdraw yourselves.

*[Attendants and Gentleman exit.]*

JAILER  
And, madam, I must be present at your conference.

PAULINA Well, be 't so, prithee. *[Jailer exits.]*  
Here's such ado to make no stain a stain  
As passes coloring.

*[Enter Emilia with Jailer.]*

Dear gentlewoman,  
How fares our gracious lady?

EMILIA  
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 delivered.

PAULINA

A boy?

EMILIA A daughter, and a goodly babe,  
Lusty and like to live. The Queen receives  
Much comfort in 't, says "My poor prisoner,  
I am innocent as you."

PAULINA I dare be sworn.

These dangerous unsafe lunes i' th' King, beshrew  
them!

He must be told on 't, and he shall. The office  
Becomes a woman best. I'll take 't upon me.  
If I prove honey-mouthed, let my tongue blister  
And never to my red-looking anger be  
The trumpet anymore. Pray you, Emilia,  
Commend my best obedience to the Queen.  
If she dares trust me with her little babe,  
I'll show 't the King and undertake to be  
Her advocate to th' loud'st We do not know  
How he may soften at the sight o' th' child.  
The silence often of pure innocence  
Persuades when speaking fails.

EMILIA Most worthy madam,  
Your honor and your goodness is so evident  
That your free undertaking cannot miss  
A thriving issue. There is no lady living  
So meet for this great errand. Please your Ladyship  
To visit the next room, I'll presently  
Acquaint the Queen of your most noble offer,  
Who but today hammered of this design,  
But durst not tempt a minister of honor  
Lest she should be denied.

PAULINA Tell her, Emilia,  
I'll use that tongue I have. If wit flow from 't  
As boldness from my bosom, let 't not be doubted  
I shall do good.

EMILIA Now be you blest for it!  
I'll to the Queen. Please you come something  
nearer.

JAILER *[to Paulina]*

Madam, if 't please the Queen to send the babe,

I know not what I shall incur to pass it,  
Having no warrant.

PAULINA You need not fear it, sir.  
This child was prisoner to the womb, and is  
By law and process of great nature thence  
Freed and enfranchised, not a party to  
The anger of the King, nor guilty of,  
If any be, the trespass of the Queen.

JAILER I do believe it.

PAULINA  
Do not you fear. Upon mine honor, I  
Will stand betwixt you and danger.

*[They exit.]*

### Scene 3

*[Enter Leontes.]*

LEONTES  
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' th' cause,  
She th' adult'ress, for the harlot king  
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  
Might come to me again.—Who's there?

*[Enter a Servant.]*

SERVANT My lord.

LEONTES How does the boy?

SERVANT He took good rest tonight. 'Tis hoped  
His sickness is discharged.

LEONTES To see his nobleness,  
Conceiving the dishonor of his mother.  
He straight declined, drooped, took it deeply,  
Fastened and fixed the shame on 't in himself,  
Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep,  
And downright languished. Leave me solely. Go,

See how he fares.      *[Servant exits.]*  
Fie, fie, no thought of him.  
The very thought of my revenges that way  
Recoil upon me—in himself too mighty,  
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 sorrow.  
They should not laugh if I could reach them, nor  
Shall she within my power.

*[Enter Paulina, carrying the baby, with Servants,  
Antigonus, and Lords.]*

LORD You must not enter.

PAULINA  
Nay, rather, good my lords, be second to me.  
Fear you his tyrannous passion more, alas,  
Than the Queen's life? A gracious innocent soul,  
More free than he is jealous.

ANTIGONUS That's enough.

SERVANT  
Madam, he hath not slept tonight, commanded  
None should come at him.

PAULINA Not so hot, good sir.  
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  
Nourish the cause of his awaking. I  
Do come with words as medicinal as true,  
Honest as either, to purge him of that humor  
That presses him from sleep.

LEONTES What noise there, ho?

PAULINA  
No noise, my lord, but needful conference  
About some gossips for your Highness.

LEONTES How?—  
Away with that audacious lady. Antigonus,  
I charged thee that she should not come about me.  
I knew she would.

ANTIGONUS I told her so, my lord,  
On your displeasure's peril and on mine,  
She should not visit you.

LEONTES What, canst not rule her?

PAULINA  
From all dishonesty he can. In this,  
Unless he take the course that you have done—  
Commit me for committing honor—trust it,  
He shall not rule me.

ANTIGONUS La you now, you hear.  
When she will take the rein I let her run,  
But she'll not stumble.

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

LEONTES Good queen?

PAULINA  
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.

LEONTES Force her hence.

PAULINA  
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,  
For she is good, hath brought you forth a  
daughter—  
Here 'tis—commends it to your blessing.  
*[She lays down the baby.]*

LEONTES Out!  
A mankind witch! Hence with her, out o' door.  
A most intelligencing bawd.



PAULINA Not so.  
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.

LEONTES Traitors,  
Will you not push her out? [*To Antigonus.*] Give her  
the bastard,  
Thou dotard; thou art woman-tired, unroosted  
By thy Dame Partlet here. Take up the bastard,  
Take 't up, I say. Give 't to thy crone.

PAULINA [*to Antigonus*] Forever  
Unvenerable be thy hands if thou  
Tak'st up the Princess by that forced baseness  
Which he has put upon 't.

LEONTES He dreads his wife.

PAULINA  
So I would you did. Then 'twere past all doubt  
You'd call your children yours.

LEONTES A nest of traitors!

ANTIGONUS  
I am none, by this good light.

PAULINA Nor I, nor any  
But one that's here, and that's himself. For he  
The sacred honor of himself, his queen's,  
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 compelled to 't—once remove  
The root of his opinion, which is rotten  
As ever oak or stone was sound.

LEONTES A callet  
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.  
Hence with it, and together with the dam  
Commit them to the fire.

PAULINA It is yours,  
And, might we lay th' old proverb to your charge,  
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,  
The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek, his  
smiles,  
The very mold 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  
The ordering of the mind too, 'mongst all colors  
No yellow in 't, lest she suspect, as he does,  
Her children not her husband's.

LEONTES A gross hag!—  
And, losel, thou art worthy to be hanged  
That wilt not stay her tongue.

ANTIGONUS Hang all the husbands  
That cannot do that feat, you'll leave yourself  
Hardly one subject.

LEONTES Once more, take her hence.

PAULINA  
A most unworthy and unnatural lord  
Can do no more.

LEONTES I'll ha' thee burnt.

PAULINA I care not.  
It is an 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,  
Not able to produce more accusation  
Than your own weak-hinged fancy, something  
savors  
Of tyranny, and will ignoble make you,  
Yea, scandalous to the world.

LEONTES [*to Antigonus*] On your allegiance,  
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!

PAULINA [*to Lords*]  
I pray you do not push me; I'll be gone.—

Look to your babe, my lord; 'tis yours. Jove send her  
A better guiding spirit.—What needs these hands?  
You that are thus so tender o'er his follies  
Will never do him good, not one of you.  
So, so. Farewell, we are gone. *[She exits.]*

LEONTES *[to Antigonus]*  
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,  
And see it instantly consumed 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,  
For thou sett'st on thy wife.

ANTIGONUS I did not, sir.  
These lords, my noble fellows, if they please,  
Can clear me in 't.

LORDS We can, my royal liege.  
He is not guilty of her coming hither.

LEONTES You're liars all.

LORD  
Beseech your Highness, give us better credit.  
We have always truly served you, and beseech  
So to esteem of us. And on our knees we beg,  
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.

LEONTES  
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.  
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 this beard's gray. What will you  
adventure  
To save this brat's life?

ANTIGONUS Anything, my lord,  
That my ability may undergo  
And nobleness impose. At least thus much:  
I'll pawn the little blood which I have left  
To save the innocent. Anything possible.

LEONTES  
It shall be possible. Swear by this sword  
Thou wilt perform my bidding.

ANTIGONUS [*his hand on the hilt*] I will, my lord.

LEONTES  
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-tongued wife,  
Whom for this time we pardon. We enjoin thee,  
As thou art liegeman to us, that thou carry  
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 it own protection  
And favor 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,  
That thou commend it strangely to some place  
Where chance may nurse or end it. Take it up.

ANTIGONUS  
I swear to do this, though a present death  
Had been more merciful.—Come on, poor babe.  
*[He picks up the baby.]*

Some powerful spirit instruct the kites and ravens  
To be thy nurses! Wolves and bears, they say,  
Casting their savageness aside, have done  
Like offices of pity. [*To Leontes.*] Sir, be prosperous  
In more than this deed does require.—And blessing  
Against this cruelty fight on thy side,  
Poor thing, condemned to loss.  
*[He exits, carrying the baby.]*

LEONTES No, I'll not rear  
Another's issue.

*[Enter a Servant.]*

SERVANT Please your Highness, posts  
From those you sent to th' oracle are come  
An hour since. Cleomenes and Dion,  
Being well arrived from Delphos, are both landed,  
Hasting to th' court.

LORD *[to Leontes]* So please you, sir, their speed  
Hath been beyond account.

LEONTES Twenty-three days  
They have been absent. 'Tis good speed, foretells  
The great Apollo suddenly will have  
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 accused, so shall she have  
A just and open trial. While she lives,  
My heart will be a burden to me. Leave me,  
And think upon my bidding.

*[They exit.]*

## Act 3

### Scene 1

*[Enter Cleomenes and Dion.]*

CLEOMENES

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—  
Methinks I so should term them—and the reverence  
Of the grave wearers. O, the sacrifice,  
How ceremonious, solemn, and unearthly  
It was i' th' off'ring!

CLEOMENES But of all, the burst  
And the ear-deaf'ning voice o' th' oracle,  
Kin to Jove's thunder, so surprised my sense  
That I was nothing.

DION If th' event o' th' journey  
Prove as successful to the Queen—O, be 't so!—  
As it hath been to us rare, pleasant, speedy,  
The time is worth the use on 't.

CLEOMENES Great Apollo  
Turn all to th' best! These proclamations,  
So forcing faults upon Hermione,  
I little like.

DION The violent carriage of it  
Will clear or end the business when the oracle,  
Thus by Apollo's great divine sealed up,  
Shall the contents discover. Something rare  
Even then will rush to knowledge. Go. Fresh horses;  
And gracious be the issue.

*[They exit.]*

### Scene 2

*[Enter Leontes, Lords, and Officers.]*

LEONTES

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 beloved. Let us be cleared  
Of being tyrannous, since we so openly  
Proceed in justice, which shall have due course  
Even to the guilt or the purgation.  
Produce the prisoner.

OFFICER

It is his Highness' pleasure that the Queen  
Appear in person here in court.

*[Enter Hermione, as to her trial, Paulina, and Ladies.]*

Silence!

LEONTES Read the indictment.

OFFICER *[reads]* 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 pretense 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.

HERMIONE

Since what I am to say must be but that  
Which contradicts my accusation, and  
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 received. But thus: if powers divine  
Behold our human actions, as they do,  
I doubt not then but innocence shall make  
False accusation blush and tyranny  
Tremble at patience. You, my lord, best know,  
Whom 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  
Than history can pattern, though devised  
And played 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 honor fore  
Who please to come and hear. For life, I prize it  
As I weigh grief, which I would spare. For honor,  
'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,  
How merited to be so; since he came,  
With what encounter so uncurrent I  
Have strained t' appear thus; if one jot beyond  
The bound of honor, or in act or will  
That way inclining, hardened be the hearts  
Of all that hear me, and my near'st of kin  
Cry fie upon my grave.

LEONTES I ne'er heard yet  
That any of these bolder vices wanted  
Less impudence to gainsay what they did  
Than to perform it first.

HERMIONE That's true enough,  
Though 'tis a saying, sir, not due to me.

LEONTES  
You will not own it.

HERMIONE More than mistress of  
Which comes to me in name of fault, I must not  
At all acknowledge. For Polixenes,  
With whom I am accused, I do confess  
I loved him as in honor he required,  
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  
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,  
I know not how it tastes, though it be dished  
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.

LEONTES  
You knew of his departure, as you know



What you have underta'en to do in 's absence.

HERMIONE Sir,  
You speak a language that I understand not.  
My life stands in the level of your dreams,  
Which I'll lay down.

LEONTES Your actions are my dreams.  
You had a bastard by Polixenes,  
And I but dreamed 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,  
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.

HERMIONE Sir, spare your threats.  
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 favor,  
I do give lost, for I do feel it gone,  
But know not how it went. My second joy  
And first fruits of my body, from his presence  
I am barred like one infectious. My third comfort,  
Starred most unluckily, is from my breast,  
The innocent milk in it most innocent mouth,  
Haled out to murder; myself on every post  
Proclaimed a strumpet; with immodest hatred  
The childbed privilege denied, which longs  
To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried  
Here to this place, i' th' open air, before  
I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,  
Tell me what blessings I have here alive,  
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 honor,  
Which I would free), if I shall be condemned  
Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else  
But what your jealousies awake, I tell you  
'Tis rigor, and not law. Your Honors all,  
I do refer me to the oracle.  
Apollo be my judge.

LORD This your request  
Is altogether just. Therefore bring forth,  
And in Apollo's name, his oracle. *[Officers exit.]*

HERMIONE

The Emperor of Russia was my father.  
O, that he were alive and here beholding  
His daughter's trial, that he did but see  
The flatness of my misery, yet with eyes  
Of pity, not revenge.

*[Enter Cleomenes, Dion, with Officers.]*

OFFICER *[presenting a sword]*

You here shall swear upon this sword of justice  
That you, Cleomenes and Dion, have  
Been both at Delphos, and from thence have  
brought  
This sealed-up oracle, by the hand delivered  
Of great Apollo's priest, and that since then  
You have not dared to break the holy seal  
Nor read the secrets in 't.

CLEOMENES DION All this we swear.

LEONTES Break up the seals and read.

OFFICER *[reads]* Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless,  
Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant,  
his innocent babe truly begotten; and the King shall  
live without an heir if that which is lost be not  
found.

LORDS

Now blessed be the great Apollo!

HERMIONE Praised!

LEONTES Hast thou read truth?

OFFICER

Ay, my lord, even so as it is here set down.

LEONTES

There is no truth at all i' th' oracle.  
The sessions shall proceed. This is mere falsehood.

*[Enter a Servant.]*

SERVANT

My lord the King, the King!

LEONTES What is the business?

SERVANT

O sir, I shall be hated to report it.  
The Prince your son, with mere conceit and fear  
Of the Queen's speed, is gone.

LEONTES How? Gone?

SERVANT Is dead.

LEONTES

Apollo's angry, and the heavens themselves  
Do strike at my injustice.

*[Hermione falls.]*

How now there?

PAULINA

This news is mortal to the Queen. Look down  
And see what death is doing.

LEONTES Take her hence.

Her heart is but o'ercharged. She will recover.  
I have too much believed mine own suspicion.  
Beseech you, tenderly apply to her  
Some remedies for life.

*[Paulina exits with Officers carrying Hermione.]*

Apollo, pardon

My great profaneness 'gainst thine oracle.  
I'll reconcile me to Polixenes,  
New woo my queen, recall the good Camillo,  
Whom I proclaim a man of truth, of mercy;  
For, being transported by my jealousies  
To bloody thoughts and to revenge, I chose  
Camillo for the minister to poison  
My friend Polixenes, which had been done  
But that the good mind of Camillo tardied  
My swift command, though I with death and with  
Reward did threaten and encourage him,  
Not doing it and being done. He, most humane  
And filled with honor, to my kingly guest  
Unclassed my practice, quit his fortunes here,  
Which you knew great, and to the hazard

Of all incertainties himself commended,  
No richer than his honor. How he glisters  
Through my rust, and how his piety  
Does my deeds make the blacker!

*[Enter Paulina.]*

PAULINA Woe the while!  
O, cut my lace, lest my heart, cracking it,  
Break too!

LORD What fit is this, good lady?

PAULINA *[to Leontes]*  
What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me?  
What wheels, racks, fires? What flaying? Boiling  
In leads or oils? What old or newer torture  
Must I receive, whose every word deserves  
To taste of thy most worst? Thy tyranny,  
Together working with thy jealousies,  
Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle  
For girls of nine, O, think what they have done,  
And then run mad indeed, stark mad, for all  
Thy bygone fooleries were but spices of it.  
That thou betrayedst Polixenes, 'twas nothing;  
That did but show thee of a fool, inconstant  
And damnable ingrateful. Nor was 't much  
Thou wouldst have poisoned good Camillo's honor,  
To have him kill a king: poor trespasses,  
More monstrous standing by, whereof I reckon  
The casting forth to crows thy baby daughter  
To be or none or little, though a devil  
Would have shed water out of fire ere done 't.  
Nor is 't directly laid to thee the death  
Of the young prince, whose honorable thoughts,  
Thoughts high for one so tender, cleft the heart  
That could conceive a gross and foolish sire  
Blemished his gracious dam. This is not, no,  
Laid to thy answer. But the last—O lords,  
When I have said, cry woe!—the Queen, the Queen,  
The sweet'st, dear'st creature's dead, and vengeance  
for 't  
Not dropped down yet.

LORD The higher powers forbid!

PAULINA

I say she's dead. I'll swear 't. If word nor oath  
Prevail not, go and see. If you can bring  
Tincture or luster in her lip, her eye,  
Heat outwardly or breath within, I'll serve you  
As I would do the gods.—But, O thou tyrant,  
Do not repent these things, for they are heavier  
Than all thy woes can stir. Therefore betake thee  
To nothing but despair. A thousand knees  
Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,  
Upon a barren mountain, and still winter  
In storm perpetual, could not move the gods  
To look that way thou wert.

LEONTES Go on, go on.  
Thou canst not speak too much. I have deserved  
All tongues to talk their bitt'rest.

LORD [*to Paulina*] Say no more.  
Howe'er the business goes, you have made fault  
I' th' boldness of your speech.

PAULINA I am sorry for 't.  
All faults I make, when I shall come to know them,  
I do repent. Alas, I have showed too much  
The rashness of a woman. He is touched  
To th' noble heart.—What's gone and what's past  
help  
Should be past grief. Do not receive affliction  
At my petition. I beseech you, rather  
Let me be punished, that have minded you  
Of what you should forget. Now, good my liege,  
Sir, royal sir, forgive a foolish woman.  
The love I bore your queen—lo, fool again!—  
I'll speak of her no more, nor of your children.  
I'll not remember you of my own lord,  
Who is lost too. Take your patience to you,  
And I'll say nothing.

LEONTES Thou didst speak but well  
When most the truth, which I receive much better  
Than to be pitied of thee. Prithee, bring me  
To the dead bodies of my queen and son.  
One grave shall be for both. Upon them shall  
The causes of their death appear, unto  
Our shame perpetual. Once a day I'll visit  
The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there  
Shall be my recreation. So long as nature  
Will bear up with this exercise, so long

I daily vow to use it. Come, and lead me  
To these sorrows.

*[They exit.]*

### Scene 3

*[Enter Antigonus carrying the babe, and a Mariner.]*

ANTIGONUS

Thou art perfect, then, our ship hath touched upon  
The deserts of Bohemia?

MARINER Ay, my lord, and fear

We have landed in ill time. The skies look grimly  
And threaten present blusters. In my conscience,  
The heavens with that we have in hand are angry  
And frown upon 's.

ANTIGONUS

Their sacred wills be done. Go, get aboard.  
Look to thy bark. I'll not be long before  
I call upon thee.

MARINER Make your best haste, and go not  
Too far i' th' land. 'Tis like to be loud weather.  
Besides, this place is famous for the creatures  
Of prey that keep upon 't.

ANTIGONUS Go thou away.  
I'll follow instantly.

MARINER I am glad at heart  
To be so rid o' th' business. *[He exits.]*

ANTIGONUS Come, poor babe.

I have heard, but not believed, the spirits o' th' dead  
May walk again. If such thing be, thy mother  
Appeared to me last night, for ne'er was dream  
So like a waking. To me comes a creature,  
Sometimes her head on one side, some another.  
I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,  
So filled and so becoming. In pure white robes,  
Like very sanctity, she did approach  
My cabin where I lay, thrice bowed before me,  
And, gasping to begin some speech, her eyes  
Became two spouts. The fury spent, anon  
Did this break from her: "Good Antigonus,  
Since fate, against thy better disposition,

Hath made thy person for the thrower-out  
Of my poor babe, according to thine oath,  
Places remote enough are in Bohemia.  
There weep, and leave it crying. And, for the babe  
Is counted lost forever, Perdita  
I prithee call 't. For this ungentle business  
Put on thee by my lord, thou ne'er shalt see  
Thy wife Paulina more." And so, with shrieks,  
She melted into air. Affrighted much,  
I did in time collect myself and thought  
This was so and no slumber. Dreams are toys,  
Yet for this once, yea, superstitiously,  
I will be squared by this. I do believe  
Hermione hath suffered death, and that  
Apollo would, this being indeed the issue  
Of King Polixenes, it should here be laid,  
Either for life or death, upon the earth  
Of its right father.—Blossom, speed thee well.  
There lie, and there thy character; there these,  
*[He lays down the baby, a bundle, and a box.]*  
Which may, if fortune please, both breed thee, pretty,  
And still rest thine. *[Thunder.]* The storm begins.  
Poor wretch,  
That for thy mother's fault art thus exposed  
To loss and what may follow. Weep I cannot,  
But my heart bleeds, and most accurst am I  
To be by oath enjoined to this. Farewell.  
The day frowns more and more. Thou 'rt like to have  
A lullaby too rough. I never saw  
The heavens so dim by day.  
*[Thunder, and sounds of hunting.]*

A savage clamor!  
Well may I get aboard! This is the chase.  
I am gone forever! *[He exits, pursued by a bear.]*

*[Enter Shepherd.]*

SHEPHERD I would there were no age between ten and  
three-and-twenty, or that youth would sleep out the  
rest, for there is nothing in the between but getting  
wenches with child, wronging the ancients, stealing,  
fighting—Hark you now. Would any but these  
boiled brains of nineteen and two-and-twenty hunt  
this weather? They have scared away two of my best  
sheep, which I fear the wolf will sooner find than  
the master. If anywhere I have them, 'tis by the  
seaside, browsing of ivy. Good luck, an 't be thy will,

what have we here? Mercy on 's, a bairn! A very pretty bairn. A boy or a child, I wonder? A pretty one, a very pretty one. Sure some scape. Though I am not bookish, yet I can read waiting-gentlewoman in the scape. This has been some stair-work, some trunk-work, some behind-door work. They were warmer that got this than the poor thing is here. I'll take it up for pity. Yet I'll tarry till my son come. He halloed but even now.—Whoa-ho-ho!

*[Enter Shepherd's Son.]*

SHEPHERD'S SON Hilloa, loa!

SHEPHERD What, art so near? If thou 'lt see a thing to talk on when thou art dead and rotten, come hither. What ail'st thou, man?

SHEPHERD'S SON I have seen two such sights, by sea and by land—but I am not to say it is a sea, for it is now the sky; betwixt the firmament and it, you cannot thrust a bodkin's point.

SHEPHERD Why, boy, how is it?

SHEPHERD'S SON I would you did but see how it chafes, how it rages, how it takes up the shore. But that's not to the point. O, the most piteous cry of the poor souls! Sometimes to see 'em, and not to see 'em. Now the ship boring the moon with her mainmast, and anon swallowed with yeast and froth, as you'd thrust a cork into a hogshead. And then for the land service, to see how the bear tore out his shoulder-bone, how he cried to me for help, and said his name was Antigonus, a nobleman. But to make an end of the ship: to see how the sea flap-dragoned it. But, first, how the poor souls roared and the sea mocked them, and how the poor gentleman roared and the bear mocked him, both roaring louder than the sea or weather.

SHEPHERD Name of mercy, when was this, boy?

SHEPHERD'S SON Now, now. I have not winked since I saw these sights. The men are not yet cold under water, nor the bear half dined on the gentleman. He's at it now.



SHEPHERD Would I had been by to have helped the old man.

SHEPHERD'S SON I would you had been by the ship side, to have helped her. There your charity would have lacked footing.

SHEPHERD Heavy matters, heavy matters. But look thee here, boy. Now bless thyself. Thou met'st with things dying, I with things newborn. Here's a sight for thee. Look thee, a bearing cloth for a squire's child. Look thee here. Take up, take up, boy. Open 't. So, let's see. It was told me I should be rich by the fairies. This is some changeling. Open 't. What's within, boy?

SHEPHERD'S SON [*opening the box*] You're a made old man. If the sins of your youth are forgiven you, you're well to live. Gold, all gold.

SHEPHERD This is fairy gold, boy, and 'twill prove so. Up with 't, keep it close. Home, home, the next way. We are lucky, boy, and to be so still requires nothing but secrecy. Let my sheep go. Come, good boy, the next way home.

SHEPHERD'S SON Go you the next way with your findings. I'll go see if the bear be gone from the gentleman and how much he hath eaten. They are never curst but when they are hungry. If there be any of him left, I'll bury it.

SHEPHERD That's a good deed. If thou mayest discern by that which is left of him what he is, fetch me to th' sight of him.

SHEPHERD'S SON Marry, will I, and you shall help to put him i' th' ground.

SHEPHERD 'Tis a lucky day, boy, and we'll do good deeds on 't.

[*They exit.*]

## Act 4

### Scene 1

*[Enter Time, the Chorus.]*

TIME

I, that please some, try all—both joy and terror  
Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error—  
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,  
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime  
To me or my swift passage that I slide  
O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried  
Of that wide gap, since it is in my power  
To o'erthrow law and in one self-born hour  
To plant and o'erwhelm custom. Let me pass  
The same I am ere ancient'st order was  
Or what is now received. I witness to  
The times that brought them in. So shall I do  
To th' freshest things now reigning, and make stale  
The glistening of this present, as my tale  
Now seems to it. Your patience this allowing,  
I turn my glass and give my scene such growing  
As you had slept between. Leontes leaving,  
Th' effects of his fond jealousies so grieving  
That he shuts up himself, imagine me,  
Gentle spectators, that I now may be  
In fair Bohemia. And remember well  
I mentioned a son o' th' King's, which Florizell  
I now name to you, and with speed so pace  
To speak of Perdita, now grown in grace  
Equal with wond'ring. What of her ensues  
I list not prophesy; but let Time's news  
Be known when 'tis brought forth. A shepherd's  
daughter  
And what to her adheres, which follows after,  
Is th' argument of Time. Of this allow,  
If ever you have spent time worse ere now.  
If never, yet that Time himself doth say  
He wishes earnestly you never may.

*[He exits.]*

### Scene 2

*[Enter Polixenes and Camillo.]*

POLIXENES I pray thee, good Camillo, be no more  
importunate. 'Tis a sickness denying thee anything,

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 lov'st 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 call'st 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 sawst thou the Prince Florizell, 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 neighbors, 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. Prithee 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.

*[They exit.]*

### Scene 3

*[Enter Autolycus singing.]*

AUTOLYCUS

*When daffodils begin to peer,  
With heigh, the doxy over the dale,  
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year,  
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.*

*The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,  
With heigh, the sweet birds, O how they sing!  
Doth set my pugging tooth an edge,  
For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.*

*The lark, that tirralirra chants,  
With heigh, with heigh, the thrush and the jay,  
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,  
While we lie tumbling in the hay.*

I have served Prince Florizell and in my time wore three-pile, but now I am out of service.

*But shall I go mourn for that, my dear?  
The pale moon shines by night,  
And when I wander here and there,  
I then do most go right.*

*If tinkers may have leave to live,  
And bear the sow-skin budget,  
Then my account I well may give,*

*And in the stocks avouch it.*

My traffic is sheets. When the kite builds, look to lesser linen. My father named me Autolycus, who, being, as I am, littered under Mercury, was likewise a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. With die and drab I purchased this caparison, and my revenue is the silly cheat. Gallows and knock are too powerful on the highway. Beating and hanging are terrors to me. For the life to come, I sleep out the thought of it. A prize, a prize!

*[Enter Shepherd's Son.]*

SHEPHERD'S SON Let me see, every 'leven wether tods, every tod yields pound and odd shilling; fifteen hundred shorn, what comes the wool to?

AUTOLYCUS *[aside]* If the springe hold, the cock's mine. *[He lies down.]*

SHEPHERD'S SON I cannot do 't without counters. Let me see, what am I to buy for our sheep-shearing feast? *[(He reads a paper.)]* Three pound of sugar, five pound of currants, rice—what will this sister of mine do with rice? But my father hath made her mistress of the feast, and she lays it on. She hath made me four-and-twenty nosegays for the shearers, three-man song men all, and very good ones; but they are most of them means and basses, but one Puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to hornpipes. I must have saffron to color the warden pies; mace; dates, none, that's out of my note; nutmegs, seven; a race or two of ginger, but that I may beg; four pound of prunes, and as many of raisins o' th' sun.

AUTOLYCUS *[writhing as if in pain]* O, that ever I was born!

SHEPHERD'S SON I' th' name of me!

AUTOLYCUS O, help me, help me! Pluck but off these rags, and then death, death.

SHEPHERD'S SON Alack, poor soul, thou hast need of more rags to lay on thee rather than have these off.

AUTOLYCUS O sir, the loathsomeness of them offends me more than the stripes I have received, which are mighty ones and millions.

SHEPHERD'S SON Alas, poor man, a million of beating may come to a great matter.

AUTOLYCUS I am robbed, sir, and beaten, my money and apparel ta'en from me, and these detestable things put upon me.

SHEPHERD'S SON What, by a horseman, or a footman?

AUTOLYCUS A footman, sweet sir, a footman.

SHEPHERD'S SON Indeed, he should be a footman by the garments he has left with thee. If this be a horseman's coat, it hath seen very hot service. Lend me thy hand; I'll help thee. Come, lend me thy hand.

AUTOLYCUS O, good sir, tenderly, O!

SHEPHERD'S SON Alas, poor soul.

AUTOLYCUS O, good sir, softly, good sir. I fear, sir, my shoulder blade is out.

SHEPHERD'S SON How now? Canst stand?

AUTOLYCUS [*stealing the Shepherd's Son's purse*] Softly, dear sir, good sir, softly. You ha' done me a charitable office.

SHEPHERD'S SON Dost lack any money? I have a little money for thee.

AUTOLYCUS No, good sweet sir, no, I beseech you, sir. I have a kinsman not past three-quarters of a mile hence, unto whom I was going. I shall there have money or anything I want. Offer me no money, I pray you; that kills my heart.

SHEPHERD'S SON What manner of fellow was he that robbed you?

AUTOLYCUS A fellow, sir, that I have known to go about

with troll-my-dames. I knew him once a servant of the Prince. I cannot tell, good sir, for which of his virtues it was, but he was certainly whipped out of the court.

SHEPHERD'S SON His vices, you would say. There's no virtue whipped out of the court. They cherish it to make it stay there, and yet it will no more but abide.

AUTOLYCUS Vices, I would say, sir. I know this man well. He hath been since an ape-bearer, then a process-server, a bailiff. Then he compassed a motion of the Prodigal Son, and married a tinker's wife within a mile where my land and living lies, and, having flown over many knavish professions, he settled only in rogue. Some call him Autolycus.

SHEPHERD'S SON Out upon him! Prig, for my life, prig! He haunts wakes, fairs, and bearbaitings.

AUTOLYCUS Very true, sir: he, sir, he. That's the rogue that put me into this apparel.

SHEPHERD'S SON Not a more cowardly rogue in all Bohemia. If you had but looked big and spit at him, he'd have run.

AUTOLYCUS I must confess to you, sir, I am no fighter. I am false of heart that way, and that he knew, I warrant him.

SHEPHERD'S SON How do you now?

AUTOLYCUS Sweet sir, much better than I was. I can stand and walk. I will even take my leave of you and pace softly towards my kinsman's.

SHEPHERD'S SON Shall I bring thee on the way?

AUTOLYCUS No, good-faced sir, no, sweet sir.

SHEPHERD'S SON Then fare thee well. I must go buy spices for our sheep-shearing.

AUTOLYCUS Prosper you, sweet sir.

*[Shepherd's Son exits.]*

Your purse is not hot enough to purchase your spice. I'll be with you at your sheep-shearing too. If

I make not this cheat bring out another, and the  
shearers prove sheep, let me be unrolled and my  
name put in the book of virtue.

*[Sings.] Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,*

*And merrily hent the stile-a.*

*A merry heart goes all the day,*

*Your sad tires in a mile-a.*

*[He exits.]*

## Scene 4

*[Enter Florizell and Perdita.]*

FLORIZELL

These your unusual weeds to each part of you  
Does give a life—no shepherdess, but Flora  
Peering in April's front. This your sheep-shearing  
Is as a meeting of the petty gods,  
And you the queen on 't.

PERDITA Sir, my gracious lord,  
To chide at your extremes it not becomes me;  
O, pardon that I name them! Your high self,  
The gracious mark o' th' land, you have obscured  
With a swain's wearing, and me, poor lowly maid,  
Most goddesslike pranked up. But that our feasts  
In every mess have folly, and the feeders  
Digest it with a custom, I should blush  
To see you so attired, swoon, I think,  
To show myself a glass.

FLORIZELL I bless the time  
When my good falcon made her flight across  
Thy father's ground.

PERDITA Now Jove afford you cause.  
To me the difference forges dread. Your greatness  
Hath not been used to fear. Even now I tremble  
To think your father by some accident  
Should pass this way as you did. O the Fates,  
How would he look to see his work, so noble,  
Vilely bound up? What would he say? Or how  
Should I, in these my borrowed flaunts, behold  
The sternness of his presence?

FLORIZELL Apprehend  
Nothing but jollity. The gods themselves,  
Humbling their deities to love, have taken



The shapes of beasts upon them. Jupiter  
Became a bull, and bellowed; the green Neptune  
A ram, and bleated; and the fire-robed god,  
Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,  
As I seem now. Their transformations  
Were never for a piece of beauty rarer,  
Nor in a way so chaste, since my desires  
Run not before mine honor, nor my lusts  
Burn hotter than my faith.

PERDITA O, but sir,  
Your resolution cannot hold when 'tis  
Opposed, as it must be, by th' power of the King.  
One of these two must be necessities,  
Which then will speak: that you must change this  
purpose  
Or I my life.

FLORIZELL Thou dear'st Perdita,  
With these forced thoughts I prithee darken not  
The mirth o' th' feast. Or I'll be thine, my fair,  
Or not my father's. For I cannot be  
Mine own, nor anything to any, if  
I be not thine. To this I am most constant,  
Though destiny say no. Be merry, gentle.  
Strangle such thoughts as these with anything  
That you behold the while. Your guests are coming.  
Lift up your countenance as it were the day  
Of celebration of that nuptial which  
We two have sworn shall come.

PERDITA O Lady Fortune,  
Stand you auspicious!

FLORIZELL See, your guests approach.  
Address yourself to entertain them sprightly,  
And let's be red with mirth.

*[Enter Shepherd, Shepherd's Son, Mopsa, Dorcas,  
Shepherds and Shepherdesses, Servants, Musicians,  
and Polixenes and Camillo in disguise.]*

SHEPHERD  
Fie, daughter, when my old wife lived, upon  
This day she was both pantler, butler, cook,  
Both dame and servant; welcomed all; served all;  
Would sing her song and dance her turn, now here

At upper end o' th' table, now i' th' middle;  
On his shoulder, and his; her face afire  
With labor, and the thing she took to quench it  
She would to each one sip. You are retired  
As if you were a feasted one and not  
The hostess of the meeting. Pray you bid  
These unknown friends to 's welcome, for it is  
A way to make us better friends, more known.  
Come, quench your blushes and present yourself  
That which you are, mistress o' th' feast. Come on,  
And bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing,  
As your good flock shall prosper.

PERDITA [*to Polixenes*] Sir, welcome.  
It is my father's will I should take on me  
The hostess-ship o' th' day. [*To Camillo.*] You're  
welcome, sir.—  
Give me those flowers there, Dorcas.—Reverend  
sirs,  
For you there's rosemary and rue. These keep  
Seeming and savor all the winter long.  
Grace and remembrance be to you both,  
And welcome to our shearing.

POLIXENES Shepherdess—  
A fair one are you—well you fit our ages  
With flowers of winter.

PERDITA Sir, the year growing ancient,  
Not yet on summer's death nor on the birth  
Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers o' th' season  
Are our carnations and streaked gillyvors,  
Which some call nature's bastards. Of that kind  
Our rustic garden's barren, and I care not  
To get slips of them.

POLIXENES Wherefore, gentle maiden,  
Do you neglect them?

PERDITA For I have heard it said  
There is an art which in their piedness shares  
With great creating nature.

POLIXENES Say there be;  
Yet nature is made better by no mean  
But nature makes that mean. So, over that art  
Which you say adds to nature is an art  
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry

A gentler scion to the wildest stock,  
And make conceive a bark of baser kind  
By bud of nobler race. This is an art  
Which does mend nature, change it rather, but  
The art itself is nature.

PERDITA So it is.

POLIXENES

Then make your garden rich in gillyvors,  
And do not call them bastards.

PERDITA I'll not put  
The dibble in earth to set one slip of them,  
No more than, were I painted, I would wish  
This youth should say 'twere well, and only  
therefore  
Desire to breed by me. Here's flowers for you:  
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram,  
The marigold, that goes to bed wi' th' sun  
And with him rises weeping. These are flowers  
Of middle summer, and I think they are given  
To men of middle age. You're very welcome.

CAMILLO

I should leave grazing, were I of your flock,  
And only live by gazing.

PERDITA Out, alas!  
You'd be so lean that blasts of January  
Would blow you through and through. *[(To Florizell.)]* Now, my fair'st friend,  
I would I had some flowers o' th' spring, that might  
Become your time of day, *[(to the Shepherdesses)]*  
and yours, and yours,  
That wear upon your virgin branches yet  
Your maidenheads growing. O Proserpina,  
For the flowers now that, frightened, thou let'st fall  
From Dis's wagon! Daffodils,  
That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,  
That die unmarried ere they can behold  
Bright Phoebus in his strength—a malady  
Most incident to maids; bold oxlips and  
The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,  
The flower-de-luce being one—O, these I lack

To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend,  
To strew him o'er and o'er.

FLORIZELL What, like a corse?

PERDITA

No, like a bank for love to lie and play on,  
Not like a corse; or if, not to be buried,  
But quick and in mine arms. Come, take your  
flowers.

Methinks I play as I have seen them do  
In Whitsun pastorals. Sure this robe of mine  
Does change my disposition.

FLORIZELL What you do

Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,  
I'd have you do it ever. When you sing,  
I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,  
Pray so; and for the ord'ring your affairs,  
To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you  
A wave o' th' sea, that you might ever do  
Nothing but that, move still, still so,  
And own no other function. Each your doing,  
So singular in each particular,  
Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds,  
That all your acts are queens.

PERDITA O Doricles,

Your praises are too large. But that your youth  
And the true blood which peeps fairly through 't  
Do plainly give you out an unstained shepherd,  
With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,  
You wooed me the false way.

FLORIZELL I think you have

As little skill to fear as I have purpose  
To put you to 't. But come, our dance, I pray.  
Your hand, my Perdita. So turtles pair  
That never mean to part.

PERDITA I'll swear for 'em.

POLIXENES *[to Camillo]*

This is the prettiest lowborn lass that ever  
Ran on the greensward. Nothing she does or seems  
But smacks of something greater than herself,  
Too noble for this place.

CAMILLO He tells her something  
That makes her blood look out. Good sooth, she is  
The queen of curds and cream.

SHEPHERD'S SON *[to Musicians]* Come on, strike up.

DORCAS  
Mopsa must be your mistress? Marry, garlic  
To mend her kissing with.

MOPSA Now, in good time!

SHEPHERD'S SON  
Not a word, a word. We stand upon our manners.—  
Come, strike up. *[Music begins.]*  
*[Here a Dance of Shepherds and Shepherdesses.]*

POLIXENES  
Pray, good shepherd, what fair swain is this  
Which dances with your daughter?

SHEPHERD  
They call him Doricles, and boasts himself  
To have a worthy feeding. But I have it  
Upon his own report, and I believe it.  
He looks like sooth. He says he loves my daughter.  
I think so too, for never gazed the moon  
Upon the water as he'll stand and read,  
As 'twere, my daughter's eyes. And, to be plain,  
I think there is not half a kiss to choose  
Who loves another best.

POLIXENES She dances featly.

SHEPHERD  
So she does anything, though I report it  
That should be silent. If young Doricles  
Do light upon her, she shall bring him that  
Which he not dreams of.

*[Enter a Servant.]*

SERVANT O, master, if you did but hear the peddler at  
the door, you would never dance again after a tabor  
and pipe; no, the bagpipe could not move you. He  
sings several tunes faster than you'll tell money. He  
utters them as he had eaten ballads and all men's

ears grew to his tunes.

SHEPHERD'S SON He could never come better. He shall come in. I love a ballad but even too well if it be doleful matter merrily set down, or a very pleasant thing indeed and sung lamentably.

SERVANT He hath songs for man or woman, of all sizes. No milliner can so fit his customers with gloves. He has the prettiest love songs for maids, so without bawdry, which is strange, with such delicate burdens of dildos and fadings, "Jump her and thump her." And where some stretch-mouthed rascal would, as it were, mean mischief and break a foul gap into the matter, he makes the maid to answer "Whoop, do me no harm, good man"; puts him off, slights him, with "Whoop, do me no harm, good man."

POLIXENES This is a brave fellow.

SHEPHERD'S SON Believe me, thou talkest of an admirable conceited fellow. Has he any unbraided wares?

SERVANT He hath ribbons of all the colors i' th' rainbow; points more than all the lawyers in Bohemia can learnedly handle, though they come to him by th' gross; inkles, caddises, cambrics, lawns—why, he sings 'em over as they were gods or goddesses. You would think a smock were a she-angel, he so chants to the sleeve-hand and the work about the square on 't.

SHEPHERD'S SON Prithee bring him in, and let him approach singing.

PERDITA Forewarn him that he use no scurrilous words in 's tunes. *[Servant exits.]*

SHEPHERD'S SON You have of these peddlers that have more in them than you'd think, sister.

PERDITA Ay, good brother, or go about to think.

*[Enter Autolycus, wearing a false beard, singing.]*

AUTOLYCUS

*Lawn as white as driven snow,  
Cypress black as e'er was crow,  
Gloves as sweet as damask roses,  
Masks for faces and for noses,  
Bugle bracelet, necklace amber,  
Perfume for a lady's chamber,  
Golden coifs and stomachers  
For my lads to give their dears,  
Pins and poking-sticks of steel,  
What maids lack from head to heel,  
Come buy of me, come. Come buy, come buy.  
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry.  
Come buy.*

SHEPHERD'S SON If I were not in love with Mopsa, thou shouldst take no money of me; but being enthralled as I am, it will also be the bondage of certain ribbons and gloves.

MOPSA I was promised them against the feast, but they come not too late now.

DORCAS He hath promised you more than that, or there be liars.

MOPSA He hath paid you all he promised you. Maybe he has paid you more, which will shame you to give him again.

SHEPHERD'S SON Is there no manners left among maids? Will they wear their plackets where they should bear their faces? Is there not milking time, when you are going to bed, or kiln-hole, to whistle of these secrets, but you must be tittle-tattling before all our guests? 'Tis well they are whisp'ring. Clamor your tongues, and not a word more.

MOPSA I have done. Come, you promised me a tawdry lace and a pair of sweet gloves.

SHEPHERD'S SON Have I not told thee how I was cozened by the way and lost all my money?

AUTOLYCUS And indeed, sir, there are cozeners abroad; therefore it behooves men to be wary.

SHEPHERD'S SON Fear not thou, man. Thou shalt lose

nothing here.

AUTOLYCUS I hope so, sir, for I have about me many parcels of charge.

SHEPHERD'S SON What hast here? Ballads?

MOPSA Pray now, buy some. I love a ballad in print alive, for then we are sure they are true.

AUTOLYCUS Here's one to a very doleful tune, how a usurer's wife was brought to bed of twenty moneybags at a burden, and how she longed to eat adders' heads and toads carbonadoed.

MOPSA Is it true, think you?

AUTOLYCUS Very true, and but a month old.

DORCAS Bless me from marrying a usurer!

AUTOLYCUS Here's the midwife's name to 't, one Mistress Taleporter, and five or six honest wives that were present. Why should I carry lies abroad?

MOPSA [*to Shepherd's Son*] Pray you now, buy it.

SHEPHERD'S SON [*to Autolycus*] Come on, lay it by, and let's first see more ballads. We'll buy the other things anon.

AUTOLYCUS Here's another ballad, of a fish that appeared upon the coast on Wednesday the fourscore of April, forty thousand fathom above water, and sung this ballad against the hard hearts of maids. It was thought she was a woman, and was turned into a cold fish for she would not exchange flesh with one that loved her. The ballad is very pitiful, and as true.

DORCAS Is it true too, think you?

AUTOLYCUS Five justices' hands at it, and witnesses more than my pack will hold.

SHEPHERD'S SON Lay it by too. Another.

AUTOLYCUS This is a merry ballad, but a very pretty



one.

MOPSA Let's have some merry ones.

AUTOLYCUS Why, this is a passing merry one and goes to the tune of "Two Maids Wooing a Man." There's scarce a maid westward but she sings it. 'Tis in request, I can tell you.

MOPSA We can both sing it. If thou 'lt bear a part, thou shalt hear; 'tis in three parts.

DORCAS We had the tune on 't a month ago.

AUTOLYCUS I can bear my part. You must know 'tis my occupation. Have at it with you.

Song.

AUTOLYCUS     *Get you hence, for I must go  
Where it fits not you to know.*

DORCAS         *Whither?*

MOPSA     O, whither?

DORCAS     Whither?

MOPSA     *It becomes thy oath full well  
Thou to me thy secrets tell.*

DORCAS     *Me too. Let me go thither.*

MOPSA     *Or thou goest to th' grange or mill.*

DORCAS     *If to either, thou dost ill.*

AUTOLYCUS     *Neither.*

DORCAS     What, neither?

AUTOLYCUS     Neither.

DORCAS     *Thou hast sworn my love to be.*

MOPSA     *Thou hast sworn it more to me.  
Then whither goest? Say whither.*

SHEPHERD'S SON We'll have this song out anon by ourselves. My father and the gentlemen are in sad talk, and we'll not trouble them. Come, bring away thy pack after me.—Wenches, I'll buy for you both.—Peddler, let's have the first choice.—Follow me, girls.

*[He exits with Mopsa, Dorcas, Shepherds and Shepherdesses.]*

AUTOLYCUS And you shall pay well for 'em.

Song.

*Will you buy any tape,  
Or lace for your cape,  
My dainty duck, my dear-a?  
Any silk, any thread,  
Any toys for your head,  
Of the new'st and fin'st, fin'st wear-a?  
Come to the peddler.  
Money's a meddler  
That doth utter all men's ware-a.*

*[He exits.]*

*[Enter a Servant.]*

SERVANT *[to Shepherd]* Master, there is three carters, three shepherds, three neatherds, three swineherds, that have made themselves all men of hair. They call themselves saultiers, and they have a dance which the wenches say is a gallimaufry of gambols, because they are not in 't, but they themselves are o' th' mind, if it be not too rough for some that know little but bowling, it will please plentifully.

SHEPHERD Away! We'll none on 't. Here has been too much homely foolery already.—I know, sir, we weary you.

POLIXENES You weary those that refresh us. Pray, let's see these four threes of herdsmen.

SERVANT One three of them, by their own report, sir, hath danced before the King, and not the worst of

the three but jumps twelve foot and a half by th' square.

SHEPHERD Leave your prating. Since these good men are pleased, let them come in—but quickly now.

SERVANT Why, they stay at door, sir.

*[He admits the herdsmen.]*

*[Here a Dance of twelve herdsmen, dressed as Satyrs.]*  
*[Herdsmen, Musicians, and Servants exit.]*

POLIXENES *[to Shepherd]*

O father, you'll know more of that hereafter.

*[Aside to Camillo.]* Is it not too far gone? 'Tis time to part them.

He's simple, and tells much. *[To Florizell.]* How now, fair shepherd?

Your heart is full of something that does take  
Your mind from feasting. Sooth, when I was young  
And handed love, as you do, I was wont  
To load my she with knacks. I would have ransacked  
The peddler's silken treasury and have poured it  
To her acceptance. You have let him go  
And nothing mated with him. If your lass  
Interpretation should abuse and call this  
Your lack of love or bounty, you were straited  
For a reply, at least if you make a care  
Of happy holding her.

FLORIZELL Old sir, I know

She prizes not such trifles as these are.

The gifts she looks from me are packed and locked  
Up in my heart, which I have given already,  
But not delivered. *[To Perdita.]* O, hear me breathe  
my life

Before this ancient sir, who, it should seem,  
Hath sometime loved. I take thy hand, this hand  
As soft as dove's down and as white as it,  
Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fanned snow that's  
bolted  
By th' northern blasts twice o'er.

POLIXENES What follows this?—

How prettily th' young swain seems to wash  
The hand was fair before.—I have put you out.  
But to your protestation. Let me hear

What you profess.

FLORIZELL Do, and be witness to 't.

POLIXENES

And this my neighbor too?

FLORIZELL And he, and more

Than he, and men—the Earth, the heavens, and  
all—

That were I crowned the most imperial monarch,  
Thereof most worthy, were I the fairest youth  
That ever made eye swerve, had force and knowledge  
More than was ever man's, I would not prize them  
Without her love; for her employ them all,  
Commend them and condemn them to her service  
Or to their own perdition.

POLIXENES Fairly offered.

CAMILLO

This shows a sound affection.

SHEPHERD But my daughter,  
Say you the like to him?

PERDITA I cannot speak

So well, nothing so well, no, nor mean better.  
By th' pattern of mine own thoughts I cut out  
The purity of his.

SHEPHERD Take hands, a bargain.—

And, friends unknown, you shall bear witness to 't:  
I give my daughter to him and will make  
Her portion equal his.

FLORIZELL O, that must be

I' th' virtue of your daughter. One being dead,  
I shall have more than you can dream of yet,  
Enough then for your wonder. But come on,  
Contract us fore these witnesses.

SHEPHERD Come, your hand—  
And daughter, yours.

POLIXENES [*To Florizell*] Soft, swain, awhile, beseech  
you.  
Have you a father?

FLORIZELL I have, but what of him?

POLIXENES  
Knows he of this?

FLORIZELL He neither does nor shall.

POLIXENES Methinks a father  
Is at the nuptial of his son a guest  
That best becomes the table. Pray you once more,  
Is not your father grown incapable  
Of reasonable affairs? Is he not stupid  
With age and alt'ring rheums? Can he speak? Hear?  
Know man from man? Dispute his own estate?  
Lies he not bedrid, and again does nothing  
But what he did being childish?

FLORIZELL No, good sir.  
He has his health and ampler strength indeed  
Than most have of his age.

POLIXENES By my white beard,  
You offer him, if this be so, a wrong  
Something unfilial. Reason my son  
Should choose himself a wife, but as good reason  
The father, all whose joy is nothing else  
But fair posterity, should hold some counsel  
In such a business.

FLORIZELL I yield all this;  
But for some other reasons, my grave sir,  
Which 'tis not fit you know, I not acquaint  
My father of this business.

POLIXENES Let him know 't.

FLORIZELL  
He shall not.

POLIXENES Prithee let him.

FLORIZELL No, he must not.

SHEPHERD  
Let him, my son. He shall not need to grieve  
At knowing of thy choice.

FLORIZELL Come, come, he must not.  
Mark our contract.

POLIXENES [*removing his disguise*] Mark your divorce,  
young sir,  
Whom son I dare not call. Thou art too base  
To be acknowledged. Thou a scepter's heir  
That thus affects a sheep-hook!—Thou, old traitor,  
I am sorry that by hanging thee I can  
But shorten thy life one week.—And thou, fresh  
piece  
Of excellent witchcraft, whom of force must know  
The royal fool thou cop'st with—

SHEPHERD O, my heart!

POLIXENES  
I'll have thy beauty scratched with briers and made  
More homely than thy state.—For thee, fond boy,  
If I may ever know thou dost but sigh  
That thou no more shalt see this knack—as never  
I mean thou shalt—we'll bar thee from succession,  
Not hold thee of our blood, no, not our kin,  
Far'r than Deucalion off. Mark thou my words.  
Follow us to the court. [*To Shepherd.*] Thou, churl,  
for this time,  
Though full of our displeasure, yet we free thee  
From the dead blow of it.—And you, enchantment,  
Worthy enough a herdsman—yea, him too,  
That makes himself, but for our honor therein,  
Unworthy thee—if ever henceforth thou  
These rural latches to his entrance open,  
Or hoop his body more with thy embraces,  
I will devise a death as cruel for thee  
As thou art tender to 't. [*He exits.*]

PERDITA Even here undone.  
I was not much afeard, for once or twice  
I was about to speak and tell him plainly  
The selfsame sun that shines upon his court  
Hides not his visage from our cottage but  
Looks on alike. [*To Florizell.*] Will 't please you, sir,  
be gone?  
I told you what would come of this. Beseech you,  
Of your own state take care. This dream of mine—  
Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch farther,  
But milk my ewes and weep.

CAMILLO *[to Shepherd]* Why, how now, father?  
Speak ere thou diest.

SHEPHERD I cannot speak, nor think,  
Nor dare to know that which I know. *[To Florizell.]*  
O sir,  
You have undone a man of fourscore three,  
That thought to fill his grave in quiet, yea,  
To die upon the bed my father died,  
To lie close by his honest bones; but now  
Some hangman must put on my shroud and lay me  
Where no priest shovels in dust. *[To Perdita.]* O  
cursed wretch,  
That knew'st this was the Prince, and wouldst  
adventure  
To mingle faith with him!—Undone, undone!  
If I might die within this hour, I have lived  
To die when I desire. *[He exits.]*

FLORIZELL *[to Perdita]* Why look you so upon me?  
I am but sorry, not afeard; delayed,  
But nothing altered. What I was, I am,  
More straining on for plucking back, not following  
My leash unwillingly.

CAMILLO Gracious my lord,  
You know your father's temper. At this time  
He will allow no speech, which I do guess  
You do not purpose to him; and as hardly  
Will he endure your sight as yet, I fear.  
Then, till the fury of his Highness settle,  
Come not before him.

FLORIZELL I not purpose it.  
I think Camillo?

CAMILLO *[removing his disguise]* Even he, my lord.

PERDITA *[to Florizell]*  
How often have I told you 'twould be thus?  
How often said my dignity would last  
But till 'twere known?

FLORIZELL It cannot fail but by  
The violation of my faith; and then  
Let nature crush the sides o' th' Earth together  
And mar the seeds within. Lift up thy looks.  
From my succession wipe me, father. I

Am heir to my affection.

CAMILLO Be advised.

FLORIZELL

I am, and by my fancy. If my reason  
Will thereto be obedient, I have reason.  
If not, my senses, better pleased with madness,  
Do bid it welcome.

CAMILLO This is desperate, sir.

FLORIZELL

So call it; but it does fulfill my vow.  
I needs must think it honesty. Camillo,  
Not for Bohemia nor the pomp that may  
Be thereat gleaned, for all the sun sees or  
The close earth wombs or the profound seas hides  
In unknown fathoms, will I break my oath  
To this my fair beloved. Therefore, I pray you,  
As you have ever been my father's honored friend,  
When he shall miss me, as in faith I mean not  
To see him anymore, cast your good counsels  
Upon his passion. Let myself and fortune  
Tug for the time to come. This you may know  
And so deliver: I am put to sea  
With her who here I cannot hold on shore.  
And most opportune to our need I have  
A vessel rides fast by, but not prepared  
For this design. What course I mean to hold  
Shall nothing benefit your knowledge, nor  
Concern me the reporting.

CAMILLO O my lord,  
I would your spirit were easier for advice  
Or stronger for your need.

FLORIZELL Hark, Perdita.—  
I'll hear you by and by.

*[Florizell and Perdita walk aside.]*

CAMILLO He's irremovable,  
Resolved for flight. Now were I happy if  
His going I could frame to serve my turn,  
Save him from danger, do him love and honor,  
Purchase the sight again of dear Sicilia  
And that unhappy king, my master, whom  
I so much thirst to see.



FLORIZELL [*coming forward*] Now, good Camillo,  
I am so fraught with curious business that  
I leave out ceremony.

CAMILLO Sir, I think  
You have heard of my poor services i' th' love  
That I have borne your father?

FLORIZELL Very nobly  
Have you deserved. It is my father's music  
To speak your deeds, not little of his care  
To have them recompensed as thought on.

CAMILLO Well, my  
lord,  
If you may please to think I love the King  
And, through him, what's nearest to him, which is  
Your gracious self, embrace but my direction,  
If your more ponderous and settled project  
May suffer alteration. On mine honor,  
I'll point you where you shall have such receiving  
As shall become your Highness, where you may  
Enjoy your mistress—from the whom I see  
There's no disjunction to be made but by,  
As heavens forfend, your ruin—marry her,  
And with my best endeavors in your absence,  
Your discontenting father strive to qualify  
And bring him up to liking.

FLORIZELL How, Camillo,  
May this, almost a miracle, be done,  
That I may call thee something more than man,  
And after that trust to thee?

CAMILLO Have you thought on  
A place whereto you'll go?

FLORIZELL Not any yet.  
But as th' unthought-on accident is guilty  
To what we wildly do, so we profess  
Ourselves to be the slaves of chance, and flies  
Of every wind that blows.

CAMILLO Then list to me.  
This follows: if you will not change your purpose  
But undergo this flight, make for Sicilia,  
And there present yourself and your fair princess,

For so I see she must be, 'fore Leontes.  
She shall be habited as it becomes  
The partner of your bed. Methinks I see  
Leontes opening his free arms and weeping  
His welcomes forth, asks thee, the son, forgiveness,  
As 'twere i' th' father's person; kisses the hands  
Of your fresh princess; o'er and o'er divides him  
'Twixt his unkindness and his kindness. Th' one  
He chides to hell and bids the other grow  
Faster than thought or time.

FLORIZELL Worthy Camillo,  
What color for my visitation shall I  
Hold up before him?

CAMILLO Sent by the King your father  
To greet him and to give him comforts. Sir,  
The manner of your bearing towards him, with  
What you, as from your father, shall deliver,  
Things known betwixt us three, I'll write you down,  
The which shall point you forth at every sitting  
What you must say, that he shall not perceive  
But that you have your father's bosom there  
And speak his very heart.

FLORIZELL I am bound to you.  
There is some sap in this.

CAMILLO A course more promising  
Than a wild dedication of yourselves  
To unpathed waters, undreamed shores, most  
certain  
To miseries enough; no hope to help you,  
But as you shake off one to take another;  
Nothing so certain as your anchors, who  
Do their best office if they can but stay you  
Where you'll be loath to be. Besides, you know  
Prosperity's the very bond of love,  
Whose fresh complexion and whose heart together  
Affliction alters.

PERDITA One of these is true.  
I think affliction may subdue the cheek  
But not take in the mind.

CAMILLO Yea, say you so?  
There shall not at your father's house these seven  
years

Be born another such.

FLORIZELL My good Camillo,  
She's as forward of her breeding as she is  
I' th' rear our birth.

CAMILLO I cannot say 'tis pity  
She lacks instructions, for she seems a mistress  
To most that teach.

PERDITA Your pardon, sir. For this  
I'll blush you thanks.

FLORIZELL My prettiest Perdita.  
But O, the thorns we stand upon!—Camillo,  
Preserver of my father, now of me,  
The medicine of our house, how shall we do?  
We are not furnished like Bohemia's son,  
Nor shall appear in Sicilia.

CAMILLO My lord,  
Fear none of this. I think you know my fortunes  
Do all lie there. It shall be so my care  
To have you royally appointed as if  
The scene you play were mine. For instance, sir,  
That you may know you shall not want, one word.  
*[They step aside and talk.]*

*[Enter Autolycus.]*

AUTOLYCUS Ha, ha, what a fool Honesty is! And Trust,  
his sworn brother, a very simple gentleman! I have  
sold all my trumpery. Not a counterfeit stone, not a  
ribbon, glass, pomander, brooch, table book, ballad,  
knife, tape, glove, shoe tie, bracelet, horn ring,  
to keep my pack from fasting. They throng who  
should buy first, as if my trinkets had been hallowed  
and brought a benediction to the buyer; by which  
means I saw whose purse was best in picture, and  
what I saw, to my good use I remembered. My  
clown, who wants but something to be a reasonable  
man, grew so in love with the wenches' song that he  
would not stir his pettitoes till he had both tune and  
words, which so drew the rest of the herd to me that  
all their other senses stuck in ears. You might have  
pinched a placket, it was senseless; 'twas nothing to  
geld a codpiece of a purse. I could have filed

keys off that hung in chains. No hearing, no feeling,  
but my sir's song and admiring the nothing of it. So  
that in this time of lethargy I picked and cut most of  
their festival purses. And had not the old man come  
in with a hubbub against his daughter and the  
King's son, and scared my choughs from the chaff, I  
had not left a purse alive in the whole army.

*[Camillo, Florizell, and Perdita come forward.]*

CAMILLO *[to Florizell]*

Nay, but my letters, by this means being there  
So soon as you arrive, shall clear that doubt.

FLORIZELL

And those that you'll procure from King Leontes—

CAMILLO

Shall satisfy your father.

PERDITA Happy be you!

All that you speak shows fair.

CAMILLO *[noticing Autolycus]* Who have we here?

We'll make an instrument of this, omit  
Nothing may give us aid.

AUTOLYCUS *[aside]*

If they have overheard me now, why, hanging.

CAMILLO How now, good fellow? Why shak'st thou so?

Fear not, man. Here's no harm intended to thee.

AUTOLYCUS I am a poor fellow, sir.

CAMILLO Why, be so still. Here's nobody will steal that  
from thee. Yet for the outside of thy poverty we  
must make an exchange. Therefore discase thee  
instantly—thou must think there's a necessity in  
't—and change garments with this gentleman.

Though the pennyworth on his side be the worst,  
yet hold thee, there's some boot.

*[He hands Autolycus money.]*

AUTOLYCUS I am a poor fellow, sir. *[Aside.]* I know you  
well enough.

CAMILLO Nay, prithee, dispatch. The gentleman is half  
flayed already.

AUTOLYCUS Are you in earnest, sir? [*Aside.*] I smell the trick on 't.

FLORIZELL Dispatch, I prithee.

AUTOLYCUS Indeed, I have had earnest, but I cannot with conscience take it.

CAMILLO Unbuckle, unbuckle.

*[Florizell and Autolycus exchange garments.]*

Fortunate mistress—let my prophecy  
Come home to you!—you must retire yourself  
Into some covert. Take your sweetheart's hat  
And pluck it o'er your brows, muffle your face,  
Dismantle you, and, as you can, disliken  
The truth of your own seeming, that you may—  
For I do fear eyes over—to shipboard  
Get undescried.

PERDITA I see the play so lies  
That I must bear a part.

CAMILLO No remedy.—  
Have you done there?

FLORIZELL Should I now meet my father,  
He would not call me son.

CAMILLO Nay, you shall have no hat.

*[He gives Florizell's hat to Perdita.]*

Come, lady, come.—Farewell, my friend.

AUTOLYCUS Adieu, sir.

FLORIZELL

O Perdita, what have we twain forgot?  
Pray you, a word. *[They talk aside.]*

CAMILLO *[aside]*

What I do next shall be to tell the King  
Of this escape, and whither they are bound;  
Wherein my hope is I shall so prevail  
To force him after, in whose company  
I shall re-view Sicilia, for whose sight  
I have a woman's longing.

FLORIZELL Fortune speed us!—

Thus we set on, Camillo, to th' seaside.

CAMILLO The swifter speed the better.

*[Camillo, Florizell, and Perdita exit.]*

AUTOLYCUS I understand the business; I hear it. To have an open ear, a quick eye, and a nimble hand is necessary for a cutpurse; a good nose is requisite also, to smell out work for th' other senses. I see this is the time that the unjust man doth thrive. What an exchange had this been without boot! What a boot is here with this exchange! Sure the gods do this year connive at us, and we may do anything extempore. The Prince himself is about a piece of iniquity, stealing away from his father with his clog at his heels. If I thought it were a piece of honesty to acquaint the King withal, I would not do 't. I hold it the more knavery to conceal it, and therein am I constant to my profession.

*[Enter Shepherd's Son and Shepherd, carrying the bundle and the box.]*

Aside, aside! Here is more matter for a hot brain. Every lane's end, every shop, church, session, hanging, yields a careful man work. *[He moves aside.]*

SHEPHERD'S SON *[to Shepherd]* See, see, what a man you are now! There is no other way but to tell the King she's a changeling and none of your flesh and blood.

SHEPHERD Nay, but hear me.

SHEPHERD'S SON Nay, but hear me!

SHEPHERD Go to, then.

SHEPHERD'S SON She being none of your flesh and blood, your flesh and blood has not offended the King, and so your flesh and blood is not to be punished by him. Show those things you found about her, those secret things, all but what she has with her. This being done, let the law go whistle, I warrant you.

SHEPHERD I will tell the King all, every word, yea, and his son's pranks too; who, I may say, is no honest

man, neither to his father nor to me, to go about to make me the King's brother-in-law.

SHEPHERD'S SON Indeed, brother-in-law was the farthest off you could have been to him, and then your blood had been the dearer by I know how much an ounce.

AUTOLYCUS *[aside]* Very wisely, puppies.

SHEPHERD Well, let us to the King. There is that in this fardel will make him scratch his beard.

AUTOLYCUS *[aside]* I know not what impediment this complaint may be to the flight of my master.

SHEPHERD'S SON Pray heartily he be at' palace.

AUTOLYCUS *[aside]* Though I am not naturally honest, I am so sometimes by chance. Let me pocket up my peddler's excrement. *[(He removes his false beard.)]* How now, rustics, whither are you bound?

SHEPHERD To th' palace, an it like your Worship.

AUTOLYCUS Your affairs there? What, with whom, the condition of that fardel, the place of your dwelling, your names, your ages, of what having, breeding, and anything that is fitting to be known, discover!

SHEPHERD'S SON We are but plain fellows, sir.

AUTOLYCUS A lie; you are rough and hairy. Let me have no lying. It becomes none but tradesmen, and they often give us soldiers the lie, but we pay them for it with stamped coin, not stabbing steel; therefore they do not give us the lie.

SHEPHERD'S SON Your Worship had like to have given us one, if you had not taken yourself with the manner.

SHEPHERD Are you a courtier, an 't like you, sir?

AUTOLYCUS Whether it like me or no, I am a courtier. Seest thou not the air of the court in these enfoldings? Hath not my gait in it the measure of the court? Receives not thy nose court odor from me?

Reflect I not on thy baseness court contempt?  
Think'st thou, for that I insinuate and toze from  
thee thy business, I am therefore no courtier? I am  
courtier cap-a-pie; and one that will either push on  
or pluck back thy business there. Whereupon I  
command thee to open thy affair.

SHEPHERD My business, sir, is to the King.

AUTOLYCUS What advocate hast thou to him?

SHEPHERD I know not, an 't like you.

SHEPHERD'S SON [*aside to Shepherd*] Advocate's the  
court word for a pheasant. Say you have none.

SHEPHERD [*to Autolycus*] None, sir. I have no pheasant,  
cock nor hen.

AUTOLYCUS  
How blest are we that are not simple men!  
Yet Nature might have made me as these are.  
Therefore I will not disdain.

SHEPHERD'S SON [*to Shepherd*] This cannot be but a  
great courtier.

SHEPHERD His garments are rich, but he wears them  
not handsomely.

SHEPHERD'S SON He seems to be the more noble in  
being fantastical. A great man, I'll warrant. I know  
by the picking on 's teeth.

AUTOLYCUS The fardel there. What's i' th' fardel?  
Wherefore that box?

SHEPHERD Sir, there lies such secrets in this fardel and  
box which none must know but the King, and  
which he shall know within this hour if I may come  
to th' speech of him.

AUTOLYCUS Age, thou hast lost thy labor.

SHEPHERD Why, sir?

AUTOLYCUS The King is not at the palace. He is gone  
aboard a new ship to purge melancholy and air



himself, for, if thou beest capable of things serious,  
thou must know the King is full of grief.

SHEPHERD So 'tis said, sir—about his son, that should  
have married a shepherd's daughter.

AUTOLYCUS If that shepherd be not in handfast, let him  
fly. The curses he shall have, the tortures he shall  
feel, will break the back of man, the heart of  
monster.

SHEPHERD'S SON Think you so, sir?

AUTOLYCUS Not he alone shall suffer what wit can  
make heavy and vengeance bitter; but those that are  
germane to him, though removed fifty times, shall  
all come under the hangman—which, though it be  
great pity, yet it is necessary. An old sheep-whistling  
rogue, a ram tender, to offer to have his daughter  
come into grace! Some say he shall be stoned, but  
that death is too soft for him, say I. Draw our throne  
into a sheepcote? All deaths are too few, the sharpest  
too easy.

SHEPHERD'S SON Has the old man e'er a son, sir, do you  
hear, an 't like you, sir?

AUTOLYCUS He has a son, who shall be flayed alive; then  
'nointed over with honey, set on the head of a  
wasps'-nest; then stand till he be three-quarters and  
a dram dead, then recovered again with aqua vitae  
or some other hot infusion; then, raw as he is, and  
in the hottest day prognostication proclaims, shall  
he be set against a brick wall, the sun looking with a  
southward eye upon him, where he is to behold him  
with flies blown to death. But what talk we of these  
traitorly rascals, whose miseries are to be smiled at,  
their offenses being so capital? Tell me—for you  
seem to be honest plain men—what you have to the  
King. Being something gently considered, I'll bring  
you where he is aboard, tender your persons to his  
presence, whisper him in your behalfs; and if it be  
in man besides the King to effect your suits, here is  
man shall do it.

SHEPHERD'S SON [*to Shepherd*] He seems to be of  
great authority. Close with him, give him gold; and  
though authority be a stubborn bear, yet he is oft

led by the nose with gold. Show the inside of your purse to the outside of his hand, and no more ado. Remember: “stoned,” and “flayed alive.”

SHEPHERD *[to Autolycus]* An ’t please you, sir, to undertake the business for us, here is that gold I have. I’ll make it as much more, and leave this young man in pawn till I bring it you.

AUTOLYCUS After I have done what I promised?

SHEPHERD Ay, sir.

AUTOLYCUS Well, give me the moiety. *[Shepherd hands him money.]* Are you a party in this business?

SHEPHERD’S SON In some sort, sir; but though my case be a pitiful one, I hope I shall not be flayed out of it.

AUTOLYCUS O, that’s the case of the shepherd’s son! Hang him, he’ll be made an example.

SHEPHERD’S SON *[to Shepherd]* Comfort, good comfort. We must to the King, and show our strange sights. He must know ’tis none of your daughter nor my sister. We are gone else.—Sir, I will give you as much as this old man does when the business is performed, and remain, as he says, your pawn till it be brought you.

AUTOLYCUS I will trust you. Walk before toward the seaside. Go on the right hand. I will but look upon the hedge, and follow you.

SHEPHERD’S SON *[to Shepherd]* We are blessed in this man, as I may say, even blessed.

SHEPHERD Let’s before, as he bids us. He was provided to do us good. *[Shepherd and his son exit.]*

AUTOLYCUS If I had a mind to be honest, I see Fortune would not suffer me. She drops booties in my mouth. I am courted now with a double occasion: gold, and a means to do the Prince my master good; which who knows how that may turn back to my advancement? I will bring these two moles, these blind ones, aboard him. If he think it fit to shore them again and that the complaint they have to the

King concerns him nothing, let him call me rogue  
for being so far officious, for I am proof against that  
title and what shame else belongs to 't. To him will I  
present them. There may be matter in it.

*[He exits.]*

## Act 5

### Scene 1

*[Enter Leontes, Cleomenes, Dion, Paulina, and  
Servants.]*

CLEOMENES

Sir, you have done enough, and have performed  
A saintlike sorrow. No fault could you make  
Which you have not redeemed—indeed, paid down  
More penitence than done trespass. At the last,  
Do as the heavens have done: forget your evil;  
With them forgive yourself.

LEONTES Whilst I remember

Her and her virtues, I cannot forget  
My blemishes in them, and so still think of  
The wrong I did myself, which was so much  
That heirless it hath made my kingdom and  
Destroyed the sweet'st companion that e'er man  
Bred his hopes out of.

PAULINA True, too true, my lord.

If one by one you wedded all the world,  
Or from the all that are took something good  
To make a perfect woman, she you killed  
Would be unparalleled.

LEONTES I think so. Killed?

She I killed? I did so, but thou strik'st me  
Sorely to say I did. It is as bitter  
Upon thy tongue as in my thought. Now, good now,  
Say so but seldom.

CLEOMENES Not at all, good lady.

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 pity not the state nor the remembrance  
Of his most sovereign name, consider little  
What dangers by his Highness' fail of issue

May drop upon his kingdom and devour  
Uncertain lookers-on. What were more holy  
Than to rejoice the former queen is well?  
What holier than, for royalty's repair,  
For present comfort, and for future good,  
To bless the bed of majesty again  
With a sweet fellow to 't?

PAULINA There is none worthy,  
Respecting her that's gone. Besides, the gods  
Will have fulfilled their secret purposes.  
For has not the divine Apollo said,  
Is 't not the tenor of his oracle,  
That King Leontes shall not have an heir  
Till his lost child be found? Which that it shall  
Is all as monstrous to our human reason  
As my Antigonus to break his grave  
And come again to me—who, on my life,  
Did perish with the infant. 'Tis your counsel  
My lord should to the heavens be contrary,  
Oppose against their wills. Care not for issue.  
The crown will find an heir. Great Alexander  
Left his to th' worthiest; so his successor  
Was like to be the best.

LEONTES Good Paulina,  
Who hast the memory of Hermione,  
I know, in honor, O, that ever I  
Had squared me to thy counsel! Then even now  
I might have looked upon my queen's full eyes,  
Have taken treasure from her lips—

PAULINA And left them  
More rich for what they yielded.

LEONTES Thou speak'st truth.  
No more such wives, therefore no wife. One worse,  
And better used, would make her sainted spirit  
Again possess her corpse, and on this stage,  
Where we offenders now appear, soul-vexed,  
And begin "Why to me?"

PAULINA Had she such power,  
She had just cause.

LEONTES She had, and would incense me  
To murder her I married.

PAULINA I should so.  
Were I the ghost that walked, I'd bid you mark  
Her eye, and tell me for what dull part in 't  
You chose her. Then I'd shriek, that even your ears  
Should rift to hear me, and the words that followed  
Should be "Remember mine."

LEONTES Stars, stars,  
And all eyes else dead coals! Fear thou no wife;  
I'll have no wife, Paulina.

PAULINA Will you swear  
Never to marry but by my free leave?

LEONTES  
Never, Paulina, so be blest my spirit.

PAULINA  
Then, good my lords, bear witness to his oath.

CLEOMENES  
You tempt him over-much.

PAULINA Unless another  
As like Hermione as is her picture  
Affront his eye.

CLEOMENES Good madam—

PAULINA I have done.  
Yet if my lord will marry—if you will, sir,  
No remedy but you will—give me the office  
To choose you a queen. She shall not be so young  
As was your former, but she shall be such  
As, walked your first queen's ghost, it should take  
joy  
To see her in your arms.

LEONTES My true Paulina,  
We shall not marry till thou bid'st us.

PAULINA That  
Shall be when your first queen's again in breath,  
Never till then.

*[Enter a Servant.]*

SERVANT

One that gives out himself Prince Florizell,  
Son of Polixenes, with his princess—she  
The fairest I have yet beheld—desires access  
To your high presence.

LEONTES What with him? He comes not  
Like to his father's greatness. His approach,  
So out of circumstance and sudden, tells us  
'Tis not a visitation framed, but forced  
By need and accident. What train?

SERVANT But few,  
And those but mean.

LEONTES His princess, say you, with him?

SERVANT

Ay, the most peerless piece of earth, I think,  
That e'er the sun shone bright on.

PAULINA O Hermione,  
As every present time doth boast itself  
Above a better gone, so must thy grave  
Give way to what's seen now. [*To Servant.*] Sir, you  
yourself  
Have said and writ so—but your writing now  
Is colder than that theme—she had not been  
Nor was not to be equalled. Thus your verse  
Flowed with her beauty once. 'Tis shrewdly ebb'd  
To say you have seen a better.

SERVANT Pardon, madam.  
The one I have almost forgot—your pardon;  
The other, when she has obtained your eye,  
Will have your tongue too. This is a creature,  
Would she begin a sect, might quench the zeal  
Of all professors else, make proselytes  
Of who she but bid follow.

PAULINA How, not women?

SERVANT

Women will love her that she is a woman  
More worth than any man; men, that she is  
The rarest of all women.

LEONTES Go, Cleomenes.

Yourself, assisted with your honored friends,  
Bring them to our embracement.

*[Cleomenes and others exit.]*

Still, 'tis strange  
He thus should steal upon us.

PAULINA Had our prince,  
Jewel of children, seen this hour, he had paired  
Well with this lord. There was not full a month  
Between their births.

LEONTES Prithee, no more; cease. Thou  
know'st  
He dies to me again when talked of. Sure,  
When I shall see this gentleman, thy speeches  
Will bring me to consider that which may  
Unfurnish me of reason. They are come.

*[Enter Florizell, Perdita, Cleomenes, and others.]*

Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince,  
For she did print your royal father off,  
Conceiving you. Were I but twenty-one,  
Your father's image is so hit in you,  
His very air, that I should call you brother,  
As I did him, and speak of something wildly  
By us performed before. Most dearly welcome,  
And your fair princess—goddess! O, alas,  
I lost a couple that 'twixt heaven and Earth  
Might thus have stood, begetting wonder, as  
You, gracious couple, do. And then I lost—  
All mine own folly—the society,  
Amity too, of your brave father, whom,  
Though bearing misery, I desire my life  
Once more to look on him.

FLORIZELL By his command  
Have I here touched Sicilia, and from him  
Give you all greetings that a king, at friend,  
Can send his brother. And but infirmity,  
Which waits upon worn times, hath something  
seized  
His wished ability, he had himself  
The lands and waters 'twixt your throne and his  
Measured to look upon you, whom he loves—  
He bade me say so—more than all the scepters  
And those that bear them living.



LEONTES O my brother,  
Good gentleman, the wrongs I have done thee stir  
Afresh within me, and these thy offices,  
So rarely kind, are as interpreters  
Of my behindhand slackness. Welcome hither,  
As is the spring to th' earth. And hath he too  
Exposed this paragon to th' fearful usage,  
At least ungentle, of the dreadful Neptune,  
To greet a man not worth her pains, much less  
Th' adventure of her person?

FLORIZELL Good my lord,  
She came from Libya.

LEONTES Where the warlike Smalus,  
That noble honored lord, is feared and loved?

FLORIZELL  
Most royal sir, from thence, from him, whose  
daughter  
His tears proclaimed his, parting with her. Thence,  
A prosperous south wind friendly, we have crossed  
To execute the charge my father gave me  
For visiting your Highness. My best train  
I have from your Sicilian shores dismissed,  
Who for Bohemia bend, to signify  
Not only my success in Libya, sir,  
But my arrival and my wife's in safety  
Here where we are.

LEONTES The blessed gods  
Purge all infection from our air whilst you  
Do climate here! You have a holy father,  
A graceful gentleman, against whose person,  
So sacred as it is, I have done sin,  
For which the heavens, taking angry note,  
Have left me issueless. And your father's blest,  
As he from heaven merits it, with you,  
Worthy his goodness. What might I have been  
Might I a son and daughter now have looked on,  
Such goodly things as you?

*[Enter a Lord.]*

LORD Most noble sir,  
That which I shall report will bear no credit,  
Were not the proof so nigh. Please you, great sir,

Bohemia greets you from himself by me,  
Desires you to attach his son, who has—  
His dignity and duty both cast off—  
Fled from his father, from his hopes, and with  
A shepherd's daughter.

LEONTES Where's Bohemia? Speak.

LORD  
Here in your city. I now came from him.  
I speak amazedly, and it becomes  
My marvel and my message. To your court  
Whiles he was hast'ning—in the chase, it seems,  
Of this fair couple—meets he on the way  
The father of this seeming lady and  
Her brother, having both their country quitted  
With this young prince.

FLORIZELL Camillo has betrayed me,  
Whose honor and whose honesty till now  
Endured all weathers.

LORD Lay 't so to his charge.  
He's with the King your father.

LEONTES Who? Camillo?

LORD  
Camillo, sir. I spake with him, who now  
Has these poor men in question. Never saw I  
Wretches so quake. They kneel, they kiss the earth,  
Forswear themselves as often as they speak.  
Bohemia stops his ears and threatens them  
With divers deaths in death.

PERDITA O my poor father!  
The heaven sets spies upon us, will not have  
Our contract celebrated.

LEONTES You are married?

FLORIZELL  
We are not, sir, nor are we like to be.  
The stars, I see, will kiss the valleys first.  
The odds for high and low's alike.

LEONTES My lord,  
Is this the daughter of a king?

FLORIZELL She is  
When once she is my wife.

LEONTES  
That “once,” I see, by your good father’s speed  
Will come on very slowly. I am sorry,  
Most sorry, you have broken from his liking,  
Where you were tied in duty, and as sorry  
Your choice is not so rich in worth as beauty,  
That you might well enjoy her.

FLORIZELL [*to Perdita*] Dear, look up.  
Though Fortune, visible an enemy,  
Should chase us with my father, power no jot  
Hath she to change our loves.—Beseech you, sir,  
Remember since you owed no more to time  
Than I do now. With thought of such affections,  
Step forth mine advocate. At your request,  
My father will grant precious things as trifles.

LEONTES  
Would he do so, I’d beg your precious mistress,  
Which he counts but a trifle.

PAULINA Sir, my liege,  
Your eye hath too much youth in ’t. Not a month  
’Fore your queen died, she was more worth such  
gazes  
Than what you look on now.

LEONTES I thought of her  
Even in these looks I made. [*To Florizell.*] But your  
petition  
Is yet unanswered. I will to your father.  
Your honor not o’erthrown by your desires,  
I am friend to them and you. Upon which errand  
I now go toward him. Therefore follow me,  
And mark what way I make. Come, good my lord.  
*[They exit.]*

## Scene 2

*[Enter Autolycus and a Gentleman.]*

AUTOLYCUS Beseech you, sir, were you present at this  
relation?

FIRST GENTLEMAN I was by at the opening of the fardel, heard the old shepherd deliver the manner how he found it, whereupon, after a little amazedness, we were all commanded out of the chamber. Only this, methought, I heard the shepherd say: he found the child.

AUTOLYCUS I would most gladly know the issue of it.

FIRST GENTLEMAN I make a broken delivery of the business, but the changes I perceived in the King and Camillo were very notes of admiration. They seemed almost, with staring on one another, to tear the cases of their eyes. There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture. They looked as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed. A notable passion of wonder appeared in them, but the wisest beholder that knew no more but seeing could not say if th' importance were joy or sorrow; but in the extremity of the one it must needs be.

*[Enter another Gentleman.]*

Here comes a gentleman that happily knows more.—  
The news, Rogero?

SECOND GENTLEMAN Nothing but bonfires. The oracle is fulfilled: the King's daughter is found! Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad makers cannot be able to express it.

*[Enter another Gentleman.]*

Here comes the Lady Paulina's steward. He can deliver you more.—How goes it now, sir? This news which is called true is so like an old tale that the verity of it is in strong suspicion. Has the King found his heir?

THIRD GENTLEMAN Most true, if ever truth were pregnant by circumstance. That which you hear you'll swear you see, there is such unity in the proofs. The mantle of Queen Hermione's, her jewel about the neck of it, the letters of Antigonus found with it, which they know to be his character, the majesty of the creature in resemblance of the mother, the affection of nobleness which nature shows above

her breeding, and many other evidences proclaim her with all certainty to be the King's daughter. Did you see the meeting of the two kings?

SECOND GENTLEMAN No.

THIRD GENTLEMAN Then have you lost a sight which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of. There might you have beheld one joy crown another, so and in such manner that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their joy waded in tears. There was casting up of eyes, holding up of hands, with countenance of such distraction that they were to be known by garment, not by favor. Our king, being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his found daughter, as if that joy were now become a loss, cries "O, thy mother, thy mother!" then asks Bohemia forgiveness, then embraces his son-in-law, then again worries he his daughter with clipping her. Now he thanks the old shepherd, which stands by like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns. I never heard of such another encounter, which lames report to follow it and undoes description to do it.

SECOND GENTLEMAN What, pray you, became of Antigonus, that carried hence the child?

THIRD GENTLEMAN Like an old tale still, which will have matter to rehearse though credit be asleep and not an ear open: he was torn to pieces with a bear. This avouches the shepherd's son, who has not only his innocence, which seems much, to justify him, but a handkerchief and rings of his that Paulina knows.

FIRST GENTLEMAN What became of his bark and his followers?

THIRD GENTLEMAN Wracked the same instant of their master's death and in the view of the shepherd, so that all the instruments which aided to expose the child were even then lost when it was found. But O, the noble combat that 'twixt joy and sorrow was fought in Paulina. She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband, another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled. She lifted the Princess from the earth, and so locks her in embracing as if she would

pin her to her heart that she might no more be in danger of losing.

FIRST GENTLEMAN The dignity of this act was worth the audience of kings and princes, for by such was it acted.

THIRD GENTLEMAN One of the prettiest touches of all, and that which angled for mine eyes—caught the water, though not the fish—was when at the relation of the Queen's death—with the manner how she came to 't bravely confessed and lamented by the King—how attentiveness wounded his daughter, till, from one sign of dolor to another, she did, with an "Alas," I would fain say bleed tears, for I am sure my heart wept blood. Who was most marble there changed color; some swooned, all sorrowed. If all the world could have seen 't, the woe had been universal.

FIRST GENTLEMAN Are they returned to the court?

THIRD GENTLEMAN No. The Princess hearing of her mother's statue, which is in the keeping of Paulina—a piece many years in doing and now newly performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape; he so near to Hermione hath done Hermione that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer. Thither with all greediness of affection are they gone, and there they intend to sup.

SECOND GENTLEMAN I thought she had some great matter there in hand, for she hath privately twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione, visited that removed house. Shall we thither and with our company piece the rejoicing?

FIRST GENTLEMAN Who would be thence that has the benefit of access? Every wink of an eye some new grace will be born. Our absence makes us unthrifty to our knowledge. Let's along.

*[The Three Gentlemen exit.]*

AUTOLYCUS Now, had I not the dash of my former life in me, would preferment drop on my head. I

brought the old man and his son aboard the Prince, told him I heard them talk of a fardel and I know not what. But he at that time, overfond of the shepherd's daughter—so he then took her to be—who began to be much seasick, and himself little better, extremity of weather continuing, this mystery remained undiscovered. But 'tis all one to me, for had I been the finder-out of this secret, it would not have relished among my other discredits.

*[Enter Shepherd and Shepherd's Son, both dressed in rich clothing.]*

Here come those I have done good to against my will, and already appearing in the blossoms of their fortune.

SHEPHERD Come, boy, I am past more children, but thy sons and daughters will be all gentlemen born.

SHEPHERD'S SON *[to Autolycus]* You are well met, sir. You denied to fight with me this other day because I was no gentleman born. See you these clothes? Say you see them not and think me still no gentleman born. You were best say these robes are not gentlemen born. Give me the lie, do, and try whether I am not now a gentleman born.

AUTOLYCUS I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born.

SHEPHERD'S SON Ay, and have been so any time these four hours.

SHEPHERD And so have I, boy.

SHEPHERD'S SON So you have—but I was a gentleman born before my father. For the King's son took me by the hand and called me brother, and then the two kings called my father brother, and then the Prince my brother and the Princess my sister called my father father; and so we wept, and there was the first gentlemanlike tears that ever we shed.

SHEPHERD We may live, son, to shed many more.

SHEPHERD'S SON Ay, or else 'twere hard luck, being in so preposterous estate as we are.

AUTOLYCUS I humbly beseech you, sir, to pardon me all the faults I have committed to your Worship and to give me your good report to the Prince my master.

SHEPHERD Prithee, son, do, for we must be gentle now we are gentlemen.

SHEPHERD'S SON [*to Autolycus*] Thou wilt amend thy life?

AUTOLYCUS Ay, an it like your good Worship.

SHEPHERD'S SON Give me thy hand. I will swear to the Prince thou art as honest a true fellow as any is in Bohemia.

SHEPHERD You may say it, but not swear it.

SHEPHERD'S SON Not swear it, now I am a gentleman? Let boors and franklins say it; I'll swear it.

SHEPHERD How if it be false, son?

SHEPHERD'S SON If it be ne'er so false, a true gentleman may swear it in the behalf of his friend.—And I'll swear to the Prince thou art a tall fellow of thy hands and that thou wilt not be drunk; but I know thou art no tall fellow of thy hands and that thou wilt be drunk. But I'll swear it, and I would thou wouldst be a tall fellow of thy hands.

AUTOLYCUS I will prove so, sir, to my power.

SHEPHERD'S SON Ay, by any means prove a tall fellow. If I do not wonder how thou dar'st venture to be drunk, not being a tall fellow, trust me not. Hark, the Kings and Princes, our kindred, are going to see the Queen's picture. Come, follow us. We'll be thy good masters.

*[They exit.]*

### Scene 3

*[Enter Leontes, Polixenes, Florizell, Perdita, Camillo, Paulina, and Lords.]*

LEONTES



O grave and good Paulina, the great comfort  
That I have had of thee!

PAULINA What, sovereign sir,  
I did not well, I meant well. All my services  
You have paid home. But that you have vouchsafed,  
With your crowned brother and these your contracted  
Heirs of your kingdoms, my poor house to visit,  
It is a surplus of your grace which never  
My life may last to answer.

LEONTES O Paulina,  
We honor you with trouble. But we came  
To see the statue of our queen. Your gallery  
Have we passed through, not without much content  
In many singularities; but we saw not  
That which my daughter came to look upon,  
The statue of her mother.

PAULINA As she lived peerless,  
So her dead likeness, I do well believe,  
Excels whatever yet you looked upon  
Or hand of man hath done. Therefore I keep it  
Lonely, apart. But here it is. Prepare  
To see the life as lively mocked as ever  
Still sleep mocked death. Behold, and say 'tis well.

*[She draws a curtain  
to reveal Hermione (like a statue).]*

I like your silence. It the more shows off  
Your wonder. But yet speak. First you, my liege.  
Comes it not something near?

LEONTES Her natural posture!—  
Chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed  
Thou art Hermione; or rather, thou art she  
In thy not chiding, for she was as tender  
As infancy and grace.—But yet, Paulina,  
Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing  
So aged as this seems.

POLIXENES O, not by much!

PAULINA  
So much the more our carver's excellence,  
Which lets go by some sixteen years and makes her  
As she lived now.

LEONTES As now she might have done,

So much to my good comfort as it is  
Now piercing to my soul. O, thus she stood,  
Even with such life of majesty—warm life,  
As now it coldly stands—when first I wooed her.  
I am ashamed. Does not the stone rebuke me  
For being more stone than it?—O royal piece,  
There's magic in thy majesty, which has  
My evils conjured to remembrance and  
From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,  
Standing like stone with thee.

PERDITA And give me leave,  
And do not say 'tis superstition, that  
I kneel, and then implore her blessing.      *[She kneels.]*  
Lady,  
Dear queen, that ended when I but began,  
Give me that hand of yours to kiss.

PAULINA O, patience!  
The statue is but newly fixed; the color's  
Not dry.

CAMILLO *[to Leontes, who weeps]*  
My lord, your sorrow was too sore laid on,  
Which sixteen winters cannot blow away,  
So many summers dry. Scarce any joy  
Did ever so long live; no sorrow  
But killed itself much sooner.

POLIXENES Dear my brother,  
Let him that was the cause of this have power  
To take off so much grief from you as he  
Will piece up in himself.

PAULINA Indeed, my lord,  
If I had thought the sight of my poor image  
Would thus have wrought you—for the stone is  
mine—  
I'd not have showed it.

LEONTES Do not draw the curtain.

PAULINA  
No longer shall you gaze on 't, lest your fancy  
May think anon it moves.

LEONTES Let be, let be.  
Would I were dead but that methinks already—

What was he that did make it?—See, my lord,  
Would you not deem it breathed? And that those  
veins  
Did verily bear blood?

POLIXENES Masterly done.  
The very life seems warm upon her lip.

LEONTES  
The fixture of her eye has motion in 't,  
As we are mocked with art.

PAULINA I'll draw the curtain.  
My lord's almost so far transported that  
He'll think anon it lives.

LEONTES O sweet Paulina,  
Make me to think so twenty years together!  
No settled senses of the world can match  
The pleasure of that madness. Let 't alone.

PAULINA  
I am sorry, sir, I have thus far stirred you, but  
I could afflict you farther.

LEONTES Do, Paulina,  
For this affliction has a taste as sweet  
As any cordial comfort. Still methinks  
There is an air comes from her. What fine chisel  
Could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me,  
For I will kiss her.

PAULINA Good my lord, forbear.  
The ruddiness upon her lip is wet.  
You'll mar it if you kiss it, stain your own  
With oily painting. Shall I draw the curtain?

LEONTES  
No, not these twenty years.

PERDITA [*rising*] So long could I  
Stand by, a looker-on.

PAULINA Either forbear,  
Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you  
For more amazement. If you can behold it,  
I'll make the statue move indeed, descend  
And take you by the hand. But then you'll think—

Which I protest against—I am assisted  
By wicked powers.

LEONTES What you can make her do  
I am content to look on; what to speak,  
I am content to hear, for 'tis as easy  
To make her speak as move.

PAULINA It is required  
You do awake your faith. Then all stand still—  
Or those that think it is unlawful business  
I am about, let them depart.

LEONTES Proceed.  
No foot shall stir.

PAULINA Music, awake her! Strike!  
*[Music sounds.]*  
'Tis time. Descend. Be stone no more. Approach.  
Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,  
I'll fill your grave up. Stir, nay, come away.  
Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him  
Dear life redeems you.—You perceive she stirs.

*[Hermione descends.]*

Start not. Her actions shall be holy as  
You hear my spell is lawful. Do not shun her  
Until you see her die again, for then  
You kill her double. Nay, present your hand.  
When she was young, you wooed her; now in age  
Is she become the suitor?

LEONTES O, she's warm!  
If this be magic, let it be an art  
Lawful as eating.

POLIXENES She embraces him.

CAMILLO She hangs about his neck.  
If she pertain to life, let her speak too.

POLIXENES  
Ay, and make it manifest where she has lived,  
Or how stol'n from the dead.

PAULINA That she is living,

Were it but told you, should be hooted at  
Like an old tale, but it appears she lives,  
Though yet she speak not. Mark a little while.  
[*To Perdita.*] Please you to interpose, fair madam.  
Kneel  
And pray your mother's blessing. [*To Hermione.*]  
Turn, good lady.  
Our Perdita is found.

HERMIONE You gods, look down,  
And from your sacred vials pour your graces  
Upon my daughter's head! Tell me, mine own,  
Where hast thou been preserved? Where lived? How  
found  
Thy father's court? For thou shalt hear that I,  
Knowing by Paulina that the oracle  
Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserved  
Myself to see the issue.

PAULINA There's time enough for that,  
Lest they desire upon this push to trouble  
Your joys with like relation. Go together,  
You precious winners all. Your exultation  
Partake to everyone. I, an old turtle,  
Will wing me to some withered bough and there  
My mate, that's never to be found again,  
Lament till I am lost.

LEONTES O peace, Paulina.  
Thou shouldst a husband take by my consent,  
As I by thine a wife. This is a match,  
And made between 's by vows. Thou hast found  
mine—  
But how is to be questioned, for I saw her,  
As I thought, dead, and have in vain said many  
A prayer upon her grave. I'll not seek far—  
For him, I partly know his mind—to find thee  
An honorable husband.—Come, Camillo,  
And take her by the hand, whose worth and honesty  
Is richly noted and here justified  
By us, a pair of kings. Let's from this place.  
[*To Hermione.*] What, look upon my brother! Both  
your pardons  
That e'er I put between your holy looks  
My ill suspicion. This your son-in-law  
And son unto the King, whom heavens directing,  
Is troth-plight to your daughter.—Good Paulina,  
Lead us from hence, where we may leisurely

Each one demand and answer to his part  
Performed in this wide gap of time since first  
We were dissevered. Hastily lead away.

*[They exit.]*