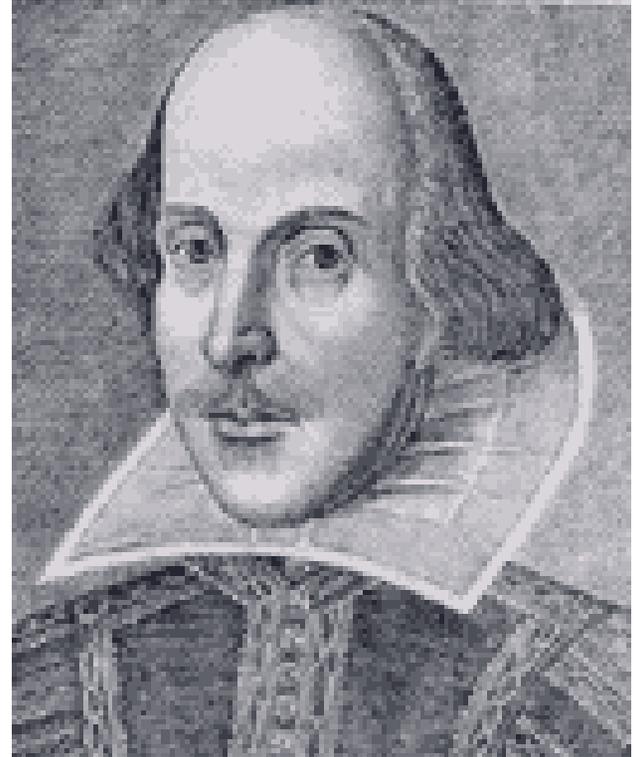


The Winter's Tale

ABRIDGED



William Shakespeare
(1564-1616)

By
William Shakespeare

PAULINA

Music, awake her; strike!

Music

'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 comes down

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 woo'd 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.

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. Please you to interpose, fair madam: kneel and pray your mother's blessing. 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.

PERDITA embraces HERMIONE; LEONTES clutches her, while on his knees weeping.

Others react accordingly. Music swells.

Stage action "freezes" as (the Ghost of) MAMILLIUS enters, followed by AUTOLYCUS as TIME, carrying an hourglass. Lightly coaxed by TIME, MAMILLIUS approaches his family and lays a forgiving hand on his Father's head. After a moment, he gently pats the head and looks questioningly back at TIME, who points off-stage as if to signal an exit. Slowly, MAMILLIUS backs away from his family and heads off-stage in the direction indicated. TIME then walks to Center Stage, takes one final glance at the "frozen" stage action, then turns over the hourglass and raises it above his head.

William Shakespeare's

The Winter's Tale

The Wichita Shakespeare Co.

The Winter's Tale

Dramatis Personae

LEONTES, king of Sicilia.

MAMILLIUS, young prince of Sicilia.

ANTIGONUS, lord of Sicilia.

LORD, of Sicilia.

POLIXENES, King of Bohemia.

FLORIZEL, Prince of Bohemia.

OLD SHEPHERD, reputed father of Perdita.

CLOWN, his son.

AUTOLYCUS / TIME, a rogue / chorus.

JAILER, in Sicilia.

HERMIONE, queen to Leontes.

CAMILLO, attendant to Leontes.

PERDITA, daughter to Leontes and Hermione.

PAULINA, wife to Antigonus.

EMILIA, a lady attending on Hermione.

LADY, attending on Hermione.

SERVANT, to Leontes.

MOPSA, a shepherdess.

DORCAS, a shepherdess.

Other Lords and Gentlemen, Ladies, Officers, and Servants, Shepherds, and Shepherdesses.

LEONTES

The fixture of her eye has motion in't, as we are mock'd 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, let 't alone.

PAULINA

I am sorry, sir, I have thus far stirr'd 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

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; those that think it is unlawful business I am about, let them depart.

LEONTES

Proceed: No foot shall stir.

PAULINA

As she lived peerless, so her dead likeness, I do well believe, excels whatever yet you look'd upon or hand of man hath done; therefore I keep it lonely, apart. But here it is: prepare to see the life as lively mock'd as ever still sleep mock'd death: behold, and say 'tis well.

PAULINA draws a curtain, and discovers HERMIONE standing 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. But yet, Paulina, Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing so aged as this seems.

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 woo'd 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.

PERDITA

And give me leave, and do not say 'tis superstition, that I kneel and then implore her blessing. 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 fix'd, the colour's not dry. If I had thought the sight of my poor image would thus have wrought you,--for the stone is mine-- I'd not have show'd 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

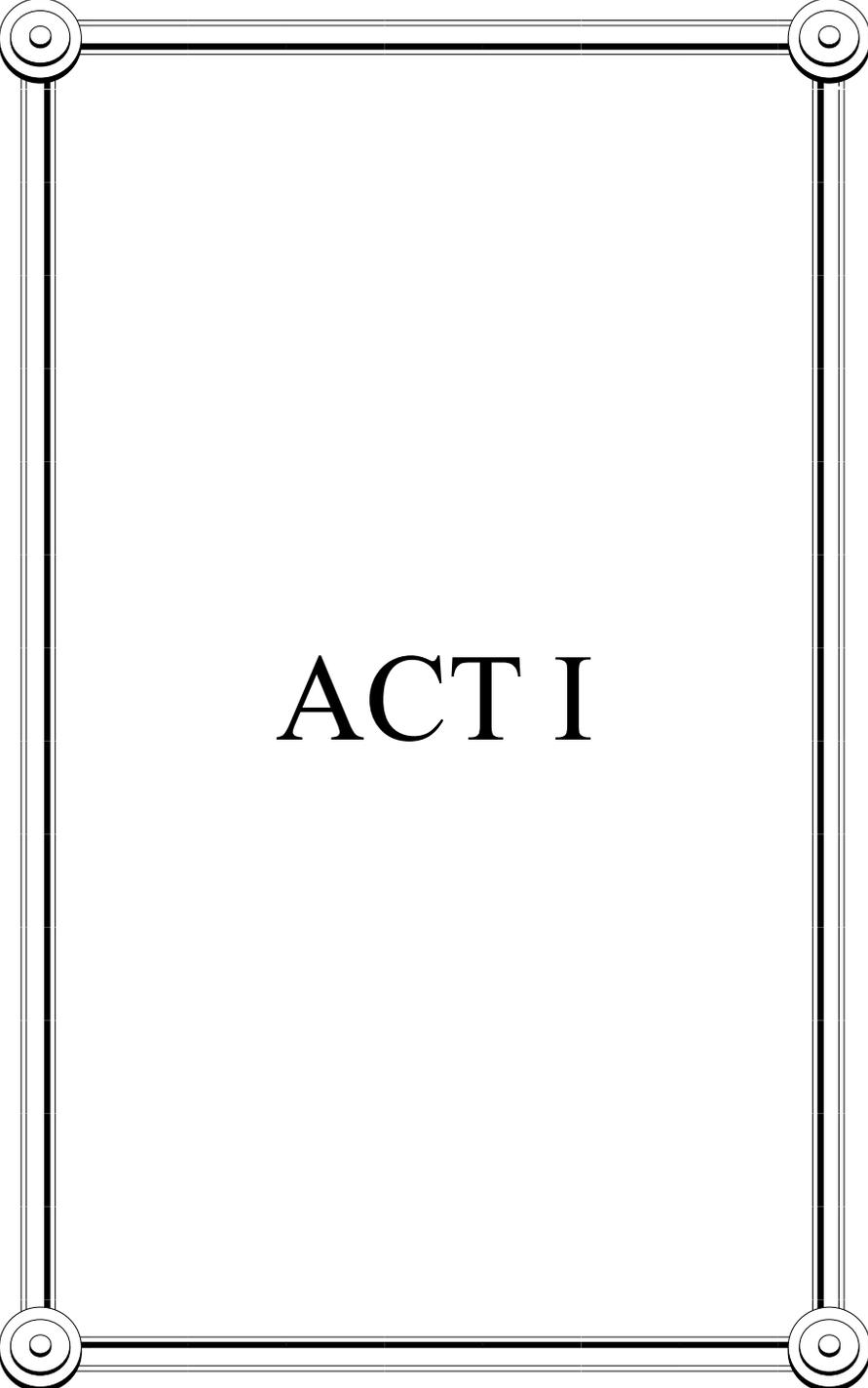
Masterly done: the very life seems warm upon her lip.

SYNOPSIS

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Setting:

As the play begins, Polixenes, king of Bohemia, has been a guest for close to a year in the court of Leontes, king of Sicilia and a longtime childhood friend.



ACT I

CLOWN

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 gentleman-like tears that ever we shed.

SHEPHERD

We may live, son, to shed many more.

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.

CLOWN

Thou wilt amend thy life?

AUTOLYCUS

Ay, an it like your good worship.

CLOWN

Give me thy hand: I will swear to the prince thou art as honest a true fellow as any is in Bohemia.

AUTOLYCUS

I will prove so, sir, to my power.

CLOWN

Hark! The kings and the princes, our kindred, are going to see the queen's statue. Come, follow us: we'll be thy good masters.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A chapel in PAULINA'S house.

Enter LEONTES, POLIXENES, FLORIZEL, PERDITA, CAMILLO, PAULINA, Lords, and Attendants

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.

LEONTES

O Paulina, we honour you with trouble: but we came to see the statue of our queen: your gallery have we pass'd 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.

EMILIA

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

LORD

Are they returned to the court?

LADY

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: 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.

EMILIA

I thought Paulina 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. Come, let us thither and with our company piece the rejoicing.

Exeunt LORD, LADY, and EMILIA

AUTOLYCUS

Enter Shepherd and Clown

Ah, 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.

CLOWN

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; 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.

CLOWN

Ay, and have been so any time these four hours.

SHEPHERD

And so have I, boy.

SCENE II. A room of state in Leontes' palace.

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

POLIXENES

Nine changes of the watery star hath been the shepherd's note since we have left our throne without a burthen: time as long again would be find up, my brother, with our thanks; and yet we should, for perpetuity, go hence in debt.

LEONTES

Stay your thanks a while; and pay them when you part.

POLIXENES

Sir, that's to-morrow. I am question'd by my fears, of what may chance or breed upon my absence. 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 seven-night longer.

POLIXENES

Very sooth, to-morrow.

LEONTES

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

POLIXENES

Press me not. There is no tongue that moves, none, none i' the world, so soon as yours could win me.

LEONTES

Tongue-tied, our queen? Speak you.

HERMIONE

I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until you have drawn oaths from him not to stay. You, sir, charge him too coldly. Tell him you are sure all in Bohemia's well. 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. Yet of your royal presence I'll adventure the borrow of a week. 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 should yet say 'Sir, no going,' verily, you shall not go. A lady's 'Verily' 's as potent as a lord's. Will you go yet? Force me to keep you as a prisoner. 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.

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 to-morrow as to-day, and to be boy eternal.

HERMIONE

Was not my lord the verier wag o' the two?

POLIXENES

We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' the sun, and bleat the one at the other: what we changed was innocence for innocence; we knew not the doctrine of ill-doing

HERMIONE

By this we gather you have tripp'd 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 cross'd the eyes of my young play-fellow.

HERMIONE

Grace to boot! Of this make no conclusion, lest you say your queen and I are devils. Yet go on.

LEONTES

Is he won yet?

HERMIONE

He'll stay my lord.

LEONTES

At my request he would not.
Hermione, my dearest, thou never spokest to better purpose.

LORD

Enter EMILIA

Here comes a gentlewoman that haply knows more. The news, Emilia?

EMILIA

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 a LADY

Here comes the Lady Paulina's steward: she can deliver you more. How goes it now, madam? 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?

LADY

Most true, 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?

EMILIA

No.

LADY

Then have you lost a sight, which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of. There might you have beheld one joy crown another. There was casting up of eyes, holding up of hands. 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; now he thanks the old shepherd, who stands by like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns. I never heard of such another encounter.

EMILIA

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

LADY

Like an old tale still, 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. 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.

LADY

Camillo, sir; I spake with her; 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.

Exit Lady

PERDITA

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

LEONTES

You are married?

FLORIZEL

We are not, sir, nor are we like to be; the stars will kiss the valleys first.

LEONTES

My lord, is this the daughter of a king?

FLORIZEL

She is, when once she is my wife. 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

I will to your father: your honour 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.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Before LEONTES' palace.

Enter AUTOLYCUS and a LORD

AUTOLYCUS

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

LORD

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.

HERMIONE

Never?

LEONTES

Never, but once.

HERMIONE

What! Have I twice said well? When was't before? I prithee tell me.

LEONTES

Why, that was when three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to death, ere I could make thee open thy white hand and clap thyself my love: then didst thou utter 'I am yours for ever.'

HERMIONE

'Tis grace indeed. Why, lo you now, I have spoke to the purpose twice: the one for ever earn'd a royal husband; the other for some while a friend.

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. I' fecks! What, hast smutch'd thy nose? They say it is a copy out of mine. Come, captain, we must be neat; not neat, but cleanly, captain: and yet the steer, the heifer and the calf are all call'd neat. How now, you wanton calf! Art thou my calf?

MAMILLIUS

Yes, if you will, my lord.

POLIXENES

What means Sicilia?

HERMIONE

He something seems unsettled.

POLIXENES

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. Looking on the lines of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreech'd. 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; 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 lovest 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' the 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!

Exeunt POLIXENES, HERMIONE, and Attendants

Gone already! Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue will hiss me to my grave. Go, play, boy, play. There have been, or I am much deceived, cuckolds ere now; and many a man there is, holds his wife by the arm, that little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence, and his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by Sir Smile, his neighbour. How now, boy!

MAMILLIUS

I am like you, they say.

LEONTES

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

CAMILLO

Ay, my good lord.

PAULINA

Had our prince, Mamillius, seen this hour, he had pair'd 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 talk'd 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.

Re-enter SERVANT and others, with FLORIZEL and PERDITA

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 perform'd 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.

FLORIZEL

By his command have I here touch'd Sicilia and from him give you all greetings that a king, a friend, can send his brother.

Enter LADY

LADY

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.

LADY

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 hastening, 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.

FLORIZEL

Camillo has betray'd me.

LADY

Lay't so to his charge: she's with the king your father.

LEONTES

Who? Camillo?

LEONTES

Never, Paulina; so be blest my spirit!

PAULINA

Then, good my lord, bear witness to his oath.

LORD

You tempt him over-much.

PAULINA

Unless another, as like Hermione as is her picture, affront his eye.

LORD

Good madam,--

PAULINA

I have done. Yet, if my lord will marry, 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, walk'd 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 Florizel, 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.

LEONTES

Go, bring them to our embracement. Still, 'tis strange he thus should steal upon us.

Exeunt SERVANT and others

LEONTES

Go play, Mamillius; thou'rt an honest man.

Exit MAMILLIUS

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.

LEONTES

Didst perceive it?

Aside

They're here with me already, whispering, rounding 'Sicilia is a so-forth:' 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?

CAMILLO

I think most understand Bohemia stays here longer.

LEONTES

Ay, but why?

CAMILLO

To satisfy your highness and the entreaties of our most gracious mistress.

LEONTES

Satisfy! The entreaties of your mistress! Satisfy! Let that suffice. I have trusted thee, Camillo, with all the nearest things to my heart, as well my chamber-councils; but we have been deceived in thy integrity, deceived in that which seems so.

CAMILLO

Be it forbid, my lord!

LEONTES

Ha' not you seen, Camillo,-- but that's past doubt, you have--or heard,-- for to a vision so apparent rumour cannot be mute,--or thought,--for cogitation resides not in that man that does not think,-- my wife is slippery? If thou wilt confess, 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-pledge: 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.

LEONTES

Is whispering nothing? Is leaning cheek to cheek? Is meeting noses? Kissing with inside lip? Stopping the career of laughing with a sigh? Skulking in corners? 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; 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; 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 a medal, hanging about his neck, Bohemia: who, if I had servants true about me, that bare eyes to see alike mine honour as their profits, they would do that which should undo more doing: ay, and thou, his cupbearer, mightst bespice a cup, to give mine enemy a lasting wink; which draught to me were cordial.

CAMILLO

Sir, my lord, I could do this, and that with no rash potion, but with a lingering dram that should not work maliciously like poison: but I cannot believe this crack to be in my dread mistress, so sovereignly being honourable. I have loved thee,--

SCENE I. A room in LEONTES' palace.

Enter LEONTES, LORD (s), PAULINA, and Attendants

LORD

Sir, you have done enough, and have perform'd a saint-like sorrow.

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 destroy'd 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 kill'd would be unparallel'd.

LEONTES

I think so. Kill'd! She I kill'd! I did so: but thou strikest me sorely, to say I did; it is as bitter upon thy tongue as in my thought: now, good now, say so but seldom.

LORD

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.

LORD

If you would not so, you pity not the state.

PAULINA

There is none worthy, respecting her that's gone. Besides, the gods will have fulfill'd 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?

LEONTES

Good Paulina, who hast the memory of Hermione, I know, in honour, O, that ever I had squared me to thy counsel! Then, even now, I might have look'd upon my queen's full eyes, have taken treasure from her lips--

PAULINA

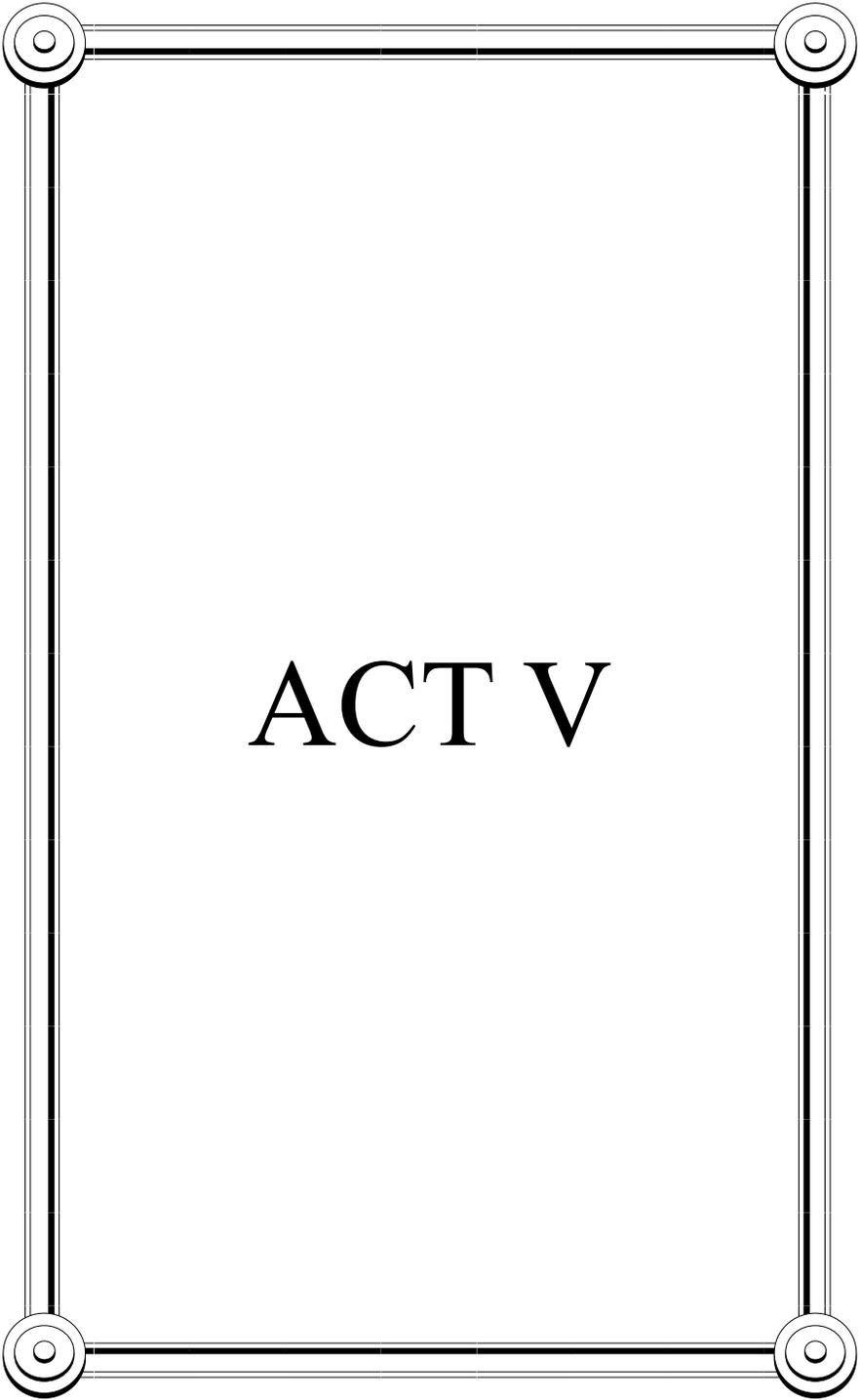
And left them more rich for what they yielded.

LEONTES

Thou speak'st truth. No more such wives; therefore, no wife. I'll have no wife, Paulina.

PAULINA

Will you swear never to marry but by my free leave?



ACT V

LEONTES

Make that thy question, and go rot!

Dost thou think I am so muddy, so unsettled, to appoint myself in this vexation, sully the purity and whiteness of my sheets?

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 honour, 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 split'st thine own.

CAMILLO

I'll do't, my lord.

LEONTES

I will seem friendly, as thou hast advised me.

Exit

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 flourish'd after, I'd not do't; but since nor brass nor stone nor parchment bears not one, let villany itself forswear't. I must forsake the court: to do't, or no, is certain to me a break-neck.

Re-enter POLIXENES

POLIXENES

This is strange: methinks my favour here begins to warp. Not speak? Good day, Camillo.

CAMILLO

Hail, most royal sir!

POLIXENES

What is the news i' the 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 the contrary and falling a lip of much contempt, speeds from me and so leaves me to consider what is breeding that changeth 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.

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! I have look'd on thousands, who have sped the better by my regard, but kill'd none so. Camillo, as you are certainly a gentlewoman, I beseech you, if you know aught which does behove my knowledge thereof to be inform'd, imprison't not in ignorant concealment.

CAMILLO

I may not answer.

POLIXENES

A sickness caught of me, and yet I well! I must be answer'd.

CAMILLO

Sir, I will tell you; since I am charged in honour and by him that I think honourable: therefore mark my counsel.

POLIXENES

On, good Camillo.

CAMILLO

I am appointed him to murder you.

POLIXENES

By whom, Camillo?

CAMILLO

By the king.

AUTOLYCUS

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.

CLOWN

He seems to be of great authority: close with him, give him gold.

SHEPHERD

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. I will trust you. Walk before toward the sea-side; go on the right hand: I will but look upon the hedge and follow you.

CLOWN

We are blest in this man, as I may say, even blest.

SHEPHERD

Let's before as he bids us: he was provided to do us good.

Exeunt Shepherd and Clown

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.

Exit

SHEPHERD

My business, sir, is to the king.

AUTOLYCUS

What advocate hast thou to him?

SHEPHERD

I know not, an't like you.

CLOWN

Advocate's the court-word for a pheasant: say you have none.

SHEPHERD

None, sir; I have no pheasant, cock nor hen.

AUTOLYCUS

How blessed are we that are not simple men! Yet nature might have made me as these are, therefore I will not disdain.

CLOWN

This cannot be but a great courtier.

SHEPHERD

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

CLOWN

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' the 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 the speech of him.

AUTOLYCUS

Age, thou hast lost thy labour.

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.

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 touch'd his queen forbiddenly.

POLIXENES

O, 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, away to-night! Your followers I will whisper to the business, and will by twos and threes at several posterns clear them o' the city. For myself, I'll put my fortunes to your service, which are here by this discovery lost. Be not uncertain; for, by the honour of my parents, I have utter'd truth.

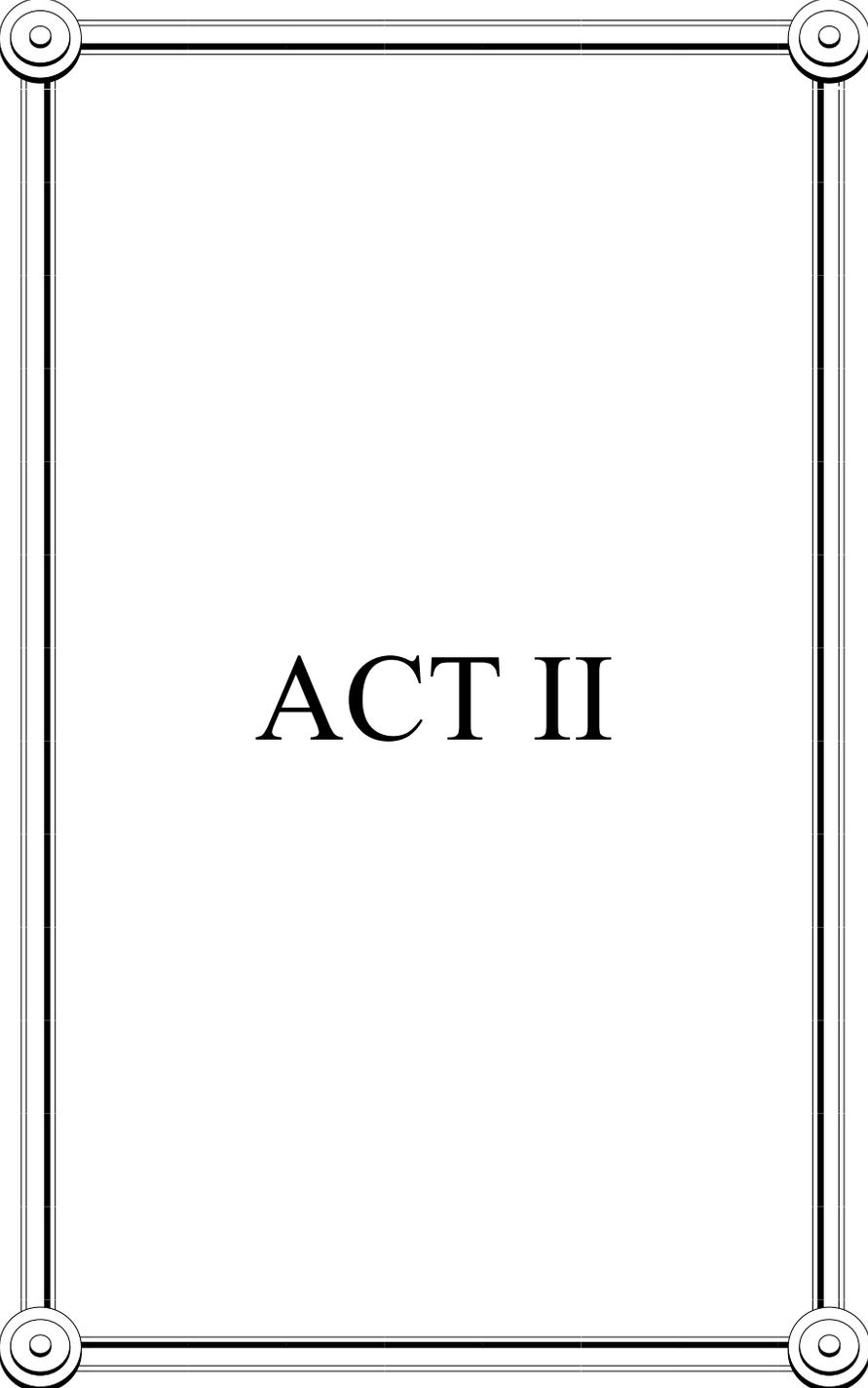
POLIXENES

I do believe thee: I saw his heart in 's face. Give me thy hand. 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 dishonour'd by a man which ever profess'd to him, why, his revenges must in that be made more bitter. Come, Camillo.

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.

Exeunt



ACT II

CLOWN

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.

CLOWN

Nay, but hear me.

SHEPHERD

Go to, then.

CLOWN

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

Well, let us to the king: there is that in this fardel will make him scratch his head.

AUTOLYCUS

[Aside] Though I am not naturally honest, I am so sometimes by chance: let me pocket up my pedlar's excrement.

Takes off his false beard

How now, rustics! Whither are you bound?

SHEPHERD

To the 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 any thing that is fitting to be known, discover.

CLOWN

We are but plain fellows, sir.

AUTOLYCUS

A lie; you are rough and hairy. Let me have no lying.

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? I am courtier cap-a-pe; and one that will either push on or pluck back thy business there: whereupon I command thee to open thy affair.

CAMILLO

Unbuckle, unbuckle.

FLORIZEL and AUTOLYCUS exchange garments

Fortunate mistress,--let my prophecy come home to ye!--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?

FLORIZEL

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

CAMILLO

Nay, you shall have no hat.

Giving it to PERDITA

Come, lady, come. Farewell, my friend.

AUTOLYCUS

Adieu, madam.

FLORIZEL

O Perdita, what have we twain forgot! Pray you, a word.

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 review Sicilia.

FLORIZEL

Fortune speed us! Thus we set on, Camillo, to the sea-side.

CAMILLO

The swifter speed the better.

Exeunt FLORIZEL, PERDITA, and CAMILLO

AUTOLYCUS

I see this is the time that the unjust man doth thrive. 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.

Re-enter Clown and Shepherd

SCENE I. A room in LEONTES' palace.

Enter HERMIONE, MAMILLIUS, and Ladies

HERMIONE

Take the boy to you: he so troubles me, 'tis past enduring.

LADY

Come, my gracious lord; shall I be your playfellow?

MAMILLIUS

No, I'll none of you.

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.

EMILIA

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.

EMILIA

Who taught you this?

MAMILLIUS

I learnt it out of women's faces. Pray now what colour are your eyebrows?

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.

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.

EMILIA

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: 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.

Enter LEONTES, with ANTIGONUS, Lords and others

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! 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 employ'd was pre-employ'd by him: He has discover'd my design, and I remain a pinch'd thing; yea, a very trick for them to play at will. How came the posterns so easily open?

LORD

By her great authority; which often hath no less prevail'd than so on your command.

LEONTES

I know't too well. 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.

CAMILLO

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

FLORIZEL

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

Who have we here?

Seeing AUTOLYCUS

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

AUTOLYCUS

If they have overheard me now, why, hanging.

CAMILLO

How now, good fellow! Why shakest thou so? Fear not, man; here's no harm intended to thee.

AUTOLYCUS

I am a poor fellow, madam.

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.

AUTOLYCUS

I am a poor fellow, madam.

Aside

I know ye 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.

FLORIZEL

Dispatch, I prithee.

FLORIZEL

Now, good Camillo; I am so fraught with curious business that I leave out ceremony.

CAMILLO

Well, my lord, if you may please to think I love the king and through him what is nearest to him, which is your gracious self, embrace but my direction; 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 your ruin; marry her, and, with my best endeavours in your absence, your discontenting father strive to qualify and bring him up to liking.

FLORIZEL

How, Camillo, may this, almost a miracle, be done?

CAMILLO

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' the father's person.

FLORIZEL

Worthy Camillo, what colour for my visitation shall I hold up before him?

CAMILLO

Sent by the king your father to greet him and to give him comforts.

FLORIZEL

I am bound to you: there is some sap in this. 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 furnish'd 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. One word.

They talk aside

Re-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.

CAMILLO, FLORIZEL, and PERDITA come forward

HERMIONE

What is this? Sport?

LEONTES

Bear the boy hence; he shall not come about her; away with him! And let her sport herself with that she's big with; for 'tis Polixenes has made thee swell thus. 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, honourable:' but be 't known, from him that has most cause to grieve it should be, she's an adulteress.

HERMIONE

Should a villain say so, the most replenish'd villain in the world, he were as much more villain: you, my lord, do but mistake.

LEONTES

You have mistook, my lady, Polixenes for Leontes. I have said she's an adulteress; I have said with whom: more, she's a traitor and Camillo is a federy 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.

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 publish'd me! Gentle my lord, you scarce can right me thoroughly then to say you did mistake.

LEONTES

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 favourable. Good my lords, I am not prone to weeping, as our sex commonly are. But I have that honourable 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 perform'd!

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 wish'd to see you sorry; now I trust I shall. My women, come.

LEONTES

Go, do our bidding; hence!

Exit HERMIONE, guarded; with Ladies

LORD

Beseech your highness, call the queen again.

ANTIGONUS

Be certain what you do, sir. For her, my Lord, I dare my life lay down and will do't, sir, for every inch of woman in the world, ay, every dram of woman's flesh is false, if she be.

LEONTES

What! lack I credit?

LORD

I had rather you did lack than I, my lord, upon this ground.

LEONTES

Then, for a greater confirmation, I have dispatch'd in post to sacred Delphos, to Apollo's temple, Cleomenes and Dion, whom you know of stuff'd sufficiency: now from the oracle they will bring all; whose spiritual counsel had, shall stop or spur me. Have I done well?

ANTIGONUS

Well done, my lord.

LEONTES

Though I am satisfied and need no more than what I know, yet shall the oracle give rest to the minds of others, such as he whose ignorant credulity will not come up to the truth.

Exeunt

SCENE II. A prison.

Enter PAULINA and a Servant

PAULINA

The keeper of the prison, call to him; let him have knowledge who I am.

Exit Servant

Good lady, no court in Europe is too good for thee; what dost thou then in prison?

Re-enter Servant, with the Jailer.

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

JAILER

For a worthy lady and one whom much I honour.

PAULINA

Pray you then, conduct me to the queen.

PERDITA

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

Why, how now, father! Speak ere thou diest.

SHEPHERD

I cannot speak, nor think nor dare to know that which I know. O sir! You have undone a man of fourscore three. 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.

Exit

FLORIZEL

Why look you so upon me?
I am but sorry, not afeard; delay'd,
but nothing alter'd: what I was, I am.

PERDITA

How often have I told you 'twould be thus! How often said, my dignity would last but till 'twere known!

FLORIZEL

It cannot fail but by the violation of my faith; lift up thy looks: from my succession wipe me, father; I am heir to my affection.

CAMILLO

Be advised. This is desperate, sir.

FLORIZEL

So call it: but it does fulfil my vow; I needs must think it honesty. Camillo, not for Bohemia will I break my oath to this my fair beloved: therefore, I pray you, as you have ever been my father's honour'd friend, when he shall miss me,--as, in faith, I mean not to see him any more,-- cast your good counsels upon his passion; this you may know and so deliver, I am put to sea with her whom here I cannot hold on shore. What course I mean to hold shall nothing benefit your knowledge, nor concern me the reporting. Hark, Perdita

Drawing her aside

CAMILLO

He's irremoveable, 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 honour, purchase the sight again of dear Sicilia and that unhappy king, my master, whom I so much thirst to see.

FLORIZEL

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?

FLORIZEL

No, good sir; he has his health and ampler strength indeed than most have of his age. 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.

FLORIZEL

He shall not.

POLIXENES

Prithee, let him.

FLORIZEL

No, he must not.

SHEPHERD

Let him, my son: he shall not need to grieve at knowing of thy choice.

FLORIZEL

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

POLIXENES

Mark your divorce, young sir,

Discovering himself

Whom son I dare not call; thou art too base to be acknowledged: thou a sceptre's heir, that thus affect'st 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, who of force must know the royal fool thou copest with,--

SHEPHERD

O, my heart!

POLIXENES

I'll have thy beauty scratch'd with briars, 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. Mark thou my words: follow us to the court. And you, enchantment, 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.

Exit

JAILER

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

PAULINA

Here's ado, to lock up honesty and honour from the access of gentle visitors! Is't lawful, pray you, to see her women? Any of them? Emilia?

JAILER

So please you, madam, to put apart this your attendant, I shall bring Emilia forth.

PAULINA

I pray now, call her. Withdraw yourself.

Exeunt Servant

JAILER

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

PAULINA

Well, be't so, prithee.

Exit Jailer

Here's such ado to make no stain a stain as passes colouring.

Re-enter Jailer, with EMILIA

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 born greater, she is something before her time deliver'd.

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' the 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-mouth'd let my tongue blister and never to my red-look'd anger be the trumpet any more. Pray you, Emilia, commend my best obedience to the queen: if she dares trust me with her little babe, I'll show't the king and undertake to be her advocate to the loud'st. We do not know how he may soften at the sight o' the child: The silence often of pure innocence persuades when speaking fails.

EMILIA

Most worthy madam: there is no lady living so meet for this great errand. I'll presently acquaint the queen of your most noble offer.

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

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 honour, I will stand betwixt you and danger.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A room in LEONTES' palace.

Enter LEONTES, ANTIGONUS, and LORD

LEONTES

Nor night nor day no rest: it is but weakness to bear the matter thus; mere weakness.

SERVANT

My lord?

LEONTES

Who's there? How does the boy?

SERVANT

Mamillius took good rest to-night; 'tis hoped his sickness is discharged.

LEONTES

To see his nobleness! Conceiving the dishonour of his mother, he straight declined, droop'd, took it deeply, fasten'd and fix'd the shame on't in himself, threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep, and downright languish'd. Leave me solely: go, see how he fares.

Exit Servant

FLORIZEL

Old sir, I know she prizes not such trifles as these are: the gifts she looks from me are pack'd and lock'd up in my heart; which I have given already, but not deliver'd. 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 fann'd snow that's bolted by the northern blasts twice o'er.

POLIXENES

What follows this? Let me hear what you profess.

FLORIZEL

Do, and be witness to 't.

POLIXENES

And this my neighbour too?

FLORIZEL

And she, and more than she, and men, the earth, the heavens, and all: that, were I crown'd 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.

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 the 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.

FLORIZEL

O, that must be I' the virtue of your daughter; I shall have more than you can dream of yet; but, come on, contract us 'fore these witnesses.

SHEPHERD

Come, your hand; and, daughter, yours.

POLIXENES

Soft, swain, awhile, beseech you; have you a father?

FLORIZEL

I have: but what of him?

POLIXENES

Knows he of this?

DORCAS

Is it true too, think you?

AUTOLYCUS

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

CLOWN

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.

DORCAS

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

MOPSA

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.

CLOWN

We'll have this song out anon by ourselves: my father is in sad talk, and we'll not trouble them. Come, bring away thy pack after me. Wenches, I'll buy for you both. Pedlar, let's have the first choice. Follow me, girls.

Exit with DORCAS and MOPSA

AUTOLYCUS

And you shall pay well for 'em.

Exit

POLIXENES

To CAMILLO

Is it not too far gone? 'Tis time to part them. He's simple and tells much.

To FLORIZEL

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 ransack'd the pedlar's silken treasury and have pour'd it to her acceptance; you have let him go and nothing mated with him.

Fie, fie! No thought of him. 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, with a child

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.

LORD

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 humour that presses him from sleep.

LEONTES

What noise there, ho? 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 honour, 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 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.

Laying down the child

LEONTES

Out! A mankind witch! Hence with her, out o' door: A most intelligencing bawd! Traitors! Will you not push her out? Give her the bastard. Thou dotard! Thou art woman-tired, unrooted by thy dame partlet here. Take up the bastard; Take't up, I say; give't to thy crone. 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

LEONTES

A callat of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband and now baits me! This brat is none of mine; it is the issue of Polixenes: hence with it, and together with the dam commit them to the fire!

PAULINA

It is yours; and, might we lay the 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--

LEONTES

A gross hag! And, lozel, thou art worthy to be hang'd, 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.

MOPSA

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

CLOWN

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 behoves men to be wary.

CLOWN

Fear not thou, man, thou shalt lose nothing here.

AUTOLYCUS

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

CLOWN

What hast here? Ballads?

MOPSA

Pray now, buy some: I love a ballad in print o' life, 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 money-bags at a burthen and how she longed to eat adders' heads and toads carbonadoed.

DORCAS

Is it true, think you?

AUTOLYCUS

Very true, and but a month old.

DORCAS

Bless me from marrying a usurer!

MOPSA

Pray you now, buy it.

CLOWN

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 four-score 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.

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 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.

POLIXENES

She dances featly.

SHEPHERD

So she does any thing; 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 AUTOLYCUS, singing

AUTOLYCUS

"Lawn as white as driven snow;
Cyprus 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 quoifs 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."

CLOWN

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; may be, he has paid you more, which will shame you to give him again.

CLOWN

Is there no manners left among maids? Clamour your tongues, and not a word 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 savours of tyranny and will ignoble make you, yea, scandalous to the world.

LEONTES

On your allegiance, out of the chamber with her!

PAULINA

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.

Exit

LEONTES

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. 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 set'st on thy wife.

ANTIGONUS

I did not, sir: this lord, my noble fellow, if he please, can clear me in't.

LORD

I can: my royal liege, he is not guilty of her coming hither.

LEONTES

You're liars both.

LORD

Beseech your highness, give us better credit: we have always truly served you, and beseech you 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

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. 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, --what will you adventure to save this brat's life?

ANTIGONUS

Any thing, 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: any thing possible.

LEONTES

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

ANTIGONUS

I will, my lord.

LEONTES

Mark and perform it, see'st 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 liege-man 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 its own protection and favour of the climate. As by strange fortune it came to us, I do in justice charge thee, 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: some powerful spirit instruct the kites and ravens to be thy nurses!

Exit with the child

LEONTES

No, I'll not rear another's issue.

Enter a Servant

SERVANT

Please your highness, posts from those you sent to the oracle are come an hour since: Cleomenes and Dion, being well arrived from Delphos, are both landed, hasting to the court.

LORD

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; 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 burthen to me. Leave me, and think upon my bidding.

Exeunt

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 those of middle age. You're very welcome. Now, my fair'st friend, I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might become your time of day; 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!

FLORIZEL

What, like a corse?

PERDITA

No, like a bank for love to lie and play on.

FLORIZEL

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; when you do dance, I wish you a wave o' the sea, that you might ever do nothing but that.

PERDITA

O Doricles, your praises are too large.

POLIXENES

This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever ran on the green-sward: 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.

CLOWN

Come on, strike up!

DORCAS

Mopsa must be your mistress: marry, garlic, to mend her kissing with!

MOPSA

Now, in good time!

CLOWN

Not a word, a word; we stand upon our manners. Come, strike up!

Music. Here a dance of Shepherds and Shepherdesses

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; 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; Come, quench your blushes and present yourself that which you are, mistress o' the 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' the day.

To CAMILLO

You're welcome, madam. Give me those flowers there, Dorcas. Reverend ones, for you there's rosemary and rue; these keep seeming and savour 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 fairest fowers 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

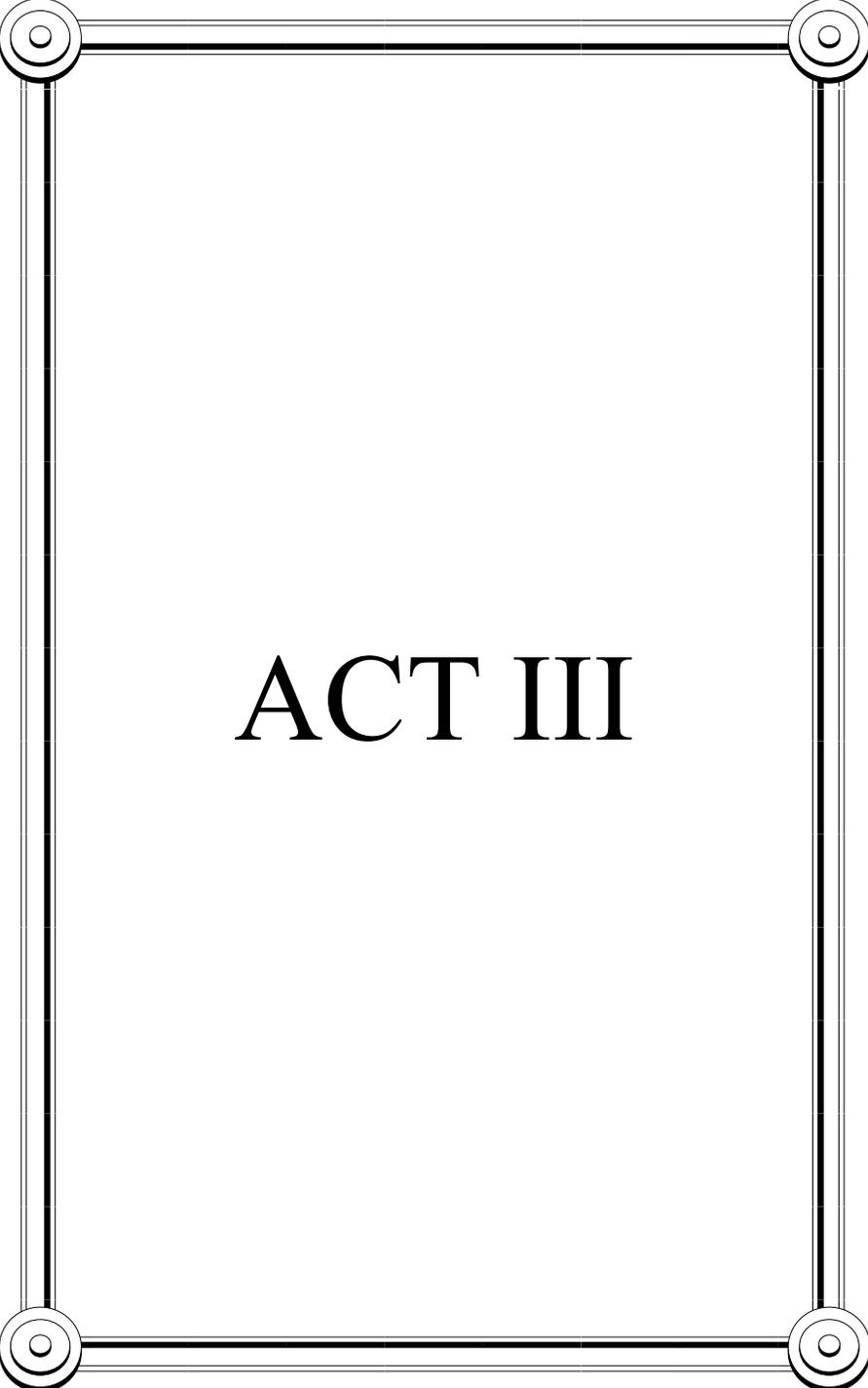
Say there be; you see sweet maid, we marry a gentler scion to the wildest stock, and make conceive a bark of baser kind by bud of nobler race. This is an art which does mend nature – change it rather – but the art itself is nature.

PERDITA

So it is.

POLIXENES

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



ACT III

SCENE IV. The Shepherd's cottage.

Enter FLORIZEL and PERDITA

FLORIZEL

These your unusual weeds to each part of you do 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' the land, you have obscured with a swain's wearing, and me, poor lowly maid, most goddess-like prank'd up.

FLORIZEL

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 borrow'd flaunts, behold the sternness of his presence?

FLORIZEL

Apprehend nothing but jollity.

PERDITA

O, but, sir, your resolution cannot hold, when 'tis opposed, as it must be, by the power of the king.

FLORIZEL

Thou dearest Perdita, with these forced thoughts, I prithee, darken not the mirth o' the feast. Or I'll be thine, my fair, or not my father's. For I cannot be mine own, nor any thing 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 any thing 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!

FLORIZEL

See, your guests approach: address yourself to entertain them sprightly, and let's be red with mirth.

Enter Shepherd, Clown, MOPSA, DORCAS, and others, with POLIXENES and CAMILLO disguised

AUTOLYCUS

A fellow, sir, that I have known to go about with troll-my-dames; I knew him once a servant of the Prince Florizel: I cannot tell, good sir, for which of his virtues it was, but he was certainly whipped out of the court.

CLOWN

His vices, you would say; there's no virtue whipped out of the court.

AUTOLYCUS

Vices, I would say, sir. I know this man well; some call him Autolycus.

CLOWN

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.

CLOWN

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.

CLOWN

Shall I bring thee on the way?

AUTOLYCUS

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

CLOWN

Then fare thee well: I must go buy spices for our sheep-shearing.

AUTOLYCUS

Prosper you, sweet sir!

Exit Clown

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

Sings

"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
and merrily hent the stile-a:
a merry heart goes all the day,
your sad tires in a mile-a."

Exit

SCENE II. A court of Justice.

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 clear'd 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.

LORD

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

Enter HERMIONE guarded; PAULINA and Ladies attending

LEONTES

Read the indictment.

LORD

[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 pretence whereof being by circumstances partly laid open, thou, Hermione, contrary to the faith and allegiance of a true subject, didst counsel and aid them, for their better safety, to fly away by night.

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. You, my lord, best know my past life hath been as continent, as chaste, as true, as I am now unhappy. 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 strain'd to appear thus: if one jot beyond the bound of honour, or in act or will that way inclining, harden'd be the hearts of all that hear me, and my near'st of kin cry fie upon my grave!

LEONTES

You will not own it.

HERMIONE

For Polixenes, with whom I am accused, I do confess I loved him as in honour he required, with such a kind of love as might become a lady like me. Now, for conspiracy, I know not how it tastes; though it be dish'd for me to try how: all I know of it is that Camillo was an honest woman; and why she left your court, the gods themselves, wotting no more than I, are ignorant.

LEONTES

You knew of her departure, as you know what you have underta'en to do in'r 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 dream'd it. Thy brat hath been cast out, like to itself, no father owning it. And so thou shalt feel our justice, in whose easiest passage look for no less than death.

HERMIONE

Sir, spare your threats; to me can life be no commodity: The crown and comfort of my life, your favour, I do give lost; for I do feel it gone, but know not how it went. My second joy and first-fruits of my body, from his presence I am barr'd, like one infectious. My third comfort, is from my breast, the innocent milk in its most innocent mouth, haled out to murder: myself on every post proclaimed a strumpet; lastly, hurried here to this place, i' the open air, before I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege, tell me what blessings I have here alive, that I should fear to die? Therefore proceed. But yet hear this, if I shall be condemn'd upon surmises, I tell you 'tis rigor and not law. Your honours all, I do refer me to the oracle: Apollo be my judge!

LEONTES

Therefore bring forth, and in Apollos name, his oracle. Break up the seals and read.

LORD

[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.

EMILIA

Now blessed be the great Apollo!

HERMIONE

Praised!

LEONTES

Hast thou read truth?

LORD

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

CLOWN

I cannot do't without counters. Let me see; what am I to buy for our sheep-shearing feast? 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.

AUTOLYCUS

O that ever I was born!

Grovelling on the ground

CLOWN

I' the name of me--

AUTOLYCUS

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

CLOWN

Alas, poor man!

AUTOLYCUS

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

CLOWN

Lend me thy hand, I'll help thee: come, lend me thy hand.

AUTOLYCUS

O, good sir, tenderly, O!

CLOWN

Alas, poor soul!

AUTOLYCUS

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

CLOWN

How now! Canst stand?

AUTOLYCUS

[Picking his pocket]

Softly, dear sir; good sir, softly. You ha' done me a charitable office.

CLOWN

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 any thing I want: offer me no money, I pray you; that kills my heart.

CLOWN

What manner of fellow was he that robbed you?

POLIXENES

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

CAMILLO

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

POLIXENES

That's likewise part of my intelligence; but, I fear, the angle that plucks our son thither. Thou shalt accompany us to the place; where we will, not appearing what we are, have some question with the shepherd. 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.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A road near the Shepherd's cottage.

Enter AUTOLYCUS, singing

AUTOLYCUS

"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."

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 Clown

CLOWN

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.

LEONTES

There is no truth at all i' the oracle:
the sessions shall proceed: this is mere falsehood.

Enter 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 swoons

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.

Exeunt PAULINA and Ladies, with 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 woman 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: how she glisters through my rust! And how her pity does my deeds make the blacker!

Re-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

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 by-gone fooleries were but spices of it. That thou betray'dst Polixenes, 'twas nothing; that did but show thee, of a fool, inconstant and damnable ingrateful: nor was't much, thou wouldst have poison'd good Camillo's honour, to have her 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: 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 dropp'd 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 lustre 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 bitterest.

LORD

Say no more: howe'er the business goes, you have made fault I' the boldness of your speech.

LEONTES

No, 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. 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 unto these sorrows.

Exeunt

SCENE I:

Enter Time, the Chorus

TIME

I, 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. Your patience this allowing, I turn my glass and give my scene such growing as you had slept between: Leontes leaving, the 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' the king's, which Florizel I now name to you; and with speed so pace to speak of Perdita, now grown in grace equal with wondering: what of her ensues I list not prophecy; but let Time's news be known when 'tis brought forth. A shepherd's daughter, and what to her adheres, which follows after, is the 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.

Exit

SCENE II. Bohemia. The palace of POLIXENES.

Enter POLIXENES and CAMILLO

POLIXENES

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

CAMILLO

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

POLIXENES

As thou lovest me, Camillo, wipe not out the rest of thy services by leaving me now. Of that fatal country, Sicilia, prithee speak no more; whose very naming punishes me with the remembrance of that penitent, as thou callest him, and reconciled king; whose loss of his most precious queen and children are even now to be afresh lamented. Say to me, when sawest thou the Prince Florizel, my son?

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.



ACT IV

SCENE III. Bohemia. A desert country near the sea.

Enter ANTIGONUS with a Child

ANTIGONUS

Come, poor babe: I have heard, but not believed, the spirits o' the dead may walk again: if such thing be, thy mother appear'd to me last night, for ne'er was dream so like a waking: in pure white robes, like very sanctity, she did approach my cabin where I lay; '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 for ever, 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. The storm begins; poor wretch. Weep I cannot, but my heart bleeds; and most accursed am I to be by oath enjoin'd 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. A savage clamour!

Exit; a bear growl; a man's scream

Enter a Shepherd

SHEPHERD

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 any where 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 barne, a very pretty barne! A boy or a child, I wonder? A pretty one; a very pretty one: I can read waiting-gentlewoman in the 'scape. This has been some stair-work, some trunk-work, some behind-door-work. I'll take it up for pity: yet I'll tarry till my son come; he halloed but even now. Whoa, ho, hoa!

Enter Clown

CLOWN

Hilloa, loa!

SHEPHERD

What ailest thou, man?

CLOWN

O, the most piteous cry of the poor soul! 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. And how the poor gentleman roared and the bear mocked him!

SHEPHERD

Name of mercy, when was this, boy?

CLOWN

Now, now: I have not winked since I saw this sight; the bear hath not half dined on the gentleman: he's at it now.

SHEPHERD

Would I had been by, to have helped the old man! Heavy matters! Heavy matters! But look thee here, boy. Now bless thyself: thou mettest 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?

CLOWN

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.

Exeunt