

The Winter's Tale

Act III, sc. 2 (line 90)

LEONTES

Your actions are my dreams;

You had a bastard by Polixenes,

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

Those of your fact are so--so past all truth:

Which to deny concerns more than avails; for as

Thy brat hath been cast out, like to itself,

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 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

Starr'd most unluckily, is from my breast,

The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth,

Haled out to murder: myself on every post

Proclaimed a strumpet: with immodest hatred

The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs
To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried
Here to this place, i' the open air, before
I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,
Tell me what blessings I have here alive,
That I should fear to die? Therefore proceed.
But yet hear this: mistake me not; no life,
I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour,
Which I would free, if I shall be condemn'd
Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else
But what your jealousies awake, I tell you
'Tis rigor and not law. Your honours all,
I do refer me to the oracle:
Apollo be my judge!