

# The Winter's Tale

by William Shakespeare

Act 3, sc. 2 (line 90 - Verse)

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## Hermione

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!