

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 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;
And, I beseech you, hear me, who profess
Myself your loyal servant, your physician,
Your most obedient counsellor, yet that dare
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.

LEONTES

Traitors!
Will you not push her out? 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

For ever
Unvenerable be thy hands, if thou
Takest 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 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.