



Complete text available at <http://shakespeare.mit.edu>

PAULINA from A WINTER'S TALE by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE Act 3 Scene 2

Character's age: 20's/30's

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
5 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, stark mad, for all
10 Thy bygone fooleries were but spices of it.
 That thou betray'st Polixenes 'twas nothing:
 That did but show thee of a fool, inconstant,
 And damnably ungrateful. Nor was't much
 Thou would have poisoned good Camillo's honour
15 To have him kill a king – poor trespasses,
 More monstrous standing by; whereof I reckon
 The casting forth to crows thy baby daughter
 To be none or little, though a devil
 Would have shed water out of fire ere done't.
20 Nor is't directly laid to thee, the death
 Of the young prince, whose honourable thoughts
 Thoughts so high for one so tender – cleft the heart
 That could conceive a gross and foolish sire
 Blemish'd his gracious dam. This is not, no,

25

Laid to thy answer. But the last – O lords,
When I have said, cry woe! The queen, the queen
The sweetest, dear'st creatures dead; and vengeance for't
Not dropped down yet!

[To return to lists of speeches, exit this page](#)