

“BEAR” in *The Winter’s Tale*

Hamlet 3.1.69–81

For who would *bear* the whips and scorns of time
Th’ oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
The pangs of disprised love, the law’s delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th’ unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a *bare* bodkin, who would fardels *bear*,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose *ourn*
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather *bear* those ills we have,
Than fly to others than we know not of?

1.2.1–3, 12–13

Nine changes of the watery star hath been
The shepherd’s note since we have left our throne
Without a *burden*.

I am questioned by my fears of what may chance
Or *breed* upon our absence

1.2.132–36

But were they false
As o’erdyed blacks, as wind, as waters, false
As dice are to be wished by one that fixes
No *ourn* ’twixt his and mine, yet were it true
To say this *boy* were like me.

1.2.259

I the *issue* doubted

1.2.308–13

if I
Had servants true about me, that *bare* eyes
To see alike mine honor as their profits
Their own particular thrifts, they would do that
Which should undo more doing. Ay, and thou,
His cup*bearer* —

1.2.398–405

PAULINA Dost thou hear, Camillo?
I conjure thee by all the parts of man
Which honor does acknowledge, whereof the least
Is not this suit of mine, that thou declare
What incidency thou dost guess of harm
Is creeping toward me; how far off, how near,
Which way to be prevented, if to be;
If not, how best to *bear* it.

1.2.431–35

CAMILLO But I am sure ’tis safer to

Avoid what’s grown than question how ’tis *born*.
If therefore you dare trust my honesty,
That lies enclosed in this trunk which you
Shall *bear* along impawned, away tonight!

2.1.1–2

Take the boy to you. He so troubles me,
’Tis past *enduring*.

2.1.56–59

LEONTES

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.

HERMIONE

What is this? sport?

LEONTES

Bear the boy hence. He shall not come about her.

2.2.42–46

EMILIA [to Paulina] Most worthy madam,
Your honor and your goodness is so evident
That your free undertaking cannot miss
A *thriving issue*. There is no lady living
So meet for this great errand.

2.3.1–2

Nor night, nor day, no rest. It is but weakness
To *bear* the matter thus — mere weakness.

2.3.172–75

We enjoin thee,
As thou art liegeman to us, that thou *carry*
This female *bastard* hence, and that thou *bear* it
To some remote and desert place

2.3.202–08

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*.

3.1.15–22

CLEOMENES These proclamations,
So forcing faults upon Hermione,
I little like.

DION

The violent *carriage* of it
Will clear or end the business. When the oracle
Thus by Apollo’s great divine sealed up,
Shall the contents discover, something rare

Even then will rush to knowledge. Go. Fresh horses!
And gracious be *the issue!* *Exeunt.*

3.2.205–12

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.

3.2.224–30

Now, good my liege,
Sir, royal sir, forgive a foolish woman.
The love I *bore* your queen — lo, fool again! —
I'll speak of her no more, nor of your *children*;
I'll not remember you of my own lord,
Who is lost too. Take your *patience* to you.
And I'll say nothing.

3.3:

57: *Exit pursued by a bear.*

67–68: What have we here? Mercy on's, a *barne*, a very
pretty *barne!*

88–89: the ship *boring* the moon

111: look thee, a *bearing*-cloth for a squire's child

4.1.7–9, 26–29

since it is in my power
To o'erthrow law, and in one self-*born* hour
To Plant and o'erwhelm custom.

.....
but let Time's news
Be known when 'tis *brought forth*. A shepherd's
daughter,
And what to her adheres, which follows after,
Is th' argument of Time.

4.3.19–26

If tinkers may have leave to live,
And *bear* the sow-skin budget,
Then my account I well may give,
And in the stocks avouch it.
My traffic is sheets; when the kite builds, look to lesser
linen. My father named me Autolycus, who being, as I
am, *littered* under Mercury, was likewise a snapper-up
of unconsidered trifles.

4.3.90–91

I know this man well. He hath been since an *ape-bearer*

*Note that performing apes were traditionally carried
by trained bears (see *Richard III* 3.1.128–31).

4.3.97–98

Out upon him! Prig, for my life, prig! He haunts wakes,
fairs, and *bearbaitings*.

4.4.79–85

Sir, the year growing ancient,
Not yet on summer's death nor on the *birth*
Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers 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.

4.4.192–95

He has the prettiest love songs for maids, so without
bawdry, which is strange, with such delicate *burdens* of
dildos and fadings, "Jump her and thump her."

4.4.261–64

Here's one to a very doleful tune, how a usurer's wife
was *brought* to bed of twenty moneybags at a *burden*

The later parts of 4.4 have several straightforward
"bear" references — too many and too dull to type out
here in full: the idea of carrying lies abroad (line 270);
talk about bearing one's part in a song (291–94); talk of
bearing witness (383); the topic of Florizel's bearing
toward Leontes (557); an exchange between Camillo
and Florizel in which Camillo says that there "shall
not at your father's house these seven years / Be born
another such" [as Perdita] and in which Florizel
responds with, "She's as forward of her breeding as /
She is i' th' rear 'our birth" (579–80); a theatrical
metaphor from Perdita who works a metamorphosis
on a gaming metaphor and emerges with a theatrical
one: "I see the play lies so / That I must bear a
part" (653–54); and a passing comparison of authority
to "a stubborn bear."

5.1

Of the many "bear" references in 5.1, the most
interesting one is in line 179 where a lord enters with
news of Polixenes's sudden arrival at Leontes's court and
says a line that, though it has the word "bear" in it, is
most interesting as an emblem of *The Winter's Tale* at
large:

"That which I shall report will bear no credit."

5.2.7-11

FIRST GENTLEMAN

I heard the shepherd say, he found the child.

AUTOLYCUS

I would most gladly know the *issue* of it.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

I make a broken *delivery* of the business;

There are more casual uses of the word “bear” in the last scene, but I’ll close with the comic glory of the “gentleman born” exchange.

5.2.122-42

Enter SHEPHERD and CLOWN.

AUTOLYCUS

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. You were best say these robes are not gentlemen 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.

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.