

**POLIXENES**

Nine changes of the wat'ry star hath been  
 The shepherd's note since we have left our throne  
 Without a burthen: time as long again  
 Would be fill'd up, my brother, with our thanks;  
 And yet we should, for perpetuity,  
 Go hence in debt: and therefore, like a cipher,  
 Yet standing in rich place, I multiply  
 With one 'We thank you' many thousands moe  
 That go before it.

**LEONTES**

Stay your thanks a while;  
 And pay them when you part.

**POLIXENES**

Sir, that's to-morrow.  
 I am question'd by my fears, of what may chance  
 Or breed upon our absence; that may blow  
 No sneaping winds at home, to make us say  
 'This is put forth too truly:' besides, I have stay'd  
 To tire your royalty.

**LEONTES**

We are tougher, brother,  
 Than you can put us to't.

**POLIXENES**

No longer stay.

**LEONTES**

One seven-night longer.

**POLIXENES**

Very sooth, to-morrow.

**LEONTES**

Tongue-tied, our queen? Speak you.

**HERMIONE**

I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until  
 You have drawn oaths from him not to stay. You, sir,  
 Charge him too coldly. Tell him, you are sure  
 All in Bohemia's well; this satisfaction  
 The by-gone day proclaim'd: say this to him,  
 He's beat from his best ward.

**LEONTES**

Well said, Hermione.

**HERMIONE**

To tell, he longs to see his son, were strong:  
 But let him say so then, and let him go;  
 But let him swear so, and he shall not stay,  
 We'll thwack him hence with distaffs.

Yet of your royal presence I'll adventure  
 The borrow of a week. When at Bohemia  
 You take my lord, I'll give him my commission  
 To let him there a month behind the gest  
 Prefix'd for's parting: yet, good deed, Leontes,  
 I love thee not a jar o' the clock behind  
 What lady-she her lord. You'll stay?

**POLIXENES**

No, madam.

**HERMIONE**

Nay, but you will?

**POLIXENES**

I may not, verily.

**HERMIONE**

You shall not go: a lady's 'Verily' 's  
 As potent as a lord's. Will you go yet?  
 Force me to keep you as a prisoner,  
 Not like a guest; so you shall pay your fees  
 When you depart, and save your thanks. How say you?  
 My prisoner? or my guest? by your dread 'Verily,'  
 One of them you shall be.

**POLIXENES**

Your guest, then, madam:

To be your prisoner should import offending;  
 Which is for me less easy to commit  
 Than you to punish.

**HERMIONE**

Not your gaoler, then,  
 But your kind hostess.

**LEONTES**

Is he won yet?

**HERMIONE**

He'll stay my lord.