

- 24 *choose*: help, avoid.
branch: flourish, put out branches; and also diverge, separate.
 25 *mature dignities*: high positions in adult life.
necessities: obligations.
 26 *encounters*: meetings, intercourse.
 27 *royally attorneyed*: carried out magnificently by their deputies.
 30 *vast*: void, a wide expanse of space or time.
 30-1 *from . . . winds*: from all corners of the earth.
 31 *The . . . loves*: long may their love last.

there rooted betwixt them then such an affection, which cannot choose but branch now. Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made separation of their society, their encounters, though not personal, hath been royally attorneyed with interchange of gifts, letters, loving embassies: that they have seemed to be together, though absent; shook hands as over a vast; and embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds. The heavens continue their loves!



Archidamus

- 33 *matter*: reason, substance.

I think there is not in the world either malice or matter to alter it. You have an unspeakable comfort of your young prince Mamillius. It is a gentleman of the greatest promise that ever came into my note.

Camillo

- 37 *physics the subject*: is a tonic for everybody in the land.
 38-9 *They that . . . a man*: those who were old even before he was born want to go on living until he is grown up.
 40 *else*: otherwise.

I very well agree with you in the hopes of him. It is a gallant child; one that indeed physics the subject, makes old hearts fresh. They that went on crutches ere he was born desire yet their life to see him a man.

Archidamus

40 Would they else be content to die?

Camillo

Yes—if there were no other excuse why they should desire to live.

Archidamus

If the king had no son, they would desire to live on crutches till he had one.

[*Exeunt*

Act I Scene 2

This important scene, which is all in verse, runs the gamut of emotions from easy, relaxed gaiety to tense suspicion and murderous jealousy. Leontes urges his companion—the friend he has known from childhood—to stay with him just a little longer. At first Polixenes is adamant, but eventually he yields to persuasion from Hermione, the wife of Leontes. Such yielding, however, generates alarm in the mind of Leontes and he begins to distrust his wife, voicing his thoughts aloud to himself (in the hearing of the audience) and then to his trusted counsellor, Camillo. Camillo promises to take some action, and the king is satisfied—but Camillo gives a warning to Polixenes (who has already noticed a change in Leontes' behaviour). The king of Bohemia plans an immediate departure from Sicilia, taking Camillo with him.

- 1-2 *Nine . . . note*: the shepherd has recorded the passage of nine months by observing the phases of the moon (called 'the watery star' because of its connection with the movement of tides).
 3 *burden*: occupant (and also the refrain of the shepherd's song).
 5-6 *for . . . debt*: be eternally grateful to you when we leave.
 6 *like a cipher*: like the figure 'o' (when this is added to 1,000, for example, it makes 10,000).
 9 *Stay*: delay, postpone.
 11 *question'd*: worried.
 11-12 *chance . . . absence*: happen or develop because I am away from home (Polixenes uses the 'royal plural').
 12-14 *That . . . truly*: that would cause enough serious trouble to make me realize that I had been right to worry.
 13 *sneaping*: biting.
 15 *royalty*: majesty.
 15-16 *We are . . . to'r*: I can take more of that than you can try me with. Leontes, also using the 'royal plural', addresses Polixenes with affection as a brother king.
 17 *sev'n-night*: week.
Very sooth: really and truly.
 18 *part*: split.

Scene 2

Enter Leontes, Hermione, Mamillius, Polixenes, Camillo, and Attendants

Polixenes

Nine changes of the watery star hath been The shepherd's note since we have left our throne Without a burden. Time as long again Would be fill'd up, my brother, with our thanks,
 5 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 more That go before it.

Leontes

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

Polixenes

Sir, that's tomorrow. 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
 15 To tire your royalty.

Leontes

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

Polixenes

No longer stay.

Leontes

One sev'n-night longer.

Polixenes

Very sooth, tomorrow.

Leontes

We'll part the time between's then; and in that I'll no gainsaying.

Polixenes

Press me not, beseech you so.
 20 There is no tongue that moves, none, none i'th'world, So soon as yours could win me. So it should now, Were there necessity in your request, although 'Twere needful I denied it. My affairs Do even drag me homeward; which to hinder