

Polonius/Hamlet

Polonius
How does my good lord Hamlet.

HAMLET

Better than most. And worse than many.

POLONIUS

Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET

Yes, of course, you are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS

Not I, my lord.

HAMLET

No? It's a pity then, that you are not so honest a man.

POLONIUS

Honest?

HAMLET

Yes, sir. A fishmonger cannot lie. If his product has gone bad, he has no cause for lying, as our noses would already know the pungent truth. If his product was good, he sets a price, and cannot charge higher.

POLONIUS .

But couldn't he charge twice or ten times what the man in next town is charging?

HAMLET

Do you have a daughter?

POLONIUS

I have, my lord.

HAMLET

Is she fair?

POLONIUS

The fairest.

HAMLET

Then you must keep her out of the sun. She must not burn. Leave that to the bun in her oven.

(Pause. Hamlet begins to walk away. Polonius cuts in front of him.)

POLONIUS

What do you read, my lord?

HAMLET

Words, words words.

POLONIUS

What about?

HAMLET

It is a book of truths, sir.

POLONIUS

Truths?

HAMLET

Yes. It says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes lifeless, their bodies weak, and their intellects are faded into shadows of their prior status, which in some cases leaves the man witless, brainless, and a dithering fool. Never have I seen more truth in words... for I myself am an old man, and you should be as old as I am if, like a crab, you could go backward.

POLONIUS

(Aside.) There is a method to his madness... My Lord, I will take my leave of you.

HAMLET

You cannot take from me anything that I will more willingly part with, except my life, except my life, except my life.

(Polonius exits.)

O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew.
Or that th'Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter.

(Pause. The Queen appears.)

To marry my uncle less than two months after my father has died. Frailty, thy name is woman.

QUEEN

WHEN SKIES ARE OVERCAST
YOU CAN STILL HEAR THE STARS SING
OF YOUR FUTURE AND YOUR PAST
LISTEN, MY LITTLE KING