

**Polonius.**

I hold my duty as I hold my soul,  
Both to my God and to my gracious king;  
And I do think- or else this brain of mine  
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
As it hath us'd to do- that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

**Gertrude.**

I doubt it is no other but the main,  
His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage.

**Polonius;**

My liege, and madam, to expostulate  
What majesty should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night is night, and time is time.  
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.  
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.  
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,  
What is't but to be nothing else but mad?  
But let that go.

**Gertrude.**

More matter, with less art.

**Polonius.**

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.  
That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;  
And pity 'tis 'tis true. A foolish figure!  
But farewell it, for I will use no art.  
Mad let us grant him then. And now remains  
That we find out the cause of this effect-  
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,  
For this effect defective comes by cause.  
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.  
Perpend.  
I have a daughter (have while she is mine),  
Who in her duty and obedience, mark,

Hath given me this. Now gather, and surmise.

*[Reads the letter.]*

'To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,'-

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a vile phrase.

But you shall hear. Thus:

*[Reads.]*

'In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.'

**Gertrude.**

Came this from Hamlet to her?

**Polonius.**

Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful. *[Reads.]*

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;

Doubt that the sun doth move;

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But never doubt I love.

'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

'Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, HAMLET.'

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me;

And more above, hath his solicitings,

All given to mine ear.

**Claudius.**

But how hath she

Receiv'd his love?

**Polonius.**

What do you think of me?

**Claudius.**

As of a man faithful and hon'orable.

**Polonius.**

I would fain prove so. But what might you think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing

(As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,

Before my daughter told me), what might you,

Or my dear Majesty your queen here, think,

If I had play'd the desk or table book,  
What might you think? No, I went round to work  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:  
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star.  
This must not be.' And then I prescripts gave her,  
That she should lock herself from his resort,  
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice,  
And he, repulsed, a short tale to make,  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,  
Into the madness wherein now he raves,  
And all we mourn for.

**Claudius.**

Do you think 'tis this?

**Gertrude.**

It may be, very like.

**Polonius.**

*[points to his head and shoulder]* Take this from this, if this be otherwise.

**Claudius.**

How may we try it further?

**Polonius.**

You know sometimes he walks for hours together  
Here in the lobby.

**Gertrude.**

So he does indeed.

**Polonius.**

At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him.  
Be you and I behind a curtain then.  
Mark the encounter. If he love her not,  
Let me be no assistant for a state,  
But keep a farm and carters.