

Renascence Editions

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[Renascence Editions](#)

William Shakespeare

Measure for Measure.

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1605

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

VINCENTIO, the Duke
ANGELO, the Deputy
ESCALUS, an ancient Lord
CLAUDIO, a young gentleman
LUCIO, a fantastic
Two other like Gentlemen
VARRIUS, a gentleman, servant to the Duke
PROVOST
THOMAS, friar
PETER, friar
A JUSTICE
ELBOW, a simple constable
FROTH, a foolish gentleman
POMPEY, a clown and servant to Mistress Overdone
ABHORSON, an executioner
BARNARDINE, a dissolute prisoner

DUKE. Look where he comes.

ANGELO. Always obedient to your Grace's will,
I come to know your pleasure.

DUKE. Angelo,

There is a kind of character in thy life
That to th' observer doth thy history
Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely
touch'd

But to fine issues; nor Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use. But I do bend my speech
To one that can my part in him advertise.
Hold, therefore, Angelo-
In our remove be thou at full ourself;
Mortality and mercy in Vienna
Live in thy tongue and heart. Old Escalus,
Though first in question, is thy secondary.
Take thy commission.

ANGELO. Now, good my lord,

Let there be some more test made of my metal,
Before so noble and so great a figure
Be stamp'd upon it.

DUKE. No more evasion!

We have with a leaven'd and prepared choice
Proceeded to you; therefore take your honours.
Our haste from hence is of so quick condition
That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestion'd
Matters of needful value. We shall write to you,
As time and our concernings shall importune,
How it goes with us, and do look to know
What doth befall you here. So, fare you well.
To th' hopeful execution do I leave you
Of your commissions.

ANGELO. Yet give leave, my lord,

That we may bring you something on the way.

DUKE. My haste may not admit it;

Nor need you, on mine honour, have to do
With any scruple: your scope is as mine own,
So to enforce or qualify the laws
As to your soul seems good. Give me your hand;
I'll privily away. I love the people,
But do not like to stage me to their eyes;
Though it do well, I do not relish well
Their loud applause and Aves vehement;
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
That does affect it. Once more, fare you well.

ANGELO. The heavens give safety to your purposes!

ESCALUS. Lead forth and bring you back in happiness!

DUKE. I thank you. Fare you
well. Exit

ESCALUS. I shall desire you, sir, to give me leave
To have free speech with you; and it concerns me
To look into the bottom of my place:
A pow'r I have, but of what strength and nature
I am not yet instructed.

ANGELO. 'Tis so with me. Let us withdraw together,
And we may soon our satisfaction have
Touching that point.

ESCALUS. I'll wait upon your
honour. Exeunt

SCENE II.

A street

Enter Lucio and two other GENTLEMEN

LUCIO. If the Duke, with the other dukes, come not
to composition
with the King of Hungary, why then all the dukes
fall upon the
King.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Heaven grant us its peace, but not
the King of
Hungary's!

SECOND GENTLEMAN. Amen.

LUCIO. Thou conclud'st like the sanctimonious
pirate that went to
sea with the Ten Commandments, but scrap'd one
out of the table.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. 'Thou shalt not steal'?

LUCIO. Ay, that he raz'd.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Why, 'twas a commandment to

command the captain

and all the rest from their functions: they put
forth to steal.

There's not a soldier of us all that, in the
thanksgiving before

meat, do relish the petition well that prays for
peace.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. I never heard any soldier dislike
it.

LUCIO. I believe thee; for I think thou never wast
where grace was

said.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. No? A dozen times at least.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. What, in metre?

LUCIO. In any proportion or in any language.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. I think, or in any religion.

LUCIO. Ay, why not? Grace is grace, despite of all
controversy; as,

for example, thou thyself art a wicked villain,
despite of all
grace.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Well, there went but a pair of
shears between us.

LUCIO. I grant; as there may between the lists and
the velvet.

Thou art the list.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. And thou the velvet; thou art good
velvet; thou'rt

a three-pil'd piece, I warrant thee. I had as
lief be a list of

an English kersey as be pil'd, as thou art pil'd,
for a French

velvet. Do I speak feelingly now?

LUCIO. I think thou dost; and, indeed, with most
painful feeling of

thy speech. I will, out of thine own confession,
learn to begin

thy health; but, whilst I live, forget to drink
after thee.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. I think I have done myself wrong,
have I not?

SECOND GENTLEMAN. Yes, that thou hast, whether thou
art tainted or

free.

Enter MISTRESS OVERDONE

LUCIO. Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes! I have
purchas'd as many diseases under her roof as come
to-

SECOND GENTLEMAN. To what, I pray?

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Judge.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. To three thousand dolours a year.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Ay, and more.

LUCIO. A French crown more.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Thou art always figuring diseases
in me, but thou
art full of error; I am sound.

LUCIO. Nay, not, as one would say, healthy; but so
sound as things
that are hollow: thy bones are hollow; impiety
has made a feast
of thee.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. How now! which of your hips has
the most profound
sciatica?

MRS. OVERDONE. Well, well! there's one yonder
arrested and carried
to prison was worth five thousand of you all.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Who's that, I pray thee?

MRS. OVERDONE. Marry, sir, that's Claudio, Signior
Claudio.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Claudio to prison? 'Tis not so.

MRS. OVERDONE. Nay, but I know 'tis so: I saw him
arrested; saw him
carried away; and, which is more, within these
three days his
head to be chopp'd off.

LUCIO. But, after all this fooling, I would not
have it so. Art
thou sure of this?

MRS. OVERDONE. I am too sure of it; and it is for
getting Madam
Julietta with child.

LUCIO. Believe me, this may be; he promis'd to meet
me two hours
since, and he was ever precise in promise-keeping.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. Besides, you know, it draws
something near to the

speech we had to such a purpose.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. But most of all agreeing with the proclamation.

LUCIO. Away; let's go learn the truth of it.

Exeunt Lucio

and GENTLEMEN

MRS. OVERDONE. Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what

with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk.

Enter POMPEY

How now! what's the news with you?

POMPEY. Yonder man is carried to prison.

MRS. OVERDONE. Well, what has he done?

POMPEY. A woman.

MRS. OVERDONE. But what's his offence?

POMPEY. Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

MRS. OVERDONE. What! is there a maid with child by him?

POMPEY. No; but there's a woman with maid by him. You have not

heard of the proclamation, have you?

MRS. OVERDONE. What proclamation, man?

POMPEY. All houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be pluck'd down.

MRS. OVERDONE. And what shall become of those in the city?

POMPEY. They shall stand for seed; they had gone down too, but that

a wise burgher put in for them.

MRS. OVERDONE. But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be

pull'd down?

POMPEY. To the ground, mistress.

MRS. OVERDONE. Why, here's a change indeed in the commonwealth!

What shall become of me?

POMPEY. Come, fear not you: good counsellors lack no clients.

Though you change your place you need not change your trade; I'll

be your tapster still. Courage, there will be pity taken on you;

you that have worn your eyes almost out in the
service, you will
be considered.

MRS. OVERDONE. What's to do here, Thomas Tapster?
Let's withdraw.

POMPEY. Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the
provost to prison;

and there's Madam
Juliet.

Exeunt

Enter PROVOST, CLAUDIO, JULIET, and
OFFICERS;

LUCIO following

CLAUDIO. Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to th'
world?

Bear me to prison, where I am committed.

PROVOST. I do it not in evil disposition,
But from Lord Angelo by special charge.

CLAUDIO. Thus can the demigod Authority
Make us pay down for our offence by weight
The words of heaven: on whom it will, it will;
On whom it will not, so; yet still 'tis just.

LUCIO. Why, how now, Claudio, whence comes this
restraint?

CLAUDIO. From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty;
As surfeit is the father of much fast,
So every scope by the immoderate use
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
A thirsty evil; and when we drink we die.

LUCIO. If I could speak so wisely under an arrest,
I would send for

certain of my creditors; and yet, to say the
truth, I had as lief

have the foppery of freedom as the morality of
imprisonment.

What's thy offence, Claudio?

CLAUDIO. What but to speak of would offend again.

LUCIO. What, is't murder?

CLAUDIO. No.

LUCIO. Lechery?

CLAUDIO. Call it so.

PROVOST. Away, sir; you must go.

CLAUDIO. One word, good friend. Lucio, a word with

you.

LUCIO. A hundred, if they'll do you any good. Is
lechery so look'd
after?

CLAUDIO. Thus stands it with me: upon a true
contract

I got possession of Julietta's bed.
You know the lady; she is fast my wife,
Save that we do the denunciation lack
Of outward order; this we came not to,
Only for propagation of a dow'r
Remaining in the coffer of her friends.
From whom we thought it meet to hide our love
Till time had made them for us. But it chances
The stealth of our most mutual entertainment,
With character too gross, is writ on Juliet.

LUCIO. With child, perhaps?

CLAUDIO. Unhappily, even so.

And the new deputy now for the Duke-
Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness,
Or whether that the body public be
A horse whereon the governor doth ride,
Who, newly in the seat, that it may know
He can command, lets it straight feel the spur;
Whether the tyranny be in his place,
Or in his eminence that fills it up,
I stagger in. But this new governor
Awakes me all the enrolled penalties
Which have, like unscour'd armour, hung by th'

wall

So long that nineteen zodiacs have gone round
And none of them been worn; and, for a name,
Now puts the drowsy and neglected act
Freshly on me. 'Tis surely for a name.

LUCIO. I warrant it is; and thy head stands so
tickle on thy

shoulders that a milkmaid, if she be in love, may
sigh it off.

Send after the Duke, and appeal to him.

CLAUDIO. I have done so, but he's not to be found.

I prithee, Lucio, do me this kind service:
This day my sister should the cloister enter,
And there receive her approbation;
Acquaint her with the danger of my state;
Implore her, in my voice, that she make friends

To the strict deputy; bid herself assay him.
I have great hope in that; for in her youth
There is a prone and speechless dialect
Such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art
When she will play with reason and discourse,
And well she can persuade.

LUCIO. I pray she may; as well for the
encouragement of the like,
which else would stand under grievous imposition,
as for the
enjoying of thy life, who I would be sorry should
be thus
foolishly lost at a game of tick-tack. I'll to
her.

CLAUDIO. I thank you, good friend Lucio.

LUCIO. Within two hours.

CLAUDIO. Come, officer,
away.

Exeunt

SCENE III.

A monastery

Enter DUKE and FRIAR THOMAS

DUKE. No, holy father; throw away that thought;
Believe not that the dribbling dart of love
Can pierce a complete bosom. Why I desire thee
To give me secret harbour hath a purpose
More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends
Of burning youth.

FRIAR. May your Grace speak of it?

DUKE. My holy sir, none better knows than you
How I have ever lov'd the life removed,
And held in idle price to haunt assemblies
Where youth, and cost, a witless bravery keeps.
I have deliver'd to Lord Angelo,
A man of stricture and firm abstinence,
My absolute power and place here in Vienna,
And he supposes me travell'd to Poland;
For so I have strew'd it in the common ear,
And so it is received. Now, pious sir,
You will demand of me why I do this.

FRIAR. Gladly, my lord.

DUKE. We have strict statutes and most biting laws,
The needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds,
Which for this fourteen years we have let slip;

Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave,
That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,
Having bound up the threat'ning twigs of birch,
Only to stick it in their children's sight
For terror, not to use, in time the rod
Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,
Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead;
And liberty plucks justice by the nose;
The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
Goes all decorum.

FRIAR. It rested in your Grace
To unloose this tied-up justice when you pleas'd;
And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd
Than in Lord Angelo.

DUKE. I do fear, too dreadful.
Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
For what I bid them do; for we bid this be done,
When evil deeds have their permissive pass
And not the punishment. Therefore, indeed, my
father,

I have on Angelo impos'd the office;
Who may, in th' ambush of my name, strike home,
And yet my nature never in the fight
To do in slander. And to behold his sway,
I will, as 'twere a brother of your order,
Visit both prince and people. Therefore, I
prithee,

Supply me with the habit, and instruct me
How I may formally in person bear me
Like a true friar. Moe reasons for this action
At our more leisure shall I render you.
Only, this one: Lord Angelo is precise;
Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses
That his blood flows, or that his appetite
Is more to bread than stone. Hence shall we see,
If power change purpose, what our seemers
be. Exeunt

SCENE IV.
A nunnery

Enter ISABELLA and FRANCISCA

ISABELLA. And have you nuns no farther privileges?
FRANCISCA. Are not these large enough?

ISABELLA. Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more,
But rather wishing a more strict restraint
Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.

LUCIO. [Within] Ho! Peace be in this place!

ISABELLA. Who's that which calls?

FRANCISCA. It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabella,
Turn you the key, and know his business of him:
You may, I may not; you are yet unsworn;
When you have vow'd, you must not speak with men
But in the presence of the prioress;
Then, if you speak, you must not show your face,
Or, if you show your face, you must not speak.
He calls again; I pray you answer him.

Exit FRANCISCA

ISABELLA. Peace and prosperity! Who is't that calls?

Enter LUCIO

LUCIO. Hail, virgin, if you be, as those cheek-roses
Proclaim you are no less. Can you so stead me
As bring me to the sight of Isabella,
A novice of this place, and the fair sister
To her unhappy brother Claudio?

ISABELLA. Why her 'unhappy brother'? Let me ask
The rather, for I now must make you know
I am that Isabella, and his sister.

LUCIO. Gentle and fair, your brother kindly greets
you.

Not to be weary with you, he's in prison.

ISABELLA. Woe me! For what?

LUCIO. For that which, if myself might be his judge,
He should receive his punishment in thanks:
He hath got his friend with child.

ISABELLA. Sir, make me not your story.

LUCIO. It is true.

I would not- though 'tis my familiar sin
With maids to seem the lapwing, and to jest,
Tongue far from heart- play with all virgins so:
I hold you as a thing enskied and sainted,
By your renouncement an immortal spirit,
And to be talk'd with in sincerity,
As with a saint.

ISABELLA. You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

LUCIO. Do not believe it. Fewness and truth, 'tis
thus:

Your brother and his lover have embrac'd.
As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time
That from the seedness the bare fallow brings
To teeming foison, even so her plenteous womb
Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

ISABELLA. Some one with child by him? My cousin
Juliet?

LUCIO. Is she your cousin?

ISABELLA. Adoptedly, as school-maids change their
names

By vain though apt affection.

LUCIO. She it is.

ISABELLA. O, let him marry her!

LUCIO. This is the point.

The Duke is very strangely gone from hence;
Bore many gentlemen, myself being one,
In hand, and hope of action; but we do learn,
By those that know the very nerves of state,
His givings-out were of an infinite distance
From his true-meant design. Upon his place,
And with full line of his authority,
Governs Lord Angelo, a man whose blood
Is very snow-broth, one who never feels
The wanton stings and motions of the sense,
But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge
With profits of the mind, study and fast.
He- to give fear to use and liberty,
Which have for long run by the hideous law,
As mice by lions- hath pick'd out an act
Under whose heavy sense your brother's life
Falls into forfeit; he arrests him on it,
And follows close the rigour of the statute
To make him an example. All hope is gone,
Unless you have the grace by your fair prayer
To soften Angelo. And that's my pith of business
'Twixt you and your poor brother.

ISABELLA. Doth he so seek his life?

LUCIO. Has censur'd him

Already, and, as I hear, the Provost hath
A warrant for his execution.

ISABELLA. Alas! what poor ability's in me
To do him good?

LUCIO. Assay the pow'r you have.

ISABELLA. My power, alas, I doubt!

LUCIO. Our doubts are traitors,

And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt. Go to Lord Angelo,
And let him learn to know, when maidens sue,
Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel,
All their petitions are as freely theirs
As they themselves would owe them.

ISABELLA. I'll see what I can do.

LUCIO. But speedily.

ISABELLA. I will about it straight;

No longer staying but to give the Mother
Notice of my affair. I humbly thank you.
Commend me to my brother; soon at night
I'll send him certain word of my success.

LUCIO. I take my leave of you.

ISABELLA. Good sir,
adieu.

Exeunt

Act II. Scene I.

A hall in ANGELO'S house

Enter ANGELO, ESCALUS, a JUSTICE, PROVOST,
OFFICERS, and

other ATTENDANTS

ANGELO. We must not make a scarecrow of the law,
Setting it up to fear the birds of prey,
And let it keep one shape till custom make it
Their perch, and not their terror.

ESCALUS. Ay, but yet

Let us be keen, and rather cut a little
Than fall and bruise to death. Alas! this
gentleman,

Whom I would save, had a most noble father.
Let but your honour know,
Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue,
That, in the working of your own affections,
Had time coher'd with place, or place with

wishing,

Or that the resolute acting of our blood
Could have attain'd th' effect of your own purpose
Whether you had not sometime in your life
Err'd in this point which now you censure him,
And pull'd the law upon you.

ANGELO. 'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall. I not deny
The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,

May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two
Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to
justice,

That justice seizes. What knows the laws
That thieves do pass on thieves? 'Tis very
pregnant,

The jewel that we find, we stoop and take't,
Because we see it; but what we do not see
We tread upon, and never think of it.
You may not so extenuate his offence
For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,
When I, that censure him, do so offend,
Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,
And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die.
ESCALUS. Be it as your wisdom will.

ANGELO. Where is the Provost?

PROVOST. Here, if it like your honour.

ANGELO. See that Claudio

Be executed by nine to-morrow morning;
Bring him his confessor; let him be prepar'd;
For that's the utmost of his pilgrimage.

Exit PROVOST

ESCALUS. [Aside] Well, heaven forgive him! and
forgive us all!

Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall;
Some run from breaks of ice, and answer none,
And some condemned for a fault alone.

Enter ELBOW and OFFICERS with FROTH and
POMPEY

ELBOW. Come, bring them away; if these be good
people in a
commonweal that do nothing but use their abuses
in common houses,

I know no law; bring them away.

ANGELO. How now, sir! What's your name, and what's
the matter?

ELBOW. If it please your honour, I am the poor
Duke's constable,
and my name is Elbow; I do lean upon justice,
sir, and do bring
in here before your good honour two notorious
benefactors.

ANGELO. Benefactors! Well- what benefactors are

they? Are they not
malefactors?

ELBOW. If it please your honour, I know not well
what they are; but
precise villains they are, that I am sure of, and
void of all
profanation in the world that good Christians
ought to have.

ESCALUS. This comes off well; here's a wise officer.

ANGELO. Go to; what quality are they of? Elbow is
your name? Why

dost thou not speak, Elbow?

POMPEY. He cannot, sir; he's out at elbow.

ANGELO. What are you, sir?

ELBOW. He, sir? A tapster, sir; parcel-bawd; one
that serves a bad

woman; whose house, sir, was, as they say,
pluck'd down in the
suburbs; and now she professes a hot-house,
which, I think, is a
very ill house too.

ESCALUS. How know you that?

ELBOW. My Wife, sir, whom I detest before heaven
and your honour-

ESCALUS. How! thy wife!

ELBOW. Ay, sir; whom I thank heaven, is an honest
woman-

ESCALUS. Dost thou detest her therefore?

ELBOW. I say, sir, I will detest myself also, as
well as she, that

this house, if it be not a bawd's house, it is
pity of her life,
for it is a naughty house.

ESCALUS. How dost thou know that, constable?

ELBOW. Marry, sir, by my wife; who, if she had been
a woman

cardinally given, might have been accus'd in
fornication,
adultery, and all uncleanness there.

ESCALUS. By the woman's means?

ELBOW. Ay, sir, by Mistress Overdone's means; but
as she spit in
his face, so she defied him.

POMPEY. Sir, if it please your honour, this is not
so.

ELBOW. Prove it before these varlets here, thou honourable man,
prove it.

ESCALUS. Do you hear how he misplaces?

POMPEY. Sir, she came in great with child; and longing, saving your honour's reverence, for stew'd prunes. Sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit dish, a dish of some three pence; your honours have seen such dishes; they are not China dishes, but very good dishes.

ESCALUS. Go to, go to; no matter for the dish, sir.

POMPEY. No, indeed, sir, not of a pin; you are therein in the right; but to the point. As I say, this Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, with child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes; and having but two in the dish, as I said, Master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly; for, as you know, Master Froth, I could not give you three pence again-

FROTH. No, indeed.

POMPEY. Very well; you being then, if you be rememb' red, cracking

the stones of the foresaid prunes-

FROTH. Ay, so I did indeed.

POMPEY. Why, very well; I telling you then, if you be rememb' red,

that such a one and such a one were past cure of the thing you

wot of, unless they kept very good diet, as I told you-

FROTH. All this is true.

POMPEY. Why, very well then-

ESCALUS. Come, you are a tedious fool. To the purpose: what was done to Elbow's wife that he hath cause to

complain of? Come me

to what was done to her.

POMPEY. Sir, your honour cannot come to that yet.

ESCALUS. No, sir, nor I mean it not.

POMPEY. Sir, but you shall come to it, by your honour's leave. And,

I beseech you, look into Master Froth here, sir, a man of

fourscore pound a year; whose father died at Hallowmas- was't not

at Hallowmas, Master Froth?

FROTH. All-hallond eve.

POMPEY. Why, very well; I hope here be truths. He, sir, sitting, as

I say, in a lower chair, sir; 'twas in the Bunch of Grapes,

where, indeed, you have a delight to sit, have you not?

FROTH. I have so; because it is an open room, and good for winter.

POMPEY. Why, very well then; I hope here be truths.

ANGELO. This will last out a night in Russia,

When nights are longest there; I'll take my leave, And leave you to the hearing of the cause,

Hoping you'll find good cause to whip them all.

ESCALUS. I think no less. Good morrow to your lordship.

[Exit ANGELO] Now, sir, come on; what was done to Elbow's wife,

once more?

POMPEY. Once?- sir. There was nothing done to her once.

ELBOW. I beseech you, sir, ask him what this man did to my wife.

POMPEY. I beseech your honour, ask me.

ESCALUS. Well, sir, what did this gentleman to her?

POMPEY. I beseech you, sir, look in this gentleman's face. Good

Master Froth, look upon his honour; 'tis for a good purpose. Doth

your honour mark his face?

ESCALUS. Ay, sir, very well.

POMPEY. Nay, I beseech you, mark it well.

ESCALUS. Well, I do so.

POMPEY. Doth your honour see any harm in his face?

ESCALUS. Why, no.

POMPEY. I'll be suppos'd upon a book his face is
the worst thing
about him. Good then; if his face be the worst
thing about him,
how could Master Froth do the constable's wife
any harm? I would
know that of your honour.

ESCALUS. He's in the right, constable; what say you
to it?

ELBOW. First, an it like you, the house is a
respected house; next,
this is a respected fellow; and his mistress is a
respected
woman.

POMPEY. By this hand, sir, his wife is a more
respected person than
any of us all.

ELBOW. Varlet, thou liest; thou liest, wicket
varlet; the time is
yet to come that she was ever respected with man,
woman, or
child.

POMPEY. Sir, she was respected with him before he
married with her.

ESCALUS. Which is the wiser here, Justice or
Iniquity? Is this
true?

ELBOW. O thou caitiff! O thou varlet! O thou wicked
Hannibal! I

respected with her before I was married to her!
If ever I was

respected with her, or she with me, let not your
worship think me

the poor Duke's officer. Prove this, thou wicked
Hannibal, or

I'll have mine action of batt'ry on thee.

ESCALUS. If he took you a box o' th' ear, you might
have your

action of slander too.

ELBOW. Marry, I thank your good worship for it.
What is't your

worship's pleasure I shall do with this wicked
caitiff?

ESCALUS. Truly, officer, because he hath some

offences in him that

thou wouldst discover if thou couldst, let him
continue in his

courses till thou know'st what they are.

ELBOW. Marry, I thank your worship for it. Thou
seest, thou wicked

varlet, now, what's come upon thee: thou art to
continue now,

thou varlet; thou art to continue.

ESCALUS. Where were you born, friend?

FROTH. Here in Vienna, sir.

ESCALUS. Are you of fourscore pounds a year?

FROTH. Yes, an't please you, sir.

ESCALUS. So. What trade are you of, sir?

POMPEY. A tapster, a poor widow's tapster.

ESCALUS. Your mistress' name?

POMPEY. Mistress Overdone.

ESCALUS. Hath she had any more than one husband?

POMPEY. Nine, sir; Overdone by the last.

ESCALUS. Nine! Come hither to me, Master Froth.

Master Froth, I

would not have you acquainted with tapsters: they
will draw you,

Master Froth, and you will hang them. Get you
gone, and let me

hear no more of you.

FROTH. I thank your worship. For mine own part, I
never come into

any room in a taphouse but I am drawn in.

ESCALUS. Well, no more of it, Master Froth;
farewell. [Exit FROTH]

Come you hither to me, Master Tapster; what's
your name, Master

Tapster?

POMPEY. Pompey.

ESCALUS. What else?

POMPEY. Bum, sir.

ESCALUS. Troth, and your bum is the greatest thing
about you; so

that, in the beastliest sense, you are Pompey the
Great. Pompey,

you are partly a bawd, Pompey, howsoever you
colour it in being a

tapster. Are you not? Come, tell me true; it
shall be the better

for you.

POMPEY. Truly, sir, I am a poor fellow that would live.

ESCALUS. How would you live, Pompey- by being a bawd? What do you

think of the trade, Pompey? Is it a lawful trade?

POMPEY. If the law would allow it, sir.

ESCALUS. But the law will not allow it, Pompey; nor it shall not be

allowed in Vienna.

POMPEY. Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the youth of the city?

ESCALUS. No, Pompey.

POMPEY. Truly, sir, in my poor opinion, they will to't then. If

your worship will take order for the drabs and the knaves, you need not to fear the bawds.

ESCALUS. There is pretty orders beginning, I can tell you: but it is but heading and hanging.

POMPEY. If you head and hang all that offend that way but for ten

year together, you'll be glad to give out a commission for more

heads; if this law hold in Vienna ten year, I'll rent the fairest

house in it, after threepence a bay. If you live to see this come

to pass, say Pompey told you so.

ESCALUS. Thank you, good Pompey; and, in requital of your prophecy,

hark you: I advise you, let me not find you before me again upon

any complaint whatsoever- no, not for dwelling where you do; if I

do, Pompey, I shall beat you to your tent, and prove a shrewd

Caesar to you; in plain dealing, Pompey, I shall have you whipt.

So for this time, Pompey, fare you well.

POMPEY. I thank your worship for your good counsel; [Aside] but I

shall follow it as the flesh and fortune shall

better determine.

Whip me? No, no; let carman whip his jade;
The valiant heart's not whipt out of his
trade. Exit

ESCALUS. Come hither to me, Master Elbow; come
hither, Master

Constable. How long have you been in this place
of constable?

ELBOW. Seven year and a half, sir.

ESCALUS. I thought, by the readiness in the office,
you had

continued in it some time. You say seven years
together?

ELBOW. And a half, sir.

ESCALUS. Alas, it hath been great pains to you!
They do you wrong

to put you so oft upon't. Are there not men in
your ward

sufficient to serve it?

ELBOW. Faith, sir, few of any wit in such matters;
as they are

chosen, they are glad to choose me for them; I do
it for some

piece of money, and go through with all.

ESCALUS. Look you, bring me in the names of some
six or seven, the

most sufficient of your parish.

ELBOW. To your worship's house, sir?

ESCALUS. To my house. Fare you well.

[Exit ELBOW]

What's o'clock, think you?

JUSTICE. Eleven, sir.

ESCALUS. I pray you home to dinner with me.

JUSTICE. I humbly thank you.

ESCALUS. It grieves me for the death of Claudio;
But there's no remedy.

JUSTICE. Lord Angelo is severe.

ESCALUS. It is but needful:

Mercy is not itself that oft looks so;

Pardon is still the nurse of second woe.

But yet, poor Claudio! There is no remedy.

Come,

sir.

Exeunt

SCENE II.

Another room in ANGELO'S house

Enter PROVOST and a SERVANT

SERVANT. He's hearing of a cause; he will come straight.

I'll tell him of you.

PROVOST. Pray you do. [Exit SERVANT] I'll know His pleasure; may be he will relent. Alas, He hath but as offended in a dream! All sects, all ages, smack of this vice; and he To die for 't!

Enter ANGELO

ANGELO. Now, what's the matter, Provost?

PROVOST. Is it your will Claudio shall die to-morrow?

ANGELO. Did not I tell thee yea? Hadst thou not order?

Why dost thou ask again?

PROVOST. Lest I might be too rash; Under your good correction, I have seen When, after execution, judgment hath Repented o'er his doom.

ANGELO. Go to; let that be mine.

Do you your office, or give up your place, And you shall well be spar'd.

PROVOST. I crave your honour's pardon.

What shall be done, sir, with the groaning Juliet? She's very near her hour.

ANGELO. Dispose of her

To some more fitter place, and that with speed.

Re-enter SERVANT

SERVANT. Here is the sister of the man condemn'd Desires access to you.

ANGELO. Hath he a sister?

PROVOST. Ay, my good lord; a very virtuous maid, And to be shortly of a sisterhood, If not already.

ANGELO. Well, let her be admitted.

Exit SERVANT

See you the fornicatress be remov'd; Let her have needful but not lavish means;

There shall be order for't.

Enter Lucio and ISABELLA

PROVOST. [Going] Save your honour!

ANGELO. Stay a little while. [To ISABELLA] Y'are
welcome; what's
your will?

ISABELLA. I am a woeful suitor to your honour,
Please but your honour hear me.

ANGELO. Well; what's your suit?

ISABELLA. There is a vice that most I do abhor,
And most desire should meet the blow of justice;
For which I would not plead, but that I must;
For which I must not plead, but that I am
At war 'twixt will and will not.

ANGELO. Well; the matter?

ISABELLA. I have a brother is condemn'd to die;
I do beseech you, let it be his fault,
And not my brother.

PROVOST. [Aside] Heaven give thee moving graces.

ANGELO. Condemn the fault and not the actor of it!
Why, every fault's condemn'd ere it be done;
Mine were the very cipher of a function,
To fine the faults whose fine stands in record,
And let go by the actor.

ISABELLA. O just but severe law!

I had a brother, then. Heaven keep your honour!

LUCIO. [To ISABELLA] Give't not o'er so; to him
again, entreat him,
Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown;
You are too cold: if you should need a pin,
You could not with more tame a tongue desire it.
To him, I say.

ISABELLA. Must he needs die?

ANGELO. Maiden, no remedy.

ISABELLA. Yes; I do think that you might pardon him.
And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.

ANGELO. I will not do't.

ISABELLA. But can you, if you would?

ANGELO. Look, what I will not, that I cannot do.

ISABELLA. But might you do't, and do the world no
wrong,
If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse
As mine is to him?

ANGELO. He's sentenc'd; 'tis too late.

LUCIO. [To ISABELLA] You are too cold.

ISABELLA. Too late? Why, no; I, that do speak a word,

May call it back again. Well, believe this:
No ceremony that to great ones longs,
Not the king's crown nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace
As mercy does.

If he had been as you, and you as he,
You would have slipp'd like him; but he, like you,
Would not have been so stern.

ANGELO. Pray you be gone.

ISABELLA. I would to heaven I had your potency,
And you were Isabel! Should it then be thus?
No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge
And what a prisoner.

LUCIO. [To ISABELLA] Ay, touch him; there's the vein.

ANGELO. Your brother is a forfeit of the law,
And you but waste your words.

ISABELLA. Alas! Alas!

Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.

ANGELO. Be you content, fair maid.

It is the law, not I condemn your brother.
Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,
It should be thus with him. He must die to-morrow.

ISABELLA. To-morrow! O, that's sudden! Spare him,
spare him.

He's not prepar'd for death. Even for our kitchens
We kill the fowl of season; shall we serve heaven
With less respect than we do minister
To our gross selves? Good, good my lord, bethink
you.

Who is it that hath died for this offence?
There's many have committed it.

LUCIO. [Aside] Ay, well said.

ANGELO. The law hath not been dead, though it hath

slept.

Those many had not dar'd to do that evil
If the first that did th' edict infringe
Had answer'd for his deed. Now 'tis awake,
Takes note of what is done, and, like a prophet,
Looks in a glass that shows what future evils-
Either now or by remissness new conceiv'd,
And so in progress to be hatch'd and born-
Are now to have no successive degrees,
But here they live to end.

ISABELLA. Yet show some pity.

ANGELO. I show it most of all when I show justice;
For then I pity those I do not know,
Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall,
And do him right that, answering one foul wrong,
Lives not to act another. Be satisfied;
Your brother dies to-morrow; be content.

ISABELLA. So you must be the first that gives this
sentence,

And he that suffers. O, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength! But it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.

LUCIO. [To ISABELLA] That's well said.

ISABELLA. Could great men thunder
As Jove himself does, Jove would never be quiet,
For every pelting petty officer
Would use his heaven for thunder,
Nothing but thunder. Merciful Heaven,
Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
Splits the unwedgeable and gnarled oak
Than the soft myrtle. But man, proud man,
Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As makes the angels weep; who, with our speens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

LUCIO. [To ISABELLA] O, to him, to him, wench! He
will relent;

He's coming; I perceive 't.

PROVOST. [Aside] Pray heaven she win him.

ISABELLA. We cannot weigh our brother with ourself.
Great men may jest with saints: 'tis wit in them;
But in the less foul profanation.

LUCIO. [To ISABELLA] Thou'rt i' th' right, girl;

more o' that.

ISABELLA. That in the captain's but a choleric word
Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.

LUCIO. [To ISABELLA] Art avis'd o' that? More on't.

ANGELO. Why do you put these sayings upon me?

ISABELLA. Because authority, though it err like
others,

Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself
That skins the vice o' th' top. Go to your bosom,
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
That's like my brother's fault. If it confess
A natural guiltiness such as is his,
Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
Against my brother's life.

ANGELO. [Aside] She speaks, and 'tis
Such sense that my sense breeds with it.- Fare
you well.

ISABELLA. Gentle my lord, turn back.

ANGELO. I will bethink me. Come again to-morrow.

ISABELLA. Hark how I'll bribe you; good my lord,
turn back.

ANGELO. How, bribe me?

ISABELLA. Ay, with such gifts that heaven shall
share with you.

LUCIO. [To ISABELLA] You had marr'd all else.

ISABELLA. Not with fond sicles of the tested gold,
Or stones, whose rate are either rich or poor
As fancy values them; but with true prayers
That shall be up at heaven and enter there
Ere sun-rise, prayers from preserved souls,
From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate
To nothing temporal.

ANGELO. Well; come to me to-morrow.

LUCIO. [To ISABELLA] Go to; 'tis well; away.

ISABELLA. Heaven keep your honour safe!

ANGELO. [Aside] Amen; for I
Am that way going to temptation
Where prayers cross.

ISABELLA. At what hour to-morrow
Shall I attend your lordship?

ANGELO. At any time 'fore noon.

ISABELLA. Save your honour! Exeunt all
but ANGELO

ANGELO. From thee; even from thy virtue!
What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or

mine?

The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?

Ha!

Not she; nor doth she tempt; but it is I
That, lying by the violet in the sun,
Do as the carrion does, not as the flow'r,
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground

enough,

Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary,
And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie!
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
Dost thou desire her foully for those things
That make her good? O, let her brother live!
Thieves for their robbery have authority
When judges steal themselves. What, do I love her,
That I desire to hear her speak again,
And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?
O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous
Is that temptation that doth goad us on
To sin in loving virtue. Never could the strumpet,
With all her double vigour, art and nature,
Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
Subdues me quite. Ever till now,
When men were fond, I smil'd and wond'ered

how.

Exit

SCENE III.

A prison

Enter, severally, DUKE, disguised as a FRIAR,
and PROVOST

DUKE. Hail to you, Provost! so I think you are.

PROVOST. I am the Provost. What's your will, good
friar?

DUKE. Bound by my charity and my blest order,
I come to visit the afflicted spirits
Here in the prison. Do me the common right
To let me see them, and to make me know
The nature of their crimes, that I may minister
To them accordingly.

PROVOST. I would do more than that, if more were
needful.

Enter JULIET

Look, here comes one; a gentlewoman of mine,
Who, falling in the flaws of her own youth,
Hath blister'd her report. She is with child;
And he that got it, sentenc'd- a young man
More fit to do another such offence
Than die for this.

DUKE. When must he die?

PROVOST. As I do think, to-morrow.

[To JULIET] I have provided for you; stay awhile
And you shall be conducted.

DUKE. Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?

JULIET. I do; and bear the shame most patiently.

DUKE. I'll teach you how you shall arraign your
conscience,

And try your penitence, if it be sound
Or hollowly put on.

JULIET. I'll gladly learn.

DUKE. Love you the man that wrong'd you?

JULIET. Yes, as I love the woman that wrong'd him.

DUKE. So then, it seems, your most offenceful act
Was mutually committed.

JULIET. Mutually.

DUKE. Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

JULIET. I do confess it, and repent it, father.

DUKE. 'Tis meet so, daughter; but lest you do repent
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,
Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not
heaven,

Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it,
But as we stand in fear-

JULIET. I do repent me as it is an evil,
And take the shame with joy.

DUKE. There rest.

Your partner, as I hear, must die to-morrow,
And I am going with instruction to him.
Grace go with you!

Benedicite!

Exit

JULIET. Must die to-morrow! O, injurious law,
That respites me a life whose very comfort
Is still a dying horror!

PROVOST. 'Tis pity of
him.

Exeunt

SCENE IV.
ANGELO'S house

Enter ANGELO

ANGELO. When I would pray and think, I think and pray

To several subjects. Heaven hath my empty words,
Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,
Anchors on Isabel. Heaven in my mouth,
As if I did but only chew his name,
And in my heart the strong and swelling evil
Of my conception. The state whereon I studied
Is, like a good thing being often read,
Grown sere and tedious; yea, my gravity,
Wherein- let no man hear me- I take pride,
Could I with boot change for an idle plume
Which the air beats for vain. O place, O form,
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming! Blood, thou art blood.
Let's write 'good angel' on the devil's horn;
'Tis not the devil's crest.

Enter SERVANT

How now, who's there?

SERVANT. One Isabel, a sister, desires access to you.

ANGELO. Teach her the way. [Exit SERVANT] O heavens!
Why does my blood thus muster to my heart,
Making both it unable for itself
And dispossessing all my other parts
Of necessary fitness?
So play the foolish throngs with one that swoons;
Come all to help him, and so stop the air
By which he should revive; and even so
The general subject to a well-wish'd king
Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
Must needs appear offence.

Enter ISABELLA

How now, fair maid?

ISABELLA. I am come to know your pleasure.

ANGELO. That you might know it would much better
please me

Than to demand what 'tis. Your brother cannot
live.

ISABELLA. Even so! Heaven keep your honour!

ANGELO. Yet may he live awhile, and, it may be,
As long as you or I; yet he must die.

ISABELLA. Under your sentence?

ANGELO. Yea.

ISABELLA. When? I beseech you; that in his reprieve,
Longer or shorter, he may be so fitted
That his soul sicken not.

ANGELO. Ha! Fie, these filthy vices! It were as good
To pardon him that hath from nature stol'n
A man already made, as to remit
Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven's image
In stamps that are forbid; 'tis all as easy
Falsely to take away a life true made
As to put metal in restrained means
To make a false one.

ISABELLA. 'Tis set down so in heaven, but not in
earth.

ANGELO. Say you so? Then I shall pose you quickly.
Which had you rather- that the most just law
Now took your brother's life; or, to redeem him,
Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness
As she that he hath stain'd?

ISABELLA. Sir, believe this:

I had rather give my body than my soul.

ANGELO. I talk not of your soul; our compell'd sins
Stand more for number than for accompt.

ISABELLA. How say you?

ANGELO. Nay, I'll not warrant that; for I can speak
Against the thing I say. Answer to this:
I, now the voice of the recorded law,
Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life;
Might there not be a charity in sin
To save this brother's life?

ISABELLA. Please you to do't,
I'll take it as a peril to my soul
It is no sin at all, but charity.

ANGELO. Pleas'd you to do't at peril of your soul,
Were equal poise of sin and charity.

ISABELLA. That I do beg his life, if it be sin,

Heaven let me bear it! You granting of my suit,
If that be sin, I'll make it my morn prayer
To have it added to the faults of mine,
And nothing of your answer.

ANGELO. Nay, but hear me;

Your sense pursues not mine; either you are
ignorant

Or seem so, craftily; and that's not good.

ISABELLA. Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good
But graciously to know I am no better.

ANGELO. Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright
When it doth tax itself; as these black masks
Proclaim an enshielded beauty ten times louder
Than beauty could, display'd. But mark me:
To be received plain, I'll speak more gross-
Your brother is to die.

ISABELLA. So.

ANGELO. And his offence is so, as it appears,
Accountant to the law upon that pain.

ISABELLA. True.

ANGELO. Admit no other way to save his life,
As I subscribe not that, nor any other,
But, in the loss of question, that you, his
sister,

Finding yourself desir'd of such a person
Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,
Could fetch your brother from the manacles
Of the all-binding law; and that there were
No earthly mean to save him but that either
You must lay down the treasures of your body
To this supposed, or else to let him suffer-
What would you do?

ISABELLA. As much for my poor brother as myself;
That is, were I under the terms of death,
Th' impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death as to a bed
That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame.

ANGELO. Then must your brother die.

ISABELLA. And 'twere the cheaper way:
Better it were a brother died at once
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,
Should die for ever.

ANGELO. Were not you, then, as cruel as the sentence
That you have slander'd so?

ISABELLA. Ignominy in ransom and free pardon
Are of two houses: lawful mercy
Is nothing kin to foul redemption.

ANGELO. You seem'd of late to make the law a tyrant;
And rather prov'd the sliding of your brother
A merriment than a vice.

ISABELLA. O, pardon me, my lord! It oft falls out,
To have what we would have, we speak not what we
mean:

I something do excuse the thing I hate
For his advantage that I dearly love.

ANGELO. We are all frail.

ISABELLA. Else let my brother die,
If not a fedary but only he
Owe and succeed thy weakness.

ANGELO. Nay, women are frail too.

ISABELLA. Ay, as the glasses where they view
themselves,
Which are as easy broke as they make forms.
Women, help heaven! Men their creation mar
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times
frail;

For we are soft as our complexions are,
And credulous to false prints.

ANGELO. I think it well;

And from this testimony of your own sex,
Since I suppose we are made to be no stronger
Than faults may shake our frames, let me be bold.
I do arrest your words. Be that you are,
That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none;
If you be one, as you are well express'd
By all external warrants, show it now
By putting on the destin'd livery.

ISABELLA. I have no tongue but one; gentle, my lord,
Let me intreat you speak the former language.

ANGELO. Plainly conceive, I love you.

ISABELLA. My brother did love Juliet,
And you tell me that he shall die for't.

ANGELO. He shall not, Isabel, if you give me love.

ISABELLA. I know your virtue hath a license in't,
Which seems a little fouler than it is,
To pluck on others.

ANGELO. Believe me, on mine honour,
My words express my purpose.

ISABELLA. Ha! little honour to be much believ'd,

And most pernicious purpose! Seeming, seeming!
I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for't.
Sign me a present pardon for my brother
Or, with an outstretch'd throat, I'll tell the
world aloud

What man thou art.

ANGELO. Who will believe thee, Isabel?

My unsoil'd name, th' austereness of my life,
My vouch against you, and my place i' th' state,
Will so your accusation overweigh
That you shall stifle in your own report,
And smell of calumny. I have begun,
And now I give my sensual race the rein:
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes
That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother
By yielding up thy body to my will;
Or else he must not only die the death,
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
To ling'ring sufferance. Answer me to-morrow,
Or, by the affection that now guides me most,
I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,
Say what you can: my false o'erweighs your
true. Exit

ISABELLA. To whom should I complain? Did I tell
this,

Who would believe me? O perilous mouths
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue
Either of condemnation or approof,
Bidding the law make curtsy to their will;
Hooking both right and wrong to th' appetite,
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother.
Though he hath fall'n by prompture of the blood,
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour
That, had he twenty heads to tender down
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up
Before his sister should her body stoop
To such abhorr'd pollution.
Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:
More than our brother is our chastity.
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,
And fit his mind to death, for his soul's
rest. Exit

ACT III. SCENE I.

The prison

Enter DUKE, disguised as before, CLAUDIO, and PROVOST

DUKE. So, then you hope of pardon from Lord Angelo?

CLAUDIO. The miserable have no other medicine

But only hope:

I have hope to Eve, and am prepar'd to die.

DUKE. Be absolute for death; either death or life

Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life.

If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing

That none but fools would keep. A breath thou art,

Servile to all the skyey influences,

That dost this habitation where thou keep'st

Hourly afflict. Merely, thou art Death's fool;

For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun

And yet run'st toward him still. Thou art not

noble;

For all th' accommodations that thou bear'st

Are nurs'd by baseness. Thou 'rt by no means

valiant;

For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork

Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,

And that thou oft provok'st; yet grossly fear'st

Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself;

For thou exists on many a thousand grains

That issue out of dust. Happy thou art not;

For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to

get,

And what thou hast, forget'st. Thou art not

certain;

For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,

After the moon. If thou art rich, thou'rt poor;

For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,

Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,

And Death unloads thee. Friend hast thou none;

For thine own bowels which do call thee sire,

The mere effusion of thy proper loins,

Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum,

For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor youth

nor age,

But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,

Dreaming on both; for all thy blessed youth

Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms

Of palsied eld; and when thou art old and rich,
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor
beauty,

To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this
That bears the name of life? Yet in this life
Lie hid moe thousand deaths; yet death we fear,
That makes these odds all even.

CLAUDIO. I humbly thank you.

To sue to live, I find I seek to die;
And, seeking death, find life. Let it come on.

ISABELLA. [Within] What, ho! Peace here; grace and
good company!

PROVOST. Who's there? Come in; the wish deserves a
welcome.

DUKE. Dear sir, ere long I'll visit you again.

CLAUDIO. Most holy sir, I thank you.

Enter ISABELLA

ISABELLA. My business is a word or two with Claudio.

PROVOST. And very welcome. Look, signior, here's
your sister.

DUKE. Provost, a word with you.

PROVOST. As many as you please.

DUKE. Bring me to hear them speak, where I may be
conceal'd.

Exeunt DUKE

and PROVOST

CLAUDIO. Now, sister, what's the comfort?

ISABELLA. Why,

As all comforts are; most good, most good, indeed.
Lord Angelo, having affairs to heaven,
Intends you for his swift ambassador,
Where you shall be an everlasting leiger.
Therefore, your best appointment make with speed;
To-morrow you set on.

CLAUDIO. Is there no remedy?

ISABELLA. None, but such remedy as, to save a head,
To cleave a heart in twain.

CLAUDIO. But is there any?

ISABELLA. Yes, brother, you may live:

There is a devilish mercy in the judge,
If you'll implore it, that will free your life,
But fetter you till death.

CLAUDIO. Perpetual durance?

ISABELLA. Ay, just; perpetual durance, a restraint,
Though all the world's vastidity you had,
To a determin'd scope.

CLAUDIO. But in what nature?

ISABELLA. In such a one as, you consenting to't,
Would bark your honour from that trunk you bear,
And leave you naked.

CLAUDIO. Let me know the point.

ISABELLA. O, I do fear thee, Claudio; and I quake,
Lest thou a feverous life shouldst entertain,
And six or seven winters more respect
Than a perpetual honour. Dar'st thou die?
The sense of death is most in apprehension;
And the poor beetle that we tread upon
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies.

CLAUDIO. Why give you me this shame?
Think you I can a resolution fetch
From flow'ry tenderness? If I must die,
I will encounter darkness as a bride
And hug it in mine arms.

ISABELLA. There spake my brother; there my father's
grave

Did utter forth a voice. Yes, thou must die:
Thou art too noble to conserve a life
In base appliances. This outward-sainted deputy,
Whose settled visage and deliberate word
Nips youth i' th' head, and follies doth enew
As falcon doth the fowl, is yet a devil;
His filth within being cast, he would appear
A pond as deep as hell.

CLAUDIO. The precise Angelo!

ISABELLA. O, 'tis the cunning livery of hell
The damned'st body to invest and cover
In precise guards! Dost thou think, Claudio,
If I would yield him my virginity
Thou mightst be freed?

CLAUDIO. O heavens! it cannot be.

ISABELLA. Yes, he would give't thee, from this rank
offence,

So to offend him still. This night's the time
That I should do what I abhor to name,
Or else thou diest to-morrow.

CLAUDIO. Thou shalt not do't.

ISABELLA. O, were it but my life!

I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.

CLAUDIO. Thanks, dear Isabel.

ISABELLA. Be ready, Claudio, for your death to-
morrow.

CLAUDIO. Yes. Has he affections in him
That thus can make him bite the law by th' nose
When he would force it? Sure it is no sin;
Or of the deadly seven it is the least.

ISABELLA. Which is the least?

CLAUDIO. If it were damnable, he being so wise,
Why would he for the momentary trick
Be perdurably fin'd?- O Isabel!

ISABELLA. What says my brother?

CLAUDIO. Death is a fearful thing.

ISABELLA. And shamed life a hateful.

CLAUDIO. Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thought
Imagine howling- 'tis too horrible.
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment,
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

ISABELLA. Alas, alas!

CLAUDIO. Sweet sister, let me live.
What sin you do to save a brother's life,
Nature dispenses with the deed so far
That it becomes a virtue.

ISABELLA. O you beast!

O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!
Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?
Is't not a kind of incest to take life
From thine own sister's shame? What should I
think?

Heaven shield my mother play'd my father fair!
For such a warped slip of wilderness
Ne'er issu'd from his blood. Take my defiance;

Die; perish. Might but my bending down
Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed.
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
No word to save thee.

CLAUDIO. Nay, hear me, Isabel.

ISABELLA. O fie, fie, fie!

Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade.
Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd;
'Tis best that thou diest quickly.

CLAUDIO. O, hear me, Isabella.

Re-enter DUKE

DUKE. Vouchsafe a word, young sister, but one word.

ISABELLA. What is your will?

DUKE. Might you dispense with your leisure, I would
by and by have

some speech with you; the satisfaction I would
require is

likewise your own benefit.

ISABELLA. I have no superfluous leisure; my stay
must be stolen out

of other affairs; but I will attend you awhile.

[Walks

apart]

DUKE. Son, I have overheard what hath pass'd
between you and your

sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt
her; only he hath

made an assay of her virtue to practise his
judgment with the

disposition of natures. She, having the truth of
honour in her,

hath made him that gracious denial which he is
most glad to

receive. I am confessor to Angelo, and I know
this to be true;

therefore prepare yourself to death. Do not
satisfy your

resolution with hopes that are fallible; to-
morrow you must die;

go to your knees and make ready.

CLAUDIO. Let me ask my sister pardon. I am so out
of love with life

that I will sue to be rid of it.

DUKE. Hold you there. Farewell. [Exit CLAUDIO]
Provost, a word with
you.

Re-enter PROVOST

PROVOST. What's your will, father?

DUKE. That, now you are come, you will be gone.
Leave me a while
with the maid; my mind promises with my habit no
loss shall touch
her by my company.

PROVOST. In good time.
Exit PROVOST

DUKE. The hand that hath made you fair hath made
you good; the
goodness that is cheap in beauty makes beauty
brief in goodness;
but grace, being the soul of your complexion,
shall keep the body
of it ever fair. The assault that Angelo hath
made to you,
fortune hath convey'd to my understanding; and,
but that frailty
hath examples for his falling, I should wonder at
Angelo. How
will you do to content this substitute, and to
save your brother?

ISABELLA. I am now going to resolve him; I had
rather my brother
die by the law than my son should be unlawfully
born. But, O, how
much is the good Duke deceiv'd in Angelo! If ever
he return, and
I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain,
or discover his
government.

DUKE. That shall not be much amiss; yet, as the
matter now stands,
he will avoid your accusation: he made trial of
you only.
Therefore fasten your ear on my advisings; to the
love I have in
doing good a remedy presents itself. I do make
myself believe

that you may most uprighteously do a poor wronged
lady a merited
benefit; redeem your brother from the angry law;
do no stain to
your own gracious person; and much please the
absent Duke, if
peradventure he shall ever return to have hearing
of this
business.

ISABELLA. Let me hear you speak farther; I have
spirit to do
anything that appears not foul in the truth of my
spirit.

DUKE. Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful.
Have you not
heard speak of Mariana, the sister of Frederick,
the great
soldier who miscarried at sea?

ISABELLA. I have heard of the lady, and good words
went with her
name.

DUKE. She should this Angelo have married; was
affianced to her by
oath, and the nuptial appointed; between which
time of the
contract and limit of the solemnity her brother
Frederick was
wreck'd at sea, having in that perished vessel
the dowry of his
sister. But mark how heavily this befell to the
poor gentlewoman:
there she lost a noble and renowned brother, in
his love toward
her ever most kind and natural; with him the
portion and sinew of
her fortune, her marriage-dowry; with both, her
combinate
husband, this well-seeming Angelo.

ISABELLA. Can this be so? Did Angelo so leave her?

DUKE. Left her in her tears, and dried not one of
them with his
comfort; swallowed his vows whole, pretending in
her discoveries
of dishonour; in few, bestow'd her on her own
lamentation, which

she yet wears for his sake; and he, a marble to
her tears, is
washed with them, but relents not.

ISABELLA. What a merit were it in death to take
this poor maid from
the world! What corruption in this life that it
will let this man
live! But how out of this can she avail?

DUKE. It is a rupture that you may easily heal; and
the cure of it
not only saves your brother, but keeps you from
dishonour in
doing it.

ISABELLA. Show me how, good father.

DUKE. This forenamed maid hath yet in her the
continuance of her
first affection; his unjust unkindness, that in
all reason should
have quenched her love, hath, like an impediment
in the current,
made it more violent and unruly. Go you to
Angelo; answer his
requiring with a plausible obedience; agree with
his demands to
the point; only refer yourself to this advantage:
first, that
your stay with him may not be long; that the time
may have all
shadow and silence in it; and the place answer to
convenience.

This being granted in course- and now follows
all: we shall
advise this wronged maid to stand up your
appointment, go in your
place. If the encounter acknowledge itself
hereafter, it may
compel him to her recompense; and here, by this,
is your brother
saved, your honour untainted, the poor Mariana
advantaged, and
the corrupt deputy scaled. The maid will I frame
and make fit for
his attempt. If you think well to carry this as
you may, the
doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from

reproof. What

think you of it?

ISABELLA. The image of it gives me content already;
and I trust it

will grow to a most prosperous perfection.

DUKE. It lies much in your holding up. Haste you
speedily to

Angelo; if for this night he entreat you to his
bed, give him

promise of satisfaction. I will presently to
Saint Luke's; there,

at the moated grange, resides this dejected
Mariana. At that

place call upon me; and dispatch with Angelo,
that it may be

quickly.

ISABELLA. I thank you for this comfort. Fare you
well, good father.

Exeunt

severally

Scene II.

The street before the prison

Enter, on one side, DUKE disguised as before;
on the other,

ELBOW, and OFFICERS with POMPEY

ELBOW. Nay, if there be no remedy for it, but that
you will needs

buy and sell men and women like beasts, we shall
have all the

world drink brown and white bastard.

DUKE. O heavens! what stuff is here?

POMPEY. 'Twas never merry world since, of two
usuries, the merriest

was put down, and the worser allow'd by order of
law a furr'd

gown to keep him warm; and furr'd with fox on
lamb-skins too, to

signify that craft, being richer than innocency,
stands for the

facing.

ELBOW. Come your way, sir. Bless you, good father
friar.

DUKE. And you, good brother father. What offence

hath this man made
you, sir?

ELBOW. Marry, sir, he hath offended the law; and,
sir, we take him
to be a thief too, sir, for we have found upon
him, sir, a
strange picklock, which we have sent to the
deputy.

DUKE. Fie, sirrah, a bawd, a wicked bawd!
The evil that thou causest to be done,
That is thy means to live. Do thou but think
What 'tis to cram a maw or clothe a back
From such a filthy vice; say to thyself
'From their abominable and beastly touches
I drink, I eat, array myself, and live.'
Canst thou believe thy living is a life,
So stinkingly depending? Go mend, go mend.

POMPEY. Indeed, it does stink in some sort, sir;
but yet, sir,
I would prove-

DUKE. Nay, if the devil have given thee proofs for
sin,

Thou wilt prove his. Take him to prison, officer;
Correction and instruction must both work
Ere this rude beast will profit.

ELBOW. He must before the deputy, sir; he has given
him warning.

The deputy cannot abide a whoremaster; if he be a
whoremonger,
and comes before him, he were as good go a mile
on his errand.

DUKE. That we were all, as some would seem to be,
From our faults, as his faults from seeming, free.

ELBOW. His neck will come to your waist- a cord,
sir.

Enter LUCIO

POMPEY. I spy comfort; I cry bail. Here's a
gentleman, and a friend
of mine.

LUCIO. How now, noble Pompey! What, at the wheels
of Caesar? Art
thou led in triumph? What, is there none of
Pygmalion's images,

newly made woman, to be had now for putting the
hand in the

pocket and extracting it clutch'd? What reply,
ha? What say'st

thou to this tune, matter, and method? Is't not
drown'd i' th'

last rain, ha? What say'st thou, trot? Is the
world as it was,

man? Which is the way? Is it sad, and few words?
or how? The

trick of it?

DUKE. Still thus, and thus; still worse!

LUCIO. How doth my dear morsel, thy mistress?
Procures she still,

ha?

POMPEY. Troth, sir, she hath eaten up all her beef,
and she is

herself in the tub.

LUCIO. Why, 'tis good; it is the right of it; it
must be so; ever

your fresh whore and your powder'd bawd- an
unshunn'd

consequence; it must be so. Art going to prison,
Pompey?

POMPEY. Yes, faith, sir.

LUCIO. Why, 'tis not amiss, Pompey. Farewell; go,
say I sent thee

thither. For debt, Pompey- or how?

ELBOW. For being a bawd, for being a bawd.

LUCIO. Well, then, imprison him. If imprisonment be
the due of a

bawd, why, 'tis his right. Bawd is he doubtless,
and of

antiquity, too; bawd-born. Farewell, good Pompey.
Commend me to

the prison, Pompey. You will turn good husband
now, Pompey; you

will keep the house.

POMPEY. I hope, sir, your good worship will be my
bail.

LUCIO. No, indeed, will I not, Pompey; it is not
the wear. I will

pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage. If you
take it not

patiently, why, your mettle is the more. Adieu

trusty Pompey.

Bless you, friar.

DUKE. And you.

LUCIO. Does Bridget paint still, Pompey, ha?

ELBOW. Come your ways, sir; come.

POMPEY. You will not bail me then, sir?

LUCIO. Then, Pompey, nor now. What news abroad, friar? what news?

ELBOW. Come your ways, sir; come.

LUCIO. Go to kennel, Pompey, go.

Exeunt ELBOW, POMPEY

and OFFICERS

What news, friar, of the Duke?

DUKE. I know none. Can you tell me of any?

LUCIO. Some say he is with the Emperor of Russia; other some, he is

in Rome; but where is he, think you?

DUKE. I know not where; but wheresoever, I wish him well.

LUCIO. It was a mad fantastical trick of him to steal from the

state and usurp the beggary he was never born to. Lord Angelo

dukes it well in his absence; he puts transgression to't.

DUKE. He does well in't.

LUCIO. A little more lenity to lechery would do no harm in him;

something too crabbed that way, friar.

DUKE. It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it.

LUCIO. Yes, in good sooth, the vice is of a great kindred; it is

well allied; but it is impossible to extirp it quite, friar, till

eating and drinking be put down. They say this Angelo was not

made by man and woman after this downright way of creation. Is it

true, think you?

DUKE. How should he be made, then?

LUCIO. Some report a sea-maid spawn'd him; some, that he was begot

between two stock-fishes. But it is certain that
when he makes

water his urine is congeal'd ice; that I know to
be true. And he

is a motion generative; that's infallible.

DUKE. You are pleasant, sir, and speak apace.

LUCIO. Why, what a ruthless thing is this in him,
for the rebellion

of a codpiece to take away the life of a man!
Would the Duke that

is absent have done this? Ere he would have
hang'd a man for the

getting a hundred bastards, he would have paid
for the nursing a

thousand. He had some feeling of the sport; he
knew the service,

and that instructed him to mercy.

DUKE. I never heard the absent Duke much detected
for women; he was

not inclin'd that way.

LUCIO. O, sir, you are deceiv'd.

DUKE. 'Tis not possible.

LUCIO. Who- not the Duke? Yes, your beggar of
fifty; and his use

was to put a ducat in her clack-dish. The Duke
had crotchets in

him. He would be drunk too; that let me inform
you.

DUKE. You do him wrong, surely.

LUCIO. Sir, I was an inward of his. A shy fellow
was the Duke; and

I believe I know the cause of his withdrawing.

DUKE. What, I prithee, might be the cause?

LUCIO. No, pardon; 'tis a secret must be lock'd
within the teeth

and the lips; but this I can let you understand:
the greater file

of the subject held the Duke to be wise.

DUKE. Wise? Why, no question but he was.

LUCIO. A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing
fellow.

DUKE. Either this is envy in you, folly, or
mistaking; the very

stream of his life, and the business he hath
helmed, must, upon a

warranted need, give him a better proclamation.
Let him be but
testimonied in his own bringings-forth, and he
shall appear to
the envious a scholar, a statesman, and a
soldier. Therefore you
speak unskilfully; or, if your knowledge be more,
it is much
dark'ned in your malice.

LUCIO. Sir, I know him, and I love him.

DUKE. Love talks with better knowledge, and
knowledge with dearer
love.

LUCIO. Come, sir, I know what I know.

DUKE. I can hardly believe that, since you know not
what you speak.

But, if ever the Duke return, as our prayers are
he may, let me

desire you to make your answer before him. If it
be honest you

have spoke, you have courage to maintain it; I am
bound to call

upon you; and I pray you your name?

LUCIO. Sir, my name is Lucio, well known to the
Duke.

DUKE. He shall know you better, sir, if I may live
to report you.

LUCIO. I fear you not.

DUKE. O, you hope the Duke will return no more; or
you imagine me

too unhurtful an opposite. But, indeed, I can do
you little harm:

you'll forswear this again.

LUCIO. I'll be hang'd first. Thou art deceiv'd in
me, friar. But no

more of this. Canst thou tell if Claudio die to-
morrow or no?

DUKE. Why should he die, sir?

LUCIO. Why? For filling a bottle with a tun-dish. I
would the Duke

we talk of were return'd again. This ungenitur'd
agent will

unpeople the province with continency; sparrows
must not build in

his house-eaves because they are lecherous. The

Duke yet would

have dark deeds darkly answered; he would never
bring them to

light. Would he were return'd! Marry, this
Claudio is condemned

for untrussing. Farewell, good friar; I prithee
pray for me. The

Duke, I say to thee again, would eat mutton on
Fridays. He's not

past it yet; and, I say to thee, he would mouth
with a beggar

though she smelt brown bread and garlic. Say that
I said so.

Farewell.

Exit

DUKE. No might nor greatness in mortality
Can censure scape; back-wounding calumny
The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong
Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?
But who comes here?

Enter ESCALUS, PROVOST, and OFFICERS with
MISTRESS OVERDONE

ESCALUS. Go, away with her to prison.

MRS. OVERDONE. Good my lord, be good to me; your
honour is

accounted a merciful man; good my lord.

ESCALUS. Double and treble admonition, and still
forfeit in the

same kind! This would make mercy swear and play
the tyrant.

PROVOST. A bawd of eleven years' continuance, may
it please your
honour.

MRS. OVERDONE. My lord, this is one Lucio's
information against me.

Mistress Kate Keepdown was with child by him in
the Duke's time;

he promis'd her marriage. His child is a year and
a quarter old

come Philip and Jacob; I have kept it myself; and
see how he goes

about to abuse me.

ESCALUS. That fellow is a fellow of much license.

Let him be call'd
before us. Away with her to prison. Go to; no
more words. [Exeunt
OFFICERS with MISTRESS OVERDONE] Provost, my
brother Angelo will
not be alter'd: Claudio must die to-morrow. Let
him be furnish'd
with divines, and have all charitable
preparation. If my brother
wrought by my pity, it should not be so with him.
PROVOST. So please you, this friar hath been with
him, and advis'd
him for th' entertainment of death.
ESCALUS. Good even, good father.
DUKE. Bliss and goodness on you!
ESCALUS. Of whence are you?
DUKE. Not of this country, though my chance is now
To use it for my time. I am a brother
Of gracious order, late come from the See
In special business from his Holiness.
ESCALUS. What news abroad i' th' world?
DUKE. None, but that there is so great a fever on
goodness that the
dissolution of it must cure it. Novelty is only
in request; and,
as it is, as dangerous to be aged in any kind of
course as it is
virtuous to be constant in any undertakeing.
There is scarce
truth enough alive to make societies secure; but
security enough
to make fellowships accurst. Much upon this
riddle runs the
wisdom of the world. This news is old enough, yet
it is every
day's news. I pray you, sir, of what disposition
was the Duke?
ESCALUS. One that, above all other strifes,
contended especially to
know himself.
DUKE. What pleasure was he given to?
ESCALUS. Rather rejoicing to see another merry than
merry at
anything which profess'd to make him rejoice; a
gentleman of all

To weed my vice and let his grow!
O, what may man within him hide,
Though angel on the outward side!
How may likeness, made in crimes,
Make a practice on the times,
To draw with idle spiders' strings
Most ponderous and substantial things!
Craft against vice I must apply.
With Angelo to-night shall lie
His old betrothed but despised;
So disguise shall, by th' disguised,
Pay with falsehood false exacting,
And perform an old

contracting.

Exit

Act IV. Scene I.

The moated grange at Saint Duke's

Enter MARIANA; and BOY singing

SONG

Take, O, take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn;
But my kisses bring again, bring again;
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, seal'd
in vain.

Enter DUKE, disguised as before

MARIANA. Break off thy song, and haste thee quick
away;

Here comes a man of comfort, whose advice
Hath often still'd my brawling
discontent. Exit BOY

I cry you mercy, sir, and well could wish
You had not found me here so musical.
Let me excuse me, and believe me so,
My mirth it much displeas'd, but pleas'd my woe.
DUKE. 'Tis good; though music oft hath such a charm
To make bad good and good provoke to harm.
I pray you tell me hath anybody inquir'd for me
here to-day. Much
upon this time have I promis'd here to meet.

MARIANA. You have not been inquir'd after; I have sat here all day.

Enter ISABELLA

DUKE. I do constantly believe you. The time is come even now. I

shall crave your forbearance a little. May be I will call upon

you anon, for some advantage to yourself.

MARIANA. I am always bound to you. Exit

DUKE. Very well met, and well come.

What is the news from this good deputy?

ISABELLA. He hath a garden circummur'd with brick,
Whose western side is with a vineyard back'd;
And to that vineyard is a planced gate
That makes his opening with this bigger key;
This other doth command a little door
Which from the vineyard to the garden leads.
There have I made my promise
Upon the heavy middle of the night
To call upon him.

DUKE. But shall you on your knowledge find this way?

ISABELLA. I have ta'en a due and wary note upon't;
With whispering and most guilty diligence,
In action all of precept, he did show me
The way twice o'er.

DUKE. Are there no other tokens

Between you 'greed concerning her observance?

ISABELLA. No, none, but only a repair i' th' dark;
And that I have possess'd him my most stay
Can be but brief; for I have made him know
I have a servant comes with me along,
That stays upon me; whose persuasion is
I come about my brother.

DUKE. 'Tis well borne up.

I have not yet made known to Mariana
A word of this. What ho, within! come forth.

Re-enter MARIANA

I pray you be acquainted with this maid;
She comes to do you good.

ISABELLA. I do desire the like.

DUKE. Do you persuade yourself that I respect you?
MARIANA. Good friar, I know you do, and have found
it.

DUKE. Take, then, this your companion by the hand,
Who hath a story ready for your ear.
I shall attend your leisure; but make haste;
The vaporous night approaches.

MARIANA. Will't please you walk aside?

Exeunt MARIANA

and ISABELLA

DUKE. O place and greatness! Millions of false eyes
Are stuck upon thee. Volumes of report
Run with these false, and most contrarious quest
Upon thy doings. Thousand escapes of wit
Make thee the father of their idle dream,
And rack thee in their fancies.

Re-enter MARIANA and ISABELLA

Welcome, how agreed?

ISABELLA. She'll take the enterprise upon her,
father,

If you advise it.

DUKE. It is not my consent,
But my entreaty too.

ISABELLA. Little have you to say,
When you depart from him, but, soft and low,
'Remember now my brother.'

MARIANA. Fear me not.

DUKE. Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all.
He is your husband on a pre-contract.
To bring you thus together 'tis no sin,
Sith that the justice of your title to him
Doth flourish the deceit. Come, let us go;
Our corn's to reap, for yet our tithe's to
sow. Exeunt

SCENE II.
The prison

Enter PROVOST and POMPEY

PROVOST. Come hither, sirrah. Can you cut off a
man's head?

POMPEY. If the man be a bachelor, sir, I can; but
if he be a

married man, he's his wife's head, and I can never cut of a woman's head.

PROVOST. Come, sir, leave me your snatches and yield me a direct

answer. To-morrow morning are to die Claudio and Barnardine. Here

is in our prison a common executioner, who in his office lacks a

helper; if you will take it on you to assist him, it shall redeem

you from your gyves; if not, you shall have your full time of

imprisonment, and your deliverance with an unpitied whipping, for

you have been a notorious bawd.

POMPEY. Sir, I have been an unlawful bawd time out of mind; but yet

I will be content to be a lawful hangman. I would be glad to

receive some instructions from my fellow partner.

PROVOST. What ho, Abhorson! Where's Abhorson there?

Enter ABHORSON

ABHORSON. Do you call, sir?

PROVOST. Sirrah, here's a fellow will help you to-morrow in your

execution. If you think it meet, compound with him by the year,

and let him abide here with you; if not, use him for the present,

and dismiss him. He cannot plead his estimation with you; he hath

been a bawd.

ABHORSON. A bawd, sir? Fie upon him! He will discredit our mystery.

PROVOST. Go to, sir; you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale.

Exit

POMPEY. Pray, sir, by your good favour- for surely, sir, a good

favour you have but that you have a hanging look-do you call,

sir, your occupation a mystery?

ABHORSON. Ay, sir; a mystery.

POMPEY. Painting, sir, I have heard say, is a mystery; and your

whores, sir, being members of my occupation, using painting, do

prove my occupation a mystery; but what mystery there should be

in hanging, if I should be hang'd, I cannot imagine.

ABHORSON. Sir, it is a mystery.

POMPEY. Proof?

ABHORSON. Every true man's apparel fits your thief: if it be too

little for your thief, your true man thinks it big enough; if it

be too big for your thief, your thief thinks it little enough; so

every true man's apparel fits your thief.

Re-enter PROVOST

PROVOST. Are you agreed?

POMPEY. Sir, I will serve him; for I do find your hangman is a more

penitent trade than your bawd; he doth oftener ask forgiveness.

PROVOST. You, sirrah, provide your block and your axe to-morrow

four o'clock.

ABHORSON. Come on, bawd; I will instruct thee in my trade; follow.

POMPEY. I do desire to learn, sir; and I hope, if you have occasion

to use me for your own turn, you shall find me yare; for truly,

sir, for your kindness I owe you a good turn.

PROVOST. Call hither Barnardine and Claudio.

Exeunt ABHORSON

and POMPEY

Th' one has my pity; not a jot the other,

Being a murderer, though he were my brother.

Enter CLAUDIO

Look, here's the warrant, Claudio, for thy death;
'Tis now dead midnight, and by eight to-morrow
Thou must be made immortal. Where's Barnardine?
CLAUDIO. As fast lock'd up in sleep as guiltless
labour

When it lies starkly in the traveller's bones.
He will not wake.

PROVOST. Who can do good on him?

Well, go, prepare yourself. [Knocking within] But
hark, what
noise?

Heaven give your spirits comfort!

Exit CLAUDIO

[Knocking continues] By and by.

I hope it is some pardon or reprieve
For the most gentle Claudio.

Enter DUKE, disguised as before

Welcome, father.

DUKE. The best and wholesom'st spirits of the night
Envelop you, good Provost! Who call'd here of
late?

PROVOST. None, since the curfew rung.

DUKE. Not Isabel?

PROVOST. No.

DUKE. They will then, ere't be long.

PROVOST. What comfort is for Claudio?

DUKE. There's some in hope.

PROVOST. It is a bitter deputy.

DUKE. Not so, not so; his life is parallel'd
Even with the stroke and line of his great
justice;

He doth with holy abstinence subdue
That in himself which he spurs on his pow'r
To qualify in others. Were he meal'd with that
Which he corrects, then were he tyrannous;
But this being so, he's just. [Knocking within]

Now are they
come.

Exit PROVOST

This is a gentle provost; seldom when
The steeled gaoler is the friend of men.

[Knocking within]

How now, what noise! That spirit's possess'd with

haste

That wounds th' unsisting postern with these
strokes.

Re-enter PROVOST

PROVOST. There he must stay until the officer
Arise to let him in; he is call'd up.

DUKE. Have you no countermand for Claudio yet
But he must die to-morrow?

PROVOST. None, sir, none.

DUKE. As near the dawning, Provost, as it is,
You shall hear more ere morning.

PROVOST. Happily

You something know; yet I believe there comes
No countermand; no such example have we.
Besides, upon the very siege of justice,
Lord Angelo hath to the public ear
Profess'd the contrary.

Enter a MESSENGER

This is his lordship's man.

DUKE. And here comes Claudio's pardon.

MESSENGER. My lord hath sent you this note; and by
me this further

charge, that you swerve not from the smallest
article of it,

neither in time, matter, or other circumstance.
Good morrow; for

as I take it, it is almost day.

PROVOST. I shall obey him.

Exit MESSENGER

DUKE. [Aside] This is his pardon, purchas'd by such
sin

For which the pardoner himself is in;
Hence hath offence his quick celerity,
When it is borne in high authority.
When vice makes mercy, mercy's so extended
That for the fault's love is th' offender

friended.

Now, sir, what news?

PROVOST. I told you: Lord Angelo, belike thinking
me remiss in mine

office, awakens me with this unwonted putting-on;

methinks

strangely, for he hath not us'd it before.

DUKE. Pray you, let's hear.

PROVOST. [Reads] 'Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let

Claudio be executed by four of the clock, and, in the afternoon,

Barnardine. For my better satisfaction, let me have Claudio's

head sent me by five. Let this be duly performed, with a thought

that more depends on it than we must yet deliver. Thus fail not

to do your office, as you will answer it at your peril.'

What say you to this, sir?

DUKE. What is that Barnardine who is to be executed in th'

afternoon?

PROVOST. A Bohemian born; but here nurs'd up and bred.

One that is a prisoner nine years old.

DUKE. How came it that the absent Duke had not either deliver'd him

to his liberty or executed him? I have heard it was ever his

manner to do so.

PROVOST. His friends still wrought reprieves for him; and, indeed,

his fact, till now in the government of Lord Angelo, came not to

an undoubted proof.

DUKE. It is now apparent?

PROVOST. Most manifest, and not denied by himself.

DUKE. Hath he borne himself penitently in prison? How seems he to

be touch'd?

PROVOST. A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a

drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless, of what's past,

present, or to come; insensible of mortality and desperately

mortal.

DUKE. He wants advice.

PROVOST. He will hear none. He hath evermore had the liberty of the prison; give him leave to escape hence, he would not; drunk many times a day, if not many days entirely drunk. We have very oft awak'd him, as if to carry him to execution, and show'd him a seeming warrant for it; it hath not moved him at all.

DUKE. More of him anon. There is written in your brow, Provost, honesty and constancy. If I read it not truly, my ancient skill beguiles me; but in the boldness of my cunning I will lay myself in hazard. Claudio, whom here you have warrant to execute, is no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo who hath sentenc'd him. To make you understand this in a manifested effect, I crave but four days' respite; for the which you are to do me both a present and a dangerous courtesy.

PROVOST. Pray, sir, in what?

DUKE. In the delaying death.

PROVOST. Alack! How may I do it, having the hour limited, and an express command, under penalty, to deliver his head in the view of Angelo? I may make my case as Claudio's, to cross this in the smallest.

DUKE. By the vow of mine order, I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide. Let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo.

PROVOST. Angelo hath seen them both, and will discover the favour.

DUKE. O, death's a great disguiser; and you may add to it. Shave the head and tie the beard; and say it was the desire of the

penitent to be so bar'd before his death. You
know the course is
common. If anything fall to you upon this more
than thanks and
good fortune, by the saint whom I profess, I will
plead against
it with my life.

PROVOST. Pardon me, good father; it is against my
oath.

DUKE. Were you sworn to the Duke, or to the deputy?

PROVOST. To him and to his substitutes.

DUKE. You will think you have made no offence if
the Duke avouch
the justice of your dealing?

PROVOST. But what likelihood is in that?

DUKE. Not a resemblance, but a certainty. Yet since
I see you

fearful, that neither my coat, integrity, nor
persuasion, can

with ease attempt you, I will go further than I
meant, to pluck

all fears out of you. Look you, sir, here is the
hand and seal of

the Duke. You know the character, I doubt not;
and the signet is
not strange to you.

PROVOST. I know them both.

DUKE. The contents of this is the return of the
Duke; you shall

anon over-read it at your pleasure, where you
shall find within

these two days he will be here. This is a thing
that Angelo knows

not; for he this very day receives letters of
strange tenour,

perchance of the Duke's death, perchance entering
into some

monastery; but, by chance, nothing of what is
writ. Look, th'

unfolding star calls up the shepherd. Put not
yourself into

amazement how these things should be: all
difficulties are but

easy when they are known. Call your executioner,
and off with

Barnardine's head. I will give him a present
shrift, and advise
him for a better place. Yet you are amaz'd, but
this shall
absolutely resolve you. Come away; it is almost
clear dawn.

Exeunt

SCENE III.
The prison

Enter POMPEY

POMPEY. I am as well acquainted here as I was in
our house of
profession; one would think it were Mistress
Overdone's own
house, for here be many of her old customers.
First, here's young
Master Rash; he's in for a commodity of brown
paper and old
ginger, nine score and seventeen pounds, of which
he made five
marks ready money. Marry, then ginger was not
much in request,
for the old women were all dead. Then is there
here one Master
Caper, at the suit of Master Threepile the
mercier, for some four
suits of peach-colour'd satin, which now peaches
him a beggar.
Then have we here young Dizy, and young Master
Deepvow, and
Master Copperspur, and Master Starvelackey, the
rapier and dagger
man, and young Dropheir that kill'd lusty
Pudding, and Master
Forthlight the tilter, and brave Master Shootie
the great
traveller, and wild Halfcan that stabb'd Pots,
and, I think,
forty more- all great doers in our trade, and are
now 'for the
Lord's sake.'

Enter ABHORSON

ABHORSON. Sirrah, bring Barnardine hither.

POMPEY. Master Barnardine! You must rise and be hang'd, Master

Barnardine!

ABHORSON. What ho, Barnardine!

BARNARDINE. [Within] A pox o' your throats! Who makes that noise

there? What are you?

POMPEY. Your friends, sir; the hangman. You must be so good, sir,

to rise and be put to death.

BARNARDINE. [Within] Away, you rogue, away; I am sleepy.

ABHORSON. Tell him he must awake, and that quickly too.

POMPEY. Pray, Master Barnardine, awake till you are executed, and

sleep afterwards.

ABHORSON. Go in to him, and fetch him out.

POMPEY. He is coming, sir, he is coming; I hear his straw rustle.

Enter BARNARDINE

ABHORSON. Is the axe upon the block, sirrah?

POMPEY. Very ready, sir.

BARNARDINE. How now, Abhorson, what's the news with you?

ABHORSON. Truly, sir, I would desire you to clap into your prayers;

for, look you, the warrant's come.

BARNARDINE. You rogue, I have been drinking all night; I am not

fitted for't.

POMPEY. O, the better, sir! For he that drinks all night and is

hanged betimes in the morning may sleep the sounder all the next

day.

Enter DUKE, disguised as before

ABHORSON. Look you, sir, here comes your ghostly father.

Do we jest now, think you?

DUKE. Sir, induced by my charity, and hearing how
hastily you are
to depart, I am come to advise you, comfort you,
and pray with
you.

BARNARDINE. Friar, not I; I have been drinking hard
all night, and

I will have more time to prepare me, or they
shall beat out my
brains with billets. I will not consent to die
this day, that's
certain.

DUKE. O, Sir, you must; and therefore I beseech you
Look forward on the journey you shall go.

BARNARDINE. I swear I will not die to-day for any
man's persuasion.

DUKE. But hear you-

BARNARDINE. Not a word; if you have anything to say
to me, come to

my ward; for thence will not I to-
day. Exit

DUKE. Unfit to live or die. O gravel heart!

After him, fellows; bring him to the block.

Exeunt ABHORSON

and POMPEY

Enter PROVOST

PROVOST. Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?

DUKE. A creature unprepar'd, unmeet for death;
And to transport him in the mind he is
Were damnable.

PROVOST. Here in the prison, father,
There died this morning of a cruel fever
One Ragozine, a most notorious pirate,
A man of Claudio's years; his beard and head
Just of his colour. What if we do omit
This reprobate till he were well inclin'd,
And satisfy the deputy with the visage
Of Ragozine, more like to Claudio?

DUKE. O, 'tis an accident that heaven provides!
Dispatch it presently; the hour draws on
Prefix'd by Angelo. See this be done,
And sent according to command; whiles I

Persuade this rude wretch willingly to die.
PROVOST. This shall be done, good father, presently.
But Barnardine must die this afternoon;
And how shall we continue Claudio,
To save me from the danger that might come
If he were known alive?

DUKE. Let this be done:

Put them in secret holds, both Barnardine and
Claudio.

Ere twice the sun hath made his journal greeting
To the under generation, you shall find
Your safety manifested.

PROVOST. I am your free dependant.

DUKE. Quick, dispatch, and send the head to Angelo.

Exit

PROVOST

Now will I write letters to Angelo-
The Provost, he shall bear them- whose contents
Shall witness to him I am near at home,
And that, by great injunctions, I am bound
To enter publicly. Him I'll desire
To meet me at the consecrated fount,
A league below the city; and from thence,
By cold gradation and well-balanc'd form.
We shall proceed with Angelo.

Re-enter PROVOST

PROVOST. Here is the head; I'll carry it myself.

DUKE. Convenient is it. Make a swift return;

For I would commune with you of such things
That want no ear but yours.

PROVOST. I'll make all
speed.

Exit

ISABELLA. [Within] Peace, ho, be here!

DUKE. The tongue of Isabel. She's come to know
If yet her brother's pardon be come hither;
But I will keep her ignorant of her good,
To make her heavenly comforts of despair
When it is least expected.

Enter ISABELLA

ISABELLA. Ho, by your leave!

DUKE. Good morning to you, fair and gracious

daughter.

ISABELLA. The better, given me by so holy a man.

Hath yet the deputy sent my brother's pardon?

DUKE. He hath releas'd him, Isabel, from the world.

His head is off and sent to Angelo.

ISABELLA. Nay, but it is not so.

DUKE. It is no other.

Show your wisdom, daughter, in your close
patience,

ISABELLA. O, I will to him and pluck out his eyes!

DUKE. You shall not be admitted to his sight.

ISABELLA. Unhappy Claudio! Wretched Isabel!

Injurious world! Most damned Angelo!

DUKE. This nor hurts him nor profits you a jot;

Forbear it, therefore; give your cause to heaven.

Mark what I say, which you shall find

By every syllable a faithful verity.

The Duke comes home to-morrow. Nay, dry your eyes.

One of our covent, and his confessor,

Gives me this instance. Already he hath carried

Notice to Escalus and Angelo,

Who do prepare to meet him at the gates,

There to give up their pow'r. If you can, pace

your wisdom

In that good path that I would wish it go,

And you shall have your bosom on this wretch,

Grace of the Duke, revenges to your heart,

And general honour.

ISABELLA. I am directed by you.

DUKE. This letter, then, to Friar Peter give;

'Tis that he sent me of the Duke's return.

Say, by this token, I desire his company

At Mariana's house to-night. Her cause and yours

I'll perfect him withal; and he shall bring you

Before the Duke; and to the head of Angelo

Accuse him home and home. For my poor self,

I am combined by a sacred vow,

And shall be absent. Wend you with this letter.

Command these fretting waters from your eyes

With a light heart; trust not my holy order,

If I pervert your course. Who's here?

Enter LUCIO

LUCIO. Good even. Friar, where's the Provost?

DUKE. Not within, sir.

LUCIO. O pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart
to see thine eyes

so red. Thou must be patient. I am fain to dine
and sup with

water and bran; I dare not for my head fill my
belly; one

fruitful meal would set me to't. But they say the
Duke will be

here to-morrow. By my troth, Isabel, I lov'd thy
brother. If the

old fantastical Duke of dark corners had been at
home, he had

lived.

Exit ISABELLA

DUKE. Sir, the Duke is marvellous little beholding
to your reports;

but the best is, he lives not in them.

LUCIO. Friar, thou knowest not the Duke so well as
I do; he's a

better woodman than thou tak'st him for.

DUKE. Well, you'll answer this one day. Fare ye
well.

LUCIO. Nay, tarry; I'll go along with thee; I can
tell thee pretty

tales of the Duke.

DUKE. You have told me too many of him already,
sir, if they be

true; if not true, none were enough.

LUCIO. I was once before him for getting a wench
with child.

DUKE. Did you such a thing?

LUCIO. Yes, marry, did I; but I was fain to
forswear it: they would

else have married me to the rotten medlar.

DUKE. Sir, your company is fairer than honest. Rest
you well.

LUCIO. By my troth, I'll go with thee to the lane's
end. If bawdy

talk offend you, we'll have very little of it.

Nay, friar, I am a

kind of burr; I shall

stick.

Exeunt

SCENE IV.

ANGELO'S house

Enter ANGELO and ESCALUS

ESCALUS. Every letter he hath writ hath disvouch'd other.

ANGELO. In most uneven and distracted manner. His actions show much

like to madness; pray heaven his wisdom be not tainted! And why

meet him at the gates, and redeliver our authorities there?

ESCALUS. I guess not.

ANGELO. And why should we proclaim it in an hour before his

ent'ring that, if any crave redress of injustice, they should

exhibit their petitions in the street?

ESCALUS. He shows his reason for that: to have a dispatch of

complaints; and to deliver us from devices hereafter, which

shall then have no power to stand against us.

ANGELO. Well, I beseech you, let it be proclaim'd; Betimes i' th' morn I'll call you at your house; Give notice to such men of sort and suit As are to meet him.

ESCALUS. I shall, sir; fare you well.

ANGELO. Good night.

Exit ESCALUS

This deed unshapes me quite, makes me unpregnant And dull to all proceedings. A deflow' red maid! And by an eminent body that enforc'd The law against it! But that her tender shame Will not proclaim against her maiden loss, How might she tongue me! Yet reason dares her no; For my authority bears a so credent bulk That no particular scandal once can touch But it confounds the breather. He should have liv'd,

Save that his riotous youth, with dangerous sense, Might in the times to come have ta'en revenge, By so receiving a dishonour'd life With ransom of such shame. Would yet he had liv'd! Alack, when once our grace we have forgot, Nothing goes right; we would, and we would

not. Exit

SCENE V.

Fields without the town

Enter DUKE in his own habit, and Friar

PETER

DUKE. These letters at fit time deliver me.

[Giving letters]

The Provost knows our purpose and our plot.

The matter being afoot, keep your instruction

And hold you ever to our special drift;

Though sometimes you do blench from this to that

As cause doth minister. Go, call at Flavius'

house,

And tell him where I stay; give the like notice

To Valentinus, Rowland, and to Crassus,

And bid them bring the trumpets to the gate;

But send me Flavius first.

PETER. It shall be speeded well.

Exit FRIAR

Enter VARRIUS

DUKE. I thank thee, Varrius; thou hast made good haste.

Come, we will walk. There's other of our friends

Will greet us here anon. My gentle

Varrius!

Exeunt

SCENE VI.

A street near the city gate

Enter ISABELLA and MARIANA

ISABELLA. To speak so indirectly I am loath;

I would say the truth; but to accuse him so,

That is your part. Yet I am advis'd to do it;

He says, to veil full purpose.

MARIANA. Be rul'd by him.

ISABELLA. Besides, he tells me that, if peradventure

He speak against me on the adverse side,

I should not think it strange; for 'tis a physic

That's bitter to sweet end.

MARIANA. I would Friar Peter-

Enter FRIAR PETER

ISABELLA. O, peace! the friar is come.

PETER. Come, I have found you out a stand most fit,
Where you may have such vantage on the Duke
He shall not pass you. Twice have the trumpets
sounded;

The generous and gravest citizens
Have hent the gates, and very near upon
The Duke is ent'ring; therefore, hence,
away. Exeunt

ACT V. SCENE I.

The city gate

Enter at several doors DUKE, VARRIUS, LORDS;
ANGELO,
ESCALUS, Lucio, PROVOST, OFFICERS, and CITIZENS

DUKE. My very worthy cousin, fairly met!
Our old and faithful friend, we are glad to see
you.

ANGELO, ESCALUS. Happy return be to your royal
Grace!

DUKE. Many and hearty thankings to you both.
We have made inquiry of you, and we hear
Such goodness of your justice that our soul
Cannot but yield you forth to public thanks,
Forerunning more requital.

ANGELO. You make my bonds still greater.

DUKE. O, your desert speaks loud; and I should
wrong it

To lock it in the wards of covert bosom,
When it deserves, with characters of brass,
A fortified residence 'gainst the tooth of time
And razure of oblivion. Give me your hand.
And let the subject see, to make them know
That outward courtesies would fain proclaim
Favours that keep within. Come, Escalus,
You must walk by us on our other hand,
And good supporters are you.

Enter FRIAR PETER and ISABELLA

PETER. Now is your time; speak loud, and kneel
before him.

ISABELLA. Justice, O royal Duke! Vail your regard
Upon a wrong'd- I would fain have said a maid!
O worthy Prince, dishonour not your eye
By throwing it on any other object
Till you have heard me in my true complaint,
And given me justice, justice, justice, justice.

DUKE. Relate your wrongs. In what? By whom? Be
brief.

Here is Lord Angelo shall give you justice;
Reveal yourself to him.

ISABELLA. O worthy Duke,
You bid me seek redemption of the devil!
Hear me yourself; for that which I must speak
Must either punish me, not being believ'd,
Or wring redress from you. Hear me, O, hear me,
here!

ANGELO. My lord, her wits, I fear me, are not firm;
She hath been a suitor to me for her brother,
Cut off by course of justice-

ISABELLA. By course of justice!

ANGELO. And she will speak most bitterly and
strange.

ISABELLA. Most strange, but yet most truly, will I
speak.

That Angelo's forsworn, is it not strange?
That Angelo's a murderer, is't not strange?
That Angelo is an adulterous thief,
An hypocrite, a virgin-violator,
Is it not strange and strange?

DUKE. Nay, it is ten times strange.

ISABELLA. It is not truer he is Angelo
Than this is all as true as it is strange;
Nay, it is ten times true; for truth is truth
To th' end of reck'ning.

DUKE. Away with her. Poor soul,
She speaks this in th' infirmity of sense.

ISABELLA. O Prince! I conjure thee, as thou
believ'st

There is another comfort than this world,
That thou neglect me not with that opinion
That I am touch'd with madness. Make not
impossible

That which but seems unlike: 'tis not impossible
But one, the wicked'st caitiff on the ground,
May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute,

As Angelo; even so may Angelo,
In all his dressings, characts, titles, forms,
Be an arch-villain. Believe it, royal Prince,
If he be less, he's nothing; but he's more,
Had I more name for badness.

DUKE. By mine honesty,
If she be mad, as I believe no other,
Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense,
Such a dependency of thing on thing,
As e'er I heard in madness.

ISABELLA. O gracious Duke,
Harp not on that; nor do not banish reason
For inequality; but let your reason serve
To make the truth appear where it seems hid,
And hide the false seems true.

DUKE. Many that are not mad
Have, sure, more lack of reason. What would you
say?

ISABELLA. I am the sister of one Claudio,
Condemn'd upon the act of fornication
To lose his head; condemn'd by Angelo.
I, in probation of a sisterhood,
Was sent to by my brother; one Lucio
As then the messenger-

LUCIO. That's I, an't like your Grace.
I came to her from Claudio, and desir'd her
To try her gracious fortune with Lord Angelo
For her poor brother's pardon.

ISABELLA. That's he, indeed.

DUKE. You were not bid to speak.

LUCIO. No, my good lord;
Nor wish'd to hold my peace.

DUKE. I wish you now, then;
Pray you take note of it; and when you have
A business for yourself, pray heaven you then
Be perfect.

LUCIO. I warrant your honour.

DUKE. The warrant's for yourself; take heed to't.

ISABELLA. This gentleman told somewhat of my tale.

LUCIO. Right.

DUKE. It may be right; but you are i' the wrong
To speak before your time. Proceed.

ISABELLA. I went
To this pernicious caitiff deputy.

DUKE. That's somewhat madly spoken.

ISABELLA. Pardon it;

The phrase is to the matter.

DUKE. Mended again. The matter- proceed.

ISABELLA. In brief- to set the needless process by,
How I persuaded, how I pray'd, and kneel'd,
How he refell'd me, and how I replied,
For this was of much length- the vile conclusion
I now begin with grief and shame to utter:
He would not, but by gift of my chaste body
To his concupiscible intemperate lust,
Release my brother; and, after much debatement,
My sisterly remorse confutes mine honour,
And I did yield to him. But the next morn betimes,
His purpose surfeiting, he sends a warrant
For my poor brother's head.

DUKE. This is most likely!

ISABELLA. O that it were as like as it is true!

DUKE. By heaven, fond wretch, thou know'st not what
thou speak'st,

Or else thou art suborn'd against his honour
In hateful practice. First, his integrity
Stands without blemish; next, it imports no reason
That with such vehemency he should pursue
Faults proper to himself. If he had so offended,
He would have weigh'd thy brother by himself,
And not have cut him off. Some one hath set you

on;

Confess the truth, and say by whose advice
Thou cam'st here to complain.

ISABELLA. And is this all?

Then, O you blessed ministers above,
Keep me in patience; and, with ripened time,
Unfold the evil which is here wrapt up
In countenance! Heaven shield your Grace from woe,
As I, thus wrong'd, hence unbelieved go!

DUKE. I know you'd fain be gone. An officer!
To prison with her! Shall we thus permit
A blasting and a scandalous breath to fall
On him so near us? This needs must be a practice.
Who knew of your intent and coming hither?

ISABELLA. One that I would were here, Friar
Lodowick.

DUKE. A ghostly father, belike. Who knows that
Lodowick?

LUCIO. My lord, I know him; 'tis a meddling friar.

I do not like the man; had he been lay, my lord,
For certain words he spake against your Grace
In your retirement, I had swing'd him soundly.
DUKE. Words against me? This's a good friar, belike!
And to set on this wretched woman here
Against our substitute! Let this friar be found.
LUCIO. But yesternight, my lord, she and that friar,
I saw them at the prison; a saucy friar,
A very scurvy fellow.

PETER. Blessed be your royal Grace!
I have stood by, my lord, and I have heard
Your royal ear abus'd. First, hath this woman
Most wrongfully accus'd your substitute;
Who is as free from touch or soil with her
As she from one ungot.

DUKE. We did believe no less.
Know you that Friar Lodowick that she speaks of?

PETER. I know him for a man divine and holy;
Not scurvy, nor a temporary meddler,
As he's reported by this gentleman;
And, on my trust, a man that never yet
Did, as he vouches, misreport your Grace.

LUCIO. My lord, most villainously; believe it.

PETER. Well, he in time may come to clear himself;
But at this instant he is sick, my lord,
Of a strange fever. Upon his mere request-
Being come to knowledge that there was complaint
Intended 'gainst Lord Angelo- came I hither
To speak, as from his mouth, what he doth know
Is true and false; and what he, with his oath
And all probation, will make up full clear,
Whensoever he's convented. First, for this woman-
To justify this worthy nobleman,
So vulgarly and personally accus'd-
Her shall you hear disproved to her eyes,
Till she herself confess it.

DUKE. Good friar, let's hear it. Exit

ISABELLA guarded

Do you not smile at this, Lord Angelo?
O heaven, the vanity of wretched fools!
Give us some seats. Come, cousin Angelo;
In this I'll be impartial; be you judge
Of your own cause.

Enter MARIANA veiled

Is this the witness, friar?
FIRST let her show her face, and after speak.
MARIANA. Pardon, my lord; I will not show my face
Until my husband bid me.
DUKE. What, are you married?
MARIANA. No, my lord.
DUKE. Are you a maid?
MARIANA. No, my lord.
DUKE. A widow, then?
MARIANA. Neither, my lord.
DUKE. Why, you are nothing then; neither maid,
widow, nor wife.
LUCIO. My lord, she may be a punk; for many of them
are neither
maid, widow, nor wife.
DUKE. Silence that fellow. I would he had some cause
To prattle for himself.
LUCIO. Well, my lord.
MARIANA. My lord, I do confess I ne'er was married,
And I confess, besides, I am no maid.
I have known my husband; yet my husband
Knows not that ever he knew me.
LUCIO. He was drunk, then, my lord; it can be no
better.
DUKE. For the benefit of silence, would thou wert
so too!
LUCIO. Well, my lord.
DUKE. This is no witness for Lord Angelo.
MARIANA. Now I come to't, my lord:
She that accuses him of fornication,
In self-same manner doth accuse my husband;
And charges him, my lord, with such a time
When I'll depose I had him in mine arms,
With all th' effect of love.
ANGELO. Charges she moe than me?
MARIANA. Not that I know.
DUKE. No? You say your husband.
MARIANA. Why, just, my lord, and that is Angelo,
Who thinks he knows that he ne'er knew my body,
But knows he thinks that he knows Isabel's.
ANGELO. This is a strange abuse. Let's see thy face.
MARIANA. My husband bids me; now I will unmask.

[Unveiling]

This is that face, thou cruel Angelo,

Which once thou swor'st was worth the looking on;
This is the hand which, with a vow'd contract,
Was fast belock'd in thine; this is the body
That took away the match from Isabel,
And did supply thee at thy garden-house
In her imagin'd person.

DUKE. Know you this woman?

LUCIO. Carnally, she says.

DUKE. Sirrah, no more.

LUCIO. Enough, my lord.

ANGELO. My lord, I must confess I know this woman;
And five years since there was some speech of
marriage

Betwixt myself and her; which was broke off,
Partly for that her promised proportions
Came short of composition; but in chief
For that her reputation was disvalued
In levity. Since which time of five years
I never spake with her, saw her, nor heard from
her,

Upon my faith and honour.

MARIANA. Noble Prince,

As there comes light from heaven and words from
breath,

As there is sense in truth and truth in virtue,
I am affianc'd this man's wife as strongly
As words could make up vows. And, my good lord,
But Tuesday night last gone, in's garden-house,
He knew me as a wife. As this is true,
Let me in safety raise me from my knees,
Or else for ever be confixed here,
A marble monument!

ANGELO. I did but smile till now.

Now, good my lord, give me the scope of justice;
My patience here is touch'd. I do perceive
These poor informal women are no more
But instruments of some more mightier member
That sets them on. Let me have way, my lord,
To find this practice out.

DUKE. Ay, with my heart;

And punish them to your height of pleasure.
Thou foolish friar, and thou pernicious woman,
Compact with her that's gone, think'st thou thy
oaths,
Though they would swear down each particular

saint,

Were testimonies against his worth and credit,
That's seal'd in approbation? You, Lord Escalus,
Sit with my cousin; lend him your kind pains
To find out this abuse, whence 'tis deriv'd.
There is another friar that set them on;
Let him be sent for.

PETER. Would lie were here, my lord! For he indeed
Hath set the women on to this complaint.
Your provost knows the place where he abides,
And he may fetch him.

DUKE. Go, do it instantly.

Exit PROVOST

And you, my noble and well-warranted cousin,
Whom it concerns to hear this matter forth,
Do with your injuries as seems you best
In any chastisement. I for a while will leave you;
But stir not you till you have well determin'd
Upon these slanderers.

ESCALUS. My lord, we'll do it
thoroughly. Exit DUKE

Signior Lucio, did not you say you knew that
Friar Lodowick to be
a dishonest person?

LUCIO. 'Cucullus non facit monachum': honest in
nothing but in his
clothes; and one that hath spoke most villainous
speeches of the
Duke.

ESCALUS. We shall entreat you to abide here till he
come and
enforce them against him. We shall find this
friar a notable
fellow.

LUCIO. As any in Vienna, on my word.

ESCALUS. Call that same Isabel here once again; I
would speak with

her. [Exit an ATTENDANT] Pray you, my lord, give
me leave to

question; you shall see how I'll handle her.

LUCIO. Not better than he, by her own report.

ESCALUS. Say you?

LUCIO. Marry, sir, I think, if you handled her
privately, she would

sooner confess; perchance, publicly, she'll be

asham'd.

Re-enter OFFICERS with ISABELLA; and PROVOST
with the

DUKE in his friar's habit

ESCALUS. I will go darkly to work with her.

LUCIO. That's the way; for women are light at
midnight.

ESCALUS. Come on, mistress; here's a gentlewoman
denies all that
you have said.

LUCIO. My lord, here comes the rascal I spoke of,
here with the
Provost.

ESCALUS. In very good time. Speak not you to him
till we call upon
you.

LUCIO. Mum.

ESCALUS. Come, sir; did you set these women on to
slander Lord

Angelo? They have confess'd you did.

DUKE. 'Tis false.

ESCALUS. How! Know you where you are?

DUKE. Respect to your great place! and let the devil
Be sometime honour'd for his burning throne!

Where is the Duke? 'Tis he should hear me speak.

ESCALUS. The Duke's in us; and we will hear you
speak;

Look you speak justly.

DUKE. Boldly, at least. But, O, poor souls,
Come you to seek the lamb here of the fox,
Good night to your redress! Is the Duke gone?
Then is your cause gone too. The Duke's unjust
Thus to retort your manifest appeal,
And put your trial in the villain's mouth
Which here you come to accuse.

LUCIO. This is the rascal; this is he I spoke of.

ESCALUS. Why, thou unreverend and unhallowed friar,
Is't not enough thou hast suborn'd these women
To accuse this worthy man, but, in foul mouth,
And in the witness of his proper ear,
To call him villain; and then to glance from him
To th' Duke himself, to tax him with injustice?
Take him hence; to th' rack with him! We'll touze

you

Joint by joint, but we will know his purpose.

What, 'unjust'!

DUKE. Be not so hot; the Duke

Dare no more stretch this finger of mine than he

Dare rack his own; his subject am I not,

Nor here provincial. My business in this state

Made me a looker-on here in Vienna,

Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble

Till it o'errun the stew: laws for all faults,

But faults so countenanc'd that the strong

statutes

Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,

As much in mock as mark.

ESCALUS. Slander to th' state! Away with him to prison!

ANGELO. What can you vouch against him, Signior Lucio?

Is this the man that you did tell us of?

LUCIO. 'Tis he, my lord. Come hither, good-man bald-pate.

Do you know me?

DUKE. I remember you, sir, by the sound of your voice. I met you at

the prison, in the absence of the Duke.

LUCIO. O did you so? And do you remember what you said of the Duke?

DUKE. Most notably, sir.

LUCIO. Do you so, sir? And was the Duke a fleshmonger, a fool, and

a coward, as you then reported him to be?

DUKE. You must, sir, change persons with me ere you make that my

report; you, indeed, spoke so of him; and much more, much worse.

LUCIO. O thou damnable fellow! Did not I pluck thee by the nose for

thy speeches?

DUKE. I protest I love the Duke as I love myself.

ANGELO. Hark how the villain would close now, after his treasonable

abuses!

ESCALUS. Such a fellow is not to be talk'd withal. Away with him to

prison! Where is the Provost? Away with him to

prison! Lay bolts

enough upon him; let him speak no more. Away with those giglets

too, and with the other confederate companion!

[The PROVOST lays bands

on the DUKE]

DUKE. Stay, sir; stay awhile.

ANGELO. What, resists he? Help him, Lucio.

LUCIO. Come, sir; come, sir; come, sir; foh, sir!

Why, you

bald-pated lying rascal, you must be hooded, must you? Show your

knave's visage, with a pox to you! Show your sheep-biting face,

and be hang'd an hour! Will't not off?

[Pulls off the FRIAR'S hood and discovers the DUKE]

DUKE. Thou art the first knave that e'er mad'st a duke.

First, Provost, let me bail these gentle three.

[To Lucio] Sneak not away, sir, for the friar and you

Must have a word anon. Lay hold on him.

LUCIO. This may prove worse than hanging.

DUKE. [To ESCALUS] What you have spoke I pardon; sit you down.

We'll borrow place of him. [To ANGELO] Sir, by your leave.

Hast thou or word, or wit, or impudence,
That yet can do thee office? If thou hast,
Rely upon it till my tale be heard,
And hold no longer out.

ANGELO. O my dread lord,
I should be guiltier than my guiltiness,
To think I can be undiscernible,
When I perceive your Grace, like pow'r divine,
Hath look'd upon my passes. Then, good Prince,
No longer session hold upon my shame,
But let my trial be mine own confession;
Immediate sentence then, and sequent death,
Is all the grace I beg.

DUKE. Come hither, Mariana.

Say, wast thou e'er contracted to this woman?

ANGELO. I was, my lord.

DUKE. Go, take her hence and marry her instantly.

Do you the office, friar; which consummate,
Return him here again. Go with him, Provost.

Exeunt ANGELO, MARIANA, FRIAR PETER,

and PROVOST

ESCALUS. My lord, I am more amaz'd at his dishonour
Than at the strangeness of it.

DUKE. Come hither, Isabel.

Your friar is now your prince. As I was then
Advertising and holy to your business,
Not changing heart with habit, I am still
Attorney'd at your service.

ISABELLA. O, give me pardon,
That I, your vassal have employ'd and pain'd
Your unknown sovereignty.

DUKE. You are pardon'd, Isabel.

And now, dear maid, be you as free to us.
Your brother's death, I know, sits at your heart;
And you may marvel why I obscur'd myself,
Labouring to save his life, and would not rather
Make rash remonstrance of my hidden pow'r
Than let him so be lost. O most kind maid,
It was the swift celerity of his death,
Which I did think with slower foot came on,
That brain'd my purpose. But peace be with him!
That life is better life, past fearing death,
Than that which lives to fear. Make it your

comfort,

So happy is your brother.

ISABELLA. I do, my lord.

Re-enter ANGELO, MARIANA, FRIAR PETER, and
PROVOST

DUKE. For this new-married man approaching here,
Whose salt imagination yet hath wrong'd
Your well-defended honour, you must pardon
For Mariana's sake; but as he adjudg'd your
brother-

Being criminal in double violation
Of sacred chastity and of promise-breach,
Thereon dependent, for your brother's life-
The very mercy of the law cries out
Most audible, even from his proper tongue,
'An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!'
Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers

leisure;

Like doth quit like, and Measure still for
Measure.

Then, Angelo, thy fault's thus manifested,
Which, though thou wouldst deny, denies thee
vantage.

We do condemn thee to the very block
Where Claudio stoop'd to death, and with like
haste.

Away with him!

MARIANA. O my most gracious lord,

I hope you will not mock me with a husband.

DUKE. It is your husband mock'd you with a husband.

Consenting to the safeguard of your honour,
I thought your marriage fit; else imputation,
For that he knew you, might reproach your life,
And choke your good to come. For his possessions,
Although by confiscation they are ours,
We do instate and widow you withal
To buy you a better husband.

MARIANA. O my dear lord,

I crave no other, nor no better man.

DUKE. Never crave him; we are definitive.

MARIANA. Gentle my liege-

[Kneeling]

DUKE. You do but lose your labour.

Away with him to death! [To LUCIO] Now, sir, to
you.

MARIANA. O my good lord! Sweet Isabel, take my part;

Lend me your knees, and all my life to come
I'll lend you all my life to do you service.

DUKE. Against all sense you do importune her.

Should she kneel down in mercy of this fact,
Her brother's ghost his paved bed would break,
And take her hence in horror.

MARIANA. Isabel,

Sweet Isabel, do yet but kneel by me;
Hold up your hands, say nothing; I'll speak all.
They say best men moulded out of faults;
And, for the most, become much more the better
For being a little bad; so may my husband.
O Isabel, will you not lend a knee?

DUKE. He dies for Claudio's death.

ISABELLA. [Kneeling] Most bounteous sir,

Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd,

As if my brother liv'd. I partly think
A due sincerity govern'd his deeds
Till he did look on me; since it is so,
Let him not die. My brother had but justice,
In that he did the thing for which he died;
For Angelo,
His act did not o'ertake his bad intent,
And must be buried but as an intent
That perish'd by the way. Thoughts are no
subjects;

Intents but merely thoughts.

MARIANA. Merely, my lord.

DUKE. Your suit's unprofitable; stand up, I say.

I have bethought me of another fault.

Provost, how came it Claudio was beheaded
At an unusual hour?

PROVOST. It was commanded so.

DUKE. Had you a special warrant for the deed?

PROVOST. No, my good lord; it was by private
message.

DUKE. For which I do discharge you of your office;
Give up your keys.

PROVOST. Pardon me, noble lord;

I thought it was a fault, but knew it not;
Yet did repent me, after more advice;
For testimony whereof, one in the prison,
That should by private order else have died,
I have reserv'd alive.

DUKE. What's he?

PROVOST. His name is Barnardine.

DUKE. I would thou hadst done so by Claudio.

Go fetch him hither; let me look upon him.

Exit PROVOST

ESCALUS. I am sorry one so learned and so wise
As you, Lord Angelo, have still appear'd,
Should slip so grossly, both in the heat of blood
And lack of temper'd judgment afterward.

ANGELO. I am sorry that such sorrow I procure;
And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart
That I crave death more willingly than mercy;
'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it.

Re-enter PROVOST, with BARNARDINE, CLAUDIO
(muffled)

and JULIET

DUKE. Which is that Barnardine?

PROVOST. This, my lord.

DUKE. There was a friar told me of this man.

Sirrah, thou art said to have a stubborn soul,
That apprehends no further than this world,
And squar'st thy life according. Thou'rt
condemn'd;

But, for those earthly faults, I quit them all,
And pray thee take this mercy to provide
For better times to come. Friar, advise him;
I leave him to your hand. What muffl'd fellow's
that?

PROVOST. This is another prisoner that I sav'd,
Who should have died when Claudio lost his head;
As like almost to Claudio as himself.

[Unmuffles CLAUDIO]

DUKE. [To ISABELLA] If he be like your brother, for
his sake

Is he pardon'd; and for your lovely sake,
Give me your hand and say you will be mine,
He is my brother too. But fitter time for that.
By this Lord Angelo perceives he's safe;
Methinks I see a quick'ning in his eye.
Well, Angelo, your evil quits you well.
Look that you love your wife; her worth worth
yours.

I find an apt remission in myself;

And yet here's one in place I cannot pardon.

To Lucio] You, sirrah, that knew me for a fool, a
coward,

One all of luxury, an ass, a madman!

Wherein have I so deserv'd of you

That you extol me thus?

LUCIO. Faith, my lord, I spoke it but according to
the trick.

If you will hang me for it, you may; but I had
rather it would

please you I might be whipt.

DUKE. Whipt first, sir, and hang'd after.

Proclaim it, Provost, round about the city,

If any woman wrong'd by this lewd fellow-

As I have heard him swear himself there's one

Whom he begot with child, let her appear,

And he shall marry her. The nuptial finish'd,

Let him be whipt and hang'd.

LUCIO. I beseech your Highness, do not marry me to a whore. Your

Highness said even now I made you a duke; good my lord, do not

recompense me in making me a cuckold.

DUKE. Upon mine honour, thou shalt marry her.

Thy slanders I forgive; and therewithal

Remit thy other forfeits. Take him to prison;

And see our pleasure herein executed.

LUCIO. Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging.

DUKE. Slandering a prince deserves it.

Exeunt OFFICERS

with LUCIO

She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore.

Joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo;

I have confess'd her, and I know her virtue.

Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness;

There's more behind that is more grate. . .

Thanks, Provost, for thy care and secrecy;

We shall employ thee in a worthier place.

Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home

The head of Ragozine for Claudio's:

Th' offence pardons itself. Dear Isabel,

I have a motion much imports your good;

Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,

What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.

So, bring us to our palace, where we'll show

What's yet behind that's meet you all should know.

Exeunt