

## 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'red

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 outweigh  
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'ed 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 unbeliev'd 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 notedly, 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 bood 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