

Measure for Measure

ACT I

SCENE I. An apartment in the DUKE'S palace.

Enter DUKE VINCENTIO, ESCALUS, Lords and Attendants

DUKE VINCENTIO

Escalus.

ESCALUS

My lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Of government the properties to unfold,
Would seem in me to affect speech and discourse;
Since I am put to know that your own science
Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice
My strength can give you: then no more remains,
But that to your sufficiency as your Worth is able,
And let them work. The nature of our people,
Our city's institutions, and the terms
For common justice, you're as pregnant in
As art and practise hath enriched any
That we remember. There is our commission,
From which we would not have you warp. Call hither,
I say, bid come before us Angelo.

Exit an Attendant

What figure of us think you he will bear?
For you must know, we have with special soul
Elected him our absence to supply,
Lent him our terror, dress'd him with our love,
And given his deputation all the organs
Of our own power: what think you of it?

ESCALUS

If any in Vienna be of worth
To undergo such ample grace and honour,
It is Lord Angelo.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Look where he comes.

Enter ANGELO

ANGELO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Angelo,
There is a kind of character in thy life,
That to the 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 yourself;
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 VINCENTIO

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 the 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 VINCENTIO

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:
Through 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 power 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 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 concludest like the sanctimonious pirate, that went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one out of the table.

Second Gentleman

'Thou shalt not steal'?

LUCIO

Ay, that he razed.

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-piled piece, I warrant thee: I had as lief be a list of an English kersey as be piled, as thou art piled, 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.

LUCIO

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

Second Gentleman

To what, I pray?

LUCIO

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.

Enter MISTRESS OVERDONE

First Gentleman

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

MISTRESS OVERDONE

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

Second Gentleman

Who's that, I pray thee?

MISTRESS OVERDONE

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

First Gentleman

Claudio to prison? 'tis not so.

MISTRESS 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 chopped off.

LUCIO

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

MISTRESS OVERDONE

I am too sure of it: and it is for getting Madam Julietta with child.

LUCIO

Believe me, this may be: he promised 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

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

Well; what has he done?

POMPEY

A woman.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

But what's his offence?

POMPEY

Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

MISTRESS 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?

MISTRESS OVERDONE

What proclamation, man?

POMPEY

All houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be pulled down?

POMPEY

To the ground, mistress.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

Why, here's a change indeed in the commonwealth!
What shall become of me?

POMPEY

Come; fear you not: 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.

MISTRESS 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

CLAUDIO

Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to the 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.

Re-enter LUCIO and two Gentlemen

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 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 dower
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 emmence 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 the 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 VINCENTIO and FRIAR THOMAS

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 THOMAS

May your grace speak of it?

DUKE VINCENTIO

My holy sir, none better knows than you
How I have ever loved the life removed
And held in idle price to haunt assemblies
Where youth, and cost, and 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 THOMAS

Gladly, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

We have strict statutes and most biting laws.
The needful bits and curbs to headstrong weeds,
Which for this nineteen 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 threatening 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 THOMAS

It rested in your grace
To unloose this tied-up justice when you pleased:
And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd
Than in Lord Angelo.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 imposed the office;
Who may, in the 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. More 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

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 ensky'd 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 embraced:
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 censured 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 power 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, and a Justice, Provost, Officers, and other Attendants, behind

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 cohered with place or place with wishing,
Or that the resolute acting of your blood
Could have attain'd the 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 know 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 prepared;
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 brakes 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, plucked 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 accused 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 stewed 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 remembered,
cracking the stones of the foresaid prunes,--

FROTH

Ay, so I did indeed.

POMPEY

Why, very well; I telling you then, if you be
remembered, 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 four-score 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 do 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 supposed 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, wicked varlet! the time has 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 battery on thee.

ESCALUS

If he took you a box o' the 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 knowest 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?

POMPHEY

Tapster; a poor widow's tapster.

ESCALUS

Your mistress' name?

POMPHEY

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 tap-house, 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 are pretty orders beginning, I can tell you:
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 three-pence 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 is 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 your 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 the same.

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 tomorrow?

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 spared.

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 removed:
Let have needful, but not lavish, means;
There shall be order for't.

Enter ISABELLA and LUCIO

Provost

God save your honour!

ANGELO

Stay a little while.

To ISABELLA

You're 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

[Aside 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 sentenced; 'tis too late.

LUCIO

[Aside 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 slipt 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

[Aside 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 tomorrow.

ISABELLA

To-morrow! O, that's sudden! Spare him, spare him!
He's not prepared 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 to ISABELLA] Ay, well said.

ANGELO

The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept:
Those many had not dared to do that evil,
If the first that did the 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 new, or by remissness new-conceived,
And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,
Are now to have no successive degrees,
But, ere 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 suffer's. O, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.

LUCIO

[Aside to ISABELLA] That's well said.

ISABELLA

Could great men thunder
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er 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
Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak
Than the soft myrtle: but man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep; who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

LUCIO

[Aside 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

Thou'rt i' the right, girl; more o, that.

ISABELLA

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

LUCIO

[Aside to ISABELLA] Art avised 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' the 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 tomorrow.

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

[Aside to ISABELLA] You had marr'd all else.

ISABELLA

Not with fond shekels of the tested gold,
Or stones whose rates 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

[Aside 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 ISABELLA, LUCIO, and Provost

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 flower,
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. Even till now,
When men were fond, I smiled and wonder'd how.

Exit

SCENE III. A room in a prison.

Enter, severally, DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as a friar, and Provost

DUKE VINCENTIO

Hail to you, provost! so I think you are.

Provost

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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, sentenced; a young man
More fit to do another such offence
Than die for this.

DUKE VINCENTIO

When must he die?

Provost

As I do think, to-morrow.
I have provided for you: stay awhile,

To JULIET

And you shall be conducted.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

JULIET

I do; and bear the shame most patiently.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Love you the man that wrong'd you?

JULIET

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

So then it seems your most offenceful act
Was mutually committed?

JULIET

Mutually.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

JULIET

I do confess it, and repent it, father.

DUKE VINCENTIO

'Tis meet so, daughter: but lest you do repent,
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,
Which sorrow is always towards 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 VINCENTIO

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 love,
That respites me a life, whose very comfort
Is still a dying horror!

Provost

'Tis pity of him.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. A room in 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 fear'd 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 a 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 stolen
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

Pleased 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 enshield 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 desired of such a person,
Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,
Could fetch your brother from the manacles
Of the all-building 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,
The 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

Ignomy 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 proved 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 feodary, 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 destined livery.

ISABELLA

I have no tongue but one: gentle my lord,
Let me entreat 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 it.

ANGELO

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

ISABELLA

I know your virtue hath a licence 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 believed,
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, the austereness of my life,
My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,
Will so your accusation overweigh,
That you shall stifle in your own report
And smell of calumny. I have begun,
And now I give my sensual race the rein:
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes,
That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother
By yielding up thy body to my will;
Or else he must not only die the death,
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
To lingering 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 court'sy to their will:
Hooking both right and wrong to the appetite,
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother:
Though he hath fallen 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. A room in the prison.

Enter DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as before, CLAUDIO, and Provost

DUKE VINCENTIO

So then you hope of pardon from Lord Angelo?

CLAUDIO

The miserable have no other medicine
But only hope:
I've hope to live, and am prepared to die.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 runn'st toward him still. Thou art not noble;
For all the accommodations that thou bear'st
Are nursed 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 provokest; yet grossly fear'st
Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself;
For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains
That issue out of dust. Happy thou art not;
For what thou hast not, still thou strivest 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Provost, a word with you.

Provost

As many as you please.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Bring me to hear them speak, where I may be concealed.

Exeunt DUKE VINCENTIO 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 determined 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. Darest 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 flowery 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' the head and follies doth emmew
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 prenzie Angelo!

ISABELLA

O, 'tis the cunning livery of hell,
The damned'st body to invest and cover
In prenzie 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 tomorrow.

CLAUDIO

Yes. Has he affections in him,
That thus can make him bite the law by the 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 fined? 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 issued from his blood. Take my defiance!
Die, perish! Might but my bending down
Relieve 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 thou diest quickly.

CLAUDIO

O hear me, Isabella!

Re-enter DUKE VINCENTIO

DUKE VINCENTIO

Vouchsafe a word, young sister, but one word.

ISABELLA

What is your will?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Son, I have overheard what hath passed between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her; only he hath made an essay 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: tomorrow 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 VINCENTIO

Hold you there: farewell.

Exit CLAUDIO

Provost, a word with you!

Re-enter Provost

Provost

What's your will, father

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

Provost

In good time.

Exit Provost. ISABELLA comes forward

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 conveyed 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 deceived in Angelo! If ever he return and I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain, or discover his government.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 uprightly 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 wrecked 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 VINCENTIO

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,
bestowed 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 stead 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO 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 VINCENTIO

O heavens! what stuff is here

POMPEY

'Twas never merry world since, of two usuries, the merriest was put down, and the worser allowed by order of law a furred gown to keep him warm; and furred with fox and 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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

ELBOW

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

POMPEY

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

Enter LUCIO

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
sayest thou to this tune, matter and method? Is't
not drowned i' the last rain, ha? What sayest
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 VINCENTIO

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 powdered bawd: an unshunned 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

How should he be made, then?

LUCIO

Some report a sea-maid spawned him; some, that he was begot between two stock-fishes. But it is certain that when he makes water his urine is congealed ice; that I know to be true: and he is a motion generative; that's infallible.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 hanged 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 VINCENTIO

I never heard the absent duke much detected for women; he was not inclined that way.

LUCIO

O, sir, you are deceived.

DUKE VINCENTIO

'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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

What, I prithee, might be the cause?

LUCIO

No, pardon; 'tis a secret must be locked 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 VINCENTIO

Wise! why, no question but he was.

LUCIO

A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Either this is the 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 darkened in your malice.

LUCIO

Sir, I know him, and I love him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

Come, sir, I know what I know.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

I fear you not.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 hanged first: thou art deceived in me, friar. But no more of this. Canst thou tell if Claudio die to-morrow or no?

DUKE VINCENTIO

Why should he die, sir?

LUCIO

Why? For filling a bottle with a tundish. I would the duke we talk of were returned again: the ungenitured 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 returned! 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 VINCENTIO

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!

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS 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 promised 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 licence: let him be
called before us. Away with her to prison! Go to;
no more words.

Exeunt Officers with MISTRESS OVERDONE

Provost, my brother Angelo will not be altered;
Claudio must die to-morrow: let him be furnished
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
advised him for the entertainment of death.

ESCALUS

Good even, good father.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Bliss and goodness on you!

ESCALUS

Of whence are you?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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' the world?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 it is as dangerous to be aged in any kind of course, as it is virtuous to be constant in any undertaking. 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 VINCENTIO

What pleasure was he given to?

ESCALUS

Rather rejoicing to see another merry, than merry at any thing which professed to make him rejoice: a gentleman of all temperance. But leave we him to his events, with a prayer they may prove prosperous; and let me desire to know how you find Claudio prepared. I am made to understand that you have lent him visitation.

DUKE VINCENTIO

He professes to have received no sinister measure from his judge, but most willingly humbles himself to the determination of justice: yet had he framed to himself, by the instruction of his frailty, many deceiving promises of life; which I by my good leisure have discredited to him, and now is he resolved to die.

ESCALUS

You have paid the heavens your function, and the prisoner the very debt of your calling. I have laboured for the poor gentleman to the extremest shore of my modesty: but my brother justice have I found so severe, that he hath forced me to tell him he is indeed Justice.

DUKE VINCENTIO

If his own life answer the straitness of his proceeding, it shall become him well; wherein if he chance to fail, he hath sentenced himself.

ESCALUS

I am going to visit the prisoner. Fare you well.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Peace be with you!

Exeunt ESCALUS and Provost

He who the sword of heaven will bear
Should be as holy as severe;
Pattern in himself to know,
Grace to stand, and virtue go;
More nor less to others paying
Than by self-offences weighing.
Shame to him whose cruel striking
Kills for faults of his own liking!
Twice treble shame on Angelo,
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,
Making practise 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 the disguised,
Pay with falsehood false exacting,
And perform an old contracting.

Exit

ACT IV

SCENE I. The moated grange at ST. LUKE'S.

Enter MARIANA and a Boy

Boy sings

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 sealed in vain, sealed in vain.

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

Enter DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as before

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 VINCENTIO

'Tis good; though music oft hath such a charm
To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.
I pray, you, tell me, hath any body inquired
for me here to-day? much upon this time have
I promised here to meet.

MARIANA

You have not been inquired after:
I have sat here all day.

Enter ISABELLA

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Very well met, and well come.
What is the news from this good deputy?

ISABELLA

He hath a garden circummured with brick,
Whose western side is with a vineyard back'd;
And to that vineyard is a planched 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Are there no other tokens
Between you 'greed concerning her observance?

ISABELLA

No, none, but only a repair i' the 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 VINCENTIO

'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 VINCENTIO

Do you persuade yourself that I respect you?

MARIANA

Good friar, I know you do, and have found it.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

O place and greatness! millions of false eyes
Are stuck upon thee: volumes of report
Run with these false and most contrarious quests
Upon thy doings: thousand escapes of wit
Make thee the father of their idle dreams
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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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. A room in 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 off 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 instruction 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 hanged, 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 POMPEY and ABHORSON

The 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

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

Enter DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as before

Welcome father.

DUKE VINCENTIO

The best and wholesomest spirits of the night
Envelope you, good Provost! Who call'd here of late?

Provost

None, since the curfew rung.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Not Isabel?

Provost

No.

DUKE VINCENTIO

They will, then, ere't be long.

Provost

What comfort is for Claudio?

DUKE VINCENTIO

There's some in hope.

Provost

It is a bitter deputy.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 power
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 possessed with haste
That wounds the 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 VINCENTIO

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

Provost

None, sir, none.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

And here comes Claudio's pardon.

Messenger

[Giving a paper]

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 VINCENTIO

[Aside] This is his pardon, purchased by such sin
For which the pardoner himself is in.
Hence hath offence his quick celerity,
When it is born in high authority:
When vice makes mercy, mercy's so extended,
That for the fault's love is the 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 used it before.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

What is that Barnardine who is to be executed in the
afternoon?

Provost

A Bohemian born, but here nursed un and bred; one that is a prisoner nine years old.

DUKE VINCENTIO

How came it that the absent duke had not either delivered 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 undoubtful proof.

DUKE VINCENTIO

It is now apparent?

Provost

Most manifest, and not denied by himself.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Hath he born himself penitently in prison? how seems he to be touched?

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 VINCENTIO

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 awaked him, as if to carry him to execution, and showed him a seeming warrant for it: it hath not moved him at all.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 sentenced 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 VINCENTIO

In the delaying death.

Provost

A lack, 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 VINCENTIO

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 born to Angelo.

Provost

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 bared before his death: you know the course is common. If any thing 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 VINCENTIO

Were you sworn to the duke, or to the deputy?

Provost

To him, and to his substitutes.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 tenor; perchance of the duke's death; perchance entering into some monastery; but, by chance, nothing of what is writ. Look, the 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 amazed; but this shall absolutely resolve you. Come away; it is almost clear dawn.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Another room in the same.

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, ninescore 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 Three-pile the mercer, for some four suits of peach-coloured satin, which now peaches him a beggar. Then have we here young Dizzy, and young Master Deep-vow, and Master Copperspur, and Master Starve-lackey the rapier and dagger man, and young Drop-heir that killed lusty Pudding, and Master Forthlight the tilter, and brave Master Shooty the

great traveller, and wild Half-can that stabbed
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 hanged.
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.

ABHORSON

Is the axe upon the block, sirrah?

POMPEY

Very ready, sir.

Enter BARNARDINE

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.

ABHORSON

Look you, sir; here comes your ghostly father: do we jest now, think you?

Enter DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as before

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

But hear you.

BARNARDINE

Not a word: if you have any thing to say to me, come to my ward; for thence will not I to-day.

Exit

DUKE VINCENTIO

Unfit to live or die: O gravel heart!
After him, fellows; bring him to the block.

Exeunt ABHORSON and POMPEY

Re-enter Provost

Provost

Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?

DUKE VINCENTIO

A creature unprepared, 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 inclined;
And satisfy the deputy with the visage
Of Ragozine, more like to Claudio?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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-balanced form,
We shall proceed with Angelo.

Re-enter Provost

Provost

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

He hath released him, Isabel, from the world:
His head is off and sent to Angelo.

ISABELLA

Nay, but it is not so.

DUKE VINCENTIO

It is no other: show your wisdom, daughter,
In your close patience.

ISABELLA

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

You shall not be admitted to his sight.

ISABELLA

Unhappy Claudio! wretched Isabel!
Injurious world! most damned Angelo!

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 convent, 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 power. 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 loved thy brother:
if the old fantastical duke of dark corners had been
at home, he had lived.

Exit ISABELLA

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 takest him for.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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. A room in ANGELO's house.

Enter ANGELO and ESCALUS

ESCALUS

Every letter he hath writ hath disvouched 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
entering, 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 proclaimed betimes
i' the 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 deflower'd maid!
And by an eminent body that enforced
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 of a credent bulk,
That no particular scandal once can touch
But it confounds the breather. He should have lived,
Save that 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 lived!
A lack, 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 VINCENTIO in his own habit, and FRIAR PETER

DUKE VINCENTIO

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.

FRIAR PETER

It shall be speeded well.

Exit

Enter VARRIUS

DUKE VINCENTIO

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. 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 advised to do it;
He says, to veil full purpose.

MARIANA

Be ruled 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--

ISABELLA

O, peace! the friar is come.

Enter FRIAR PETER

FRIAR 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 entering: therefore, hence, away!

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. The city gate.

MARIANA veiled, ISABELLA, and FRIAR PETER, at their stand. Enter DUKE VINCENTIO, VARRIUS, Lords, ANGELO, ESCALUS, LUCIO, Provost, Officers, and Citizens, at several doors

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 rasure 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.

FRIAR PETER and ISABELLA come forward

FRIAR 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 VINCENTIO

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 believed,
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 VINCENTIO

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 the end of reckoning.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Away with her! Poor soul,
She speaks this in the infirmity of sense.

ISABELLA

O prince, I conjure thee, as thou believest
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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 desired her
To try her gracious fortune with Lord Angelo
For her poor brother's pardon.

ISABELLA

That's he indeed.

DUKE VINCENTIO

You were not bid to speak.

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

The warrants for yourself; take heed to't.

ISABELLA

This gentleman told somewhat of my tale,--

LUCIO

Right.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

That's somewhat madly spoken.

ISABELLA

Pardon it;
The phrase is to the matter.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

This is most likely!

ISABELLA

O, that it were as like as it is true!

DUKE VINCENTIO

By heaven, fond wretch, thou knowist not what thou speak'st,
Or else thou art suborn'd against his honour
In hateful practise. 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 camest here to complain.

ISABELLA

And is this all?
Then, O you blessed ministers above,
Keep me in patience, and with ripen'd 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 VINCENTIO

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 practise.
Who knew of Your intent and coming hither?

ISABELLA

One that I would were here, Friar Lodowick.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 swung him soundly.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Words against me? this is 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.

FRIAR PETER

Blessed be your royal grace!
I have stood by, my lord, and I have heard
Your royal ear abused. First, hath this woman
Most wrongfully accused your substitute,
Who is as free from touch or soil with her
As she from one ungot.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

FRIAR 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 villanously; believe it.

FRIAR 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 accused,
Her shall you hear disproved to her eyes,
Till she herself confess it.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Good friar, let's hear it.

ISABELLA is carried off guarded; and MARIANA comes forward

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. 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 VINCENTIO

What, are you married?

MARIANA

No, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Are you a maid?

MARIANA

No, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

A widow, then?

MARIANA

Neither, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

For the benefit of silence, would thou wert so too!

LUCIO

Well, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 the effect of love.

ANGELO

Charges she more than me?

MARIANA

Not that I know.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 swore'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 imagined person.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Know you this woman?

LUCIO

Carnally, she says.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 affianced 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 practise out.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 derived.
There is another friar that set them on;
Let him be sent for.

FRIAR PETER

Would he 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 VINCENTIO

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 determined
Upon these slanderers.

ESCALUS

My lord, we'll do it throughly.

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
villanous speches 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 ashamed.

ESCALUS

I will go darkly to work with her.

LUCIO

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

Re-enter Officers with ISABELLA; and Provost with the DUKE VINCENTIO in his friar's habit

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 confessed you did.

DUKE VINCENTIO

'Tis false.

ESCALUS

How! know you where you are?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 unhallow'd 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 the duke himself, to tax him with injustice?
Take him hence; to the rack with him! We'll touse you
Joint by joint, but we will know his purpose.
What 'unjust'!

DUKE VINCENTIO

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'er-run the stew; laws for all faults,
But faults so countenanced, that the strong statutes
Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,
As much in mock as mark.

ESCALUS

Slander to the 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, goodman baldpate:
do you know me?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Most notably, sir.

LUCIO

Do you so, sir? And was the duke a fleshmonger, a fool, and a coward, as you then reported him to be?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 talked 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 giglots too, and with the other confederate companion!

DUKE VINCENTIO

[To Provost] 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 hanged an hour! Will't not off?

Pulls off the friar's hood, and discovers DUKE VINCENTIO

DUKE VINCENTIO

Thou art the first knave that e'er madest 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 VINCENTIO

[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 power 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 VINCENTIO

Come hither, Mariana.
Say, wast thou e'er contracted to this woman?

ANGELO

I was, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 amazed at his dishonour
Than at the strangeness of it.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 obscured myself,
Labouring to save his life, and would not rather
Make rash remonstrance of my hidden power
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 VINCENTIO

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 adjudged 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Never crave him; we are definitive.

MARIANA

Gentle my liege,--

Kneeling

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

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 are 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 VINCENTIO

He dies for Claudio's death.

ISABELLA

Most bounteous sir,

Kneeling

Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd,
As if my brother lived: 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;
Intent but merely thoughts.

MARIANA

Merely, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Had you a special warrant for the deed?

Provost

No, my good lord; it was by private message.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 reserved alive.

DUKE VINCENTIO

What's he?

Provost

His name is Barnardine.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Which is that Barnardine?

Provost

This, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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 squarest 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 muffled fellow's that?

Provost

This is another prisoner that I saved.
Who should have died when Claudio lost his head;
As like almost to Claudio as himself.

Unmuffles CLAUDIO

DUKE VINCENTIO

[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 quickening 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 deserved 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 VINCENTIO

Whipt first, sir, and hanged after.
Proclaim it, provost, round about the city.
Is 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 VINCENTIO

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 VINCENTIO

Slandering a prince deserves it.

Exit 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:
The 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