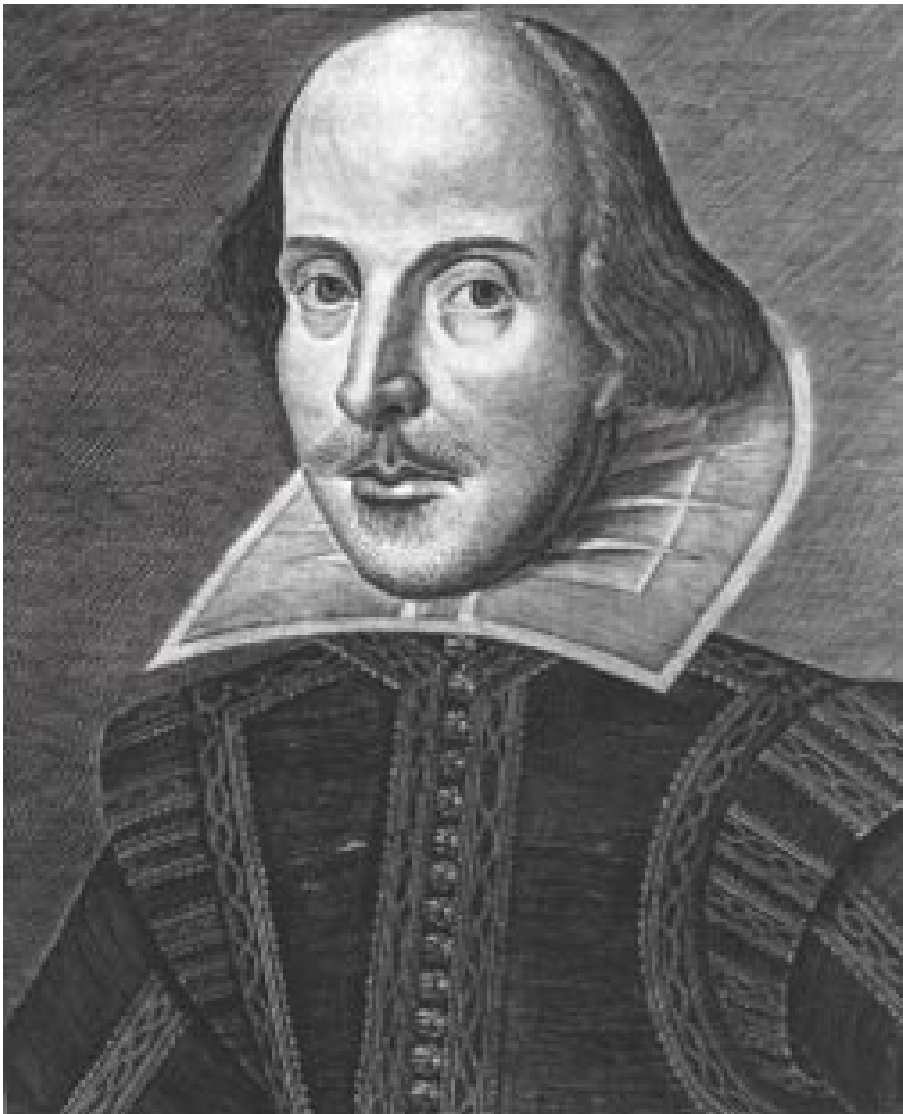


VOLUME I BOOK VIII



MEASURE FOR MEASURE



By William Shakespeare

Dramatis Personae



VINCENTIO *the Duke.*

ANGELO *Deputy.*

ESCALUS *an ancient Lord.*

CLAUDIO *a young gentleman.*

LUCIO *a fantastic.*

Two other gentlemen.
(FIRST GENTLEMAN)
(SECOND GENTLEMAN)

Provost. (PROVOST)

PETER }
THOMAS } *two friars.*

A Justice. (JUSTICE)

VARRIUS.

ELBOW *a simple constable.*

FROTH *a foolish gentleman.*

POMPEY *servant to Mistress Overdone.*

ABHORSON *an executioner.*

BARNARDINE *a dissolute prisoner.*

ISABELLA *sister to Claudio.*

MARIANA *betrothed to Angelo.*

JULIET *beloved of Claudio.*

FRANCISCA *a nun.*

MISTRESS OVERDONE *a bawd.*

Lords, Officers, Citizens, Boy, and Attendants.
(SERVANT)
(MESSENGER)

SCENE *Vienna.*

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:
Though it do well, I do not relish well
Their loud applause and Aves vehement;
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
That does affect it. Once more, fare you well.

ANGELO The heavens give safety to your purposes!

ESCALUS Lead forth and bring you back in happiness!

DUKE VINCENTIO 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 FIRST GENTLEMAN 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 eminence that fills it up,
I stagger in:—but this new governor
Awakes me all the enrolled penalties
Which have, like unscour'd armour, hung by 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. Moe reasons for this action
At our more leisure shall I render you;
Only, this one: Lord Angelo is precise;
Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses
That his blood flows, or that his appetite
Is more to bread than stone: hence shall we see,
If power change purpose, what our seemers be.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE IV

A nunnery.

[*Enter ISABELLA and FRANCISCA*]

ISABELLA And have you nuns no farther privileges?

FRANCISCA Are not these large enough?

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

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

ISABELLA Who's that which calls?

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

[*Exit*]

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 judgement 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 fourscore pound a year; whose father died at Hallowmas: was't not at Hallowmas, Master Froth?

FROTH All-hallond eve.

POMPEY Why, very well; I hope here be truths. He, sir, sitting, as I say, in a lower chair, sir; 'twas in the Bunch of Grapes, where indeed you have a delight to sit, have you not?

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

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

ANGELO This will last out a night in Russia, When nights are longest there: I'll take my leave. And leave you to the hearing of the cause; Hoping you'll find good cause to whip them all.

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

[Exit ANGELO]

Now, sir, come on: what was done to Elbow's wife, once more?

POMPEY Once, sir? there was nothing done to her once.

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

POMPEY I beseech your honour, ask me.

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

POMPEY I beseech you, sir, look in this gentleman's face. Good Master Froth, look upon his honour; 'tis for a good purpose. Doth your honour mark his face?

ESCALUS Ay, sir, very well.

POMPEY Nay; I beseech you, mark it well.

ESCALUS Well, I do so.

POMPEY Doth your honour see any harm in his face?

ESCALUS Why, no.

POMPEY I'll be 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?

POMPEY Tapster; a poor widow's tapster.

ESCALUS Your mistress' name?

POMPEY Mistress Overdone.

ESCALUS Hath she had any more than one husband?

POMPEY Nine, sir; Overdone by the last.

ESCALUS Nine! Come hither to me, Master Froth. Master Froth, I would not have you acquainted with tapsters: they will draw you, Master Froth, and you will hang them. Get you gone, and let me hear no more of you.

FROTH I thank your worship. For mine own part, I never come into any room in a taphouse, but I am drawn in.

ESCALUS Well, no more of it, Master Froth: farewell.

[Exit FROTH]

Come you hither to me, Master tapster. What's your name, Master tapster?

POMPEY Pompey.

ESCALUS What else?

POMPEY Bum, sir.

ESCALUS Troth, and your bum is the greatest thing about you; so that in the beastliest sense you are Pompey the Great. Pompey, you are partly a bawd, Pompey, howsoever you colour it in being a tapster, are you not? come, tell me true: it shall be the better for you.

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

ESCALUS How would you live, Pompey? by being a bawd? What do you think of the trade, Pompey? is it a lawful trade?

POMPEY If the law would allow it, sir.

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

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

ESCALUS No, Pompey.

POMPEY Truly, sir, in my poor opinion, they will to't then. If your worship will take order for the drabs and the knaves, you need not to fear the bawds.

ESCALUS There 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's not whipt out of his trade.

[Exit]

ESCALUS Come hither to me, Master Elbow; come hither, Master constable. How long have you been in this place of constable?

ELBOW Seven year and a half, sir.

ESCALUS I thought, by 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, judgement 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 judgement, 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 to-morrow.

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

ANGELO How! bribe me?

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

LUCIO [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 license in 't,
Which seems a little fouler than it is,
To pluck on others.

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

ISABELLA Ha! little honour to be much 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 outweigh,
That you shall stifle in your own report
And smell of calumny. I have begun,
And now I give my sensual race the rein:
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes,
That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother
By yielding up thy body to my will;
Or else he must not only die the death,
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
To 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 approval;
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 fall'n by prompture of the blood,
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour,
That, had he twenty heads to tender down
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up,
Before his sister should her body stoop
To such abhorr'd pollution.
Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:
More than our brother is our chastity.
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,
And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

[Exit]



ACT III

SCENE I

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 to-morrow.

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
Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed:
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
No word to save thee.

CLAUDIO Nay, hear me, Isabel.

ISABELLA O, fie, fie, fie!
Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade.
Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd:
'Tis best 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 assay
of her virtue to practise his judgement with the
disposition of natures: she, having the truth of honour

in her, hath made him that gracious denial which he is most glad to receive. I am confessor to Angelo, and I know this to be true; therefore prepare yourself to death: do not satisfy your resolution with hopes that are fallible: to-morrow you must die; go to your knees and make ready.

CLAUDIO Let me ask my sister pardon. I am so out of love with life that I will sue to be rid of it.

DUKE 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 stand up your appointment, go in your place; if the encounter

acknowledge itself hereafter, it may compel him to her recompense: and here, by this, is your brother saved, your honour untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled. The maid will I frame and make fit for his attempt. If you think well to carry this as you may, the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from reproof. What think you of it?

ISABELLA The image of it gives me content already; and I trust it will grow to a most prosperous perfection.

DUKE 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 innocence, 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 clutched? 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 testified 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 tun-dish. I would the duke we talk of were returned again: this 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 license: 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 up 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, nine-score and seventeen pounds; of which he made five marks, ready money: marry, then ginger was not much in request, for the old women were all dead. Then is there here one Master Caper, at the suit of Master 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 } Happy return be to your
ESCALUS } 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 razure of oblivion. Give me your hand,
And let the subject see, to make them know
That outward courtesies would fain proclaim
Favours that keep within. Come, Escalus,
You must walk by us on our other hand;
And good supporters are you.

[*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 conspicuous 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 know'st
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 converted. 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 yours 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 speeches of the duke.

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

LUCIO As any in Vienna, on my word.

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

[Exit an *ATTENDANT*]

Pray you, my lord, give me leave to question; you
shall see how I'll handle her.

LUCIO Not better than he, by her own report.

ESCALUS Say you?

LUCIO Marry, sir, I think, if you handled her privately,
she would sooner confess: perchance, publicly, she'll
be 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 judgement 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 gratefull.
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]

