

ACT I

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

Enter DUKE and ESCALUS

DUKE

Escalus.

ESCALUS

My lord.

DUKE

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: the nature of our People,
Our City's Institutions, and the Terms
For Common Justice, you're as pregnant in
As Art and practice hath enriched any
That we remember; There is our Commission,
From which we would not have you warp.
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, dressed him with our love.

ESCALUS

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

DUKE

Look where he comes.

Enter ANGELO

ANGELO

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

DUKE

Angelo,
In our remove, be thou at full ourself;
Mortality and Mercy in Vienna
Live in thy tongue, and heart. Old Escalus,
Though first in question, is thy secondary.
Take thy Commission.

ANGELO

Now good my Lord,
Let there be some more test made of my metal,
Before so noble and so great a figure
Be stamped upon it.

DUKE

No more evasion.
Our haste from hence is of so quick condition,
That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestioned
Matters of needful value. So, fare you well;
I'll privily away. I love the people,
But do not like to stage me to their eyes;
Through it do well, I do not relish well
Their loud applause and Aves vehement,
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
That does affect it. Once more fare you well.

ANGELO

The heavens give safety to your purposes.

ESCALUS

Lead forth and bring you back in happiness.

DUKE

I thank you, fare you well.

Exit DUKE

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 honor.

Exeunt all

SCENE II. A Street.

Enter LUCIO, POMPEY, and GENTLEMAN

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.

POMPEY

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

GENTLEMAN

Amen.

LUCIO

Thou concludest like the Sanctimonious Pirate that went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one out of the Table.

GENTLEMAN

'Thou shalt not steal'?

LUCIO

Ay, that he razed.

POMPEY

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.

GENTLEMAN

I never heard any Soldier dislike it.

LUCIO

I believe thee, for I think thou never wast where grace was said. Grace is Grace, despite of all controversy; as for example, Thou thyself art a wicked villain, despite of all Grace.

POMPEY

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

Enter MISTRESS OVERDONE

LUCIO

Behold, behold, where Mistress Overdone comes!

MISTRESS OVERDONE

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

GENTLEMAN

Who's that I pray thee?

MISTRESS OVERDONE

Marry Sir, that's Claudio, Sinior Claudio.

POMPEY

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

Exeunt LUCIO and GENTLEMAN

MISTRESS OVERDONE

Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am Custom-shrunk. How now, what's the news with you?

POMPEY

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

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.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

What's to do here, Thomas Tapster? Let's withdraw!

POMPEY

Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the Constable to prison.

Exeunt POMPEY and MISTRESS OVERDONE; Enter ELBOW and CLAUDIO

CLAUDIO

Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to the world?

Bear me to prison, where I am committed.

ELBOW

I do it not in evil disposition,

But from Lord Angelo by special charge.

Enter LUCIO and GENTLEMAN

LUCIO

Why how now Claudio, whence comes this restraint?

CLAUDIO

From too much liberty, my Lucio, Liberty.

As surfeit is the father of much fast,

So every Scope by the immoderate use

Turns to restraint. Our Natures do pursue

Like Rats that ravin down their proper Bane:

A thirsty evil, and when we drink, we die.

LUCIO

If I could speak so wisely under an arrest, I would send for certain of my creditors.

What's thy offence, Claudio?

CLAUDIO

What but to speak of would offend again.

LUCIO

What, is it murder?

CLAUDIO

No.

LUCIO

Lechery?

CLAUDIO

Call it so.

ELBOW

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 looked 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. 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 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 unscored armor, hung by the wall
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.
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 Convent 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. I'll to her.

CLAUDIO

I thank you, good friend Lucio.

LUCIO

Within two hours.

CLAUDIO

Come Officer, away.

Exeunt CLAUDIO, LUCIO, and GENTLEMAN

SCENE III. A monastery.

Enter DUKE and FRIAR

DUKE

No, holy father, why I desire thee
To give me secret harbor hath a purpose

More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends
Of burning youth.

FRIAR

May your Grace speak of it?

DUKE

My holy Sir, none better knows than you
How I have ever loved the life removed.
I have delivered to Lord Angelo,
A man of stricture and firm abstinence,
My absolute power and place here in Vienna,
And he supposes me travelled to Poland,
For so I have strewed it in the common ear
And so it is received. Now, pious Sir,
You will demand of me why I do this.

FRIAR

Gladly, my lord.

DUKE

We have strict Statutes and most biting Laws,
Which we have let slip. 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 mocked than feared. So our Decrees,
Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead.

FRIAR

It rested in your Grace
To unloose this tied-up Justice when you pleased,
And it in you more dreadful would have seemed
Than in Lord Angelo.

DUKE

I do fear too dreadful.

Since 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
For what I bid them do. 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. 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 DUKE and FRIAR

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, offstage

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 vowed, you must not speak with men
But in the presence of the Prioress.
He calls again; I pray you answer him.

Exit FRANCISCA

ISABELLA

Peace and prosperity, who is it that calls?

Enter LUCIO

LUCIO

Hail Virgin, if you be, can you so stead me
As bring me to the sight of Isabella,
A Novice of this place and the fair Sister
To her unhappy brother Claudio?

ISABELLA

Why her unhappy Brother? Let me ask,
The rather for I now must make you know
I am that Isabella and his Sister.

LUCIO

Gentle and fair, your Brother kindly greets you.
Not to be weary with you; he's in prison.

ISABELLA

Woe me; for what?

LUCIO

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

ISABELLA

Sir, make me not your story.

LUCIO

It is true.

I would not, though 'tis my familiar sin
With Maids to seem the Lapwing and to jest,
Tongue far from heart, play with all Virgins so.
I hold you as a thing enskied, and sainted.

ISABELLA

Juliet with child by him?

LUCIO

She it is.

ISABELLA

O, let him marry her.

LUCIO

This is the point.

The Duke is very strangely gone from hence;
Upon his place,
And with full line of his authority,
Governs Lord Angelo, a man whose blood
Is very snow-broth. He hath picked out an act,
Under whose heavy sense, your brother's life
Falls into forfeit. He arrests him on it,
And follows close the rigor of the Statute
To make him an example. All hope is gone,
Unless you have the grace, by your fair prayer,
To soften Angelo.

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.

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 ISABELLA and LUCIO

ACT II

SCENE I. A hall In ANGELO's house.

Enter ANGELO and ESCALUS

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. Let but your honor know,

Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue,

Whether you had not sometime in your life

Erred in this point, which now you censure him,

And pulled 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?
You may not so extenuate his offence
For I have had such faults, but rather tell me,
When I that censure him do so offend,
Let mine own Judgment pattern out my death
And nothing come in partial. See that Claudio
Be executed by nine tomorrow morning.
Bring him his Confessor, let him be prepared,
For that's the utmost of his pilgrimage.

ESCALUS

Well, heaven forgive him and forgive us all.
Some rise by sin and some by virtue fall.

Enter ELBOW and POMPEY

ELBOW

Come, bring him away. If these be good people in a Commonwealth that do nothing but use their abuses in common houses, I know no law. Bring him away.

ANGELO

How now, Sir, what's your name? And what's the matter?

ELBOW

If it please your honor, 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 honor a notorious Malefactor.

ESCALUS

This comes off well; here's a wise Officer.

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 dost thou know that, Constable?

ELBOW

Marry sir, by my wife, who, if she had been a woman Carnally given, might have been accused in fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness there.

POMPEY

Sir, if it please your honor, this is not so.

ELBOW

Prove it before these varlets here, thou honorable man, prove it.

ESCALUS

Do you hear how he misplaces?

POMPEY

Sir, she came in great with child and longing, saving your honor'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 honors 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, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said—

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

Come, you are a tedious fool. To the purpose: what was done to Elbow's wife once more?

POMPEY

Once, Sir? there was nothing done to her once.

ESCALUS

Constable, what say you to it?

ELBOW

First, and it like you, the house is a suspected house. Next, this is a suspected fellow, and his Mistress is a suspected woman.

POMPEY

By this hand, Sir, his wife is a more suspected person than any of us all.

ELBOW

Varlet, thou liest, thou liest, wicked varlet. The time has yet to come that she was ever suspected with man, woman, or child.

POMPEY

Sir, she was suspected 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 suspected with her before I was married to her? If ever I was suspected 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

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. What trade are you of, sir?

POMPEY

A Tapster, a poor widow's Tapster.

ESCALUS

What's your name, Master Tapster?

POMPEY

Pompey.

ESCALUS

Pompey, you are partly a bawd, Pompey, howsoever you color 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 spay and neuter all the youth of the City?

ESCALUS

No, Pompey.

POMPEY

Truly, Sir, in my poor opinion they will to it 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 beheading, and hanging.

POMPEY

If you behead and hang all that offend that way but for ten years together, you'll be glad to give out a commission for more heads. If this law holds in Vienna ten year, I'll rent the fairest house in it. 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. If I do, 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 POMPEY

ESCALUS

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

ELBOW

Seven years 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 it. What is it o'clock, think you?

ELBOW

Eleven, Sir.

ESCALUS

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

ELBOW

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.

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 it?

Exeunt ESCALUS and ELBOW

SCENE II. Another room in the same.

Enter ANGELO and ESCALUS

ANGELO

Now what's the matter?

ESCALUS

Is it your will Claudio shall die tomorrow?

ANGELO

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

Why dost thou ask again?

ESCALUS

Lest I might be too rash.

Under your good correction, I have seen

When after execution, judgment hath

Repented o'er his doom.

ANGELO

Go to; let that be mine.

Do you your office or give up your Place,

And you shall well be spared.

ESCALUS

I crave your Honor's pardon.

Enter ISABELLA and LUCIO

ISABELLA

God save your honor.

ANGELO

Stay a little while. You're welcome. What's your will?

ISABELLA

I am a woeful Suitor to your Honor.

Please but your honor 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 condemned to die.
I do beseech you, let it be his fault
And not my brother.

ESCALUS

Heaven give thee moving graces.

ANGELO

Condemn the fault and not the actor of it?
Why, every fault's condemned 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 honor.

LUCIO

Give it not o'er so. To him again, entreat him,
Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown.
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 it.

ISABELLA

But can you if you would?

ANGELO

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

ISABELLA

But might you do it and do the world no wrong,
If so your heart were touched with that remorse
As mine is to him?

ANGELO

He's sentenced; 'tis too late.

ISABELLA

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 slipped 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

Ay, touch him; there's the vein.

ANGELO

Your Brother is a forfeit of the Law,
And you but waste your words.

ISABELLA

Alas, alas,

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

ANGELO

Be you content, fair Maid.

It is the Law, not I, condemn your brother.
Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,
It should be thus with him: he must die tomorrow.

ISABELLA

Tomorrow? O, that's sudden. Spare him, spare him;
He's not prepared for death. My Lord, bethink you,
Who is it that hath died for this offence?
There's many have committed it; yet show some pity.

ANGELO

I show it most of all when I show Justice.
Your brother dies to-morrow; be content.

ISABELLA

So you must be the first that gives this sentence,
And he that suffers. O, it is excellent
To have a Giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it like a Giant. 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
Splitst the unwedgeable and gnarled Oak
Than the soft Myrtle, but man, proud man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the Angels weep.

LUCIO

He will relent,
He's coming; I perceive it.

ESCALUS

Pray heaven she win him.

ISABELLA

Great men may jest with Saints; 'tis wit in them,
But in the less foul profanation.
That in the Captain's but a choleric word,
Which in the Soldier is flat blasphemy.

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 of 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

She speaks, and 'tis such sense
That my Sense breeds with it. Fare you well.

ISABELLA

Gentle my Lord, turn back.

ANGELO

I will bethink me.

Come again tomorrow.

LUCIO

Go to, 'tis well; away.

ISABELLA

Heaven keep your honor safe.

Exeunt ISABELLA, LUCIO, and ESCALUS

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 it 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 vigor, Art, and Nature
Once stir my temper, but this virtuous Maid
Subdues me quite. Even till now
When men were fond, I smiled, and wondered how.

Exit ANGELO

SCENE III. A room in a prison.

Enter DUKE and ELBOW

DUKE

Hail to you, Constable; so I think you are.

ELBOW

I am the Constable. What's your will, good Friar?

DUKE

Bound by my charity and my blest order,
I come to visit the afflicted spirits
Here in the prison. Do me the common right

To let me see them and to make me know
The nature of their crimes, that I may minister
To them accordingly.

ELBOW

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

Enter CLAUDIO

Look here comes one: a Gentleman of mine,
Who, falling in the flaws of his own youth,
Hath blistered one's report. Juliet is with child,
And he that got it, sentenced.

DUKE

When must he die?

ELBOW

As I do think tomorrow.

DUKE

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

CLAUDIO

I do, and bear the shame most patiently.

DUKE

Love you the maid that you wronged?

CLAUDIO

Yes, as I love the man that wronged her.

DUKE

So then it seems your most offenceful act

Was mutually committed?

CLAUDIO

Mutually.

DUKE

'Tis meet so. 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.

CLAUDIO

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

DUKE

There, rest.

Grace go with you, Benedicite.

Exeunt DUKE, CLAUDIO, and ELBOW

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. Blood, thou art blood.
Let's write good Angel on the Devil's horn;
'Tis not the devil's crest.

Enter ESCALUS

How now? Who's there?

ESCALUS

One Isabel, a Sister, desires access to you.

ANGELO

Teach her the way.

Exit Escalus

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.

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 Honor.

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. '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 stained?

ISABELLA

Sir, believe this:

I had rather give my body than my soul.
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.
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,
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 slandered so?

ISABELLA

Ignomy in ransom and free pardon
Are of two houses. Lawful mercy
Is nothing kin to foul redemption.

ANGELO

You seemed of late to make the Law a tyrant,
And rather proved the sliding of your brother
A merriment than a vice.

ISABELLA

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

ANGELO

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 expressed
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 it,
Which seems a little fouler than it is,
To pluck on others.

ANGELO

Believe me on mine honor;
My words express my purpose.

ISABELLA

Ha? Little honor to be much believed,
And most pernicious purpose. Seeming, seeming.
I will proclaim thee Angelo, look for it.
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,
Or with an outstretched throat I'll tell the world aloud
What man thou art.

ANGELO

Who will believe thee Isabel?
My unsoiled name, the austereness of my life,
My vouch against you, and my place in the State
Will so your accusation overweigh
That you shall stifle in your own report
And smell of calumny. I have begun,
And now I give my sensual race the rein.
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite,
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes
That banish what they sue for. Redeem thy brother
By yielding up thy body to my will,
Or else he must not only die the death
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out

To lingering sufferance. Answer me tomorrow,
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 ANGELO

ISABELLA

To whom should I complain? Did I tell this,
Who would believe me? O perilous mouths
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue,
Either of condemnation or approof,
Bidding the Law make courtesy to their will,
Hooking both right and wrong to the appetite,
To follow as it draws. I'll to my brother;
Though he hath fallen by prompture of the blood,
Yet hath he in him such a mind of Honor.
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 abhorred 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 ISABELLA

ACT III

SCENE I. A room in the prison.

Enter DUKE, CLAUDIO, and ELBOW

DUKE

So then you hope of pardon from Lord Angelo?

CLAUDIO

I've hope to live and am prepared to die.

DUKE

Be absolute for death; either death or life
Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life:
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
That none but fools would keep. Thou art death's fool;
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun

And yet runn'st toward him still. Yet in this life
Lie hid more 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

What ho! Peace here, Grace, and good company.

ELBOW

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

DUKE

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

CLAUDIO

Most holy Sir, I thank you.

Enter ISABELLA

ISABELLA

My business is a word or two with Claudio.

ELBOW

And very welcome. Look, Signior, here's your sister.

DUKE

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

Exeunt DUKE and ELBOW

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.
Tomorrow 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 in what nature?

ISABELLA

In such a one as, you consenting to it,
Would bark your honor 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 Honor. 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 spoke my brother. 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 in the head and follies, is yet a devil.
O, 'tis the cunning Livery of hell,
The damnedest body to invest and cover
In princely 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 it thee. This night's the time
That I should do what I abhor to name,
Or else thou diest tomorrow.

CLAUDIO

Thou shalt not do it.

ISABELLA

O, were it but my life,
I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.

CLAUDIO

Thanks, dear Isabel.

ISABELLA

Be ready, Claudio, for your death tomorrow.

CLAUDIO

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

ISABELLA

Which is the least?

CLAUDIO

If it were damnable, he being so wise,
Why would he for the momentary trick
Be perdurably fined? O Isabel!

ISABELLA

What says my brother?

CLAUDIO

Death is a fearful thing.

ISABELLA

And shamed life, a hateful.

CLAUDIO

Ay, but to die and go we know not where,
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot,
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clot, And the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods or to reside
In thrilling Region of thick-ribbed Ice,
To be imprisoned 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 uncertain 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 it not a kind of Incest to take life
From thine own sister's shame? 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!

Enter DUKE

DUKE

Vouchsafe a word, young sister, but one word.

ISABELLA

What is your Will?

DUKE

Might you dispense with your leisure, I would by and by have some speech with you. The satisfaction I would require is likewise your own benefit.

ISABELLA

I have no superfluous leisure; my stay must be stolen out of other affairs, but I will attend you awhile.

ISABELLA walks aside

DUKE

Son, I have overheard what hath passed between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her, only he hath made an essay of her virtue to practice his judgment with the disposition of natures. She, having the truth of honor in her, hath made him that gracious denial, which he is most glad to receive. I am Confessor to Angelo, and

I know this to be true. Therefore prepare yourself to death; do not satisfy your resolution with hopes that are fallible. Tomorrow you must die. Go to your knees, and make ready.

CLAUDIO

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

DUKE

Constable, a word with you.

Enter ELBOW

ELBOW

What's your will, father?

DUKE

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.

ELBOW

In good time. Hold you there. Farewell.

Exeunt CLAUDIO, ELBOW; ISABELLA comes forward

DUKE

The hand that hath made you fair hath made you good. The assault that Angelo hath made to you, Fortune hath conveyed to my understanding. 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

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

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

ISABELLA

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

DUKE

She should this Angelo have married, was affianced to her by oath and the nuptial appointed, between which time, 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, with him, her marriage-dowry, with both, her husband, this well-seeming Angelo.

ISABELLA

Can this be so? Did Angelo so leave her?

DUKE

Left her in her tears and dried not one of them with his comfort, swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonor, and he, a marble to her tears, is washed with them but relents not.

ISABELLA

But how out of this can she avail?

DUKE

This forenamed Maid hath yet in her the continuance of her first affection. 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, we shall advise this wronged maid to stead up your appointment, go in your place. By this is your brother saved, your honor untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt Deputy scaled. What think you of it?

ISABELLA

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

DUKE

It lies much in your holding up. Haste you speedily to Angelo. If for this night he entreat you to his bed, give him promise of satisfaction. I will presently to Saint Luke's; there resides this dejected Mariana. At that place call upon me.

ISABELLA

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

Exeunt ISABELLA and DUKE

SCENE II. The street before the prison.

Enter DUKE, ELBOW, and POMPEY

ELBOW

Nay, there be no remedy for it if you will needs buy and sell men and women like beasts. Come your way, sir. Bless you, good Father Friar.

DUKE

O heavens, what stuff is here? 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.

DUKE

Fie, sirrah, a Bawd, a wicked bawd.
The evil that thou causest to be done,
That is thy means to live. 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? Take him to prison;
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!

DUKE

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

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 reply? Ha! How doth my dear Morsel, thy Mistress? Procures she still? Ha! It must be so. Ever your fresh Whore and your powdered Bawd, 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.

POMPEY

I hope, Sir, your good Worship will be my bail?

LUCIO

No, indeed will I not Pompey, it is not the wear. I will pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage if you take it not patiently. Why, your mettle is the more. Adieu, trusty Pompey. Bless you, Friar.

DUKE

And you.

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 and POMPEY

What news, Friar, of the Duke?

DUKE

I know none. Can you tell me of any?

LUCIO

Some say he is with the Emperor of Russia, other some, he is in Rome. But where is he, think you?

DUKE

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

LUCIO

It was a mad fantastical trick of him to steal from the State and usurp the beggary he was never born to. Lord Angelo Dukes it well in his absence; he puts transgression to it.

DUKE

He does well in it.

LUCIO

They say this Angelo was not made by Man and Woman, after this downright way of Creation. Is it true, think you?

DUKE

How should he be made then?

LUCIO

Some report a Sea-maid 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.

DUKE

You are pleasant, sir, and speak apace.

LUCIO

Why, what a ruthless thing is this in him, for the rebellion of a Codpiece, to take away the life of a man! Would the Duke that is absent have done this? Ere he would have 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

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

LUCIO

O Sir, you are deceived.

DUKE

'Tis not possible.

LUCIO

Who, not the Duke? He would be drunk too, that let me inform you.

DUKE

You do him wrong, surely.

LUCIO

Sir, I was an inward of his. A shy fellow was the Duke, and I believe I know the cause of his withdrawing.

DUKE

What, I prithee, might be the cause?

LUCIO

No, pardon. 'Tis a secret must be 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

Wise? Why, no question but he was.

LUCIO

A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow.

DUKE

Either this is the Envy in you, Folly, or mistaking. Let him be but testimonied in his own bringings-forth, and he shall appear to the envious a Scholar, a Statesman, and a Soldier. Therefore, you speak unskillfully, or, if your knowledge be more, it is much darkened in your malice.

LUCIO

Sir, I know him, and I love him.

DUKE

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

LUCIO

Come Sir, I know what I know.

DUKE

I can hardly believe that, since you know not what you speak. But if ever the Duke return, as our prayers are he may, let me desire you to make your answer before him. if it be honest you have spoke, you have courage to maintain it. I am bound to call upon you.

And I pray you your name?

LUCIO

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

DUKE

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

LUCIO

I fear you not.

DUKE

O, you hope the Duke will return no more or you imagine me too unhurtful an opposite, but indeed I can do you little harm. You'll forswear this again?

LUCIO

I'll be hanged first; thou art deceived in me, Friar. But no more of this. Farewell, good Friar. I prithee, pray for me. The Duke, I say to thee again, would eat mutton on Fridays. He's now 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 LUCIO

DUKE

No might nor greatness in mortality
Can censure 'scape. What King so strong
Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?
But who comes here?

Enter ESCALUS, ELBOW, and MISTRESS OVERDONE

ESCALUS

Go, away with her to prison.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

Good my Lord, be good to me; your Honor 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.

ELBOW

A Bawd of eleven years' continuance, may it please your Honor.

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; I have kept it myself; and see how he goes about to abuse me.

ESCALUS

That fellow is a fellow of much License. Go to, no more words. Constable, my Brother Angelo will not be altered. Claudio must die tomorrow.

ELBOW

So please you, this friar hath been with him and advised him for the entertainment of death.

ESCALUS

Away with her to prison.

Exeunt ELBOW and MISTRESS OVERDONE

Good even, good Father.

DUKE

Bliss, and goodness on you.

ESCALUS

Of whence are you?

DUKE

Not of this Country, though my chance is now

To use it for my time. I am a brother

Of gracious Order, late come from the See

In special business from his Holiness.

ESCALUS

What news abroad in the World?

DUKE

None, but that there is so great a Fever on goodness that the dissolution of it must cure it.

There is scarce truth enough alive to make Societies secure, but Security enough to make

Fellowships accursed. Much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This news is

old enough, yet it is every day's news. I pray you, Sir, of what disposition was the Duke?

ESCALUS

One, that above all other strifes, Contended especially to know himself.

DUKE

What pleasure was he given to?

ESCALUS

Rather rejoicing to see another merry than merry at anything which 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?

DUKE

He professes to have received no sinister measure from his Judge, but most willingly

humbles himself to the determination of Justice.

ESCALUS

You have paid the heavens your Function and the prisoner the very debt of your Calling.

I have labored for the poor Gentleman to the extremest shore of my modesty, but my

brother Justice have I found severe.

DUKE

If his own life Answer the straightness 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

Peace be with you.

Exit ESCALUS

He who the sword of heaven will bear
Should be as holy as severe;
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?
Craft against vice, I must apply.
With Angelo tonight shall lie
His old betrothed but despised.
So disguise shall by the disguised
Pay with falsehood, false exacting,
And perform an old contracting.

Exit DUKE

ACT IV**SCENE I. The moated grange at ST. LUKE's.**

Enter MARIANA

MARIANA, *singing*

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.

Enter DUKE; MARIANA speaks

Here comes a man of comfort, whose advice
Hath often stilled my brawling discontent.
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 displeased but pleased my woe.

DUKE

'Tis good, though Music oft hath such a charm
To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.

Enter ISABELLA

I shall crave your forbearance a little; maybe I will call upon you anon for some
advantage to yourself.

MARIANA

I am always bound to you.

DUKE

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 backed,
And to that Vineyard is a planked 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.
He did show me the way twice o'er.

DUKE

Are there no other tokens

Between you 'greed concerning her observance?

ISABELLA

No, none, but only a repair in the dark,
And that I have possessed him, my most stay
Can be but brief.

DUKE

'Tis well borne up.

I have not yet made known to Mariana
A word of this. What ho, come forth,
I pray you be acquainted with this Maid;
She comes to do you good.

ISABELLA

I do desire the like.

DUKE

Do you persuade yourself that I respect you?

MARIANA

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

DUKE

Take then this your companion by the hand,

Who hath a story ready for your ear.

I shall attend your leisure, but make haste;

The vaporous night approaches.

MARIANA

Will it please you walk aside?

DUKE

(sonnet 94)

They that have power to hurt and will do none,

That do not do the thing they most do show,

Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,

Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow,

They rightly do inherit heaven's graces

And husband nature's riches from expense;

They are the lords and owners of their faces,

Others, but stewards of their excellence.

The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,

Though to itself it only live and die,

But if that flower with base infection meet,

The basest weed outbraves his dignity,

For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;

Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds.

Welcome, how agreed?

ISABELLA

She'll take the enterprise upon her father,

If you advise it.

DUKE

It is not my consent,

But my entreaty too.

ISABELLA

Little have you to say

When you depart from him, but soft and low,

Remember now my brother.

MARIANA

Fear me not.

DUKE

Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all;

He is your husband on a pre-contract.

To bring you thus together, 'tis no sin,

Since that the Justice of your title to him

Doth flourish the deceit. Come, let us go.

Exeunt all

SCENE II. A room in the prison.

Enter ELBOW, POMPEY, and CLAUDIO

ELBOW

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.

ELBOW

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

ELBOW

What ho, Abhorson. Where's Abhorson there?

Enter ABHORSON

ABHORSON

Do you call, sir?

ELBOW

Sirrah, here's a fellow will help you tomorrow 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.

POMPEY

Pray, sir, by your good favor, for surely, sir, a good favor 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.

ABHORSON

Sir, it is a Mystery.

ELBOW

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.

ELBOW

You, sirrah, provide your block and your Axe tomorrow four o'clock.

ABHORSON

Come on, Bawd, I will instruct thee in my Trade. Follow.

POMPEY

I do desire to learn, sir, for truly, sir, for your kindness, I owe you a good turn.

POMPEY and ABHORSON exit

ELBOW

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 locked up in sleep as guiltless labor,
When it lies starkly in the Traveler's bones.
He will not wake.

ELBOW

Who can do good on him?

Knocking within

But hark, what noise?

Exit CLAUDIO; Enter DUKE

DUKE

The best and wholesomest spirits of the night
Envelope you, good Constable. Who called here of late?

ELBOW

My lord hath sent me this note, and by me this further charge: that I swerve not from the smallest Article of it, neither in time, matter, or other circumstance.

DUKE

Pray you, let's hear.

ELBOW, *reading*

Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed by four of the clock and in the afternoon, Barnardine. For my better satisfaction, let me have Claudio's head

sent me by five. Let this be duly performed with a thought that more depends on it than we must yet deliver. Thus fail not to do your Office, as you will answer it at your peril.' What say you to this, Sir?

DUKE

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

ELBOW

A Bohemian born, one that is a prisoner nine years old. 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. 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

More of him anon. There is written in your brow, Constable, 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. 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.

ELBOW

Angelo hath seen them both and will discover the favor.

DUKE

O, death's a great disguiser, and you may add to it. Shave the head, and tie the beard, and say it was the desire of the penitent to be so bared before his death; you know the course is common. If anything fall to you upon this, more than thanks and good fortune, by the Saint whom I profess, I will plead against it with my life.

ELBOW

Pardon me, good Father, it is against my oath.

DUKE

Were you sworn to the Duke or to the Deputy?

ELBOW

To him and to his Substitutes.

DUKE

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

ELBOW

But what likelihood is in that?

DUKE

Not a resemblance but a certainty. Yet, since I see you fearful, that neither my coat, integrity, nor persuasion can with ease attempt you, I will go further than I meant to pluck all fears out of you. Look you, Sir, here is the hand and seal of the Duke. You know the Character, I doubt not, and the Signet is not strange to you?

ELBOW

I know them both.

DUKE

The Contents of this is the return of the Duke. You shall anon over-read it at your pleasure, where you shall find, within these two days he will be here. This is a thing that Angelo knows not, for he this very day receives letters of strange tenor, perchance of the Duke's death, perchance entering into some Monastery, but by chance nothing of what is writ. 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. Come away, it is almost clear dawn.

Exeunt DUKE and ELBOW

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, then is there here one Master Caper, 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 brave Master Shooty the great Traveler, 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

A pox on 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

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 it.

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

DUKE

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

BARNARDINE

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

DUKE

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

BARNARDINE

I swear I will not die today for any man's persuasion.

DUKE

But hear you—

BARNARDINE

Not a word. If you have anything to say to me, come to my Ward, for thence will not I today.

Enter ELBOW; Exit BARNADINE

DUKE

Unfit to live or die, O gravel heart.
After him, Fellows, bring him to the block.

Exeunt ABHORSON and POMPEY

ELBOW

This shall be done, good Father, presently.
And how shall we continue Claudio
To save me from the danger that might come
If he were known alive?

DUKE

Put him in secret holds.
Ere twice the Sun hath made his journal greeting
To the under generation, you shall find
Your safety manifested.

ELBOW

I am your free dependent.

DUKE

Quick, dispatch and send the head to Angelo.

Exit ELBOW

Now will I write Letters to Angelo, 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.

Enter ELBOW

ELBOW

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

DUKE

Convenient is it. Make a swift return,
For I would commune with you of such things
That want no ear but yours.

ELBOW

I'll make all speed.

Exit ELBOW

ISABELLA

Peace, ho, be here.

DUKE

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

Enter ISABELLA

ISABELLA

Ho, by your leave.

DUKE

Good morning to you, fair and gracious daughter.

ISABELLA

Hath yet the Deputy sent my brother's pardon?

DUKE

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

ISABELLA

Nay, but it is not so.

DUKE

It is no other.

Show your wisdom, daughter, in your close patience.

ISABELLA

Unhappy Claudio, wretched Isabel,
Injurious world, most damned Angelo.

DUKE

This nor hurts him nor profits you a jot.
Forbear it therefore, give your cause to heaven,
Mark what I say, which you shall find
By every syllable a faithful verity.
The Duke comes home tomorrow; 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 Honor.

ISABELLA

I am directed by you.

DUKE

This Letter then to Friar Peter give;
'Tis that he sent me of the duke's return.
Say, by this token, I desire his company
At Mariana's house tonight. 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. Go you with this Letter.
Who's here?

Enter LUCIO

LUCIO

Good even, Friar. Where's the Constable?

DUKE

Not within, Sir.

LUCIO

O pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart to see thine eyes so red. Thou must be patient;
they say the Duke will be here tomorrow. 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

Sir, the Duke is marvelous 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

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. I was once
before him for getting a Wench with child.

DUKE

Sir, your company is fairer than honest; rest you well.

LUCIO

By my troth, I'll go with thee to the lane's end. If bawdy talk offend you, we'll have very little of it. Nay, Friar, I am a kind of Burr, I shall stick.

Exeunt DUKE and LUCIO

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 in 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 deflowered 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 taken revenge
By so receiving a dishonored life
With ransom of such shame. Would yet he had lived.
Alack, when once our grace we have forgot,
Nothing goes right: we would and we would not.

Exit ANGELO

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.

Enter FRIAR

FRIAR

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 Duke is entering.

Exeunt all

ACT V

SCENE I. The city gate.

Enter DUKE, ANGELO, ESCALUS, LUCIO, and ELBOW

DUKE

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

ANGELO & ESCALUS

Happy return be to your royal grace.

DUKE

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

ANGELO

You make my bonds still greater.

DUKE

O, your desert speaks loud. Give me your hand
And let the Subject see, to make them know
That outward courtesies would fain proclaim
Favors that keep within. Come, Escalus,
You must walk by us on our other hand.

Enter FRIAR, ISABELLA, and MARIANA

FRIAR

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

ISABELLA

Justice, O royal Duke, vail your regard
Upon a wronged—I would fain have said a Maid.
O worthy Prince, dishonor not your eye
By throwing it on any other object
Till you have heard me in my true complaint
And given me Justice, Justice, Justice, Justice.

DUKE

Relate your wrongs: in what? By whom? Be brief.
Here is Lord Angelo shall give you Justice;
Reveal yourself to him.

ISABELLA

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

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 it not strange?

That Angelo is an adulterous thief,

A hypocrite, a virgin-violator,

Is it not strange and strange?

DUKE

Nay it is ten times strange!

ISABELLA

Nay, it is ten times true, for truth is truth

To the end of reckoning.

DUKE

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 touched with madness. Make not impossible

That which but seems unlike.

DUKE

By mine honesty,

If she be mad, as I believe no other,

Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense:

Such a dependency of thing on thing

As e'er I heard in madness. What would you say?

ISABELLA

I am the Sister of one Claudio,

Condemned upon the Act of Fornication

To lose his head, condemned by Angelo.

I, in probation of a Sisterhood,

Was sent to by my Brother; one Lucio

As then the Messenger.

LUCIO

That's I, and it like your Grace.

ISABELLA

That's he indeed.

DUKE

You were not bid to speak.

LUCIO

No, my good Lord, nor wished to hold my peace.

DUKE

I wish you now then, pray you, take note of it.

LUCIO

I warrant your honor.

ISABELLA

I went to this pernicious Caitiff Deputy.

DUKE

That's somewhat madly spoken.

ISABELLA

Pardon it, the phrase is to the matter.

DUKE

Mended again; the matter, proceed.

ISABELLA

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

DUKE

This is most likely.

ISABELLA

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

DUKE

By heaven, fond wretch, thou knowest not what thou speak'st,
Or else thou art suborned against his honor
In hateful practice. If he had so offended,
He would have weighed thy brother by himself
And not have cut him off. Someone 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 ripened time
Unfold the evil which is here wrapped up
In countenance. Heaven shield your Grace from woe,
As I thus wronged hence unbelieved go.

DUKE

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

ISABELLA

One that I would were here, Friar Lodowick.

DUKE

A ghostly Father, belike. Who knows that Lodowick?

LUCIO

My lord, I know him. 'Tis a meddling Friar;
I do not like the man. Had he been Lay, my Lord,
For certain words he spoke against your Grace
In your retirement, I had swung him soundly.

DUKE

Words against me? Let this Friar be found.
Know you that Friar Lodowick that she speaks of?

FRIAR

I know him for a man divine and holy,
And on my trust, a man that never yet
Did, as he vouches, misreport your Grace.

LUCIO

My lord, most villainously, believe it.

FRIAR

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. 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

Good Friar, let's hear it.
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

What, are you married?

MARIANA

No, my Lord.

DUKE

Are you a Maid?

MARIANA

No, my Lord.

DUKE

A Widow then?

MARIANA

Neither, my Lord.

DUKE

Why, you are nothing then. Neither Maid, Widow, nor Wife?

MARIANA

My Lord, I do confess I never 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.

DUKE

This is no witness for Lord Angelo.

MARIANA

Now I come to it, 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.

DUKE

You say, your husband.

MARIANA

Why, just, my Lord, and that is Angelo,
Who thinks he knows that he never 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.
This is that face, thou cruel Angelo,
Which once thou swore was worth the looking on.
This is the hand, which with a vowed contract,
Was fast belocked 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

Know you this woman?

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 spoke with her, saw her, nor heard from her
Upon my faith and honor.

MARIANA

Noble prince,

As there comes light from heaven and words from breath,
As there is sense in truth and truth in virtue,
I am affianced this man's wife as strongly
As words could make up vows. And, my good Lord,
But Tuesday night last gone in his garden house,
He knew me as a wife.

ANGELO

I did but smile till now.

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

DUKE

Ay, with my heart,
And punish them to your height of pleasure.
You, Lord Escalus, lend him your kind pains
To find out this abuse, whence 'tis derived.
There is another Friar that set them on.

FRIAR

Would he were here, my Lord, for he indeed
Hath set the women on to this Complaint.
I know the place where he abides
And may fetch him.

DUKE

Go, do it instantly.

Exit FRIAR

And you, my noble and well-warranted Cousin,
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 thoroughly.

Exit DUKE

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

LUCIO

One that hath spoke most villainous speeches of the Duke.

ESCALUS

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

LUCIO

As any in Vienna, on my word.

ESCALUS

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.

Enter FRIAR and DUKE

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

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

'Tis false.

ESCALUS

How? Know you where you are?

DUKE

Respect to your great place and let the devil
Be sometime honored for his burning throne.
Where is the Duke? 'Tis he should hear me speak.

ESCALUS

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

DUKE

Boldly, at least. Is the Duke gone?

Then is your cause gone too. The Duke's unjust
Thus to retort your manifest Appeal
And put your trial in the villain's mouth,
Which here you come to accuse.

LUCIO

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

ESCALUS

Why, thou unreverend and unhallowed Friar,
Is it not enough thou hast suborned these women
To accuse this worthy man, to call him villain?
Take him hence, to the rack with him; we'll touse you
Joint by joint, but we will know his purpose.
What, unjust?

DUKE

Be not so hot. The Duke
Dare no more stretch this finger of mine than he
Dare rack his own. His Subject am I not,
Nor here Provincial; My business in this State
Made me a looker on here in Vienna,
Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble

Till it o'er-run the Stew. Laws for all faults,
But faults so countenanced 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

I remember you, Sir, by the sound of your voice. I met you at the Prison in the absence of the Duke.

LUCIO

O, did you so? And do you remember what you said of the Duke?

DUKE

Most notably, Sir.

LUCIO

Do you so, Sir? And was the Duke a flesh-monger, a fool, and a coward, as you then reported him to be?

DUKE

You must, Sir, change persons with me ere you make that my report; you indeed spoke so of him, and much more, much worse.

LUCIO

O thou damnable fellow, did not I pluck thee by the nose for thy speeches?

DUKE

I protest, I love the Duke as I love myself.

ANGELO

Hark how the villain would close now after his treasonable abuses.

ESCALUS

Such a fellow is not to be talked withal. Away with him to prison. Where is the Constable? Away with him to prison, away with those harlots too, and with the other confederate companion.

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.

LUCIO pulls off DUKE's disguise

DUKE

Thou art the first knave that e'er madest a Duke.

First, Constable, let me bail these gentle three.

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

What you have spoke, I pardon. Sit you down,
We'll borrow place of him, 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 looked upon my passes. Then, good Prince,
No longer Session hold upon my shame
But let my Trial be mine own Confession.
Immediate sentence, then, and sequent death
Is all the grace I beg.

DUKE

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

ANGELO

I was, my Lord.

DUKE

Go take her hence and marry her instantly.
Do you the office, Friar, which consummate,
Return him here again. Go with him, Constable.

ESCALUS

My Lord, I am more amazed at his dishonor
Than at the strangeness of it.

DUKE

Come hither, Isabel,
Your Friar is now your Prince. As I was then
Advertising and holy to your business,
Not changing heart with habit, I am still
Attorneyed at your service.

ISABELLA

O give me pardon,
That I, your vassal, have employed and pained
Your unknown Sovereignty.

DUKE

You are pardoned, Isabel,
And now, dear Maid, be you as free to us.
Your Brother's death I know sits at your heart.
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.

DUKE

For this new-married man approaching here,
Whose salt imagination yet hath wronged
Your well defended honor, you must pardon
For Mariana's sake, but as he adjudged your Brother,
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.
We do condemn thee to the very Block
Where Claudio stooped to death, and with like haste.
Away with him.

MARIANA

O my most gracious Lord,
I hope you will not mock me with a husband?

DUKE

It is your husband mocked you with a husband.
Consenting to the safeguard of your honor,
I thought your marriage fit, else Imputation
For that he knew, you might reproach your life
And choke your good to come.

MARIANA

Gentle, my Liege.

DUKE

Your suit's unprofitable; Stand up, I say.
I have bethought me of another fault.
Constable, how came it Claudio was beheaded
At an unusual hour?

ELBOW

It was commanded so.

DUKE

Had you a special warrant for the deed?

ELBOW

No, my good Lord, it was by private message.

DUKE

For which I do discharge you of your office.
Give up your keys.

ELBOW

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. His name is Barnardine.

DUKE

I would thou hadst done so by Claudio.
Go fetch him hither, let me look upon him.

Exit ELBOW

ESCALUS

I am sorry one so learned and so wise
As you, Lord Angelo, have still appeared
Should slip so grossly, both in the heat of blood
And lack of tempered judgment afterward.

ANGELO

I am sorry that such sorrow I procure,
And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart
That I crave death more willingly than mercy;
'Tis my deserving and I do entreat it.

Enter ELBOW and CLAUDIO

DUKE

This is that Barnardine?

ELBOW

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

DUKE

If he be like your brother, he is pardoned.
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.

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

Whipt first, sir, and hanged after.
Proclaim it, Constable, round about the City,
If any woman wronged 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 finished,
Let him be whipt and hanged.

LUCIO

I beseech your Highness, do not marry me to a whore. Your Highness said even now I
made you a Duke. Good my Lord, do not recompense me in making me a Cuckold.

DUKE

Upon mine honor thou shalt marry her.
Thy slanders I forgive, and therewithal
Remit thy other forfeits. Take him to prison
And see our pleasure herein executed.
She, Claudio, that you wronged, look you restore.
Joy to you, Mariana. Love her, Angelo;
I have confessed her, and I know her virtue.
Thanks good friend, Escalus, for thy much goodness;
There's more behind that is more grate. |
Thanks, Constable, for thy care and secrecy;
We shall employ thee in a worthier place.
Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home
The head of Barnardine 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 all