

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:

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.

Hold therefore, Angelo:--
In our remove be thou at full ourself;
Mortality and mercy in Vienna
Live in thy tongue and heart: old Escalus,
Though first in question, is thy secondary.
Take thy commission.

ANGELO

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

DUKE 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.

So, fare you well;

ANGELO

Yet give leave, my lord,

DUKE VINCENTIO

My haste may not admit it;

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:

Once more, fare you well.

ANGELO

The heavens give safety to your purposes!

ESCALUS

Lead forth and bring you back in happiness!

DUKE

I thank you. Fare you well.

Exit

ESCALUS

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

ANGELO

'Tis so with me. Let us withdraw together,

ESCALUS

I'll wait upon your honour.

Exeunt

SCENE II. A Street.

Enter LUCIO and Master Froth

LUCIO

I will, out of thine own
confession, learn to begin thy health; but, whilst I
live, forget to drink after thee.

Froth

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

Froth

To what, I pray?

LUCIO

Judge.

Froth

To three thousand dolours a year.

LUCIO

Ay, and more. A French crown more.

Enter MISTRESS OVERDONE

Froth

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.

Froth

Who's that, I pray thee?

MISTRESS OVERDONE

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

Froth

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

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.

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

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.

Re-enter LUCIO and Froth

LUCIO

Why, how now, Claudio! whence comes this restraint?

CLAUDIO

From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty:

LUCIO

What's thy offence, Claudio?

CLAUDIO

What but to speak of would offend again.

LUCIO

What, is't murder?

CLAUDIO

No.

Froth

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.

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--

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: 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;

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

SCENE III. A monastery.

Enter DUKE VINCENTIO and FRIAR PETER

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 PETER

May your grace speak of it?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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;

Now, pious sir,

You will demand of me why I do this?

FRIAR PETER

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?

ISABELLA

I am that Isabella.

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:
Your brother and his lover have embraced:

ISABELLA

Sir, make me not your story.

LUCIO

It is true.

ISABELLA

You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

LUCIO

Do not believe it. Fewness and truth, 'tis thus:
He hath got his friend with child.

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;

 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 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:

ISABELLA

Doth he so seek his life?

LUCIO

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.

 Go to Lord Angelo,

And let him learn to know, when maidens sue,

Men give like gods;

ISABELLA

I will about it straight;

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 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,
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.
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.
Where is the provost?

Provost

Here, if it like your honour.

ANGELO

See that Claudio

Be executed by nine to-morrow morning:

Exit Provost

ESCALUS

Well, heaven forgive him! and forgive us all!

Enter ELBOW, and Officers with FROTH and POMPEY

ELBOW

Come, bring them away: 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?

What are you, sir?

ELBOW

He, sir! a tapster, sir; 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, 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.

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, 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, if you be remembered, cracking the stones of the foresaid prunes,--

FROTH

Ay, so I did indeed.

POMPEY

Why, very well, then,--

ESCALUS

Come, you are a tedious fool: to the purpose. What was done to Elbow's wife?

POMPEY

Sir, your honour cannot come to that yet.
but you shall come to it, by your honour's
leave. And, I beseech you, look into Master Froth
here, sir; a man of four-score pound a year; whose
father died at Hallowmas: was't not at Hallowmas,
Master Froth?

FROTH

All-hallond eve.

POMPEY

Why, very well; I hope here be truths.

ANGELO

This will last out a night in Russia,
I'll
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 you, sir, look in this gentleman's face.
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?

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!

POMPEY

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

ESCALUS

Is this true?

ELBOW

O thou caitiff! O thou varlet! O thou wicked Hannibal! I respected with her before I was married to her! Prove this, thou wicked Hannibal, or I'll have mine action of battery on thee. 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.

Exit ELBOW

ESCALUS

Where were you born, friend?

FROTH

Here in Vienna, sir.

ESCALUS

Are you of fourscore pounds a year?

FROTH

Yes, an't please you, sir.

ESCALUS

So. What trade are you of, sir?

POMPHEY

Tapster; a poor widow's tapster.

ESCALUS

Your mistress' name?

POMPHEY

Mistress Overdone.

ESCALUS

Hath she had any more than one husband?

POMPHEY

Nine, sir; Overdone by the last.

ESCALUS

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

FROTH

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

ESCALUS

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

Exit FROTH

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

POMPHEY

Pompey.

ESCALUS

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.

POMPHEY

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.

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.

ESCALUS

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, 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: but I shall follow it as the flesh and fortune shall better determine.

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

Exit

ESCALUS

What's o'clock, think you?

Justice

Eleven, sir.

ESCALUS

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

Justice

Lord Angelo is severe.

ESCALUS

There is no remedy.

Come, sir.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Another room in the same.

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?

Do you your office, or give up your place.

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.

You're welcome: what's your will?

ISABELLA

I am a woeful suitor to your honour,

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;

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

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

Give't not o'er so: to him
again, entreat him;
Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown:

ISABELLA

Must he needs die?

ANGELO

Maiden, no remedy.
He's sentenced; 'tis too late.

LUCIO

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,
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

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

LUCIO

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:

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

O, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.

LUCIO

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,
 Like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

LUCIO

O, to him, to him, wench!
He's coming; I perceive 't.

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.

ISABELLA

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

ANGELO

How! bribe me?

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.

ANGELO

Well; come to me to-morrow.

LUCIO

Go to; 'tis well; away!

ISABELLA

Heaven keep your honour safe!

ANGELO

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?
O, fie, fie, fie!
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
Dost thou desire her foully for those things
That make her good?

What, do I love her,
That I desire to hear her speak again,
And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?
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.

BEER BREAK

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

I come to visit the afflicted spirits
Here in the prison.

Provost

Look, here comes one: 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.

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,

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.

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?

Enter ISABELLA

How now, fair maid?

ISABELLA

I am come to know your pleasure.

ANGELO

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

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

That I do beg his life, if it be sin,
Heaven let me bear it!

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,
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

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

We are all frail.

Plainly conceive, I love you.

ISABELLA

My brother did love Juliet,
And you tell me that he shall die for it.

ANGELO

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

ISABELLA

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

ANGELO

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

ISABELLA

Ha! little honour to be much believed,
And most pernicious purpose! Seeming, seeming!
I will proclaim thee, Angelo; look for't:
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,
Or with an outstretch'd throat I'll tell the world aloud
What man thou art.

ANGELO

Who will believe thee, Isabel?
My unsoil'd name, the austereness of my life,
My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,
Will so your accusation overweigh,
That you shall stifle in your own report
And smell of calumny. I have begun,
And now I give my sensual race the rein:
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;
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,

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;
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee.

What's yet in this
That bears the name of life?

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

But in what nature?

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?

CLAUDIO

Why give you me this shame?

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,
is yet a devil.

CLAUDIO

The prenie Angelo!

ISABELLA

Dost thou think, Claudio?

If I would yield him my virginity,
Thou mightst be freed.

CLAUDIO

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!
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
No word to save thee.

CLAUDIO

Nay, hear me, Isabel.

ISABELLA

O, fie, fie, fie!
'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:

ISABELLA

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

Walks apart

DUKE VINCENTIO

Son, I have overheard what hath passed between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her; only he hath made an essay of her virtue to practise his judgment with the disposition of natures: she, having the truth of honour in her, hath made him that gracious denial which he is most glad to receive. I am confessor to Angelo, and I know this to be true; therefore prepare yourself to death: do not satisfy your resolution with hopes that are fallible: tomorrow you must die; go to your knees and make ready.

CLAUDIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Hold you there: farewell.

Exit CLAUDIO

Provost, a word with you!

Re-enter Provost

Provost

What's your will, father

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

Provost

In good time.

Exit Provost. ISABELLA comes forward

DUKE VINCENTIO

The hand that hath made you fair hath made you good:
The 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 VINCENTIO

That shall not be much amiss.

Therefore fasten your ear on my advisings: 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.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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; but

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 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.

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

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; 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.

--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. 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

Haste you speedily to Angelo: 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 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

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.

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.
Take him to prison, officer:

ELBOW

He must before the deputy, sir; he has given him warning: the deputy cannot abide a whoremaster

POMPEY

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

Enter LUCIO

LUCIO

How now, noble Pompey! How doth my dear morsel, thy mistress? Procures she still, ha?

POMPEY

Troth, sir, she hath eaten up all her beef.

LUCIO

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. Adieu, trusty Pompey. 'Bless you, friar.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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, POMPEY and Officers

What news, friar, of the duke?

DUKE VINCENTIO

I know none.

LUCIO

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

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 dried fish.

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?
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 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.

I pray you, your name?

LUCIO

Sir, my name is Lucio; well known to the duke.

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 funnel. I would the duke we talk of were returned again.

I prithee, pray for me. The duke, I say to thee again, I say to thee, he would mouth with a beggar, though she smelt brown bread and garlic: say that I said so. Farewell.

Exit

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.

Provost

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

MISTRESS OVERDONE

My lord, this is one Lucio's information against me. Mistress Kate Keepdown was with child by him in the duke's time; he promised her marriage: his child is a year and a quarter old, come Philip and Jacob: I have kept it myself; and see how he goes about to abuse me!

ESCALUS

That fellow is a fellow of much licence: let him be called before us. Away with her to prison! Go to; no more words.

Exeunt Officers with MISTRESS OVERDONE

Provost, my brother Angelo will not be altered;
Claudio must die to-morrow: let him be furnished
with divines, and have all charitable preparation.

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,

ESCALUS

What news abroad i' the world?

DUKE VINCENTIO

None. 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 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.

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Peace be with you!

Exeunt.

ACT IV

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

Enter MARIANA

MARIANA sings (with others?)

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.

I pray, you, tell me, hath any body inquired
for me here to-day?

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,
There have I made my promise
Upon the heavy middle of the night
To call upon him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ISABELLA

No, none, but only a repair i' the dark;

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?

DUKE VINCENTIO

O place and greatness! millions of false eyes
Are stuck upon thee: volumes of --
Welcome, how agreed?

ISABELLA

She'll take the enterprise upon her, father,
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,
Come, let us go:

Exeunt

SCENE II. A room in the prison.

BEER BREAK

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.

Are you agreed?

POMPEY

Sir, I will serve him;

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: 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

fast lock'd up in sleep:
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;

Knocking within

Now are they come.

Provost

How now! what noise?

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;

Enter a Messenger

This is Angelo's man.

DUKE VINCENTIO

And here comes Claudio's pardon.

Messenger

My lord hath sent you this note; and by me this
further charge, that you swerve not from the
smallest article of it, neither in time, matter, or
other circumstance. Good morrow; for, as I take it,
it is almost day.

Provost

I shall obey him.

Exit Messenger

DUKE VINCENTIO

This is his pardon, purchased by such sin
For which the pardoner himself is in.
Now, sir, what news?

Provost

'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. Fail not to do your office, as you will answer it at your peril.'

What say you to this, sir?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

Provost

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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.

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

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.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Since I see you fearful, 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;

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.

BEER BREAK

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. Master Starve-lackey the rapier and dagger man, and young Drop-heir that killed lusty Pudding, 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: 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

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:

Provost

This shall be done, good father, presently.
And how shall we continue Claudio?

DUKE VINCENTIO

Let this be done.

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:
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;
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: 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;

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.
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

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. Come, we will walk.

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.
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.

and very near upon

The duke is entering: therefore, hence, away!

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. The city gate.

BEER BREAK

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ANGELO ESCALUS

Happy return be to your royal grace!

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ANGELO

You make my bonds still greater.

DUKE VINCENTIO

O, your desert speaks loud; and I should wrong it,
To lock it in the wards of covert bosom,
Come, Escalus,

You must walk by us on our other hand;

FRIAR PETER

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

ISABELLA

Justice, O royal duke!
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:

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

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!

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.

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

This is most likely!

ISABELLA

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

By heaven, fond wretch, thou knowist not what thou speak'st,

Or else thou art suborn'd against his honour
In hateful practise. First, his integrity
Stands without blemish. Next, it imports no reason
That with such vehemency he should pursue
Faults proper to himself: if he had so offended,
He would have weigh'd thy brother by himself
And not have cut him off. Some one hath set you on:
Confess the truth, and say by whose advice
Thou camest here to complain.

ISABELLA

And is this all?
Then, O you blessed ministers above,
Keep me in patience, and with ripen'd time
Unfold the evil which is here wrapt up
In countenance! Heaven shield your grace from woe,
As I, thus wrong'd, hence unbeliev'd go!

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ISABELLA

One that I would were here, Friar Lodowick.

DUKE VINCENTIO

A ghostly father, belike. Who knows that Lodowick?

LUCIO

My lord, I know him; 'tis a meddling friar;
I do not like the man: had he been lay, my lord
For certain words he spake against your grace
In your retirement, I had swung him soundly.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

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!

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;

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

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?

ANGELO

O my dread lord,
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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Come hither, Isabel.

Your friar is now your prince:

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;
But, peace be with him!
That life is better life, past fearing death,
Than that which lives to fear: make it your comfort,

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,
Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd,
As if my brother lived: I partly think
A due sincerity govern'd his deeds,
Till he did look on me: since it is so,
Let him not die. My brother had but justice,
In that he did the thing for which he died:
For Angelo,
His act did not o'ertake his bad intent,
And must be buried but as an intent
That perish'd by the way: thoughts are no subjects;
Intent but merely thoughts.

MARIANA

Merely, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

Provost

It was commanded so.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Had you a special warrant for the deed?

Provost

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

For which I do discharge you of your office:

Give up your keys.

Provost

Pardon me, noble lord:

I thought it was a fault, but knew it not;

Yet did repent me, after more advice;

For testimony whereof, one in the prison,

That should by private order else have died,

I have reserved alive.

DUKE VINCENTIO

What's he?

Provost

His name is Barnardine.

DUKE VINCENTIO

I would thou hadst done so by Claudio.

Go fetch him hither; let me look upon him.

Exit Provost

ESCALUS

I am sorry, one so learned and so wise

As you, Lord Angelo, have still appear'd,

Should slip so grossly, both in the heat of blood.

And lack of temper'd judgment afterward.

ANGELO

I am sorry that such sorrow I procure:

And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart

That I crave death more willingly than mercy;

'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it.

Re-enter Provost, with BARNARDINE, CLAUDIO muffled, and JULIET

DUKE VINCENTIO

Which is that Barnardine?

Provost

This, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

There was a friar told me of this man.

Sirrah, thou art said to have a stubborn soul.

That apprehends no further than this world,
And squarest thy life according. Thou'rt condemn'd:
But, for those earthly faults, I quit them all;
And pray thee take this mercy to provide
For better times to come. Friar, advise him;
I leave him to your hand. What muffled fellow's that?

Provost

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

Unmuffles CLAUDIO

DUKE VINCENTIO

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.
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.

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.

She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore.

Joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo:

I have confess'd her and I know her virtue.

Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness:

There's more behind that is more grate. . .

Thanks, provost, for thy care and secrecy:

We shall employ thee in a worthier place.

Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home

The head of Ragozine for Claudio's:

The offence pardons itself. Dear Isabel,

I have a motion much imports your good;

Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,

What's mine is yours and what is yours is mine.

So, bring us to our palace; where we'll show

What's yet behind, that's meet you all should know.

Exeunt