

ACT 1

Scene 1. [*The Duke's palace*]*Enter DUKE, ESCALUS*

DUKE: Escalus.

ESCALUS: My lord.

DUKE: There is our commission,
 From which we would not have you warp. Call hither,
 I say, bid come before us, Angelo. 15

ESCALUS starts to exit, but DUKE detains him.

—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,
 And given his deputation all the organs 20
 Of our own pow'r. What think you of it?

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

Enter ANGELO

DUKE: Look where he comes. 25

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

DUKE: Angelo,
 In our remove be thou at full ourself: 45
 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, 50
 Let there be some more test made of my mettle,
 Before so noble and so great a figure
 Be stamped upon it.

DUKE: No more evasion:
 We've with a leavened and preparéd choice 55
 Proceeded to you; therefore take your honours.
 Our haste from hence is of so quick condition
 That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestioned
 Matters of needful value. We shall write to you
 As time and our concernings shall importune, 60
 How it goes with us, and do look to know
 What doth befall you here. So fare you well.
 To th' hopeful execution do I leave you
 Of your commissions.

ANGELO: Yet give leave, my lord, 65

That we may bring you something on the way.
 DUKE: My haste may not admit it;
 Nor need you, on mine honour, have to do
 With any scruple; your scope is as mine own. 70
 So to enforce or qualify the laws
 As to your soul seems good. Give me your hand.
 I'll privily away; I love the people,
 But do not like to stage me to their eyes.
 Though it do well, I do not relish well
 Their loud applause and aves vehement: 75
 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. 80

DUKE exits.

ESCALUS: I shall desire you, sir, to give me leave
 To have free speech with you; and it concerns me
 To look into the bottom of my place.
 A pow'r I have, but of what strength and nature
 I am not yet instructed. 85

ANGELO: 'Tis so with me.—Let us withdraw together,
 And we may soon our satisfaction have
 Touching that point.

ESCALUS: I'll wait upon your honour.
Exeunt.

Scene 2. [A street.]

Enter LUCIO and GENTLEMAN.

LUCIO: I have purchased as many diseases under her roof as come to three thousand
 dolors a year.
 GENTLEMAN: Ay, and more.
 LUCIO: A French crown more. 45
 GENTLEMAN: Thou art always figuring diseases in me, but thou art full of
 error. I am sound.
 LUCIO: Nay, not, as one would say, healthy; but so sound as things that
 are hollow: thy bones are hollow: impiety has made a feast of thee.
Enter OVERDONE.

GENTLEMAN: How now! 50
 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?
 OVERDONE: Marry, sir, that's Claudio, Signior Claudio.
 GENTLEMAN: Claudio to prison? 'Tis not so. 55
 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? 60
OVERDONE: I am too sure of it; and it is for getting Madam Julietta with child.
LUCIO: Believe me, this may be. He promised to meet me two hours since,
and he was ever precise in promise-keeping. Let's go learn the truth of it.
Exeunt LUCIO and GENTLEMAN.
OVERDONE: Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the
gallows, and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk.
Enter POMPEY. 70
How now! what's the news with you?
POMPEY: Yonder man is carried to prison.
OVERDONE: Well; what has he done?
POMPEY: A woman.
OVERDONE: But what's his offence? 75
POMPEY: Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.
OVERDONE: What! Is there a maid with child by him?
POMPEY: No; but there's a woman with maid by him. You have not heard of
the proclamation, have you?
OVERDONE: What proclamation, man? 80
POMPEY: All houses of resort in Vienna must be plucked down. Here comes Signior
Claudio, led by the provost to prison: and there's Madam Juliet.
Enter ESCALUS, CLAUDIO, JULIET, LUCIO and GENTLEMAN.
CLAUDIO: Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to th' world?
Bear me to prison, where I am committed.
ESCALUS.: I do it not in evil disposition,
But from Lord Angelo by special charge. 100
LUCIO: Why, how now, Claudio, whence comes this restraint? 105
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, 110
A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.
LUCIO: If I could speak so wisely under an arrest, I would send for certain of my
creditors; and yet, to say the truth, I had as lief have the foppery of freedom as the
morality of imprisonment.—What's thy offence, Claudio? 115
CLAUDIO: What but to speak of would offend again.
LUCIO: What, is't murder?
CLAUDIO: No.
LUCIO: Lechery?
CLAUDIO: Call it so. 120
ESCALUS.: Away, sir; you must go.
CLAUDIO: One word, good friend.—Lucio, a word with you.
CLAUDIO and LUCIO step aside.
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 125

- 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 130
 Remaining in the coffer of her friends,
 From whom we thought it meet to hide our love
 Till time had made them for us. But it chances
 The stealth of our most mutual entertainment
 With character too gross is writ on Juliet. 135
- LUCIO: With child, perhaps?
- CLAUDIO: Unhappily, even so.
 And the new deputy now for the Duke—
 Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness,
 Or whether that the body public be 140
 A horse whereon the governor doth ride,
 Who, newly in the seat, that it may know
 He can command, lets it straight feel the spur;
 Whether the tyranny be in his place,
 Or in his eminence that fills it up, 145
 I stagger in—but this new governor
 Awakes me all the enrolléd penalties
 Which have, like unscoured armour, hung by th' wall
 So long, that nineteen zodiacs have gone round,
 And none of them been worn; and, for a name, 150
 Now puts the drowsy and neglected act
 Freshly on me. 'Tis surely for a name.
- LUCIO: I warrant it is: and thy head stands so tickle on thy shoulders
 that a milkmaid, if she be in love, may sigh it off. Send after the
 Duke, and appeal to him. 155
- 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; 160
 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 moves men; beside, she hath prosperous art 165
 When she will play with reason and discourse,
 And well she can persuade.
- LUCIO: I pray she may; as well for the encouragement of the like, which
 else would stand under grievous imposition, as for the enjoying
 of thy life, who I would be sorry should be thus foolishly lost 170
 at a game of tick-tack. I'll to her.

CLAUDIO: I thank you, good friend Lucio.

LUCIO: Within two hours.

CLAUDIO: Come, officer, away.

Exeunt ESCALUS, CLAUDIO, JULIET, LUCIO and GENTLEMAN.

OVERDONE: But shall all our houses of resort be pulled down?

POMPEY: To the ground, mistress.

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

POMPEY: Come, fear not you; good counsellors lack no clients. Though you change your place you need not change your trade: I'll be your tapster still.

Courage, there will be pity taken on you; you that have worn your eyes almost out in the service, you will be considered.

OVERDONE: What's to do here, Thomas Tapster? Let's withdraw.

Exeunt OVERDONE and POMPEY.

Scene 3. *[A monastery.]*

Enter DUKE and FRIAR

DUKE: No, holy father; throw away that thought;

Believe not that the dribbling dart of love

Can pierce a complete bosom. Why I desire thee

To give me secret harbour, hath a purpose

More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends

Of burning youth.

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FRIAR: May your grace speak of it?

DUKE: My holy sir, none better knows than you

How I have ever loved the life removed,

And held in idle price to haunt assemblies

Where youth and cost, witless bravery keeps.

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 traveled 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.

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FRIAR: Gladly, my lord.

DUKE: We have strict statutes and most biting laws,

The needful bits and curbs to headstrong weeds,

Which for this nineteen years we have let slip,

Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave,

That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,

Having bound up the threat'ning twigs of birch,

Only to stick it in their children's sight

For terror, not to use; in time the rod

Becomes more mocked than feared; so our decrees,

20

25

Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead,
 And Liberty plucks Justice by the nose; 30
 The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
 Goes all decorum.

FRIAR: It rested in your grace
 To unloose this tied-up Justice when you pleased,
 And it in you more dreadful would have seemed 35
 Than in Lord Angelo.

DUKE: I do fear, too dreadful:
 Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
 'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them 40
 For what I bid them do: for we bid this be done
 When evil deeds have their permissive pass
 And not the punishment. Therefore, indeed, my father,
 I have on Angelo imposed the office,
 Who may, in th' ambush of my name, strike home,
 And yet my nature never in the fight 45
 To do it 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 50
 Like a true friar. Moe reasons for this action
 At our more leisure shall I render you;
 Only, this one: Lord Angelo is precise,
 Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses
 That his blood flows, or that his appetite 55
 Is more to bread than stone: hence shall we see,
 If power change purpose, what our seemers be.

Exeunt DUKE and FRIAR..

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Scene 4. *[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. 5

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

ISABELLA: Who's that which calls?

FRANCISCA: It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabella,

Turn you the key, and know his business of him.

You may, I may not: you are yet unsworn. 10

When you have vowed, you must not speak with men

But in the presence of the prioress:

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. 65
 He—to give fear to use and liberty,
 Which have for long run by the hideous law,
 As mice by lions—hath picked out an act,
 Under whose heavy sense your brother's life
 Falls into forfeit: he arrests him on it, 70
 And follows close the rigour of the statute,
 To make him an example. All hope is gone,
 Unless you have the grace by your fair prayer
 To soften Angelo. And that's my pith
 Of business 'twixt you and your poor brother. 75
 ISABELLA: Doth he so seek his life?
 LUCIO: Has censur'd him
 Already, and, as I hear, the provost hath
 A warrant for's execution.
 ISABELLA: Alas! what poor ability's in me 80
 To do him good?
 LUCIO: Assay the power you have.
 ISABELLA: My power! Alas, I doubt—
 LUCIO: Our doubts are traitors,
 And makes us lose the good we oft might win, 85
 By fearing to attempt. Go to Lord Angelo,
 And let him learn to know, when maidens sue,
 Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel,
 All their petitions are as freely theirs
 As they themselves would owe them. 90
 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; 95
 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 LUCIO and ISABELLA separately.

ACT 2

Scene 1. [A room.]

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 5
 Let us be keen, and rather cut a little
 Than fall, and bruise to death. Alas, this gentleman,
 Whom I would save, had a most noble father.
 Let but your honour know,
 Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue, 10
 That, in the working of your own affections,
 Had time cohered with place, or place with wishing,
 Or that the resolute acting of your blood
 Could have attained th' effect of your own purpose,
 Whether you had not sometime in your life 15
 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, 20
 May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two
 Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to Justice,
 That Justice seizes. What knows the laws
 That thieves do pass on thieves? 'Tis very pregnant,
 The jewel that we find, we stoop and take't, 25
 Because we see it; but what we do not see
 We tread upon, and never think of it.
 You may not so extenuate his offence
 For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,
 When I, that censure him, do so offend, 30
 Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,
 And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die.
- ESCALUS: Be it as your wisdom will.
- ANGELO: See Claudio
 Be executed by nine tomorrow morning:
 Bring him his confessor; let him be prepared;
 For that's the utmost of his pilgrimage.
- ESCALUS: Is it your will Claudio shall die tomorrow? 10
- 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. 15
- 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 honour's pardon. 20
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.
See you the fornicatress be removed;
Let her have needful, but not lavish, means;
There shall be order for it.
- [Enter LUCIO and ISABELLA.]*
- ESCALUS: *[Offering to retire.]* 'Save your honour. 35
- ANGELO: Stay a little while.—Y'are welcome. What's your will?
- ISABELLA: I am a woeful suitor to your honour,
Please but your honour hear me.
- ANGELO: Well; what's your suit? 40
- 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. 45
- 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: *[aside]* Heaven give thee moving graces. 50
- 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. 55
- ISABELLA: O just but severe law!
I had a brother, then. Heaven keep your honour!
ISABELLA starts to leave.
- LUCIO: *[aside to ISABELLA.]* Give't not o'er so: to him again, entreat him;
Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown;
You are too cold: if you should need a pin, 60
You could not with more tame a tongue desire it.
To him, I say.
- ISABELLA: Must he needs die?
- ANGELO: Maiden, no remedy.
- ISABELLA: Yes; I do think that you might pardon him, 65

And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.
ANGELO: I will not do't.
ISABELLA: But can you, if you would?
ANGELO: Look what I will not, that I cannot do.
ISABELLA: But might you do't, and do the world no wrong, 70
If so your heart were touched with that remorse
As mine is to him?
ANGELO: He's sentenced; 'tis too late.
LUCIO: [*aside to ISABELLA.*] You are too cold.
ISABELLA: Too late? Why, no: I, that do speak a word, 75
May call it again. Well, believe this:
No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
Not the king's crown nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace 80
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. 85
ISABELLA: I would to heaven I had your potency,
And you were Isabel; should it then be thus?
No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge,
And what a prisoner.
LUCIO: [*Aside.*] Ay, touch him; there's the vein. 90
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 95
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. 100
ANGELO: Be you content, fair maid;
It is the law, not I, condemns 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! 105
He's not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens
We kill the fowl of season: shall we serve heaven
With less respect than we do minister
To our gross selves? Good, good my lord, bethink you:
Who is it that hath died for this offence? 110
There's many have committed it.

- LUCIO: *[aside to ISABELLA]* Ay, well said.
- ANGELO: The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept.
 Those many had not dared to do that evil,
 If the first that did th' edict infringe 115
 Had answered for his deed. Now 'tis awake;
 Takes note of what is done; and, like a prophet,
 Looks in a glass, that shows what future evils
 Are now to have no successive degrees,
 But here they live, to end.
- ISABELLA: Yet show some pity.
- ANGELO: I show it most of all when I show justice;
 For then I pity those I do not know, 125
 Which a dismissed offence would after gall;
 And do him right that, answering one foul wrong,
 Lives not to act another. Be satisfied;
 Your brother dies tomorrow; be content.
- ISABELLA: So you must be the first that gives this sentence, 130
 And he, that suffers. O, it is excellent
 To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
 To use it like a giant.
- LUCIO: *[aside]* *That's well said.*
- ISABELLA: Could great men thunder 135
 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 140
 Splits the unwedgeable and gnarled oak
 Than the soft myrtle. But man, proud man,
 Dressed in a little brief authority,
 Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
 His glassy essence, like an angry ape, 145
 Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
 As makes the angels weep; who, with our spleens,
 Would all themselves laugh mortal.
- LUCIO: *[aside to ISABELLA]* O, to him, to him, wench: he will relent;
 He's coming; I perceive 't. 150
- ESCALUS: *[aside]* Pray heaven she win him!
- ISABELLA: We cannot weigh our brother with ourself:
 Great men may jest with saints; 'tis wit in them;
 But in the less, foul profanation.
- LUCIO: Thou'rt i' the right, girl; more o' that. 155
- ISABELLA: That in the captain's but a choleric word
 Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.
- LUCIO: *[aside to ISABELLA]* Art avised o' that? more on't.
- ANGELO: Why do you put these sayings upon me?

- ISABELLA: Because authority, though it err like others, 160
 Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself
 That skins the vice o' th' top; go to your bosom,
 Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
 That's like my brother's fault: if it confess
 A natural guiltiness such as is his, 165
 Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
 Against my brother's life.
- ANGELO: [*aside*] She speaks, and 'tis
 Such sense, that my sense breeds with it. —Fare you well. 170
- ISABELLA: Gentle my lord, turn back.
 ANGELO: I will bethink me; come again tomorrow.
 ISABELLA: Hark how I'll bribe you; good my lord, turn back.
 ANGELO: How! Bribe me?
 ISABELLA: Ay, with such gifts that heaven shall share with you. 175
- LUCIO: [*aside to ISABELLA*] You had marred all else.
 ISABELLA: Not with fond sicles 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 180
 Ere sunrise, prayers from preservéd souls,
 From fasting maids whose minds are dedicate
 To nothing temporal.
- ANGELO: Well; come to me tomorrow. 185
- LUCIO: [*aside to ISABELLA.*] Go to; 'tis well; away.
 ISABELLA: Heaven keep your honour safe!
 ANGELO: [*aside*] Amen:
 For I am that way going to temptation,
 Where prayers cross. 190
- ISABELLA: At what hour tomorrow
 Shall I attend your lordship?
 ANGELO: At any time 'fore noon.
 ISABELLA: 'Save your honour!
 [*Exeunt LUCIO, ISABELLA and ESCALUS.*]
- ANGELO: From thee, even from thy virtue! 195
 What's this? What's this? Is this her fault or mine?
 The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?
 Ha, not she. Nor doth she tempt; but it is I
 That, lying by the violet in the sun,
 Do, as the carrion does, not as the flow'r, 200
 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! 205
 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, 210
 That I desire to hear her speak again,
 And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?
 O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
 With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous
 Is that temptation that doth goad us on 215
 To sin in loving virtue. Never could the strumpet,
 With all her double vigour, art, and nature,
 Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
 Subdues me quite. Ever till now,
 When men were fond, I smiled, and wondered how. 220
Exit ANGELO.

Scene 2. [*The prison.*]

Enter DUKE, habited like a Friar, and ESCALUS.

DUKE: Hail to you, provost—so I think you are.

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

DUKE: Bound by my charity and my blest order,

I come to visit the afflicted spirits

Here in the prison. Do me the common right 5

To let me see them, and to make me know

The nature of their crimes, that I may minister

To them accordingly.

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

Enter JULIET.

Look, here comes one: a gentlewoman of mine, 10

Who, falling in the flaws of her own youth,

Hath blistered her report: She is with child;

And he that got it, sentenced; a young man

More fit to do another such offence

Than die for this. 15

DUKE: When must he die?

ESCALUS: As I do think, tomorrow.

[*To JULIET.*]—I have provided for you; stay awhile

And you shall be conducted.

DUKE: Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry? 20

JULIET: I do; and bear the shame most patiently.

DUKE: I'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience,

And try your penitence, if it be sound

Or hollowly put on.

JULIET: I'll gladly learn. 25

DUKE: Love you the man that wronged you?

JULIET: Yes, as I love the woman that wronged him.

DUKE: So then, it seems, your most offenceful act
Was mutually committed.

JULIET: Mutually. 30

DUKE: Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

JULIET: I do confess it, and repent it, father.

DUKE: 'Tis meet so, daughter: but lest you do repent
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame—
Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not heaven, 35
Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it,
But as we stand in fear—

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

DUKE: There rest. 40

Your partner, as I hear, must die tomorrow,
And I am going with instruction to him.
Grace go with you, Benedicite!

Exit DUKE.

JULIET: Must die tomorrow! O, injurious love, 45
That respites me a life, whose very comfort
Is still a dying horror!

ESCALUS: 'Tis pity of him.
Exeunt ESCALUS and JULIET.

Scene 3. [A room.]

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, 5
And in my heart the strong and swelling evil
Of my conception. The state, whereon I studied,
Is, like a good thing, being often read,
Grown seared and tedious; yea, my gravity,
Wherein, let no man hear me, I take pride, 10
Could I with boot change for an idle plume
Which the air beats for vain. O place, O form.
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming! Blood, thou art blood. 15
Let's write "good angel" on the devil's horn,
'Tis not the devil's crest.

Enter ISABELLA.

[*aside*] O heavens!

- Why does my blood thus muster to my heart,
 Making both it unable for itself,
 And dispossessing all the other parts
 Of necessary fitness? 25
 So play the foolish throngs with one that swounds,
 Come all to help him, and so stop the air
 By which he should revive; and even so
 The general, subject to a well-wished king,
 Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness 30
 Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
 Must needs appear offence.—How now, fair maid?
- ISABELLA: I am come to know your pleasure.
- ANGELO: That you might know it, would much better please me 35
 Than to demand what 'tis. Your brother cannot live.
- ISABELLA: Even so? Heaven keep your honour.
ISABELLA begins to exit.
- ANGELO: Yet may he live awhile: and it may be,
 As long as you or I; yet he must die.
- ISABELLA: Under your sentence? 40
- ANGELO: Yea.
- ISABELLA: When? I beseech you? that in his reprieve,
 Longer or shorter, he may be so fitted
 That his soul sicken not.
- ANGELO: Ha! Fie, these filthy vices! It were as good 45
 To pardon him that hath from nature stol'n
 A man already made, as to remit
 Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven's image
 In stamps that are forbid: 'tis all as easy
 Falsely to take away a life true made 50
 As to put metal in restrainéd 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 55
 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. 60
- ANGELO: I talk not of your soul; our compelled sins
 Stand more for number than for accompt.
- ISABELLA: How say you?
- ANGELO: I, now the voice of the recorded law,
 Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life;
 Might there not be a charity in sin,
 To save this brother's life?

- ISABELLA: Please you to do't, 70
 I'll take it as a peril to my soul
 It is no sin at all, but charity.
- ANGELO: Pleased you to do't at peril of your soul,
 Were equal poise of sin and charity.
- ISABELLA: That I do beg his life, if it be sin, 75
 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. 80
 Your sense pursues not mine; either you are ignorant
 Or seem so, crafty; and that's not good.
- ISABELLA: Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good,
 But graciously to know I am no better.
- ANGELO: To be receivéd plain, I'll speak more gross: 90
 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— 95
 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 100
 Of the all-binding law; and that there were
 No earthly mean to save him but that either
 You must lay down the treasures of your body
 To this supposed, or else to let him suffer:
 What would you do? 105
- ISABELLA: As much for my poor brother as myself:
 That is, were I under the terms of death,
 Th' impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
 And strip myself to death as to a bed
 That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield 110
 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, 115
 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 120
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: O, pardon me, my lord. It oft falls out, 125
To have what we would have, we speak not what we mean:
I something do excuse the thing I hate
For his advantage that I dearly love.
- ANGELO: We are all frail.
- ISABELLA: Else let my brother die, 130
If not a fedary, but only he
Owe, and succeed by weakness.
- ANGELO: Nay, women are frail too.
- ISABELLA: Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves,
Which are as easy broke as they make forms. 135
Women! Help heaven! Men their creation mar
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times frail;
For we are soft as our complexions are,
And credulous to false prints.
- ANGELO: I think it well: 140
And from this testimony of your own sex—
Since, I suppose, we are made to be no stronger
Than faults may shake our frames—let me be bold:
I do arrest your words. Be that you are,
That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none; 145
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. 150
- ANGELO: Plainly conceive, I love you.
- ISABELLA: My brother did love Juliet;
And you tell me that he shall die for't.
- ANGELO: He shall not, Isabel, if you give me love.
- ISABELLA: I know your virtue hath a license in't, 155
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, 160
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 outstretched throat I'll tell the world aloud
What man thou art. 165

ANGELO: Who will believe thee, Isabel?
 My unsoiled name, th' 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, 170
 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 175
 By yielding up thy body to my will,
 Or else he must not only die the death,
 But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
 To ling'ring sufferance. Answer me tomorrow,
 Or, by the affection that now guides me most, 180
 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, 185
 Either of condemnation or approof;
 Bidding the law make curtsy to their will,
 Hooking both right and wrong to th' appetite,
 To follow as it draws. I'll to my brother.
 Though he hath fall'n by prompture of the blood, 190
 Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour,
 That, had he twenty heads to tender down
 On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up,
 Before his sister should her body stoop
 To such abhorred pollution. 195
 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 3

Scene 1. [*The prison.*]

Enter DUKE, CLAUDIO, and ESCALUS..

DUKE: So then, you hope of pardon from Lord Angelo?

CLAUDIO: I have hope to live, and am prepared to die.

DUKE: Be absolute for death; either death or life 5
 Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life:
 If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
 That none but fools would keep; a breath thou art,
 Servile to all the skyey influences,
 That dost this habitation, where thou keep'st, 10
 Hourly afflict; merely, thou art death's fool;
 For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,
 And yet runn'st toward him still. Thou art not noble,
 For all th' accommodations that thou bear'st
 Are nursed by baseness. Thou'rt by no means valiant, 15
 For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
 Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,
 And that thou oft provok'st; yet grossly fear'st
 Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself;
 For thou exists on many a thousand grains 20
 That issue out of dust. Happy thou art not,
 For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get,
 And what thou hast, forgett'st. Thou art not certain,
 For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,
 After the moon. If thou art rich, thou'rt poor. 25
 For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,
 Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
 And death unloads thee. Friend hast thou none,
 For thine own bowels, which do call thee sire,
 The mere effusion of thy proper loins, 30
 Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum,
 For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor youth nor age,
 But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
 Dreaming on both: for all thy blessed youth
 Becomes as agéd, and doth beg the alms 35
 Of palsied eld, and when thou art old and rich
 Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,
 To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this
 That bears the name of life? Yet in this life
 Lie hid moe thousand deaths; yet death we fear, 40
 That makes these odds all even.

CLAUDIO: I humbly thank you.
 To sue to live, I find I seek to die,

And, seeking death, find life: let it come on.

ISABELLA: [*Within.*] What, ho! Peace here; grace and good company! 45

ESCALUS: 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.

ESCALUS: And very welcome. Look, signior, here's your sister. 50

DUKE: Provost, a word with you.

ESCALUS: As many as you please.

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

DUKE and ESCALUS withdraw.

CLAUDIO: Now, sister, what's the comfort?

ISABELLA: Why, 55

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: 60
 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 is there any? 65

ISABELLA: Yes, brother, you may live;
 There is a devilish mercy in the judge,
 If you'll implore it, that will free your life,
 But fetter you till death.

CLAUDIO: Perpetual durance? 70

ISABELLA: Ay, just; perpetual durance, a restraint,
 Though all the world's vastidity you had,
 To a determined scope.

CLAUDIO: But in what nature?

ISABELLA: In such a one as, you consenting to't, 75
 Would bark your honour from that trunk you bear,
 And leave you naked.

CLAUDIO: Let me know the point.

ISABELLA: O, I do fear thee, Claudio; and I quake,
 Lest thou a feverous life shouldst entertain, 80
 And six or seven winters more respect
 Than a perpetual honour. Dar'st thou die?
 The sense of death is most in apprehension,
 And the poor beetle that we tread upon
 In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great 85
 As when a giant dies.

CLAUDIO: Why give you me this shame?

- Think you I can a resolution fetch
 From flow'ry tenderness? If I must die,
 I will encounter darkness as a bride,
 And hug it in mine arms. 90
- ISABELLA: There spake my brother, there my father's grave
 Did utter forth a voice. Yes, thou must die,
 Thou art too noble to conserve a life
 In base appliances. This outward-sainted deputy,
 Whose settled visage and deliberate word 95
 Nips youth i' th' head, and follies doth enmew
 As falcon doth the fowl, is yet a devil;
 His filth within being cast, he would appear
 A pond as deep as hell. 100
- CLAUDIO: The prenzie Angelo?
 ISABELLA: O, 'tis the cunning livery of hell
 The damned'st body to invest and cover
 In prenzie guards! Dost thou think, Claudio,
 If I would yield him my virginity, 105
 Thou mightst be freed?
- CLAUDIO: O heavens, it cannot be.
 ISABELLA: Yes, he would give't thee, from this rank offence,
 So to offend him still. This night's the time
 That I should do what I abhor to name, 110
 Or else thou diest tomorrow.
- CLAUDIO: Thou shalt not do't.
 ISABELLA: O, were it but my life,
 I'd throw it down for your deliverance
 As frankly as a pin. 115
- 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 th' nose
 When he would force it? Sure, it is no sin, 120
 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! 125
- ISABELLA: What says my brother?
 CLAUDIO: Death is a fearful thing.
 ISABELLA: And shaméd life a hateful.
 CLAUDIO: Ay, but to die, and go we know not where,
 To lie in cold obstruction and to rot. 130
 This sensible warm motion to become
 A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
 To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside

- In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
 To be imprisoned in the viewless winds, 135
 And blown with restless violence round about
 The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
 Of those that lawless and incertain thought
 Imagine howling—'tis too horrible!
 The weariest and most loathéd worldly life 140
 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: 145
 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, 150
 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 played my father fair,
 For such a warpéd slip of wilderness 155
 Ne'er issued from his blood. Take my defiance,
 Die, perish! Might but my bending down
 Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed.
 I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
 No word to save thee. 160
- CLAUDIO: Nay, hear me, Isabel.
- ISABELLA: O fie, fie, fie!
 Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade.
 Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd,
 'Tis best that thou diest quickly. 165
- ISABELLA starts to leave.*
- CLAUDIO: O, hear me, Isabella.
The DUKE comes forward.
- 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.
- DUKE: [*aside to CLAUDIO*] Son, I have overheard what hath passed between
 you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her; only he hath made
 an assay of her virtue to practise his 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: Hold you there. Farewell. 185

Exit CLAUDIO.

Provost, a word with you.

ESCALUS comes forward.

ESCALUS: What's your will, father?

DUKE: That, now you are come, you will be gone. Leave me a while with the maid. My mind promises with my habit no loss shall touch her by my company. 190

ESCALUS: In good time.

Exit ESCALUS.

DUKE: The assault that Angelo hath made to you, fortune hath conveyed to my understanding, and, but that frailty hath examples for his falling, I should wonder at Angelo. How will you do to content this substitute, and to save your brother?

ISABELLA: I am now going to resolve him. I had rather my brother die by the law than my son should be unlawfully born. But O, how much is the good Duke deceived in Angelo! If ever he return and I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain, or discover his government.

DUKE: 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. 210

ISABELLA: 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? 215

ISABELLA: I have heard of the lady, and good words went with her name.

DUKE: She should this Angelo have married; was affianced to her by oath, and the nuptial appointed: between which time of the contract and limit of the solemnity, her brother Frederick was wracked at sea, having in that perished vessel the dowry of his sister. But mark how heavily this befell to the poor gentlewoman: there she lost a noble and renowned brother, in his love toward her ever most kind and natural; with him, the portion and sinew of her fortune, her marriage-dowry; with both, her combinate husband, this well-seeming Angelo. 225

ISABELLA: Can this be so? Did Angelo so leave her?

DUKE: Left her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort; swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonour; in few, bestowed her on her own lamentation, which she yet wears for his sake; and he, a marble to her tears, is washed with them, but relents not.

ISABELLA: What a merit were it in death to take this poor maid from the world! What corruption in this life, that it will let this man live! But how out of this can

she avail?

DUKE: It is a rupture that you may easily heal, and the cure of it not only saves your brother, but keeps you from dishonour in doing it.

ISABELLA: Show me how, good father.

DUKE: This forenamed maid hath yet in her the continuance of her first affection; his unjust unkindness, that in all reason should have quenched her love, hath, like an impediment in the current, made it more violent and unruly. Go you to Angelo; answer his requiring with a plausible obedience; agree with his demands to the point; only refer yourself to this advantage: first, that your stay with him may not be long: that the time may have all shadow and silence in it; and the place answer to convenience. This being granted in course—and now follows all—we shall advise this wronged maid to stand up your appointment, go in your place. If the encounter acknowledge itself hereafter, it may compel him to her recompense: and here, by this, is your brother saved, your honour untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled. The maid will I frame and make fit for his attempt. If you think well to carry this, as you may, the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from reproof. What think you of it?

ISABELLA: The image of it gives me content already; and I trust it will grow to a most prosperous perfection. 255

DUKE: It lies much in your holding up. Haste you speedily to Angelo: if for this night he entreat you to his bed, give him promise of satisfaction. I will presently to Saint Luke's; there at the moated grange resides this dejected Mariana. At that place call upon me, and dispatch with Angelo, that it may be quickly. 260

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

ISABELLA exits as ELBOW and POMPEY enter.

ELBOW: Nay, if there be no remedy for it, but that you will needs buy and sell men and women like beasts, we shall have all the world drink brown and white bastard.

DUKE: O heavens! What stuff is here?

ELBOW: Come your way, sir.—'Bless you, good father friar. 10

DUKE: And you, good brother father. What offence hath this man made you, sir?

ELBOW: Marry, sir, he hath offended the law; and, sir, we take him to be a thief too, sir; for we have found upon him, sir, a strange picklock, which we have sent to the deputy. 15

DUKE: Fie, sirrah, a bawd, a wicked bawd!

The evil that thou causest to be done,
That is thy means to live. Do thou but think
What 'tis to cram a maw or clothe a back
From such a filthy vice; say to thyself, 20
From their abominable and beastly touches
I drink, I eat, array myself, and live.
Canst thou believe thy living is a life,
So stinkingly depending? Go mend, go mend.

POMPEY: Indeed, it does stink in some sort, sir; but yet, sir, I would prove—

DUKE: Nay, if the devil have given thee proofs for sin,

Thou wilt prove his. Take him to prison, officer.
Correction and instruction must both work
Ere this rude beast will profit.

30

ELBOW: He must before the deputy, sir; he has given him warning. The deputy cannot abide a whoremaster; if he be a whoremonger, and comes before him, he were as good go a mile on his errand.

Enter LUCIO.

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

LUCIO: How now, noble Pompey! What, at the wheels of Caesar! Art thou led in triumph? What, is there none of Pygmalion's images, newly made woman, to be had now, for putting the hand in the pocket and extracting it clutched? What reply, ha? What say'st thou to this tune, matter, and method? Is't not drowned i' the last rain, ha? What say'st thou to't? Is the world as it was, man? Which is the way? Is it sad, and few words? or how? The trick of it?

45

DUKE: Still thus, and thus; still worse.

LUCIO: How doth my dear morsel, thy mistress? Procures she still, ha?

POMPEY: Troth, sir, she hath eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub.

LUCIO: Why, 'tis good: it is the right of it; it must be so: ever your fresh whore and your powdered bawd—an unshunned consequence; it must be so. Art going to prison, Pompey?

POMPEY: Yes, faith, sir.

LUCIO: Why, 'tis not amiss, Pompey. Farewell; go, say I sent thee thither. For debt, Pompey? Or how?

55

ELBOW: For being a bawd, for being a bawd.

LUCIO: Well, then, imprison him. If imprisonment be the due of a bawd, why, 'tis his right. Bawd is he doubtless, and of antiquity too: bawd-born. Farewell, good Pompey. Commend me to the prison, Pompey. You will turn good husband now, Pompey; you will keep the house.

POMPEY: I hope, sir, your good worship will be my bail.

LUCIO: No, indeed, will I not, Pompey; it is not the wear. I will pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage. If you take it not patiently, why, your mettle is the more. Adieu, trusty Pompey.—'Bless you, friar.

DUKE: And you.

LUCIO: Does Bridget paint still, Pompey, ha?

ELBOW: Come your ways, sir, come.

POMPEY: You will not bail me then, sir?

70

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?

75

LUCIO: Some say he is with the Emperor of Russia; other some, he is in Rome: but where is he, think you?

DUKE: I know not where; but wheresoever, I wish him well.

LUCIO: It was a mad fantastical trick of him to steal from the state and usurp the

beggary he was never born to. Lord Angelo dukes it well in his absence; he puts transgression to't.

DUKE: He does well in't.

LUCIO: A little more lenity to lechery would do no harm in him; something too crabbed that way, friar.

DUKE: It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it. 85

LUCIO: Yes, in good sooth, the vice is of a great kindred, it is well allied; but it is impossible to extirp it quite, friar, till eating and drinking be put down. They say this Angelo was not made by man and woman after this downright way of creation.

Is it true, think you? 90

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. 95

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. 105

DUKE: 'Tis not possible.

LUCIO: Who, not the Duke? Yes, your beggar of fifty;—and his use was to put a ducat in her clack-dish: the duke had crotchets in him. He would be drunk too: that let me inform you.

DUKE: You do him wrong, surely. 110

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 envy in you, folly, or mistaking. The very stream of his life and the business he hath helmed must, upon a warranted need, give him a better proclamation. Let him be but testimonied in his own bringings-forth, and he shall appear to the envious a scholar, a statesman, and a soldier. Therefore you speak unskilfully; or if your knowledge be more, it is much darkened in your malice. 125

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.

135

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.

Canst thou tell if Claudio die tomorrow or no?

DUKE: Why should he die, sir?

LUCIO: Why? for filling a bottle with a tundish. I would the Duke we talk of were returned again; this ungenitured agent will unpeople the province with continency; sparrows must not build in his house-eaves, because they are lecherous. The Duke yet would have dark deeds darkly answered; he would never bring them to light.

Would he were returned! Marry, this Claudio is condemned for untrussing.

Farewell, good friar; I prithee pray for me. The Duke, I say to thee again, would eat mutton on Fridays. He's not past it, yet, and I say to thee, he would mouth with a beggar, though she smelt brown bread and garlic. Say that I said so.—Farewell.

LUCIO exits as ESCALUS and MISTRESS OVERDONE enter.

MISTRESS OVERDONE: Good my lord, be good to me.

ESCALUS: Good even, good father.

DUKE: Bliss and goodness on you!

MISTRESS OVERDONE: Your honour is accounted a merciful man, good my lord.

DUKE: 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. I have laboured for the poor gentleman within to the extremest shore of my modesty, but my brother justice have I found so severe that he hath forced me to tell him he is indeed Justice.

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

MISTRESS OVERDONE: Good my lord—

ESCALUS: This would make mercy swear and play the tyrant! A bawd of eleven years' continuance—

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: Go to, no more words.—Fare you well.

DUKE: Peace be with you!

Exeunt ESCALUS and MISTRESS OVERDONE.

He who the sword of heaven will bear

Should be as holy as severe;

220

Shame to him whose cruel striking

225

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! 230
Craft against vice I must apply: 235
With Angelo tonight shall lie
His old betrothed but despised;
So disguise shall, by th' disguiséd,
Pay with falsehood false exacting,
And perform an old contracting. 240

Exit DUKE.

ACT 4

Scene 1. [*The moated grange.*]*Enter DUKE and MARIANA.*

DUKE: Do you persuade yourself that I respect you? 55

MARIANA: Good friar, I know you do.

I'll take the enterprise upon me, father,
If you advise it.

DUKE: It is not my consent 70

But my entreaty too.

Enter ISABELLA.

The time is come

Even now.—Very well met, and well come.

I pray you, be acquainted with this maid;
She comes to do you good.

MARIANA: I do desire the like.

DUKE: 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 planchéd gate 30

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. 35

DUKE: But shall you on your knowledge find this way?

ISABELLA: I've ta'en a due and wary note upon't.

With whispering and most guilty diligence,

In action all of precept, he did show me

The way twice o'er. 40

DUKE: Are there no other tokens

Between you 'greed concerning her observance?

ISABELLA: No, none, but only a repair i' th' dark;

And that I have possessed him my most stay

Can be but brief. Little have you to say

When you depart from him, but, soft and low,

“Remember now my brother.”

MARIANA: Fear me not. 75

DUKE: Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all.

He is your husband on a precontract;

To bring you thus together, 'tis no sin,

Sith that the justice of your title to him

Doth flourish the deceit. Come, let us go: 80

Our corn's to reap, for yet our tithe's to sow.

Exeunt DUKE, MARIANA and ISABELLA.

Scene 2. [*The prison.*]

Enter ESCALUS and POMPEY.

ESCALUS: 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.

ESCALUS: 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. 10

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.

ESCALUS: What ho, Abhorson! Where's Abhorson, there?

Enter ABHORSON.

ABHORSON: Do you call, sir? 15

ESCALUS: 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. 20

ABHORSON: A bawd, sir? Fie upon him! He will discredit our mystery.

ESCALUS: Go to, sir; you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale. 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. 45

ESCALUS: Call hither Barnardine and Claudio.

Exeunt POMPEY and ABHORSON.

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 tomorrow 50
Thou must be made immortal. Where's Barnardine?

CLAUDIO.: As fast lock'd up in sleep as guiltless labour
When it lies starkly in the traveller's bones;
He will not wake.

ESCALUS: Who can do good on him? 55

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. Welcome, father.	60
<i>Enter DUKE.</i>	
DUKE: The best and wholesom'st spirits of the night Envelop you, good provost! Who called here of late?	
ESCALUS: None, since the curfew rung.	
DUKE: Not Isabel?	
ESCALUS: No.	65
DUKE: They will then, ere't be long.	
ESCALUS: What comfort is for Claudio?	
DUKE: There's some in hope.	
ESCALUS: It is a bitter deputy.	
DUKE: Not so, not so: his life is paralleled	70
Even with the stroke and line of his great justice. He doth with holy abstinence subdue That in himself which he spurs on his pow'r To qualify in others; were he mealed with that Which he corrects, then were he tyrannous;	75
But this being so, he's just. [<i>Knocking within</i>] Now are they come. <i>Exit ESCALUS.</i>	
This is a gentle provost: seldom when The steeléd jailer is the friend of men. <i>[Knocking within]</i>	
How now, what noise? That spirit's possessed with haste That wounds th' unsisting postern with these strokes.	80
<i>Enter ESCALUS.</i>	
ESCALUS: There he must stay until the officer Arise to let him in; he is called up.	
DUKE: Have you no countermand for Claudio yet, But he must die tomorrow?	
ESCALUS: None, sir, none.	85
DUKE: As near the dawning, Provost, as it is, You shall hear more ere morning.	
ESCALUS: Happily You something know; yet I believe there comes No countermand; no such example have we.	90
Besides, upon the very siege of justice, Lord Angelo hath to the public ear Professed the contrary. <i>Enter MESSENGER.</i>	
This is his lordship's man.	
DUKE: And here comes Claudio's pardon.	95
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.	
ESCALUS: I shall obey him.	100
<i>Exit MESSENGER.</i>	

DUKE: Now, sir, what news?

ESCALUS: I told you. Lord Angelo, belike thinking me remiss in mine office, awakens me with this unwonted putting-on; methinks strangely, for he hath not used it before.

110

DUKE: Pray you, let's hear.

ESCALUS: [*Reads the letter.*] "Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed by four of the clock; and in the afternoon Barnardine. For my better satisfaction, let me have Claudio's head sent me by five. Let this be duly performed with a thought that more depends on it than we must yet deliver. Thus fail not to do your office, as you will answer it at your peril."

What say you to this, sir?

DUKE: What is that Barnardine who is to be executed in th' afternoon?

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

DUKE: How came it that the absent duke had not either delivered him to his liberty or executed him? I have heard it was ever his manner to do so.

ESCALUS: His friends still wrought reprieves for him; and, indeed, his fact, till now in the government of Lord Angelo, came not to an undoubtful proof.

DUKE: It is now apparent?

ESCALUS: Most manifest, and not denied by himself.

DUKE: Hath he borne himself penitently in prison? How seems he to be touched?

ESCALUS: A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless, of what's past, present, or to come; insensible of mortality, and desperately mortal.

DUKE: He wants advice.

135

ESCALUS: He will hear none. He hath evermore had the liberty of the prison; give him leave to escape hence, he would not: drunk many times a-day, if not many days entirely drunk. We have very oft awaked him, as if to carry him to execution, and showed him a seeming warrant for it; it hath not moved him at all.

140

DUKE: More of him anon. There is written in your brow, provost, honesty and constancy: if I read it not truly, my ancient skill beguiles me; but in the boldness of my cunning, I will lay myself in hazard. Claudio, whom here you have warrant to execute, is no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo who hath sentenced him. To make you understand this in a manifested effect, I crave but four days' respite, for the which you are to do me both a present and a dangerous courtesy.

ESCALUS: Pray, sir, in what?

DUKE: In the delaying death.

150

ESCALUS: Alack, how may I do it, having the hour limited, and an express command, under penalty, to deliver his head in the view of Angelo? I may make my case as Claudio's, to cross this in the smallest.

DUKE: By the vow of mine Order, I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide. Let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo.

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

DUKE: O, death's a great disguiser; and you may add to it. Shave the head and tie the beard; and say it was the desire of the penitent to be so 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.

ESCALUS: Pardon me, good father; it is against my oath.

DUKE: Were you sworn to the Duke, or to the deputy? 165

ESCALUS: To him, and to his substitutes.

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

ESCALUS: But what likelihood is in that?

DUKE: Not a resemblance, but a certainty.

The DUKE removes his cowl.

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!

The DUKE replaces his cowl.

Come away; it is almost clear dawn.

Exeunt DUKE and ESCALUS.

Scene 3. *[The prison.]*

Enter ABHORSON and POMPEY.

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 friend, 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. 25

POMPEY: Pray, Master Barnardine, awake till you are executed, and sleep afterwards.

ABHORSON: Go in to him, and fetch him out.

POMPEY: He is coming, sir, he is coming; I hear his straw rustle.

Enter BARNARDINE.

ABHORSON: Is the axe upon the block, sirrah? 30

POMPEY: Very ready, sir.

BARNARDINE: How now, Abhorson? What's the news with you?

ABHORSON: Truly, sir, I would desire you to clap into your prayers; for, look you, the warrant's come.

BARNARDINE: You rogue, I have been drinking all night; I am not fitted for't. 35

POMPEY: O, the better, sir: for he that drinks all night, and is hanged betimes in the morning, may sleep the sounder all the next day.

Enter DUKE.

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

DUKE: Sir, induced by my charity, and hearing how hastily you are to depart, I

am come to advise you, comfort you, and pray with you.

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

DUKE: O, Sir, you must; and therefore I beseech you 45
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. 50

Exit BARNARDINE.

DUKE: Unfit to live or die. O gravel heart!

Enter ESCALUS.

After him, fellows; bring him to the block.

Exeunt ABHORSON and POMPEY.

ESCALUS: How do you find the prisoner, my lord?

DUKE: A creature unprepared, unmeet for death;
And to transport him in the mind he is 55
Were damnable.

ESCALUS: Here in the prison, good my lord,
There died this morning of a cruel fever
One Ragozine, a most notorious pirate,
A man of Claudio's years, his beard and head 60
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: O, 'tis an accident that Heaven provides. 65
Dispatch it presently; the hour draws on
Prefixed by Angelo. See this be done,
And sent according to command, whiles I
Persuade this rude wretch willingly to die.

ESCALUS: This shall be done, my good lord, presently; 70
But Barnardine must die this afternoon,
And how shall we continue Claudio?

DUKE: Put them in secret holds, both Barnardine and Claudio;
Quick, dispatch, and send the head to Angelo.

Exit ESCALUS.

Now will I write letters to Angelo—
The provost, he shall bear them—whose contents
Shall witness to him I am near at home,
And that by great injunctions I am bound 85
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.	90
<i>Enter ESCALUS.</i>	
ESCALUS: The head, my lord, 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.	
ESCALUS: I'll make all speed.	95
<i>Exit ESCALUS.</i>	
ISABELLA: [<i>Within</i>] 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.	100
<i>Enter ISABELLA.</i>	
ISABELLA: Ho, by your leave!	
DUKE: Good morning to you, fair and gracious daughter.	
ISABELLA: The better, given me by so holy a man. Hath yet the deputy sent my brother's pardon?	105
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.	110
ISABELLA: O, I will to him and pluck out his eyes!	
DUKE: You shall not be admitted to his sight.	
ISABELLA: Unhappy Claudio, wretched Isabel, Injurious world, most damnéd 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 pow'r. If you can, pace your wisdom In that good path that I would wish it go, And you shall have your bosom on this wretch, Grace of the Duke, revenges to your heart, And general honour.	115 120 125
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	130

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 135
 Accuse him home and home. For my poor self,
 I am combinéd 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, 140
 If I pervert your course.—Who's here?

Enter LUCIO.

LUCIO: Good even. Friar, where's the provost?

DUKE: Not within, sir.

LUCIO: O pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart to see thine eyes so red; thou must be patient. By my troth, Isabel, I loved thy brother.

Exit ISABELLA.

—If the old fantastical Duke of dark corners had been at home, he had lived.

DUKE: Sir, the Duke is marvellous little beholding to your reports; but the best is, he lives not in them.

LUCIO: Friar, thou knowest not the Duke so well as I do; he's a better woodman than thou tak'st him for.

DUKE: Well, you'll answer this one day. Fare ye well.

LUCIO: Nay, tarry; I'll go along with thee; I can tell thee pretty tales of the Duke.

DUKE: You have told me too many of him already, sir, if they be true; if not true, none were enough.

LUCIO: I was once before him for getting a wench with child.

DUKE: Did you such a thing? 160

LUCIO: Yes, marry, did I; but I was fain to forswear it: they would else have married me to the rotten medlar.

DUKE: Sir, your company is fairer than honest. Rest you well.

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

Exeunt DUKE and LUCIO.

Scene 4. [A room.]

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. 5

ANGELO: And why should we proclaim it in an hour before his ent'ring that, if any crave redress of injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street?

ESCALUS: He shows his reason for that: to have a dispatch of complaints; and to deliver us from devices hereafter which shall then have no power to stand against us.

ANGELO: Well, I beseech you, let it be proclaimed. Betimes i' th' morn I'll call you at your house. Give notice to such men of sort and suit as are to meet him. 15

ESCALUS: I shall, sir. Fare you well.

ANGELO: Good night.

Exit ESCALUS.

This deed unshapes me quite, makes me unpregnant,
 And dull to all proceedings. A deflow' red maid,
 And by an eminent body that enforced 20
 The law against it! But that her tender shame
 Will not proclaim against her maiden loss,
 How might she tongue me! Yet reason dares her no;
 For my authority bears a so credent bulk,
 That no particular scandal once can touch 25
 But it confounds the breather. He should have lived,
 Save that his riotous youth, with dangerous sense,
 Might in the times to come have ta'en revenge,
 By so receiving a dishonoured life
 With ransom of such shame. Would yet he had lived! 30
 Alack, when once our grace we have forgot,
 Nothing goes right; we would, and we would not.

Exit ANGELO.

Scene 5. [*Near the city gate.*]

Enter DUKE, in his own habit, and FRIAR.

DUKE: 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.

FRIAR: It shall be speeded well.

Scene 6. [*Near the city gate.*]

Enter ISABELLA and MARIANA.

ISABELLA: To speak so indirectly I am loath:
 I'd say the truth; but to accuse him so,
 That is your part. Yet I'm advised to do it;
 He says, to veil full purpose.

MARIANA: Be ruled by him. 5

ISABELLA: Besides, he tells me that, if peradventure
 He speak against me on the adverse side,
 I should not think it strange; for 'tis a physic
 That's bitter to sweet end.

MARIANA: I would Friar Peter—

Enter FRIAR PETER.

ISABELLA: O peace! The friar is come.

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 generous and gravest citizens

15

Have hent the gates, and very near upon

The Duke is ent'ring: therefore, hence, away!

Exeunt FRIAR, ISABELLA and MARIANA.

ACT 5

Scene 1. [*The city gate.*]

Enter DUKE, in his own habit, ANGELO, ESCALUS, LUCIO at several doors.

DUKE: My very worthy cousin, fairly met.

Our old and faithful friend, we are glad to see you.

ANGELO:

Happy return be to your royal grace!

ESCALUS:

DUKE: Many and hearty thankings to you both.

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

ANGELO: You make my bonds still greater.

DUKE: O, your desert speaks loud; and I should wrong it,

To lock it in the wards of covert bosom,
When it deserves, with characters of brass,
A fortified residence 'gainst the tooth of time
And rasure of oblivion. Give me your hand,
And let the subject see, to make them know
That outward courtesies would fain proclaim
Favours that keep within. Come, Escalus,
You must walk by us on our other hand—
And good supporters are you.

Enter FRIAR and ISABELLA.

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, dishonour not your eye
By throwing it on any other object
Till you have heard me in my true complaint,
And given me justice, justice, justice, justice!

DUKE: Relate your wrongs. In what? By whom? Be brief.

Here is Lord Angelo shall give you justice;
Reveal yourself to him.

ISABELLA: O worthy Duke,

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

ANGELO: My lord, her wits, I fear me, are not firm.

She hath been a suitor to me for her brother
Cut off by course of justice—

ISABELLA: By course of justice!

ANGELO: And she will speak most bitterly and strange.

ISABELLA: Most strange, but yet most truly, will I speak.

That Angelo's forsworn, is it not strange?
 That Angelo's a murderer, is't not strange?
 That Angelo is an adulterous thief,
 An hypocrite, a virgin-violator;
 Is it not strange, and strange?

DUKE: Nay, it is ten times strange.

ISABELLA: It is not truer he is Angelo

Than this is all as true as it is strange.
 Nay, it is ten times true, for truth is truth
 To th' end of reck'ning.

DUKE: Away with her! Poor soul,
 She speaks this in th' infirmity of sense.

ISABELLA: O prince, I conjure thee, as thou believ'st

There is another comfort than this world,
 That thou neglect me not, with that opinion
 That I am touched with madness. Make not impossible
 That which but seems unlike. 'Tis not impossible
 But one, the wicked'st caitiff on the ground,
 May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute
 As Angelo; even so may Angelo,
 In all his dressings, caracts, titles, forms,
 Be an arch-villain. Believe it, royal prince;
 If he be less, he's nothing; but he's more,
 Had I more name for badness.

DUKE: By mine honesty,
 If she be mad, as I believe no other,
 Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense,
 Such a dependency of thing on thing,
 As e'er I heard in madness.

ISABELLA: O gracious Duke,
 Harp not on that; nor do not banish reason
 For inequality, but let your reason serve
 To make the truth appear where it seems hid,
 And hide the false seems true.

DUKE: Many that are not mad
 Have, sure, more lack of reason. What would you say?

ISABELLA: I am the sister of one Claudio,
 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'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: 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: and when you have
 A business for yourself, pray heaven you then
 Be perfect.

LUCIO: I warrant your honour.

DUKE: The warrant's for yourself; take heed to't.

ISABELLA: This gentleman told somewhat of my tale—

LUCIO: Right.

DUKE: It may be right; but you are i' the wrong
 To speak before your time. Proceed.

ISABELLA: I went
 To this pernicious caitiff deputy—

DUKE: That's somewhat madly spoken.

ISABELLA: Pardon it;
 The phrase is to the matter.

DUKE: Mended again. The matter: proceed.

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

DUKE: This is most likely!

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

DUKE: By heaven, fond wretch, thou 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 weighed thy brother by himself,
 And not have cut him off. Some one hath set you on;
 Confess the truth, and say by whose advice
 Thou cam'st here to complain.

So vulgarly and personally accused,
Her shall you hear disprov'd to her eyes,
Till she herself confess it.

DUKE: Good friar, let's hear it.
Enter MARIANA, veiled.

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?

LUCIO: My lord, she may be a punk; for many of them are neither maid, widow,
nor wife.

DUKE: Silence that fellow: I would he had some cause to prattle for himself.

LUCIO: Well, my lord.

MARIANA: My lord, I do confess I ne'er was married;
And I confess besides I am no maid.
I have known my husband; yet my husband
Knows not that ever he knew me.

LUCIO: He was drunk then, my lord; it can be no better.

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

LUCIO: Well, my lord.

DUKE: This is no witness for Lord Angelo.

MARIANA: Now I come to't my lord:
She that accuses him of fornication,
In self-same manner doth accuse my husband,
And charges him my lord, with such a time
When I'll depose I had him in mine arms
With all th' effect of love.

ANGELO: Charges she more than me?

MARIANA: Not that I know.

DUKE: No? you say your husband.

MARIANA: Why, just, my lord, and that is Angelo,
Who thinks he knows that he ne'er knew my body,
But knows he thinks that he knows Isabel's.

ANGELO: This is a strange abuse. Let's see thy face.

MARIANA: My husband bids me; now I will unmask.

MARIANA unveils.

This is that face, thou cruel Angelo,
Which once thou swor'st 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?

LUCIO: Carnally, she says.

DUKE: Sirrah, no more!

LUCIO: Enough, my lord.

ANGELO: My lord, I must confess I know this woman:

And five years since there was some speech of marriage
Betwixt myself and her, which was broke off,
Partly for that her promiséd proportions
Came short of composition, but in chief,
For that her reputation was disvalued
In levity; since which time of five years
I never spake with her, saw her, nor heard from her,
Upon my faith and honour.

MARIANA: Noble prince,

As there comes light from heaven and words from breath,
As there is sense in truth and truth in virtue,
I am affianced this man's wife as strongly
As words could make up vows; and, my good lord,
But Tuesday night last gone in's garden house
He knew me as a wife. As this is true,
Let me in safety raise me from my knees,
Or else for ever be confixéd here,
A marble monument.

ANGELO: I did but smile till now:

Now, good my lord, give me the scope of justice;
My patience here is 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 practise out.

DUKE: Ay, with my heart,

And punish them to your height of pleasure.
Thou foolish friar and thou pernicious woman,
Compact with him that's gone, think'st thou thy oaths,
Though they would swear down each particular saint,
Were testimonies against his worth and credit
That's sealed in approbation? You, Lord Escalus,
Sit with my cousin; lend him your kind pains

To find out this abuse, whence 'tis derived,
And if this other friar did set them on.

FRIAR: Would he were here, my lord, for he indeed
Hath set the women on to this complaint.

DUKE: And you, my noble and well-warranted cousin,
Whom it concerns to hear this matter forth,
Do with your injuries as seems you best,
In any chastisement. I for a while
Will leave you, but stir not you till you have
Well determined upon these slanderers.

ESCALUS: My lord, we'll do it throughly.

Exit DUKE.

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

LUCIO: "Cucullus non facit monachum;" honest in nothing but in his clothes; and one that hath spoke most villanous speeches of the Duke.

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

LUCIO: As any in Vienna, on my word.

ESCALUS: I would speak with this same Isabel. 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.

Enter DUKE, as friar.

ESCALUS: Come on, mistress: here's a gentlewoman denies all that you have said.

LUCIO: My lord, here comes the rascal I spoke of.

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 honoured for his burning throne.
Where is the Duke? 'Tis he should hear me speak.

ESCALUS: The Duke's in us, and we will hear you speak:
Look you speak justly.

DUKE: Boldly, at least. But, O poor souls,
Come you to seek the lamb here of the fox?
Good night to your redress. Is the Duke gone?
Then is your cause gone too. The Duke's unjust,
Thus to retort your manifest appeal,

And put your trial in the villain's mouth
Which here you come to accuse.

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

ESCALUS: Why, thou unreverend and unhallowed friar,
Is't not enough thou hast suborned these women
To accuse this worthy man, but in foul mouth,
And in the witness of his proper ear,
To call him villain? And then to glance from him
To th' Duke himself, to tax him with injustice?
What, "unjust"!

DUKE: My business in this state
Made me a looker on here in Vienna,
Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble
Till it o'er-run the stew. Laws for all faults,
But faults so countenanced, that the strong statutes
Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,
As much in mock as mark.

ESCALUS: Slander to the state!

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 fleshmonger, a fool, and a coward, as you then reported him to be?

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

LUCIO: O thou damnable fellow! Did not I pluck thee by the nose for thy speeches?

DUKE: I protest I love the Duke as I love myself.

ANGELO: Hark, how the villain would close now, after his treasonable abuses!
Such a fellow is not to be talked withal. Away with him to prison, lay bolts enough upon him, let him speak no more. Away with those giglets too, and with the other confederate companion! 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?

LUCIO pulls off the friar's hood, and discovers the DUKE.

DUKE: Thou art the first knave that e'er mad'st a duke.

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: 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 pow'r 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, provost.

ESCALUS: My lord, I am more amazed at his dishonour
Than at the strangeness of it.

Exeunt ANGELO, MARIANA, FRIAR and ESCALUS.

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're pardoned, Isabel:
And now, dear maid, be you as free to us.
Your brother's death, I know, sits at your heart;
And you may marvel why I obscured myself,
Labouring to save his life, and would not rather
Make rash remonstrance of my hidden pow'r
Than let him so be lost. O most kind maid,
It was the swift celerity of his death,
Which I did think with slower foot came on,
That brained my purpose. But, peace be with him.
That life is better life, past fearing death,
Than that which lives to fear. Make it your comfort,
So happy is your brother.

ISABELLA: I do, my lord.

Enter ANGELO, MARIANA, FRIAR, and ESCALUS.

DUKE: For this new-married man, approaching here,
Whose salt imagination yet hath wronged
Your well-defended honour, you must pardon

For Mariana's sake. But as he adjudged your brother,
 Being criminal, in double violation,
 Of sacred chastity, and of promise-breach,
 Thereon dependent, for your brother's life,
 The very mercy of the law cries out
 Most audible, even from his proper tongue,
 "An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!"
 Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;
 Like doth quit like, and Measure still for Measure.
 Then, Angelo, thy fault's thus manifested;
 Which, though thou wouldst deny, denies thee vantage.
 We do condemn thee to the very block
 Where Claudio 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 honour,
 I thought your marriage fit; else imputation,
 For that he knew you, might reproach your life,
 And choke your good to come. For his possessions,
 Although by confiscation they are ours,
 We do instate and widow you withal,
 To buy you a better husband.

MARIANA: O my dear lord,
 I crave no other, nor no better man.

DUKE: Never crave him; we are definitive.

MARIANA: Gentle my liege—

MARIANA kneels.

DUKE: You do but lose your labour.
 Away with him to death!—Now, sir, to you.

MARIANA: O my good lord! Sweet Isabel, take my part;
 Lend me your knees, and all my life to come
 I'll lend you all my life to do you service.

DUKE: Against all sense you do importune her;
 Should she kneel down in mercy of this fact,
 Her brother's ghost his pavéd 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 molded out of faults;
 And, for the most, become much more the better
 For being a little bad; so may my husband.
 O Isabel, will you not lend a knee?

DUKE: He dies for Claudio's death.

ISABELLA: [*Kneeling*] Most bounteous sir,
 Look, if it please you, on this man condemned,
 As if my brother lived. I partly think
 A due sincerity governéd 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 perished by the way. Thoughts are no subjects,
 Intents but merely thoughts.

MARIANA: Merely, my lord.

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

ESCALUS: It was commanded so.

DUKE: Had you a special warrant for the deed?

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

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

ESCALUS: 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: What's he?

ESCALUS: His name is Barnardine.

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

Exit ESCALUS.

Enter ESCALUS and BARNARDINE

DUKE: This is that Barnardine?

ESCALUS: This, my lord.

DUKE: There was a friar told me of this man.
 Sirrah, thou art said to have a stubborn soul,
 That apprehends no further than this world,
 And squar'st thy life according. Thou'rt condemned;
 But, for those earthly faults, I quit them all,
 And pray thee take this mercy to provide
 For better times to come.

Exit BARNARDINE, whooping in drunken celebration, and ESCALUS.

Friar, advise him; I leave him to your hand.

Exit FRIAR.

I'm 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 temper'd judgment afterward.

ANGELO: I'm 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 ESCALUS, CLAUDIO, muffled, and JULIET.

What muffled fellow's that?

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

ESCALUS unmuffles CLAUDIO.

DUKE: [*To ISABELLA*] If he be like your brother, for his sake
 Is he pardoned; and, for your lovely sake,
 Give me your hand, and say you will be mine.
 He is my brother too; but fitter time for that.
 By this Lord Angelo perceives he's safe;
 Methinks I see a quick'ning in his eye.
 Well, Angelo, your evil quits you well;
 Look that you love your wife; her worth, worth yours,
 I find an apt remission in myself,
 And yet here's one in place I cannot pardon.
 [*To LUCIO*] You, sirrah, that knew me for a fool, a coward,
 One all of luxury, an ass, a madman;
 Wherein have I so 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 whipped.

DUKE: Whipped first, sir, and hanged after.
 Proclaim it, provost, round about the city,
 Is 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 whipped 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 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.
 Thanks, provost, for thy care and secrecy;
 There's more behind that is more grate.

LUCIO: Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging.

DUKE: Slandering a prince deserves it.

Exit ESCALUS and LUCIO.

She, Claudio, that you wronged, look you restore.
Joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo;
I have confessed her and I know her virtue.
Th' offence pardons itself. Dear Isabel,
I have a motion much imports your good,
Where to 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 DUKE, ISABELLA, ANGELO, MARIANA, CLAUDIO, JULIET.